

**South Central RTD
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday,
November 24, 2021 - 1:30 PM
Dona Ana County Government Center
845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM 88007**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Javier Perea, RTD Chair, City of Sunland Park
Nora Barraza, RTD Vice Chair, Town of Mesilla
Majorie Powey, Village of Williamsburg (departed approximately 2:30)
Lynn Ellins, Doña Ana County
Diana Trujillo, City of Anthony
Edna Trager proxy for Cathy Harmon, City of Elephant Butte
Yvonne Flores, City of Las Cruces

MEMBERS ABSENT:

James "Slim" Whitlock, Village of Hatch
Sharon Thomas, Citizens Advisory Committee

SCRTD STAFF:

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

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Perea called the meeting to order at approximately 1:33 p.m.

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 Nora Barraza, second by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There were none.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF October 27, 2021

There were no changes to the minutes. Motioned by Lynn Ellins, seconded by Nora Barraza. Passed. Cathy Harmon abstained.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

David Armijo gave the Executive Director's report. Ridership, the orange route was removed as that contract is still pending and will be addressed in the future. Ridership continues to increase, right at 6,000. The newest Copper line carried 128 this month. Yellow route is increased at 3,062.

Fleet update, there are huge delays. There are three buses on order to hopefully be delivered after the first of the year, three vans also for initiating the van pool program.

The capital projects are moving forward. There is pricing on the Anthony garage renovation, expanding the doors to maintain some of the larger equipment. More details on this will be given early next year. Bus stop replacement has begun of ordering the poles. Begin putting new stops sites on the Chaparral service area, Turquoise line. And then the next priority will be the Copper line. There are approximately 240 stops to be replaced during the winter. Also a bush shelter program which was begun this week.

Lastly the annual state legislative request. This year maybe a different approach. When there is money available look at getting funds to buy new equipment as we go. Also there is equipment coming in but the local match is coming from the local funds from Doña Ana County and the membership fees. Perhaps that would be a better request for the legislature to ask them to give the local match to partner with SCRTD to acquire the capital projects. This would free up some money in the budget for reserves or other programs.

There was a question about RTD going north. There has been submission for funding in the grant application for 2023 which will be known probably in June and hopefully the funds available in October 2022. Depending on how money becomes available, that might give some opportunity to look at the overall budget in the current year or new year beginning July, and see to put service north.

8. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SUN METRO SERVICE EXPANSION POLICY (SEP):

Major issues are what is the urbanized area (UZA) to fund, what is the annual funding portion for New Mexico, what are the actions Sun Metro wants to do as the

designated recipient, how RTD would get funding through the process in becoming a direct recipient, and actions by Sun Metro, El Paso, and next steps. RTD has services to northeast El Paso, west side El Paso, and downtown El Paso which are part of the El Paso UZA. Las Cruces is within the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization which is smaller and receives smaller funding versus the El Paso MPO and therefore the RTD could share in some of that. A UZA formula is based on population and ridership. This money would only be for 5307 funds. El Paso/Sun Metro is the grant recipient. The idea was that El Paso would use the fundings coming in from New Mexico to provide services in New Mexico which in fact they did not do that. To be able to share that money but to meet their policy. Sun Metro is requesting on an annualized basis is to submit a proposal requesting the funds and requesting them to release the funds through a process called a "split letter." Sun Metro requested RTD to submit a resolution that is going to commit RTD to transit funding. The commitment would be the local match which is 20%. At some point a paratransit service agreement, and a three year transit development plan and for the service area in the southern part of Doña Ana County including Chaparral, Anthony, and Sunland Park. This would include the Turquoise Route, Purple Route, Yellow Route, and Silver Route. Plan would include miles of service, hours of service, cost of the service, how many bus stops, fuel, costs, vehicles, and then break it down to each of the three years.

Then a plan to submit, execute an SEP agreement. Sun Metro would define the method in terms of expansion in that jurisdiction. The service expansion would involve the RTD becoming a direct recipient. Sun Metro upon approval of this process would provide the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) in Ft. Worth, Texas with what is called a "split letter, and that means El Paso would get the \$13.8 million and SCRTD as the only player in the southern part that is a transit provider would get \$551,594.00. These funds would only be available for the southern areas of the county previously mentioned.

The SCRTD would do a resolution to allow it to go forward with the split letter agreement that has been approved by Sun Metro through their action earlier this month. For Fiscal Year 2023 would need a full service expansion plan to be developed to be done September 1 through March 30. There is a deferral by Sun Metro for the current fiscal year of 2022 which is now currently. Should the SCRTD receive these funds it would allow reallocation of some funds.

Sun Metro has authority over the money provided by Congress and through the FTA on an annualized basis. Sun Metro also identified other opportunities in the UZA. A part of the RTD could become part of Sun Metro and would be quite complicated as created by action of the State of New Mexico in an intergovernmental agreement in 2003. Also provide sales tax initiative to the region as they have a sales tax and we do not. Second can do what Sunland Park was doing and become a contract and allow Sun Metro to do it. That did not work well for Sunland Park because the cost was higher than the actual cost of service. Third would form a local government corporation with Sun Metro and establish our own

board to oversee this service, funding mechanisms in the UZA. The last one is SCRTD become a direct recipient where Sun Metro may share the FTA section funds with the SCRTD as an eligible recipient. With this RTD would be qualified for any funding program that is within the region. An example would be paratransit, demand type response services. New Mexico does not provide operating money. This would allow operating money, capital money, etc. Possibly 5310 and other grants as well.

Sun Metro has recommended to their board and been approved to grant an exception to the policy to allow SCRTD 12 months to complete the process outlying in the service expansion plan and provide a split letter for funding as of now. As a direct recipient the RTD is still limited in the funding to go after until El Paso has decided how they are going to spend it. The 5307 has become a capital only program. There are provisions in 5307 to swap money for either senior disability program or maintenance. Maintenance includes fuel and facility and labor to capture some of the dollars. RTD may only be able to get capital money which would limit the ability to have enough excess cash for operations to be able to expand to the north in the Sierra County.

The 5339 is similar to 5307, but specifically for bus capital and facilities. It is a smaller grant program, but approximately just under \$100,000.00 a year. Sun Metro added Section D in the plan in order to address the use of 5339, bus and facility capital and decided to reserve these funds for the designated recipient which is Sun Metro. The only way we could access the New Mexico funding portion of the region for 5339 would if we became a designated grant recipient. That will take a big effort. Only get an opportunity to request from the governor of the state once every 10 years, and the timeline is when a state has just passed and taken on a new 10 year census, which was done very recently. The window of opportunity is this coming year. Need to meet with the governor, senators, and others to work the process. Because in a multijurisdictional area, it would mean not only would the governor of New Mexico have to agree, so would the governor of Texas. Attorney Anthony Anderson in Washington, DC has been consulted and feels the process is going well. This would entail a different resolution at a different meeting than the current one for Sun Metro.

Javier Perea requested to add to now be it resolved, an additional "be it further resolved that the Executive Director is authorized to pursue making the SCRTD a direct recipient for any funding the SCRTD is eligible for."

Amendment motioned by Yvonne Flores, seconded by Diana Trujillo. Passed unanimously.

Motioned by Yvonne Flores, seconded by Diana Trujillo. Passed unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION OF PAYROLL SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

Adam Shea discussed improving the payroll process in time and effort and cost. The current process is ADP and there are limitations within the RTD environment. Every payroll have to pull the hourly employees from the timekeeping system, When I Work app that the drivers and mechanics use. Then consolidate that and put that into a particular spreadsheet to narrow down the calculation for the retirement through the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). This then has to be edited in the ADP system for processing payroll. The PERA has to be entered for the employee and employer match. It takes two days at a minimum to process payroll due to consolidation of hourly time from one system into a spreadsheet and coming with the calculation from PERA, getting all the approvals because it has to be approved by the transit supervisor as well as the employee, and then take that information and plug it into ADP, make changes as far as PERA, and process the payroll.

A spreadsheet was shown of the current process and software, and then three new possible processes and softwares that could be used to decrease time and effort and make the payroll process smoother and a bit cheaper. Payday HCM was recommended, which Adam is familiar with, also the timekeeping system can be uploaded directly into the payroll system. It will calculate the PERA correctly without separate calculation. It will submit the new hirer reporting. Also have an option for an employee benefits portal, so for the annual enrollment in October, the employee can access and update their benefit enrollment. He will be able to download information directly into the Aplos accounting system. This change would be recommended as of January 2022.

General agreement for Payday HCM would be the appropriate direction and that this item could be an internal process but to keep the Board abreast of how it was working.

10. BOARD COMMENT

It was suggested service to the north should be a priority, T or C, Elephant Butte, Williamsburg, Hatch. The RTD is certainly on track for this. The process of Sun Metro and receiving those funds would then free up some other monies. And ready to submit first drafts of the 2023 budget in February. Finally what happens in June when the state gives the funding allocation. We are currently the third of four transit districts for funding. The two northern districts have their own dedicated sales tax which is why they are able to run more services in more places. The southeastern transit district in Deming has a of different funding groups but they do not have a dedicated funding source either. Until last year we would get less money than the southeastern transit district. Possibly need to get more political to "get our fair share." Sierra county is the only county on the I-25 area that does not have public transit component. Vanpools might be an interim solution in the next year if not able to get more money from the state.

11. ADJOURNMENT - Next meeting December 22, 2021

Chairperson

James Peres