



**Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2026**

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

Members Absent: George Jebaily, Kenneth Stroman, Paula Pugh

Special Committee Member Present: Corey Cunningham

Staff Present: Don Strickland, Gabby Perla, Laura Rhoads, Lauren Leonard

Public Present: Caroline Dunlap (FLATS)

A. Tom Ewart, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

B. Invocation – Carolyn Gause

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

August 27, 2026, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Public Comments:**

Caroline Dunlap, with Florence County Planning, shared information regarding the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS). Don shared the role that Caroline and FLATS played in the recent Transit Study completed by Kimley Horn. Don thanked Caroline and Florence County for making the study possible.

F. **HR Report & Newsletter & EOM**

Gabby Perla, HR Coordinator, shared the HR Report, Monthly Newsletter, and Employee of the Month. In August, there were 2 new hires, 1 rehire, and 1 termination. We closed the month with 67 employees. HR continues to recruit and attend job fairs, including the Florence Housing Authority

Job Fair. Some of the positions that are currently posted are Drivers, Transportation Inspector, Mechanic, IT Technician, Dispatcher, Staff Accountant, and Utility Worker.

The September Newsletter highlighted open positions, birthdays, work anniversaries, new hires, the Feed Hope Food Drive, the Emerging Leader program, PDRTA's Biggest Loser competition, and the First Sun EAP newsletter.

Mr. Bo Flowers, Maintenance Supervisor, was acknowledged as the August 2026 Employee of the Month.

G. PIO Update

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared the PIO update for September. The September report included content updates, fleet advertising, and social media updates. Lauren issued information related to the SEID/Tri-County Connector service and the Harbor Freight SEID/Tri-County Connector service. She is currently working on a passenger outreach campaign, which will get impact stories from passengers, to guide the future of PDRTA. Lauren is also working on updates regarding upcoming public hearings and information on route changes. The October Quarterly Newsletter is currently in progress.

PDRTA plans to participate in SC Rural Transit Day and Florence County EMD's Trunk-or-Treat event. Fleet advertising continues to move forward with the completion of several installs, wrap approvals, redesigns, and renewals.

H. Committee Reports

Don mentioned that he or Lanisha will reach out to the Service Committee for an October meeting ahead of any changes in service. He shared that there will be an in person with virtual option.

I. Executive Session:

None.

J. Action Taken from Executive Session:

None.

K. Old Business

None.

L. New Business

a. 213 Fixed-Asset Physical Inventory Policy – VOTE

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared information regarding the 213 Fixed-Asset Inventory Policy. This policy establishes criteria and procedures for maintaining assets and performing an annual physical inventory. Changes were made to the policy, including where asset information is maintained, updated job titles, and software updates. Changes also outlined how physical inventory will be managed.

A motion was made to approve the 213 Fixed-Asset Physical Inventory Policy. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

b. 216 PDRTA Fare Box Collection Policy – VOTE

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared information regarding the 216 PDRTA Fare Box Collection Policy. This policy provides guidance in the collection and management of fare revenue, ensuring sufficient internal controls from the time cash leaves the customer's possession until deposited in the bank. Changes were made to clarify the one remaining fixed route service in which this applies (between Marion and Myrtle Beach), as all other routes ceased fare collections effective August 2025. Procedures for Paratransit (ADA) Service was removed, as it is no longer applicable. Changes also clarified the employee responsible for collecting locked vaults, who will be the primary counter, who serves as backup counters, and how often the fare box revenue is to be counted. An addition to the policy included that a transaction journal entry with all reports and backup will be prepared to record the revenue deposit in the accounting software.

A motion was made to approve the 216 PDRTA Fare Box Collection Policy. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

c. 261 Direct Costs Calculations for Grant Draws Policy – VOTE

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared information regarding the 261 Direct Costs Calculations for Grant Draws Policy. This policy provides guidance to have documented procedures for explaining how operating and preventative maintenance costs are compiled and calculated to determine accurate amounts for grant draw downs from FTA and SCDOT. Changes to this policy include specifying that the salaries and benefits of the operations administration is to be coded to a unique account code, which separates their earnings from other operational staff to ensure that salaries and benefits are not duplicated in more than one draw down line item.

A motion was made to approve the 261 Direct Costs Calculations for Grant Draws Policy. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved

d. 306 Drug and Alcohol Policy – VOTE

Gabby Perla, HR Coordinator, shared information regarding the 306 Drug and Alcohol Policy. Changes to this policy include the process and procedures to follow when an employee is required to undergo a post-accident drug test. Updates were also made to position titles, found in Attachment A: Covered Positions.

A motion was made to approve the 306 Drug and Alcohol Policy. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

e. 410 Common Cost Allocation Policy – VOTE

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared information regarding the 410 Common Cost Allocation Policy. This policy outlines the procedures for allocating common costs for PDRTA, ensuring compliance with federal cost principles under 2 CFR Part 200 and requirements of the FTA and SCDOT as a subrecipient of FTA and State Mass Transit Funds programs. Key changes to the policy included the addition of PDRTA's process for identifying and treating allowable and unallowable costs from both indirect cost pools and direct billings. Minor changes included the updating of positions responsible for functions.

A motion was made to approve the 410 Common Cost Allocation Policy. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

M. Executive Director's Comments & Report:

Don Strickland shared the plans for expanded services in Florence with an anticipated date of November 16th. He explained the current environment with driver shortages across the country and that PDRTA will have to remain diligent and get creative to attract new talent.

Don shared that although he asked for approval to attend the APTA Expo in Chicago, he has now committed to attending the SCAPA Conference and presenting our recent transit study for a potential award through SCAPA. Don shared that we are sending 3 staff members to the Expo.

Mr. James Jackson asked about the possibility of sending a board member to the Expo and Don shared that we have done this in the past. When presented there were no members available to attend this year.

Don also shared his confidence in the PDRTA team and thanked them for their dedication to the PDRTA mission.

The cost of fuel was brought up and Don shared that it certainly is an ongoing concern and that we can only hope for some relief at some point soon. He shared that diesel at nearly \$6 per gallon will make things much more difficult in the future.

N. Chairman's Comments:

Tom Ewart, Chairman, thanked the entire PDRTA team for all of their effort and work. He shared that our services are such an asset for our communities. He also thanked the Board of Directors for their continued commitment.

O. Adjournment:

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:15pm.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Strickland', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Don Strickland

Executive Director