

**South Central RTD
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday,
April 27, 2022 - 1:30 PM**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Javier Perea, RTD Chair, City of Sunland Park
Nora Barraza, RTD Vice Chair, Town of Mesilla (arrived 2:01)
Lynn Ellins, Doña Ana County (departed 2:53)
Diana Murillo, City of Anthony
Edna Trager proxy for Cathy Harmon, City of Elephant Butte
Yvonne Flores, City of Las Cruces

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Majorie Powey, Village of Williamsburg
Peter Atencio, Village of Hatch
Sharon Thomas, Citizens Advisory Committee

SCRTD STAFF:

David Armijo, SCRTD Executive Director
Sara Vasquez, SCRTD
Cristina Gamboa, SCRTD
Adam Shea, SCRTD

OTHERS PRESENT: Becky Baum, RC Creations, LLC, Transcriptionist

1. CALL TO ORDER

Javier Perea called the meeting to order at approximately 1:50.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ALL STAND FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

3. ROLL CALL

A quorum was determined to be present.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda. Motioned by Diana Murillo, second by Councilor Flores. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF March 23, 2022

There were no changes to the minutes. Motioned by Councilor Flores, seconded by Diana Murillo. Passed unanimously.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

David Armijo gave the Executive Director's report. Ridership has now reached 60,000 rides for the year; just shy of 65,000 rides last year through the fiscal year. With two months to go they are slated to have more; there have been over 7,000 rides within the past month with the Red Route doing just shy of 800, Purple Route doing 520, Turquoise Route doing larger numbers with Chaparral, Yellow Route doing over 4,000, Green Route doing 341, Silver Route doing 577, and Copper Route doing 90. Staff is still working on the numbers to get a better statistic; gave the operators handheld counters to help with the counts. Lynn Ellins asked where the Yellow Route and Blue Route runs. Yellow Route runs from Sunland Park, the edge of Santa Teresa, the casino, and downtown El Paso. It is a 90 minute route and runs 10 hours a day Monday through Friday. The Blue Route does special services; the original route went away due to low ridership. They carried 111 people two weeks ago and it's used for any special event such as the migrants.

Staff received two grants. The first one is a No/Low Electric Grant, hybrid buses as well as electric buses. The grant was restricted to 25% non-electric. It's currently \$1.1 billion available. The grant also allows them to avoid a competitive procurement because they can determine who is on their team; form a team of consultants and manufacturers. Electric bus companies are limited; a company called Proterra, BYD which is a Chinese company, New Flyer out of Canada, and Gillig Bus out of California. Both Proterra and Gillig are located in California as there is mandate and half of the electric buses are in California currently; must be all electric by 2035. Staff chose Gillig due to already having Gillig hybrid buses and their reputation is better than others. SBLB was chosen for technical support and service in fleet due using them before. They will also receive technical support from Mesilla Valley MPO. A picture was shown of an electric bus.

The Zero Emission Plan went from something the government wanted people to do to something required to receive federal funding. The congressional act states that the government must award money to everyone who applies and is approved by the end of August; started in March to end of August which is a short timeline. Las Cruces is using BYD which has exemption due to some issues which are being resolved. NCRTD spoke with Mr. Armijo to collaborate on the buses as well. Most agencies are pushing back to wait for next year as it is such a short timeline. There are seven tasks to be done within the next four to six weeks to apply for the grant: existing conditions which is who they are and what they have; surface modeling which is how many miles it takes to run a bus from a to b and can they can do

those miles with an electric bus, some bus routes have shorter routes than others but most should be fine with electric buses, staff is also working with facilities to put in electric charging stations; facility concepts and phasing which is when they will receive vehicles and where they will go, it will be 18 months or longer to receive the buses; cost and lifecycle analysis; zero rollout, it has already been done for the next 15 years and will be given to the consultants to look at.

Councilor Flores asked how long it would be for the entire fleet would be electric if they receive new buses every two years; it would have to tie into the lifecycle of the current buses. Almost half the fleet will be replaced this year. Mr. Armijo expects it to be within the next 10 years full replacement. Nora Barraza asked what the capacity of the buses are; they are the same as the current buses. The buses will also be lifts and no ramps for ADA and two boarding locations. The normal capacity in the Sunland Park area going into El Paso is currently 38 passengers per revenue hour. In pre-pandemic there were times there was standing room only and these electric buses have the capacity for that. The roll out plan will be updated; providing service to disadvantaged communities, one consultant was not happy with this requirement, but the reality is being in a place where there is a larger disadvantaged community means a better chance at receiving the grant so Mr. Armijo is looking to the census to gather more data; workforce training which is an emerging area.

A disadvantaged community is defined by population, income, and education that's used on the census; it's also individual and family data. There is a point system to determine who gets what money. Mr. Armijo will talk with local people on workforce training for the electric power on the buses, Public Works Department and county help. The new van is called the E-Transit provided by Ford; there is a lift on it as well. Within two years Ford may only make electric vehicles. Other mid-sized buses will be received from Aerotech and Diamond which have a wheelchair lift in the back without ramp. The cost is somewhere between \$200,000 and \$240,000 which is less than the Gillig bus. These vehicles will replace the vehicles in Anthony that run into Las Cruces, Hatch, and etcetera. It is unknown the life expectancy of these smaller vehicles versus the Gillig buses; it may be seven or 10 years as it's dependent on miles rather than years. The Gillig buses cost more but may last longer.

Currently they do not have the infrastructure to charge the buses and mechanics that can work on electric buses. However, they will have those specifics in place. Gillig has committed to provide the staff with training and supplemental manufacturers that make the equipment needed. The 5339 grant for bus and facilities will allow for staff to receive more money from the federal government. The preliminary numbers show a commitment from Gillig for the three buses at \$833,300. The hybrid buses purchased previously were about \$1.3 million for the two buses: roughly \$620,000 apiece. Mr. Armijo broke out to the cost of the bus, delivery, training by Gillig which continues throughout the warranty of the bus, and etcetera. The money from the federal government should be around for the next

two years. Mr. Armijo is moving quickly on these grants because very few people can get the zero emission plan with the seven tasks done by May 31st which will give a better shot at receiving the money this year. He will work with the state as a team effort to get as much as they can; assuming it's still 80/20.

There was a commitment from the legislature for \$200,000 locally and Mr. Armijo will ask the county in next year's grant for \$100,000. As the buses won't come in for two years the money doesn't have to be immediately available; have the commitments to hopefully receive more money from legislature next year. Nora Barraza asked if they've considered scaling it back to two buses; yes they have and there may only be awarded two. There will be two legislative sessions prior to receiving the buses so they have opportunity to raise the funds. Nora Barraza stated that they also need to make sure they spend the money previously awarded so legislature will give more money; less likely to fund projects if there is money left on the table. There are a number of ways to make it work with the state; DFA can put the money in the Department of Transportation budget. Another idea is to reauthorize the funds.

A map from the MPO was shown; the outer edges of blue is the urbanized area of Southern Doña Ana County; includes unincorporated areas of Chaparral, Otero County, Anthony, and etcetera. Sun Metro authorized a split letter agreement in February for \$204,000 and Congress pushed the money out; two weeks ago the funding table was pushed out which moved from \$204,000 to \$696,000 available this year. SCRTD is now able to be a direct grant recipient and can apply directly from the regional office in Fort Worth. The money is in the year of service plus five years so there is time to use that funding. Mr. Armijo hopes to draw a portion of the \$204,000 this year and save the rest of the money for capital funds moving forward. It is difficult to use the funds for operations and the funding is restricted to the shown area; the El Paso service area rather than all of SCRTD area. It will be a phase out of the roll out starting in Sunland Park and then Anthony and etcetera.

Nora Barraza commented that the SCRTD keeps servicing the southern part of the area rather than the northern part and Sierra County even though they've committed to bring service. Grant funds have been requested in order to begin service in Sierra County; if enough money comes in under 5311 Urban funds that will allow service up north as well. This money specifically helps the south. Nora Barraza commented that she understands the need in Sunland Park as it has the highest ridership but there is also need in Sierra County and the northern area which needs more service and funds. Chair Perea stated that the funds from Sun Metro are specifically for the Sunland Park to El Paso area but they need to use other assets for the other areas.

Councilor Flores stated that the success of growth should help with receiving more funding as well. SCRTD are the only agency in the region in New Mexico that had ridership double and continue to grow. If they continue then within two years there

should be well over 100,000 rides and they will need paratransit rides as well. New routes and van pool rides are beginning which are doing well. Mr. Armijo requested two more vans for use in Sierra County. He hopes to place ads in the Observer beginning within the next couple weeks to run for a month as well as electronically. He has spoken to the editor of a local paper in Sierra County to be ready when they have the funds and vans for service. The van pools can be direct to the schools, university, and hospitals.

Chair Perea asked if T or C and the communities up there are a part of the SCRTPO; yes they are. There may be some funding through them in order to bring service to the northern areas. Mr. Armijo worked with Elephant Butte and T or C on a grant for service to the lake in the summer. He commented to them that it would be nice to collaborate and work together. Nora Barraza added that Angela from the Council of Governments receives part of her salary from the RPO and she recommended working with the senators, representatives, RPO, and etcetera to see how they can generate or bring funding into the RTD and provide service; even just one bus. The area is struggling with doctors and have to come into Las Cruces; a bus that runs regularly could truly help. Mr. Armijo will reach out to Angela.

Council Flores stated that in terms of expansion the Las Cruces airport will have interstate travel by the end of the year or sooner; they just received \$3.3 million spread out over a period of three years. She recommended bus service out to the airport to support that. Mr. Armijo has had conversations with the Roadrunner staff on using some kind of mobility type of service using smaller vehicles to do an on demand service. The MPO could be a great place to have that discussion further. Nora Barraza added that they are also promoting more businesses to the west mesa; need to consider more service in that area as a lot of people hired out there may not have transportation. Mr. Armijo stated they have to be careful as they really need the service before a big business comes into the area.

8. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR FY2021-22

Adam Shea gave the presentation; amendment number three is in the packet. The one originally sent to the Board was off by \$500 due to a calculation error on the formulas; this is an updated version. They are asking to move funds around primarily to meet how the expenditures fell for quarter number three. For example they are asking to move \$50,000 from employer benefits to sporadically place it in other accounts to accommodate the year to date percentage; should meet at least 75% of expenses at end of quarter three. They are asking for an increase in Travel and Maintenance due to maintenance costs going up; this is out of the \$50,000 movement. This would add \$30,500 bottom line to the expenditures specifically for commercial loan.

Nora Barraza asked for clarification on the movement of money; whether the leftover money will cover the workman's comp insurance for the remainder of the fiscal year. Mr. Shea stated that they paid the amount needed already; an amendment was already done to reduce it by \$21,901 to come up with the \$15,099. Staff originally thought workman's comp was going to be \$37,000 for the year but it was only \$15,099; insurance confirmed that lower amount was correct for the whole year. Nora Barraza is concerned because they have taken out roughly \$75,000 from benefits; do they have enough to cover remaining benefits. Mr. Shea confirmed that. The percent year to date is of March 31st which should be 75% and it's at 71% for health and insurance. Nora Barraza asked why capital outlay had money added in and is now having money taken out; they are able to reduce the money due to restructuring as of the end of the third quarter. They may need to add an amount back in during the fourth quarter.

Councilor Flores asked what other funds the money will be moved into; another account that does not have enough funds as it was budgeted less than actual expenses. Mr. Shea added that the funds are moved based on the budget as a total not necessarily to a specific item; the entire budget is a general fund. Mr. Shea explained the numbers and how it's shown in the accounts. Nora Barraza asked what the commercial loan was for; specific to the purchase of the vans which were recently acquired for the vanpool program as well as the nonrevenue van purchased. Unfortunately when they were able to finally find a van to purchase it was in California and so they had to secure it and transfer it down here. They didn't have enough in the reserve to accommodate the payment of the van; paid from DFA after. The van was part of the budget and the DFA money should be received on May 1st.

The second page is specific to the revenue. These items are under column amendment number three; Doña Ana County increase of \$95,000 for a total of \$723,000. They billed them for the fare box due to not collecting fares through the end of the fiscal year. That is why there is a reduction in bus fares and ticket sales in the budget; \$23,000 received through the fare box for this fiscal year alone. The difference of \$20,700.66 is removing that from the overall budget for the fiscal year. The other amounts under the grants in MOU section have to do with the amounts being received by the New Mexico DOT; increase in the funds and have finally been encumbered to the account. There are also the Texas DOT 5307 funds which increased \$174, 685 to accommodate the total amount received in the split letter of \$204,006. Mr. Shea also added in the El Calvario United Methodist Church for the migrant transit they accommodated for. The DMV funds show the commercial loan of \$30,500 to accommodate the increase in expense which overall nets zero.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Councilor Flores. Passed unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR THIRD QUARTER FINANCE REPORT

There was no extra information.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Councilor Flores. Passed unanimously.

10. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE STRUCTURE

Adam Shea gave the presentation. The SCRTD came down to a flat 25% increase across the board with the exception of City of Elephant Butte and the Town of Williamsburg remains the same for the next fiscal year. For 2010 when the fee structure was originally decided it amounted to 51.6 cents per population. The increase brings it to 61.4 cents per population. This is based on the 2020 census data. The fees requested are listed on a paper the Board has under 2022 to 2023. The current amounts of Elephant Butte and Town of Williamsburg are such a small amount that the numbers don't make a huge difference. The differences between the 2010 census and 2020 census was shown; Doña Ana County has a reduction of 5,620 residents and Anthony has a reduction of 667 households while everyone else grew. There was discussion on the differences between the two censuses. Mr. Armijo added that they try not to double count; they take the population and then reduce the population from each member cities in the county. Nora Barraza stated that the number for Town of Mesilla shouldn't have changed and the number from 2010 was too low; it is unknown why the 2010 census was so low. The reasons for the increase is that it hasn't happened in a long time and inflation has gone up, same with local match.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Councilor Flores. Passed unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC COMMENT OF THREE YEAR TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

David Armijo gave the presentation. A timetable was shown from the Sun Metro service expansion policy. In the discussions with El Paso Sun Metro and El Paso MPO, they felt that if the funds from the regional area Urban 5307 were extended to New Mexico then the SCRTD would need to meet requirements from them. The money is listed as New Mexico which shows Congress has listed it as a separate funding level. However, their policy items are now directed toward SCRTD and the schedule will be waived this year for the 2022 and 2023 money due to the decision being so late in the process. The \$696,000 is available through September of this year and carries over for five more years.

Sun Metro wants SCRTD to ask for money in the following year and provide Sun Metro with a three year plan; it would be updated between September 1st and March 30th beginning next year. The lines of his presentation mentions the time span of three years, 12 month funding period, how it has to be adopted by resolution by the SCRTD Board which Mr. Armijo will bring to the Board next

month, and the agreement. The bottom line is Sun Metro and SCRTD work together with moving forward. Mr. Armijo received help from Curt Scott with SBLB to write this three year plan. They used data from two years ago to put into this plan as well. This plan will go back to the El Paso MPO for review and then to Sun Metro. Mr. Armijo likes the three year plan as it's much more precise as to what will happen rather than the 10 year plan. It also identifies things such as fare policy, paratransit, bus types, and etcetera.

With how many services the SCRTD offers they could almost be two agencies or three agencies. As they move further north then more resources will be needed; the next idea for service is Sierra County to Hatch and then Hatch to Las Cruces. The SCRTD is having a meeting in Anthony in May for the plan as well as other community meetings to discuss it. There will be something more defined by next month's meeting.

12. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR NM DOT \$20,000 ZERO EMISSION GRANT

There was no discussion; SCRTD is applying for a \$20,000 grant for zero emission.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Councilor Flores. Passed unanimously.

13. BOARD COMMENT

Nora Barraza thanked Mr. Shea for cleaning up the budget report to where she can understand it. Other Board Members also thanked him. Councilor Flores thanked Mr. Armijo for all of his efforts.

14. ADJOURNMENT - Next meeting May 25, 2022


Chairperson