

**South Central RTD
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday,
August 23, 2023 - 1:30 PM**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Javier Perea, RTD Chair, City of Sunland Park
Nora Barraza, RTD Vice Chair, Town of Mesilla
Majorie Powey, Village of Williamsburg
Diana Murillo, City of Anthony
Yvonne Flores, City of Las Cruces (Arrived 1:41)
Manuel Sanchez, Doña Ana County

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Robert Martinez, Village of Hatch
Sharon Thomas, Citizens Advisory Committee

SCRTD STAFF:

David Armijo, SCRTD Executive Director
Loretta Gallegos, SCRTD
Veronica De La O, 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 1:38.

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 Manuel Sanchez, second by Nora Barraza. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF July 26, 2023

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Manuel Sanchez. Councilor Flores Abstained. Motion Passed.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

David Armijo gave the Executive Director's report. We are now 11 months into the Federal Fiscal Year that ends in September. Ridership was up this month across the board. This is five times what it was when the grant started six years ago, and more routes and buses have been added. Blue Route is only for special events. Region 6 update: Since March, they have advanced it to the next section, and it is now under final review. We are waiting for obligation and waiting until they will take the ACH numbers to disburse the \$696,000. The initial request is \$294,458 to apply to 2022 and 2023 expenses. Another grant that was begun in March is waiting until the Region 6 grant goes through, and then the new grant can be programmed. It was not originally programmed into this year's budget, so when it comes through there will be a budget adjustment made. The FTA Region 6 grant was delayed for a long while, but there are six years available to use it and it does not have to all be used at the same time. There will be a service truck programmed for these funds when the funds arrive.

The Zero Admission Plan: The State of New Mexico authorized funds just over a year ago. At that time, it was during the deadline month and only a small portion of the funds could be used. Most of the project was done internally by staff. The grant application was necessary to qualify for the Infrastructure Grant money which had a deadline of June 30, 2022. The funds still have not come through from the Infrastructure Grant. Also, during 2021, there were two major grants that were used to order new electric vehicles. The CMAC money that came through last year was used to purchase more electric vehicles. Some of the old vehicles are being retired now. The District is doing well at moving away from carbon-based transportation. This allows for more funds being committed from the New Mexico Department of Transportation as well as the Federal Department of Transportation. This will create the need for more discussion and planning. Staff will be bringing details soon.

The grant applications are in process with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the 5311 funds, the 5310 senior program funds, and one other now. The old funds do not carry over and must be spent by the end of September. During the last few years, almost 100% of the funds have been spent. The grant awards that were discussed back in June will begin on October 1, 2023, to be applied to the FY24 budget. There may need to be adjustments to the budget for these funds. The grant application that is to begin on October 1, 2024, to be applied to 2025 is due on September 8, 2023. The budget has been built around this grant application.

The hybrid electric buses acquired in 2019 went into service in 2021, and now they are probably all over 100,000 miles. These are similar to the new electric buses that will be bought next year, as they are made by the same company.

8. DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 5311 RURAL GRANT APPLICATION (RESOLUTION 2024-08)

David Armijo asked the Chair to sign a letter that reflects the same numbers as this resolution. The total is \$2,096,750 and is comprised of capital items like bus shelters and buses. The money is programmed for FY24, but the actual items may take a year or two to arrive. The State has not been enthusiastic about giving money for shelters, so they may need to be purchased from the 5307 Urban Funds. The State funds will give priority to operating costs. The 5311 gives additional funds for inner city service and the inner city area here is both in Las Cruces and El Paso. This provides an extra almost half-million dollars per year, which is very necessary for the District. Mr. Armijo will report in more detail on these funds after the 5307 funds are received.

Chair Perea would like the last Whereas statement to be moved into the Resolved section. There are no objections to that change.

Motioned by Nora Barraza, seconded by Manual Sanchez. Passed unanimously as amended.

9. DISCUSSION OF THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE FUNDING

David Armijo reported on the legislative session. Close to \$1 million has been received from the State Legislature and most of that money has been spent. In the past, items that have been presented to legislative committees have gotten lost before getting to the floor. This year the District is working with the bill sponsor and Vice-Chair of the committee, Dayan Hochman-Vigil, to get more funding. Mr. Armijo will bring the draft as soon as it is available, perhaps within the next 30 days. The State is currently doing very well and there is talk of creating a trust fund for public transit so that those funds can be applied for as needed. Mr. Armijo encouraged everyone to keep up with their legislators and he will provide the relevant contact information as soon as possible. It was suggested that there should be meetings with the local legislators through September and October to ask them to lobby for these funds. Mr. Armijo will provide a fact sheet with what is being requested and for what uses so that Board Members can make relevant points in conversation with legislators. It was suggested to ask for a much higher amount than needed, as awards are almost always lower than requests. It would be helpful to bring the numbers forward to legislators to demonstrate the District's success when asking for funding. There are two local members on the House Transportation Committee: Representative Willie Madrid and Representative Micaela Lara Cadena. Representative Nathan Small is on the Finance Committee. El Paso Electric is providing low experimental rates for charging electric vehicles at night. Once legislative funds are secured, budget adjustments will be made.

10. DISCUSSION OF THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BILL TO FUND PUBLIC TRANSIT

See Item 9.

11. CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Manuel Sanchez, seconded by Nora Barraza. Passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMENT

Board Members Powey and David Armijo were contacted by Ray Magnussen. There was an operator/safety issue and camera footage was inspected. One driver was not stopping at railroad crossings. Loretta Gallegos reported that he is being written up and retrained. Board Member Powey asked that all drivers be reminded to stop at railroad crossings. David Armijo mentioned that even the Administration needs to be careful of safety issues and that they need to lead by example.

13. ADJOURNMENT - Next meeting September 27, 2023



Chairperson