

**THE COAST-WACCAMAW RTA
BOARD MEETING
February 17, 2010
12:00 p.m.**

Board Present:

Katharine D'Angelo, Chair
Thomas Drayton, Vice Chair
Ivory Wilson
Bernard Silverman
Joseph Lazarra
Gregg Smith
Wilbert James

Staff present:

Myers Rollins, General Manager
Joey McKelvey, Director of Operations
Pat Webster, Director, Budget & Finance
Felicia Beaty, Office Manager
George Osborne, Planner Specialist
Yvette Jefferson, Marketing & Community
Relations

Others Present:

Pam Creech, Citizens Advisory Committee

The media was notified of the Board of Director's Meeting on Monday, February 15, 2010.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairwoman D'Angelo called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mr. Drayton gave the invocation. Mr. Wilson led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF QUORUM – ROLL CALL:

Roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF VISITORS:

Chairwoman D'Angelo welcomed visitors.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was properly moved and seconded that the minutes from the previous meeting be approved. There being no questions, a voice vote was taken. No nays being heard, the motion carried.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Pam Creech, President of the Citizens Advisory Committee, reported that the Committee had met the day previously and discussed presentations to be given to towns, business groups, and ad hoc committees. She has talked to Ms. Jefferson regarding public relations, and the inclusion of pictures in letters and flyers.

Ms. Creech said two bulletin boards will be assembled to provide information after the presentations.

Mr. Rollins noted that Ms. Creech and the Citizens Advisory Committee are “fresh eyes” for Coast, and that Coast relies on them to make sure Coast is doing the right thing. He has asked Ms. Creech to brainstorm at the Task Force regarding funding, and she will watch his presentation to County Council in March.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS:

Felicia Beaty read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution FEB2010-12: Application for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program Funding: -- A motion of the Board of the Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority authorizing the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer to receive monies from the JARC program to provide public transportation services for program year 2010.

Mr. Rollins said the resolution was the end result of an application for funds to support Sandy Island. Coast has been awarded \$148,000, which will be used for operations or capital purchase.

Resolution FEB2010-13: Authorization to Purchase Two (2) Administrative Support Vehicles: -- A motion of the Board of the Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority authorizing the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer to execute procurement with an approved vendor on the South Carolina State Contract for the purchase of two (2) administrative support vehicles.

Mr. Rollins said that part of the responsibility of street supervisors is to model and supervise the drivers. The new vehicles will improve the ability of those supervisors to do “trail behinds,” by adding two vehicles to the existing two vehicles in the fleet. The funding is from stimulus funds, and no matching funds are required.

Resolution FEB2010-14: Application for City of Conway Fiscal Year 2011 Grant Funding: -- A motion of the Board of the Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority authorizing the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer to file an application with the City of Conway for a grant to provide public transportation services for fiscal year 2011 and to accept grant funding from the City in the event that the application is approved.

Mr. Rollins said this would be a request to Conway for local funding. He reminded that prior to 2006, no funds were received from Conway. Then \$10,000 was awarded, but

since then funding levels have declined to last year's \$4000. The request this year will be for \$25,000.

Mr. Wilson asked if the \$25,000 would increase service in Conway. Mr. Rollins said he had been meeting with the Mayor of Conway and administrative staff to work on bringing more people to Conway, including tourists and CCU students. He has also been in discussions with CCU regarding possibly amending the route, perhaps trying for a Thursday route if no extra cost is involved. There is not enough demand for a fixed route. They are considering modifying fixed route to all day demand-response. Mr. Rollins suggested that Ms. Webster do a cost analysis regarding the possibility of bringing CCU students to Conway.

It was properly moved and seconded that each resolution be adopted. There being no questions, a voice vote was taken for each resolution. No nays being heard, each resolution passed.

MONTHLY REPORTS:

Finance and Procurement Committee:

Pat Webster indicated September's financial statements were reviewed in the Finance Committee Meeting. There were no questions from the Board.

Planning and Operations Committee:

George Osborne said information had been presented in committee. There were no questions from the Board.

Mr. Rollins asked Mr. McKelvey to explain demand response. Mr. McKelvey said pages 21 and 22 of the report indicate that demand response is growing, and there has been some transition from fixed route to demand response. Logs are kept of call-based pickups as calls come in. Mr. Rollins said that replacing some fixed routes with demand response would provide better service door to door and also provide significant cost savings, as the gas mileage on the smaller vehicles (9-19 mpg) are much better than large buses (4 mpg). Mr. Rollins indicated that the Jacksonville RTA has the best demand response service, and that Coast RTA's demand response is modeled after them. It has been a success, and a win/win for budget and passengers. Passengers call to arrange for pickup the day before, the vans are sent, and the manifest filled out. This service is for Conway, where density is less. Mr. McKelvey said the logs would eventually determine where a fixed route was needed. The route goes to ¼ mile past Brown's Swamp and costs \$3. It is partly in response to citizens who expressed a willingness to pay a little more to keep service in their area. It is not a perfect system, but it is an improvement, and answers the one complaint from County Council that buses were riding empty.

Mr. James asked about the possibility of selling passes for demand response. Mr. Rollins said his idea will be sent to the Ridership Committee.

Chairwoman D'Angelo and Mr. Wilson expressed some concern that the total cost for riders to get to Conway, from the bus terminal in Conway to a job in Myrtle Beach, and then back home again, would be \$9. Mr. McKelvey said that the residents liked it, as it is cheaper than a taxi. Mr. Rollins indicated that during last year's public hearings, the public had said they'd be willing to pay more to keep service. The service closes at 8:00 p.m. The service will be extended in the spring.

Marketing Committee:

Ms. Jefferson said the information had been provided in the committee. There were no questions from the Board.

By-Laws Committee:

Mr. Wilson said there was no report.

Local Funding Ad-Hoc Committee:

Mr. Smith said the Committee had met Friday and had preliminary discussions on short and long-term goals. They will meet with Pam Creech of the Citizens Advisory Committee regarding this year's funding. To create long-term funding, each government needs information provided regularly, and relationships needed to be established with local council members. This will involve everyone. Goals should be county-wide. A newsletter to promote good news was discussed, as in the success of demand response. They are working with Horry and Georgetown Counties and Conway regarding short range funding.

Ms. D'Angelo said bus service was needed back in North Myrtle Beach, including Little River. Mr. James asked why there was no service to North Myrtle Beach. Mr. McKelvey said that North Myrtle Beach provides no funding, so that when routes had to be reevaluated based on financial considerations, that route was eliminated. Ms. D'Angelo said the Mayor of North Myrtle Beach believes public transportation should be county funded, as city residents pay both city and county taxes.

Mr. Rollins said a Power Point Presentation was being developed, which would make it possible for anyone to give the presentation to any group. He suggested posting board reports which would demonstrate what good things were being done.

Mr. Drayton asked about the North Myrtle Beach route. When it was running, it was a big route, mirroring the current route to Georgetown.

Mr. Rollins said that Myrtle Beach had threatened to reduce its funding level if full service was being provided to North Myrtle Beach without contribution from that city. This resulted in a Board resolution dictating that service to municipalities was contingent on contributions from those municipalities.

Mr. Smith suggested customer feedback was needed on the demand response to take to local governments, to push for funding. Ms. D'Angelo said riders would not

show up to meetings in North Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Drayton said a way must be determined to resume service in North Myrtle Beach.

Mr. Rollins said some form of Route 8N11 was going to be reintroduced. The cost will be \$8, and Coast must be careful not to lose money.

Mr. James asked about the possibility of a local referendum on the issue, and was told it wasn't possible.

Mr. Smith suggested simply charging more for that route and explaining why.

Mr. Rollins said Title 6 precludes discrimination on the basis of income.

Ms. D'Angelo said she had provided the North Myrtle Beach Mayor and Council reports every month, but had never received a response. The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce wants the service.

Mr. Rollins suggested directing the matter to the ad-hoc committee, so that suggestions could be brought back to the Board.

Operations:

Mr. McKelvey distributed an operations and maintenance report, and Coast would finish FY 2010 with approximately 600,000 passenger boardings. This is the second year of gains, despite reduced service and loss of transit lanes on Ocean Boulevard. The increase is driven in part by fuel costs, the new route to Georgetown, the economy, internal route restructuring, restructuring of Route 10, marketing, and better customer service.

Mr. Silverman pointed out that in the year 2004/2005, service was hourly.

Mr. James asked about the elimination of transit lanes.

Mr. Rollins explained that merchants on Ocean Boulevard feared that, with the closing of the Pavilion, the transit lanes would hurt business.

Mr. James pointed out that the boulevard is often restricted.

Mr. Drayton said regarding North Myrtle Beach that political circumstances had changed.

Chairwoman D'Angelo suggested it might be a good time to approach that government again.

Mr. James inquired about the new Myrtle Beach Boardwalk.

Mr. Rollins said Coast will apply jointly with the city for a grant to run a trolley to the boardwalk.

General Manager:

Mr. Rollins said Senator McGill will be sending a letter to The Sun News entitled, "Time for Mass Public Transportation," to push for dedicated funding.

The award for Employee of the Month has been moved to a quarterly award. Jessie Callahan, an intern from Coastal Carolina University, had been given the Employee of the Month award for December, for her excellent work with Coats for Kids.

Felicia Beaty's position as Office Manager has been eliminated, and she has been promoted to Executive Assistant to Mr. Rollins.

Yvette Jefferson's position to assist with Marketing and Community Relations has been expanded from part-time to full-time.

Coast needs a greater presence in Columbia, but cannot afford a full-time lobbyist. A part time position in that regard is being considered for Carlton Washington, who lives in Columbia, was referred by Edgerton Burroughs, and has a relationship with Senator McGill. He will explore the possibility of Coast getting back into the State Retirement System, and will represent Coast in both Columbia and Washington.

Attorney Emma Ruth Brittain will be asked about the legalities of getting Coast on the State Health Insurance program.

Ara Heinz has been promoted to management, and will be a certified Grants and Procurement Manager.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

March's meeting will be held on Thursday, March 25, due to scheduling conflicts. Mr. Drayton will chair the meeting.

BOARD MEMBER INPUT:

Mr. James said the staff had done a good job.

Mr. Silverman echoed Mr. James's comments and thanked the Board.

Mr. Lazarra thanked the management.

Mr. Drayton thanked the staff for the work done during the lean times, and congratulated Felicia Beaty, Yvette Jefferson, and Ara Heinz on their promotions.

Mr. Smith said he was glad marketing had become a full-time staff position, and said he looks forward to working with the ad-hoc committee. He said there was yet a long way to go, that he was glad of the budding relationship with Senator McGill, and said local legislators were needed.

Mr. Wilson thanked the staff and encouraged them to keep up the good work. He also said the Citizens Advisory Committee can help resident's pressure local officials to change their minds about funding the transit authority.

Chairwoman D'Angelo said the staff represents a broad spectrum of areas of expertise, and praised them for their work. She thanked Ms. Beaty for setting up the website, thanked the ad-hoc committee, and said she looked forward to Mr. Smith encouraging North Myrtle Beach to participate in funding local transit, as she said North Myrtle Beach needs the bus service.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was properly moved and seconded that the Board adjourn. There being no questions, a voice vote was taken. No nays being heard, the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 1:08 p.m.