

**South Central RTD
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday,
February 25, 2026 - 1:30 PM**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Manuel Sanchez, SCRTD Chair, Doña Ana County/Commissioner
John Munoz, SCRTD Member, City of Las Cruces
Javier Perea, SCRTD Treasurer, City of Sunland Park/Mayor
Biviana Cadena, SCRTD Alternate, Town of Mesilla/Mayor
Gabriel Holguin, SCRTD Vice-Chair, City of Anthony/Mayor

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Gerard Nevarez, SCRTD, Town of Mesilla
Majorie Powey, SCRTD Member, Village of Williamsburg/Mayor Pro-tem

SCRTD STAFF:

David Armijo, SCRTD Executive Director
Liza Alonzo, SCRTD Executive Assistant
Sara Vasquez, SCRTD Human Resources
Crystal Gomez, SCRTD Accounting Assistant
Veronica De La O, SCRTD Administrative Assistant
Adam Shea, SCRTD Finance Manager
Rosa Isela Talamantes, SCRTD Senior Accountant
Loretta Gallegos, SCRTD Transit Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Manuel Sanchez called the meeting to order at 1:30 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

Motioned by John Munoz, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 2026

Motioned by Javier Perea, second by Manuel Sanchez.

Gabriel Holguin noted that the minutes, under Item 8, the minutes read “Russell Hernandez was the Vice-Chair for 2025 but is no longer Mayor of Mesilla and is no longer on the Board.”

Gabriel Holguin moved to amend the minutes to remove “no longer Mayor of Mesilla.” Manuel Sanchez seconded. Amendment approved unanimously.

Minutes of January 28, 2026 unanimously approved as amended.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo reported 16,385 rides for the month of January, much higher than last year. Yellow Route carried 57% of the riders. Ridership has continued to grow at about 13.549% for this year. Buses have been on time, preventive maintenance is consistent, and staffing is stable. Reimbursements continue to arrive. Adam Shea is keeping grant compliance and budget alignment at high levels. The property has been cleared for installation of the solar array. Groundbreaking is scheduled for March. There are currently three charging stations and a fourth will be added soon. Electronic gates and asphalt upgrades at the Anthony facility are complete and will be done at the Sunland Park facility soon. More electric vehicles will be added to the fleet this year. Capital outlay requests were successful. SCRTD requested \$505,000 and received \$705,000. Those funds will be used in development of the property on Venus in Las Cruces. Staff is still waiting for agreement with the MPO. It is still under legal review. SCRTD will bring in someone to help with marketing. The solar array should be done by June and staff expects it to supply all the required power. The budget submissions will be presented next month. The County documents are under internal review and will be ready to submit soon. The transportation development plan work that was promised to the El Paso MPO was submitted for their review two weeks ago. Manuel Sanchez thanked the state legislators for their support. He reported that he understands that the Executive Committee for the Mesilla Valley MPO was working on the agreement and plan to come to the MPO Policy Board in March for approval. David Armijo indicated that the delay in signing the agreement has caused problems for SCRTD and he looks forward to finally having it done. Staff is working on the tentative biannual budget for the next year as well as this year in order to have some idea of where SCRTD is going.

8. DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SCRTD TRANSIT SERVICE - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo reported that this past Sunday was the actual anniversary of SCRTD. He showed slides of things SCRTD did in the past and discussed the difference in the current mission statement compared to the original. SCRTD started in 2016 with four routes and five buses. Now there are 36 vehicles in use. The four original routes dropped to three briefly, then increased by another six routes. He spoke about the addition of the EVs, purchasing the facilities, and the solar array. The SCRTD costs are kept low by the near complete lack of deadhead, thus saving on fuel, labor, and equipment costs. This makes SCRTD ranked #1 in the state for cost efficiency. Mr. Armijo touched on the plans for the ADA micro-transit vans. He discussed the review coming up and that he expects them to direct SCRTD to expand at least one route and speculated on how that might be accomplished and how to juggle the funding for it. Mr. Armijo expects to achieve 190,000 rides by the end of the fiscal year. Ridership is also ranked #1 in the state. In the next few months, three more electric buses will be delivered. He discussed the coming completion of the Sunland Park facility and neighborhood improvements at the Anthony facility to make things quieter for the neighbors. The audit report will be presented soon and will show that \$8 million in assets have been added. SCRTD has come a long way from starting with only \$14,000 in the bank. Mr. Armijo indicated that partnerships with other transportation organizations have been strong and grant programming and compliance have been good. The two-year cycle to obtain funding from the legislature will come around next year. He plans to get a route to connect Santa Teresa to Sunland Park to get the workforce out there for the Jupiter Project. Free fares will continue through the end of the year. It will be decided whether to continue that when the budget is made. COVID continues to impact the supply chain. The new buses are waiting on windows. Staff is excited about the new vehicles with ramps to allow for more accessibility. The target for ridership is a quarter million rides by 2030. Some of the vehicles will get new wraps celebrating the ten-year anniversary of SCRTD. A suggestion was made to advertise for some of the small businesses along the routes within the buses or online and have those businesses advertise for SCRTD in return. There are pilot projects in the works to provide compact seating at the smaller stops and solar lighting built into shelters, and other things. The ridership numbers are calculated in the federal fiscal year. SCRTD will be launching a new van pool in Sunland Park for seniors.

9. DISCUSSION AND UPDATE OF THE SCRTD COMPENSATION STUDY – MARK HOLCOMB

Mark Holcomb presented a summary of the compensation study. They worked with the North Central RTD to compare organizations across the state and some surrounding states. They performed a market survey of 18 different organizations, adjusted for the cost of living here, and created different options to solve the external inequity of SCRTD. They examined 16 different jobs and got almost ten

matches per position. This will ensure that a few outliers cannot skew the results. The matches were made using job descriptions. After all the matching was done, it showed that SCRTD is about 15 to 20% behind the market on average. The highest and lowest wages were noted to be closer to each other in SCRTD than in other organizations. The recommendation is to adopt an adjusted market-responsive pay plan. Individual classifications were assigned according to exactly how far below market positions were. Options for adjusting individual employees into the new plan were discussed. The new annual recurring payroll would run almost \$65,000 per year, not including benefits and such. David Armijo reported that the definitive plan will be presented soon by Adam Shea. It is estimated that everyone will get about a 3% increase in pay if this plan is implemented. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has paid for about 80% of this study. SCRTD and NCRTD have split the remaining 20% evenly. Staff will be doing the budget by June and the budget will dictate which option is used to bring SCRTD up to market wage. Manuel Sanchez is eager to hear more details and have more discussion in the future.

10. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AMENDMENT FOR ANNUAL OFFICER BOARD APPOINTMENTS - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo reported that since the nominations and voting was done last month with some people not present, it was decided to bring the item back to make sure everyone is in agreement. Manuel Sanchez requested a motion and second to approve Resolution 2026-18: A Resolution Approving Amended Officer Board Appointments and Confirming Board Members and Alternates for the South Central Regional Transit District. This resolution reflects what was voted on in the meeting in January which would assign Manuel Sanchez as Chair, Gabriel Holguin as Vice-Chair, Javier Perea as Treasurer, and John Munoz as Secretary, and the same representatives from the Town of Mesilla, Village of Williamsburg, and Village of Hatch as before. It was agreed that David Armijo should continue as Executive Director.

Resolution motioned by Gabriel Holguin, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

11. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION OF PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE - ADAM SHEA

Adam Shea discussed the proposed dues increase. The last increase was in 2022 and the increase was to bring everyone into parity at \$0.55 per person dependent on population figures. Cost of living has increased since then by 1.25%. This means that an appropriate increase would be to add 0.069 cents to the dues, bringing it up to \$0.62 per person dependent on the population at the latest census. The chart provided in the packet shows the proposed increase in cost per municipality. The City of Las Cruces would increase, but the County overall would decrease. Other increases include Sunland Park and Williamsburg, while

decreases include the Town of Mesilla, City of Anthony, and Hatch. Total dues would then be \$142,064.69 which is an overall 7% increase from current dues. The dues are fundamental revenue and are used for operating costs and grant matching. Dona Ana County was previously being charged a bit more for dues, so this amendment will bring their total down. Staff indicated that the City of Anthony was in a similar situation and they will be sitting down with the relevant Finance Departments to straighten that out.

Resolution motioned by Gabriel Holguin, second by Javier Perea. Passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMENTS

Javier Perea welcomed the new Board Members and was happy to see new faces. He asked if there was any initiative to getting T or C to join the district. David Armijo has been looking into that with general discussions with the Cities of Williamsburg, Elephant Butte, and T or C. He would like to bring them on board. Javier Perea indicated that one of the Councilors from Elephant Butte and she said it would be easy to add a presentation to the agenda.

13. ADJOURNMENT - NEXT BOARD MEETING - SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 25, 2026

Javier Perea moved to adjourn, Manuel Sanchez seconded. Meeting adjourned.



Chairperson