Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2026

Members Present/Web Viewing: Hattie Burns, Tom Ewart, Rebecca Gamble, Carolyn Gause, James Jackson, Neil Jackson, Tyron Jones, Paula Pugh, Robert Williams

Members Absent: George Jebaily, Vivian Rogers, Kenneth Stroman

Staff Present: Don Strickland, Lauren Leonard, Laura Rhoads, Dylan Roberts, Artavius McClain, Gabriella Perla, Lanisha Rodriguez

A. Tom Ewart called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

B. Invocation – Tom Ewart

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

June 18, 2026, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Public Comments:**

None.

F. **Operations Report:**

Artavius McClain, Operations Manager, shared the Operations Report for June 2026. A newly formatted report was presented, showing the comparisons of ridership data between June 2025 and June 2026. He highlighted rider trends across different counties. The report also showed comparisons of passengers per hour in June 2025 and June 2026.

Don Strickland, Executive Director, highlighted that every hour, over 200 passengers utilize PDRTA services. Don also recommended adding a column to show ridership averages.

G. **HR Report & Newsletter:**

Gabriella Perla, HR Coordinator, shared the HR Report, Newsletter, and Employee of the Month. In June, there were 4 new hires and 3 terminations. We closed the month with 69 employees. Two promotions for current employees also took place in June. HR continues to recruit and attend job fairs. Gabriella stated that PDRTA is looking to hire approximately 8 additional drivers, primarily for the Florence area, in preparation for upcoming service changes.

The July Newsletter highlighted birthdays, work anniversaries, new hires, community events, and the First Sun EAP newsletter. Don Strickland, Executive Director, was acknowledged for his 18 years with PDRTA.

Gabriella acknowledged PDRTA's Employee of the Month, Dylan Roberts, on receiving the "Team Player Award".

The Board Members were provided with the Standards of Conduct policy and asked to sign and date, acknowledging understanding and compliance.

H. <u>PIO Update and Quarterly Newsletter:</u>

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared the PIO update for July. The July report included issued notices, the Quarterly Newsletter, upcoming information regarding service changes, finalized route information, advertising updates, and end-of-year planning.

Notices for the Marion County Public Hearings were issued via press release, flyers, website update, and social media posts. Additional social media posts included Marion and Mullins Public hearings, July 4^{th} reminder, and hiring announcements for Director of Transportation and Compliance, and Technology and Program Technician.

The Quarterly Newsletter, "An Investment in Mobility is an Investment in the Pee Dee", emphasized the importance of local funding. The newsletter highlighted why local funding matters, investing in the future of transit in the Pee Dee, PDRTA's partnership with Schaeffler USA, bus shelter expansion, service updates, and future planning. The newsletter also included important upcoming dates for the remainder of the year through the beginning of 2027.

I. <u>Finance Report:</u>

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared the finance report, emphasizing that the presented report is in draft status, due to several line items being estimated. She shared that auditors came to PDRTA to conduct an inventory observation. Laura also emphasized ongoing issues regarding 5311 grant reimbursements owed to PDRTA. Don Strickland, Executive Director, reiterated these ongoing issues and advised that the matter may require additional escalation if it remains unresolved.

J. <u>Committee Reports:</u>

a. Service Committee Update

James Jackson, Board Member and Chair of the Service Committee, shared updates to the service committee. The service committee will now meet regularly to discuss changes in service and provide recommendations and input. The service committee will also work to make the community more aware of the services PDRTA provides.

During this update, the prospective Passenger Representative, Corey Cunningham, was introduced and asked to provide some information about himself to the Board Members. The Passenger Representative would be a part of the Service Committee. Corey briefly introduced himself and informed the Board how PDRTA has impacted his life, and the lives of many within the Pee Dee region. Corey has a history of advocating for PDRTA and offered to continue his outreach to get additional public support. Don Strickland, Executive Director, thanked Corey for his work behind the scenes advocating for PDRTA. Don informed Corey that the Board would later vote to make a final decision. Don also informed Corey that the role of Passenger Representative is not a paid position. Tom Ewart, Chairman, thanked Corey for his commitment.

K. **Old Business:**

None.

L. **New Business:**

a. **PDRTA Code of Conduct Policy**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared information about the Code of Conduct Policy. This policy relates to the Trespass Bill, which was discussed during the June 2026 Board Meeting. This Code of Conduct Policy is currently in draft status and is undergoing revisions. PDRTA staff have an upcoming meeting to discuss and finalize the details required to move forward.

b. **Florence Airport 99-Year Lease Agreement – VOTE**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, presented a proposed 99-Year Lease agreement with the Florence Airport. This would allow PDRTA to develop a future intermodal transit center. He discussed limitations of the current transit center, including its size and safety concerns, and outlined the services the proposed intermodal center would provide and its anticipated benefits to riders and the community.

A motion was made to approve the Florence Airport 99-Year Lease Agreement. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

c. **FY26-27 5307 in the amount of $1,716,198.00 – VOTE**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, presented FY26-27 5307 in the amount of $1,716, 198.00 and explained the proposed allocation of funds.

A motion was made to approve the allocation and proceed with FY26-27 5307 in the amount of $1,719,198.00. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

d. **FY26-27 5311 Federal Grant Funding – VOTE**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, presented FY26-27 Federal Grant Funding and advised that the amount had not been finalized. He requested the Board's approval to move forward with the allocation of funds once the award amount is determined.

A motion was made to approve FY26-27 Federal Grant Funding The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

e. **Passenger Representative – VOTE**

During the Service Committee update, the prospective Passenger Representative introduced himself and his connection with PDRTA. Following the introduction, the Board considered his appointment to serve as the Passenger Representative.

A motion was made to approve the Passenger Representative on the Service Committee. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

f. August Board Meeting Reschedule

The Board Members were reminded of the proposed schedule change for the August Board Meeting, which was previously communicated by email. The meeting date was changed from August 20, 2026, to August 27, 2026. Board Members confirmed their availability, and there were no objections to the revised meeting date. No formal action was taken.

M. <u>Executive Session:</u>

Executive Session was held.

N. <u>Action Taken from Executive Session:</u>

A motion was made to approve the proposed action of the Executive Session. The motion was seconded and approved. Two board members, Tom Ewart and Neil Jackson, abstained from voting.

O. <u>Executive Director's Comments & Report:</u>

Don Strickland, Executive Director, stated that we are working to fill vacant Board Member positions. He welcomed Corey as the Passenger Representative, introduced the new Executive Assistant to the Board, and thanked the Board and PDRTA staff for their hard work.

P. <u>Chairwoman's Comments:</u>

Chairman, Tom Ewart, welcomed Corey as the Passenger Representative, welcomed the new Executive Assistant, and congratulated Don Strickland, Executive Director, on his 18-year anniversary with PDRTA.

Q. <u>Adjournment:</u>

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:33 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Don Strickland

Executive Director