

Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority Board Meeting

March 28, 2012 – LRTA Board Minutes

Dick Stewart offered the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Jenny Carter called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM.

Roll: Jenny Carter, Fred Harvey, Dick Stewart, Chris Hutton, David Blauch and Barbara Childs.

Absent: Louise Pinkney, Ginnie Kozak, Lynette Harley.

Also in Attendance: SCDOT Commissioner Forest, Rochelle Ferguson and Paula Porter, Palmetto Breeze.

Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2012

Motion to Accept Minutes was made by Chris Hutton; Second Dick Stewart. Motion Carried.

Action Items:

Board Nominations:

David Blauch announces the Board nominations from the nominating committee: Dick Stewart as Chairman and David Blauch as Vice Chairman. Motion to approve was made by Chris Hutton; Second by Fred Harvey. Motion carried.

Strategic Plan:

Ms. Ferguson hands out copies of the Strategic Plan draft from Professor Glasson of USCB who led the planning session. Jenny Carter states we can vote on this at the next Board Meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions or want to make any changes in the meantime. She asked Rochelle to tell everyone why it's important that we have this document in place. Ms. Ferguson replies that SCDOT requested us to have strategic plan updated. Also, this plan gives management direction from the Board. Since the original planning session was from January 2011 and as we used tax payer money for it, it's important we use what we paid for. Ms. Carter wanted to confirm that we would be looking for Board action on the document written in January 2011. Ms. Ferguson replies, yes, that is correct. Ms. Carter asks if we want to add anything to it, we would need to consider that for a later time? Ms. Ferguson replies that is correct, but it could be included in the next Board meeting in May of 2012. Chair Stewart says the Strategic Plan is a living document and we can modify it at anytime. If we accept it at the next meeting it will be the strategic plan we adopted at that time. Ms. Carter states that all sub committees can include their information for the next time.

Informational Items:

Director's Report:

Ms. Ferguson states that she will read the highlights of her report. Bubba Taylor from Lakeside Construction finished the Finance Director's new office. David Blauch saw it and thinks it looks great. He thought the men's lockers looked great and wondered if there were any complaints on the reduction of the amount of lockers. Ms. Ferguson replies, no, not that she is aware of. Chris Hutton asks if dead archive files are stored inside the offices. Ms. Ferguson states, no they are outside in the shed. Mr. Hutton offers a trailer that can be used for storage.

Ms. Ferguson states she has completed a full review of the personnel files of all current employees insuring that all the documents that need to be in there were there. She made notes on them for the staff to complete if needed and they are almost done with this project. This way we are ready if we are audited by SCDOT or the auditing firm and we should now be in a good situation.

Chair Stewart asks about the Passengers by County report. He asks if it is typical to the season for the drop in passengers. Ms. Ferguson answers yes, but the unemployment rate is affecting it also. It should start picking up now because of the season. Fred Harvey asks how does this compare year to year, say January 2012 to January 2011, or 2010. This would remove the seasonal part and we could see how it varies. Ms. Ferguson states she could do that comparison in a graph. Chair Stewart says that would be great if you could do the last five years.

Ms. Ferguson hands out the executive summary that goes with the Annual Report. She also hands out the Freedom of Information Act that they received at the TASC meeting last week. Additionally, SCDOT will provide a regional training that will repeat what was presented at the TASC conference for Board members. It will be given in four different regions in the state. Ms. Carter states that we really need to go to this training. Ms. Ferguson hands out a draft of the Emergency Preparedness Response and Recovery plan. I met with Beaufort County Emergency Management staff yesterday to more fully revise and discuss our plan. This plan now includes the original evacuation plan and the recovery plan. Previously to this we had both an evacuation plan and a recovery plan that were two separate documents. It also includes a checklist that is part of this document now. The information is much more detailed so anyone who is in this position can go ahead and proceed with the evacuation. We have also included the Beaufort County Motor Coach Evacuation Procedures within this plan. It is not the full plan as it's in excess of 100 pages. I have also included the Air Rescue Operations Plan reference which redirects people back to the Beaufort County plan. Chair Stewart asks on the post hurricane return matter is there some responsibility of this Board to be available or make decisions. Ms. Ferguson says she doesn't believe so as the plan outlines all the actions. Chair Stewart asks what is our responsibility as a transit authority in recovery. Ms. Ferguson replies to provide recovery transportation operations and bring people back to Beaufort County if the all clear has been given and it is safe to return. If there is a Katrina like situation where people are living in another part of the state and they need transportation back to this County in order to facilitate the County being back online, we would provide that service at that time. Chair Stewart asks do we have a provision to fund the cost of this. Ms. Ferguson states yes, with the FEMA expense reimbursement process, FTA, and the County would provide for that. Chair Stewart asks if that is documented and Ms. Ferguson replies, yes it is in the plan. Chair Stewart asks if this happens will we be 100% sure we will get the money to continue operating because we don't want

to shut down in two counties when there was a hurricane in one. Ms. Ferguson replies so much of the base service relies on Beaufort County being operational, so there may be a shuffling of those existing services. Chris Hutton asks if Palmetto Breeze is responsible for the evacuation of Parris Island or just coordination of evacuation services. Ms. Ferguson states it's just coordination as we do not have enough equipment to provide that service, but we do assist with coordination of it. David Blauch states that he is a member of the Early Response Team and they have a trailer on Edisto Island filled with supplies if needed. Barbara Childs asks how our digital data is protected. Ms. Ferguson states it's on the server however it's the Finance Department's responsibility to take the computer equipment and the server back-up off-site.

Finance Director Report:

Paula Porter presents the February statement of accounts and balance sheet. Chair Stewart asks how these financials compare to the Budget. Ms. Carter explains that overall at the end of February we are supposed to have received 67% of our income and spent 67% of our expenses. We have received 68% of our revenue and spent 62% of our expenses and that is why we have a positive income. Dick Stewart suggested at the end of last meeting that we possibly revise the financial statements so they are easier to read. David Blauch said he would like to see bullet points on the financial statements every month. Ms. Porter then hands out and explains the draft budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. She explains some of the items on the variance narrative that accompanies the budget. Ms. Childs asks why retirement benefits are up \$9000 in the budget and Ms. Porter says she isn't sure but will get back to her. Ms. Carter asks if we increased fuel and Ms. Porter states no, the next fiscal year budget is based on the current use and projected use of fuel which is already very high. We could not keep increasing expenses as we do not have income to cover it. Chair Stewart asks if the discretionary contributions by the local governments are the same as last year. Ms. Ferguson replies yes, we assume they will stay the same. We ask for more, but we assume we will get the same. SCDOT has made it clear there will be no increase. We are not expecting a decrease but there may be some other supplemental funding available. David Blauch asks if we are not projecting an increase in health insurance. Ms. Porter states no, there was an increase this year and they do not typically raise it every year. Ms. Carter asks if everyone will look at it by the next Board meeting.

Chairperson's Report:

Chair Carter states that she has nothing to report.

Committee Reports

Ms. Ferguson asks Fred Harvey if he is aware if the Organizational Development Committee has met since Christmas. Fred Harvey replies that Louis Pinkney was supposed to have a meeting and didn't get back to him. Chair Stewart says he will get involved to see if he can get something figured out for next time as the Chair is ex-parte to all the committees.

David Blauch reviews the Policy and Planning Committee report. One significant equipment failure was a head gasket leaking on bus 943 but the vehicle has 175,000 miles on it so it is not unusual. It was sent out for repair. The shop was in good condition and there were no exceptions.

Chair Carter states the Finance Committee review was included in your packet that was done on 2/14/12. Everything was in good order. We are still waiting for a response from the auditor, Lisa Wechsler. There was some confusion on some adjusting journal entries whether they needed to be made and we were waiting to hear back from her. We also trained Barbara Childs as she is part of the Finance committee and we are going to tweak the form we use for the review. Ms. Ferguson states yes to both questions. Ms. Carter states we will train Lynette Harley as well so we can take turns doing the review.

Dick Stewart talks about the Marine Division Committee. He distributes a letter that was received from the Daufuskie Island Council stating they are still interested in having the LRTA pursue the ferry study. They were frustrated that we weren't doing anything and I told them that we were waiting on the County and if they would like for us to continue this then send us something to indicate that. So this letter states that the need for dependable, safe, affordable transportation to and from Daufuskie Island remains a top priority with Daufuskie Island Council. With the permission of the Board he would like to proceed with presenting the report that the Marine Division Committee has completed to the Beaufort County Council. Chris Hutton says yes, let's respond and stay at the head. Chair Stewart says our goal is to provide reliable transportation and not try and step in and try and fix problems we don't have any responsibility to fix. He asks Barbara Childs if she can do some work on this. Would she please research current property owners on Daufuskie Island and separate full time homeowners from part time and homes from condos or time shares? Chair Stewart states any referendum would have to go through Council, and the County Council will want to know that information and they may choose to charge them the same or they may want to charge them differently. Any activities will still have to have an analysis to see the costs of operating ferry service, which we are not capable of doing. We previously requested money to do a study which we haven't received which is part of the reason it's been delayed. I am looking for a consensus from the Board if it's okay if we respond to the request from Chairman Newton. All respond yes.

Ms. Carter asks if she can be included in any changes in the financial statements and Chair Stewart says yes.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Announcements

Dick Stewart thanks Commissioner Forest and County Council of Beaufort County for getting us into the infrastructure grant regarding the work that was done on US 278 in Bluffton and on the Bluffton Parkway. As recently as four years ago, the expectation that Beaufort County would participate in State Infrastructure funds was dismissed. It wouldn't have gotten done if it wasn't for Commissioner Forest. Commissioner Forest says the state infrastructure grant was \$25 million towards SC Route 170. The Federal Match program brings \$15 million to the extension of the Bluffton Parkway. We were really excited about this as a couple of years ago there wasn't even a thought that some of these things would come to the Lowcountry and was one of the criticism when I came onto the Commission. We seem to have a better voice in Columbia. More positive things are happening with regards to money and infrastructure. Chair Stewart says thank you for all you've done.

Chris Hutton states regarding the Conflict of Interest form they had to fill out, he would like everyone know he is engaging in a Ferry System Operation. I don't know if this is a conflict or not, but I wanted to bring it to your attention. We are going to set up Georgia/South Carolina Maritime, which is Stewart Rodman's outfit. Chair Stewart asks if they have received their money. Mr. Hutton replies part of it. It's going to be sooner rather than later. It's strictly Savannah to Daufuskie Island.

Next meeting is May 23rd at The Jasper County BDSN offices in Ridgeland at 2:00 PM. Motion to Adjourn: Dick Stewart. David Blauch seconds. Adjournment at 3:15 PM.