

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

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Manuel Sanchez, SCRTD Chair, Doña Ana County/Commissioner
Gabriel Holguin, SCRTD Vice-Chair, City of Anthony/Mayor
Majorie Powey, SCRTD Member, Village of Williamsburg/Mayor Pro-tem
Daniel Torres, SCRTD Alternate, Village of Hatch/Trustee

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Javier Perea, SCRTD Treasurer, City of Sunland Park/Mayor
Gerard Nevarez, SCRTD, Town of Mesilla
John Munoz, SCRTD Member, City of Las Cruces

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

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 Gabriel Holguin, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

6. APPROVAL OF SCRTD MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Motioned by Gabriel Holguin, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo reported that he and several Board Members have developed a project that they feel is ready to request budget for. It is a Mobility Pilot Project for a two-year period involving several vehicles, an operation that could support the Jupiter Project. The project would provide connectivity to the BIA and Sun Metro and would offer workforce access in the area. Mr. Armijo showed a map with various existing and proposed routes highlighted. The electric vans would be perfect for this proposed pilot project. There would be at least two runs for morning and evening shifts. The EVs would charge at the Sunland Park facility. Data would be collected about ridership, employee satisfaction, cost per ride and efficiency. There would be regular reports to the Board. The vans are expected to cost about \$106,000 each. Mr. Armijo believes there should be two vans and a spare at minimum. Operation should run about \$150,000 per year including drivers, maintenance, and charging. SCRTD is in contact with Oracle to help provide funding, and Oracle is also interested in bus shelters. The City of Sunland Park, Dona Ana County, the Border Industrial Association, and the Jupiter Project developers are sponsors for the project. Staff is preparing the packet with letters of support for the applications for grants. Mr. Armijo requested Board endorsement to include in the packet and he discussed getting stakeholder engagement. He is also looking for other sources of funding such as private operators and contractors. He feels that sometime in late summer or early fall 2027 the pilot service can be launched. The Board was excited about this project. It will provide connectivity within the City of Anthony as well as to the BIA and allow more people to get to and from work.

8. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION YEAR-ENDED FY2025 FINANCIAL REPORT AUDIT - BM&Co.

Juan Garcia, Audit Manager for BM&Co discussed the audit results for FY 2025. He thanked SCRTD staff for their help and how easy the audit was because of it. The unmodified opinion is that "We hold no reservations and we believe that your financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects." The unmodified single audit opinion reads that "The South Central Regional Transit District complied in all material respects with the types of compliance requirements that could have direct material effects on each of the major Federal Programs." Mr. Garcia discussed the basic financial statements. Net Position is \$8.1 million; Investment in Capital Assets is \$11 million; Change in Net Position is \$6 million; Restatement is negative \$10,000 which reflects a change in the estimated compensated absences compared to the prior years. The report includes detailed information on the complete financial situation from page 15 to page 33. Page 37

has required supplementary information. This information is not included in the audit but does have information from PERA regarding pensions and how these things tie into the financial statements. Page 41 is a report on internal controls. There is no opinion on internal controls because the auditors do not test the internal controls. They simply make sure they are in place and functioning. A finding on the controls might be posted if it is noticed during analysis of other things. Page 43 is the report on all Federal programs. The unmodified opinion is that "South Central Regional Transit District did comply in all material respects to all items that are requested of them." Page 48 has a schedule of all expenditures of Federal awards. There was a total of \$6.164 million. BM&Co assessed all the risks of all the major programs. The highest-risk programs are chosen and tested thoroughly as though it was its own audit rather than a small part of the entire audit. The program chosen this year for testing was the Federal Transit Formula Grant labeled 20.507 by the Federal Government. There were no findings or issues with any of the Federal programs. The findings are listed about four pages after this. There was a prior-year finding of a noncompliance with collateralization requirements for public funds in FY 2024. Many people received this finding at this time. The Federal requirement for collateralization is anything over \$250,000 of FDIC-insured money that has been left in the bank. The problem with this requirement is that it allows for \$250,000 for each custodial, allowing organizations to use multiple custodials in order to delay having to provide collateral. However, New Mexico only allows one custodial and the banks had been unaware of that. This resulted in more than one of BM&Co's clients to receive this finding, and that finding has been cleared by SCRTD. Mr. Garcia reported that this year there is a Significant Deficiency finding. He clarified that this type of finding is not the highest-level finding, but it should be corrected when possible. The finding reads: "The Capital Assets Addition List provided was incomplete and inaccurate. Supporting documentation on Capital Assets and its Additions was not readily available and Capital Outlay had not been reconciled to the District's Trial Balance. The District and the IPA were able to identify and reconcile all Capital Outlay items before issuance on the Audit Report. Further, accurate Capital Assets were not certified by the Counsel." The reason this was not considered a Material Weakness is with the information provided and a bit of extra work, the information was found and included in the audit. It is just something to keep in mind and work on for next time.

Resolution motioned by Daniel Torres, second by Majorie Powey. Passed unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION AND UPDATE OF THE SCRTD 10 YEAR PLAN - KIRK SCOTT, SBLBF, LLC

Kirk Scott and Robert Babbitt discussed the update to the 10 Year Plan. The group compared SCRTD as an operation to its peers and the transit industry, reviewed conditions at SCRTD, conducted public outreach, and made some recommendations for the future, as well as other things. The public transit industry

as a whole has declined since the pandemic, while SCRTD has improved and expanded. When comparing SCRTD to 11 of its peers, it was noted that SCRTD is 29% lower in average cost per vehicle hour and 31% lower in average cost per passenger trip. The vehicles in the fleet are newer and better than the last time the plan as modified, and there are enough vehicles to cover the current activities as well as expanding services. Now that most of the vehicles are new, the next ten years will be less expensive due to not needing to purchase very many. It was a good idea to purchase a large property in Sunland Park. The central location and room for expansion are ideal. Mr. Scott expects the maintenance and parking areas to expand quickly. The Anthony facility is too small already and the shop needs modifications to accommodate the needs of the fleet. It is recommended that the District create a facility in Las Cruces, as well. He acknowledged that SCRTD is already in that process. Doing major maintenance on both the north and south ends of the territory helps to cut costs by keeping the buses from having to travel long distances for maintenance. Mr. Scott showed the study done in 2021 with charts showing growth and ridership for Dona Ana County as well as other areas. He discussed the individual routes, how many people ride them, and what income brackets those people are in. The highest ridership is along those routes with the lowest-income households, primarily the Yellow Route with the Red and Blue slightly behind that. Mr. Scott was pleasantly surprised at how well the Blue Route is performing. SBLBF did eight public meetings around the service area and an online survey which indicated that the respondents use the bus frequently due to lack of car, personal preference, or the cost of other transportation. Mr. Scott discussed the breakdown of when, how many, and why people use the bus. He discussed ways to let people know about the bus so ridership can expand. Suggestions for services to increase usage were to extend service hours, create an Uber-like service, add more weekend service, and add amenities at the bus stops. He discussed increasing service frequency as well. The challenges to increasing services include finding funding and expanding vehicles, facilities, and staffing. Federal requirements may change in future and public outreach must continue. Ideas for future activities include connecting the networks with SCRTD services and the other transit services and lobbying for fiscal support. Some of the expansions have already been started. Mr. Scott proposed a demand/response service in the Sunland Park/Santa Teresa area, extending the Silver Route and adding a second Purple Route to increase peak hour service, adding a second demand/response service in the Las Cruces area, and adding a Saturday service to the Blue Route. He discussed adding a Las Cruces to El Paso Airport express service. In the further future, Mr. Scott discussed extending the existing routes and adding more service hours, adding Saturday service to the Magenta Route, and adding Sunday service to the Red, Purple, and Turquoise Routes. These increases are estimated to increase the current budget of \$3.7 million to \$5.2 million over a ten-year period. There will be less impact than usual due to the new vehicles. The proposed demand/response expansions will fulfill the ADA requirements as well. Mr. Scott discussed various possibilities for running the demand/response services in relation to ADA requirements. SBLBF's conclusion is that SCRTD is a well-managed system with the ability to set and achieve

ambitious goals which are far beyond what would be normally seen. SCRTD has been proactive in finding new sources of funding, responding to needs for expanded service and the desires for service that riders express. The system expansion has been rewarded with increased ridership. There were a few typos on the slides which will be corrected. Mr. Scott determined the priorities of the projects by what he thought was important at the time, but it can easily be changed. Anything that is planned to happen after 2026 is complete speculation. David Armijo discussed various possibilities and described that it all can change contingent upon what facilities and vehicles SCRTD has and what the Federal requirements are in the future. There was discussion of moving forward with simple, low-cost expansions as soon as possible rather than waiting until the ten-year plan demands them. David Armijo is excited that the Passio GO! app is now working and everyone can see the routes and schedules on their phones.

Majorie Powey commented that the bus has been letting people off at the Walmart at the bottom of the hill and it is difficult for the elderly riders to get to the store. Loretta Gallegos, Transit Manager reported that she has spoken to the T or C County Manager and now the bus will let people off at the doors.

10. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR LOCAL SOLAR ACCESS FUND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SUNLAND PARK AND SCRTD - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo discussed the resolution. He had included a report in the Board Members' packets. He found out about this grant opportunity with less than a week before the deadline to put in the application. It is a new program called Local Solar Access Fund Cooperative and SCRTD did not originally qualify to apply for this grant. Staff scrambled frantically to get the application done and partnered with the City of Sunland Park to enable SCRTD to qualify for the grant. Sunland Park fits the specifications of the grant better than any of the other local governments, thus providing SCRTD with more chances to win it. This money will be used for the microgrid at Sunland Park. Mr. Armijo expects to pay a match for this grant as well. He is hopeful of receiving the grant as there were not many applicants. This resolution would authorize SCRTD to participate in the Local Solar Access Fund with the City of Sunland Park serving as the Sponsoring Entity, designate SCRTD as the Project Lead and Fiscal Agent, and authorize SCRTD to prepare, submit, and administer the Access Fund grant application and related documentation.

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

11. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION FOR TWO-YEAR MOA BETWEEN DOÑA ANA COUNTY AND SCRTD - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo discussed the MOA agreement. This agreement is the cornerstone of most of the activities discussed in the Ten-Year Plan. Prior MOA agreements

have been for one year at a time. This year Mr. Armijo is working on a two-year MOA which will be in effect from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028. This grant has helped SCRTD grow as it has and will be essential to maintain progress. Ridership has increased drastically due to the high gas prices and is projected to increase to 195,000 rides over the next year. Mr. Armijo discussed the current bus schedules and described the increases in frequency and expansion of routes. The County agreement is required to obtain Federal funds and provides the match funds as well as providing a basis for cooperation with other districts. The budget request for 2027 is \$1.3 million, only slightly increased from last year for the Cost of Living increase. The EVs have reduced costs by quite a bit with reduced gas usage. Mr. Armijo will send this information to the County once the Board approves it.

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

12. DISCUSSION ON VENUS NEPA PROJECT COMPLETION - DANIELA GUTIERREZ

Daniela Gutierrez was unable to attend the meeting, so David Armijo reported. The site review has been completed for just under \$10,000. The funding for the project came from New Mexico Matching Funds, so SCRTD only had to provide labor and staff time. He showed photos of the property, which is 3.2 acres. The plan is to have a very basic facility similar to the Anthony facility. The property will be paved and fenced for secure vehicle storage and a charging station installed. The District now has eight electric Gillig buses, four hybrid buses, two EVs in hand, and three more EVs on order. Mr. Armijo hopes to get the funding and have the project done in the next few years. If a building is built there, it would likely be a butler building rather than a full maintenance/administrative building. This facility would support the extended services to the north part of the County. The vehicles are currently being stored at Mesilla Valley Hospital. There were no concerns identified in the NEPA evaluation. This property is has excellent access to the East Mesa.

13. BOARD COMMENTS

Manuel Sanchez reminded Mayor Torres that the Board will love having Hatch represented in meetings as often as possible. He discussed remote attendance if physical attendance is not possible. The packet can be mailed before the meeting as well. Chair Sanchez thanked Mayor Torres for attending.

Majorie Powey reported that she had trouble getting into the Webex for the meeting. The computer said the site was corrupted. County IT will look into it.

Manuel Sanchez apologized for not noticing Trustee Cadena joining the meeting. Trustee Cadena indicated that she was a bit late and did not wish to interrupt the meeting. She also had trouble with the Webex. She thanked the staff member who notifies everyone of meeting times.

14. ADJOURNMENT - NEXT BOARD MEETING - SPECIAL MEETING APRIL 22, 2026

Motion by Gabriel Holguin, second by Majorie Powey. Meeting adjourned.



Chairperson