Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting Minutes
October 15, 2026

Members Present/Web Viewing: Hattie Burns, Tom Ewart (virtual), Rebecca Gamble, Carolyn Gause, James Jackson, Neil Jackson, George Jebaily (virtual), Tyron Jones, Vivian Rogers, Paula Pugh, and Robert Williams

Members Absent: Kenneth Stroman

Staff Present: Don Strickland, Gabby Perla, Laura Rhoads, Artavius McClain, Anthony Fonville, and Lanisha Rodriguez

A. Neil Jackson, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

B. Invocation – Tyron Jones

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

September 17, 2026, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Public Comments:**

None

F. **Operations Report**

Artavius McClain, Operations Manager, shared the Operations Reports for August and September. Ridership has increased significantly compared with the previous fiscal year. From July 1, 2026 to August 31, 2026, there were nearly 100,000 passenger trips. From July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2026, there was a total of 149,613 passenger trips. Reports show an average of around 50,000 trips per month. Based on the current trend, total trips are expected to exceed 600,000 for this fiscal year.

G. HR Report & Newsletter & EOM

Gabby Perla, HR Coordinator, shared the HR Report, Monthly Newsletter, and Employee of the Month. In September, there were 4 new hires and 0 terminations. We closed the month with 71 employees. HR continues to recruit and attend job fairs. Some of the positions that are currently posted are Drivers and Staff Accountant. Since implementing the driver sign-on bonus, HR has received many new applications.

The October Newsletter highlighted open positions, birthdays, work anniversaries, new hires, PDRTA's End of Year Celebration, open enrollment, PDRTA's Biggest Loser competition, the "What's Your Story" passenger outreach campaign, the First Sun EAP newsletter, and the Policy of the Month.

Lauren Engel, Maintenance Compliance Coordinator, was acknowledged as the September 2026 Employee of the Month. She received the "Amazing Addition" award.

H. PIO Update & Quarterly Newsletter

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared the PIO update for October. The October report included content updates, fleet advertising, and social media updates. Key highlights included the October Quarterly Newsletter, the Florence Transit System Public Hearing Notices, the "What's your Story" Passenger Outreach Campaign, SC Rural Transit Day, Boo Bus, and the End of Year event.

The Quarterly Newsletter highlighted PDRTA's Healthcare Partnerships and their impact on expanding transportation access. It featured partners including CareSouth Carolina, McLeod Health (Access Health), Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, and Genesis Healthcare. Through these partnerships patients are able to get to appointments, access other essential services, and stay connected to their care.

The Quarterly Newsletter also highlighted a new passenger outreach campaign, "What's Your Story?". This campaign is designed to hear directly from PDRTA's passengers to help PDRTA understand how services are being used and the impact it has made.

I. Finance Report

Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance, shared information regarding the Finance Report. The information provided showed what is anticipated to be the final figures for June 30, 2026, after the completion of the audit. The report also showed this quarter's financial information. Laura highlighted that accounts receivable has significantly decreased due to SCDOT paying the backlog of months owed to PDRTA. However, the funding that was supposed to be allocated for July 1, 2026, had not yet been allocated. She and the finance team are working with SCDOT to get new year funding approved in order to draw for the past three months.

Laura highlighted a new line item on the report, Subscription Liability. This update requires that cloud-based subscription-service contracts longer than one year be reported as assets with corresponding liabilities on the books.

J. Committee Reports

Robert Williams, Service Committee Member, shared information about the recent Service Committee meeting. Discussions included potential service changes such as the addition of service hours and potential new routes.

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared information regarding the most recent Public Hearings held to present these potential changes to the community. The community expressed appreciation for PDRTA and also offered their suggestions on services. Overall, the community was excited for the upcoming changes and highlighted how they would be positively impacted by them.

K. Executive Session:

None.

L. Action Taken from Executive Session:

None.

M. Old Business

None.

N. New Business

None.

O. Executive Director's Comments & Report:

Don Strickland, Executive Director, thanked the Board for their commitment and the PDRTA staff for a tremendous job. Don shared his appreciation for having staff who are flexible and willing to work together. Don stated that the team is moving in the right direction.

P. Chairman's Comments:

Tom Ewart, Chairman, thanked both the PDRTA staff and the Board for their commitment.

Q. Adjournment:

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Don Strickland

Executive Director