

**South Central Regional Transit District
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, August 24, 2022 - 1:30 PM**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Javier Perea, RTD Chair, City of Sunland Park
Nora Barraza, RTD Vice Chair, Town of Mesilla
Lynn Ellins, Doña Ana County (arrived 1:37)
Diana Murillo, City of Anthony
Majorie Powey, Village of Williamsburg

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Yvonne Flores, City of Las Cruces
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

Javier Perea called the meeting to order at approximately 1:40.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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 Diana Murillo. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT – Tabled for later in the meeting for Ms. Sharon Thomas, with no objection.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF July 27, 2022

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

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

David Armijo gave the Executive Director's report. Discussed four items, ridership, the annual audit as been scheduled, two areas identified of fiscal year goals and following the 10-year plan which breaks it up into service and financial, and grants. Two grants were submitted to receive an amount from the total of \$1.6 billion that was released across the US last week; 150 projects were selected with 500 projects being submitted. SCRTD was encouraged by the state to apply for both grants. They received funds for both grants. These grants are the year of service plus five years; six years in total to use the money. SCRTD decided to stay under the umbrella of NMDOT which helped present a stronger front. The funds are specifically for buses, charging stations, training, and facilities. The first grant is \$2.5 million for buses which was most competitive; must be electric vehicles and have a zero-emission plan to do it. Staff anticipates that they will go forward with the local match which was identified. They anticipate that they will defer on the second grant until next year; talk with funding partners and legislature to receive local match.

The Congestion Mitigation for Air Quality (CMAQ) came through the El Paso MPO to call for project over the next three years. SCRTD submitted their projects for the mid-size buses; 25 feet, 14 passengers, and two wheelchair lifts. Mr. Armijo went to the El Paso MPO to defend their application on August 3rd. The technical committee liked the application and approved it. It's moving to the MPO Policy Board on September 16th. This would give an additional \$1 million for these vehicles which are readily available; could potentially be in place by next summer. This is 85/15 in federal funds and local match; the local match is roughly \$150,000. No other projects were submitted; the savings will be rolled into the next two years of grants. SCRTD can bid again if they wish to apply.

The ridership numbers jumped from over 2,000 riders a week to just about 9,400; this a draft so the number could still change. The estimate amount of rides for the year is 85,000; 20,000 more than last year. Many people are asking for Sunland Park service to return. Once Sun Metro goes back to Sunday service the SCRTD may do it as well. Adam Shea commented that they've already been scheduled and set up for the audit to begin on September 26th for a week, well in advance of the deadline. There is hope it will be submitted prior to the deadline. Mr. Armijo stated that one of the fiscal year goals is service. One of the reason ridership has been able to grow is they're able to balance between operating grant 5311, anticipation of grant 5307, and the ability to make the most of the fleet they have. In order to continue and follow the 10-year plan then there is plans this upcoming year to review additional frequency on the Turquoise route, go up north, and etcetera. There has been tremendous growth with the Copper and Green routes. As staff looks at how they use their funds and additional ones get approved they can get things into operation faster. Mr. Armijo is still looking into doing a vanpool program with Sierra County.

There is an audit coming in October from NMDOT. They indicated that their evaluation of the ridership that SCRTD would be moving from an express type service with limited trips to a more mature fixed route service. This means they need ADA accommodations provided. Sun Metro believes SCRTD should look at that type of service for the entirety of the southern part of the district, unincorporated areas of Dona Ana, Anthony, Chaparral, Sunland Park, and Santa Teresa. A five year plan would need to be created to implement; it will all come down to funding. They are submitting for a two year grant with El Paso MPO for 5310; seniors and disabilities grant. The vanpool program has been delayed; only one van but looking for another one. Staff is in discussions of doing that in Sierra County. Staff would like to begin securing a bus facility in Sunland Park; there is one more year on the lease of the place they have now. Staff will also coordinate on the electric bus program with El Paso Electric; get stations in place. There are 11 acres and two power lines at the Sunland Park facility.

Another fiscal goal is to balance the budget while building reserves. The revenues have grown and the last of debt on one vehicle was paid off. They've been able to acquire more funds, but more resources are needed. Staff will work to execute the 10 year plan and it will be brought to the Board to review as things move forward. Staff needs to manage the grant funding as well, since June they received five grants totaling over \$7 million. There are three buses on order for two years waiting for vehicles due to backup. They have gotten some vehicles over the last few months to help. Programming the funds to support electric bus implementation. There was a recommendation to create a coalition or team, so they don't all go after the same money. Mr. Armijo will do a tactical plan for these goals. Majorie Powey stated that there is a group called Sierra County Cancer Assistance that drive back and forth to Las Cruces daily to help cancer patients. They could do a vanpool which would provide the van, but they would need the drivers. People who go for dialysis also need transportation help. There was a suggestion of hiring someone in Sierra County to be the driver. They can't hire a contractor to drive the SCRTD vehicle; need to begin with communication and information. Measurements of buses are done bumper to bumper.

8. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING SUBMITTAL OF \$140,000 FY24 NMDOT SECTION 5310 ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES GRANT APPLICATION

David Armijo gave the presentation. The state of New Mexico provides funding on an annual basis for public projects for people with disabilities and seniors; enhanced connections to the fixed route bus system. They will apply for the grants for two vehicles: no operating funds. The expectation is if they receive a recommendation then next year when the money is available, they can plan for the money; it will be funds for fiscal year 2024. The funds can be used anywhere in the county.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING SUBMITTAL OF \$1,714,486 FOR NMDOT FY24 SECTION 5311 RURAL GRANT APPLICATION

David Armijo gave the presentation. This is parallel to the other grant and will also be in fiscal year 2024. The grant is the district's primary funding source for operations, rural communities. The district is committed to pay \$594,000 and it would be taken from the \$835,000 grant received from the county and membership fees.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

10. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING SUBMITTAL OF \$1,037,296 FOR FY22 CMAQ GRANT APPLICATION VIA EL PASO MPO CALL FOR PROJECTS

David Armijo gave the presentation. This is still subject for approval on September 16th from the El Paso MPO policy board. This was discussed in the Executive Director's Report. They are asking for a commitment of \$150,000 in local funding. There is \$200,000 in legislature to help with local match for five vehicles; it will be used for these three vehicles with leftover monies for the other two.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING SUBMITTAL OF \$489,377 FOR FY23 SECTION 5310 GRANT APPLICATION VIA EL PASO MPO CALL FOR PROJECTS

David Armijo gave the presentation. This is a call for projects and this resolution is needed in order to submit for the grant application. They will need money for operating capital. This works under an 85/15 approach which makes the local match roughly \$97,875 which would come out of operating; annual grant for Doña Ana County. Nora Barraza requested that either Mr. Armijo or Mr. Shea could do an excel worksheet on all these amounts, matches, and where they're coming from to the next meeting. They have begun a spreadsheet but need to confirm numbers. The grant they're submitting for on 5310 has the money for operating and capital. Once it's submitted and approved then Texas has toll money, and the El Paso MPO will submit for that which would zero it out; the local match should come down. They wouldn't need the money until the year after next. The Doña Ana grant is broken up into operating and capital; the provision in the grant is it's available to help match funds for operating service or acquiring equipment.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

12. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING LOW-NO GRANT AWARD OF \$2,511,882

David Armijo gave the presentation. They're working with New Mexico as the funding partner to schedule a time to execute the grant and how it will tap into the local match funds. They believe there is enough this year to do this grant. This is a 15% local match.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

13. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING 5339 BUS AND FACILITY GRANT AWARD OF \$3,071,882

David Armijo gave the presentation. This includes the buses, facilities, charging stations, and some program management. This will be deferred but it's being voted upon now so that way they won't lose this grant for any reason. The local match for this will be requested; need to find where to find these funds. The money is not committed, only a letter from Congress.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

14. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING ANNUAL BUDGET AMENDMENT TO REFLECT ADDING CAPITAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT TWO ELECTRIC BUS GRANTS

Adam Shea gave the presentation. The only changes right now is adding the two items to the budget. These funds will have six years to use them; time to build up the reserves. In the book they have under amendment number one the amount is not correct as Mr. Shea did the extrapolation of the \$3,071,000 based on the wrong amount. The revised budget amounts are what would be filled in. The first amendment should be \$3,071,882 and the second amendment should be \$2,511,882. Nora Barraza asked that the correct amounts be reflected in the minutes and on record. David Armijo added that the grants showed FTA and the other one said NMDOT. Grants awarded through FTA are federal funds and so the number goes up but funds from the 5311 from the state it's the total grant amount which reduces the numbers.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT

Sharon Thomas stated that she's on the Southwest Area Workforce Development Board and her role is to represent transportation. She asked if they'd like to make it part of the policy to have people make connections between groups where transportation plays a role. The workforce board has a new leader who is beginning to implement a career pathways plan. This approach will have them spend more time with local businesses and industries to try and determine their needs in terms of skilled workers and then adjust programs to fit those needs. Ms. Thomas is willing to come to the Board regularly to give updates. The Board is able to codify this with a resolution

which can be brought to the next meeting. Nora Barraza would like to discuss benefits to the RTD by having someone represent the RTD. It needs to be an agenda item for discussion.

15. CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Lynn Ellins. Passed unanimously.

16. BOARD COMMENT

17. ADJOURNMENT (3:51 p.m.) - Next meeting September 28, 2022


Chairperson