South Central RTD
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday,
September 23, 2026 - 1:30 PM

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Manuel Sanchez, SCRTD Chair, Doña Ana County/Commissioner
Gabriel Holguin, SCRTD Vice-Chair, City of Anthony/Mayor
Javier Perea, SCRTD Treasurer, City of Sunland Park/Mayor
Biviana Cadena, SCRTD, Member, Town of Mesilla
John Munoz, SCRTD Member, City of Las Cruces/Mayor Pro-Tem
Majorie Powey, SCRTD Member, Village of Williamsburg/Mayor Pro-Tem
Ingo Hoeppner, SCRTD Member, Truth or Consequences/ Commissioner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Robert Martinez, SCRTD Member, Village of Hatch/Trustee

SCRTD STAFF:

David Armijo, SCRTD Executive Director
Danielle Granados, SCRTD Executive Assistant
Daniela Gutierrez, SCRTD Project Manager
Liza Alonzo, SCRTD Grants Administrator
Sara Vasquez, SCRTD Human Resources
Crystal Gomez, SCRTD Accounting Assistant
Veronica De La O, SCRTD Administrative Assistant
Adam Shea, SCRTD Finance Manager
Armando Baltazar, SCRTD Budget Analyst
Loretta Gallegos, SCRTD Transit Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Manuel Sanchez called the meeting to order at 1:32 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 Majorie Powey, second by John Munoz. Passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC INPUT

There were none.

6. APPROVAL OF SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 22, 2026

Minutes motioned by John Munoz, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo stated September is the last month of the fiscal year for the National Transit Database. Ridership based on the first two weeks of September is at an all time high of 20,165 rides. This is up 25% year to date. And 4.8% month growth since August. This projection would put ridership at 207,256. The microgrid will be done within the next 30 days. There is a need to put up interior fencing as a safety measure around the array. And there is still the exterior fencing. So, some exterior fencing will eventually be replaced with walls which the city of Sunland Park has requested. This will hopefully happen in the next 12-18 months. Solar grid is updated. Sunland Park the next effort is resurfacing and security. Perimeter and interior lighting have been added, as well as a security guard for after hours during the construction. Once the fences are completed, there will be electronic gates and probably will not need a security guard. The city of Sunland Park police has been helping with security. Progress has been made on the Venus facility getting appraisals and working with FTA as the grant is being transferred over. Fleet and charging investments, continuing to work through that. The Yellow Route is leading the increase in ridership and has carried over 100,000 riders. Next is the Purple Route out of Anthony, and Silver Route out of the west side of El Paso. All routes were shown, and the two newest routes are Blue and Magenta. The fastest growing route is Copper which runs from the beginning of Doña Ana Village through Doña Ana County to the Mayfield High School to the Move-It Center and then continues to Mesilla Valley and connects to NMSU. Priorities are to continue to expand the network looking at new routes and new services in the future. This next year will be increasing ADA trips and moving the regional building. Capital projects, the solar array will be done in the next 30-45 days. Just now starting on Sunland Park resurfacing and security. Clearing the brush and the perimeter of the area where the solar array and buses park is going to add almost 2.5 acres giving more space. Modest improvements on the Venus project. Working on fleet and charging investments. Getting more vans on the 5310. There is a good deal with El Paso Sun Metro and working on that grant application being completed this month. ADA Paratransit has contracts and SCRTD is looking to start that the first quarter of next year. The Clean Transportation Fuel Program is coming into the first quarter, by November, December might see some revenues as they sell credits derived from the solar array as well as the electric vehicles. More grants are coming through. Hatch Chile Festival with free shuttle service that was about 400 people a day for a couple of days, and one of the major sponsors. People could take pictures with the bus. Majorie Powey asked about van pooling to the VA. David Armijo stated they have been doing that for almost a year, and it is Monday through Friday. Right now, it is just the veterans center and not the hospital but are open to that should the need arise. Manuel Sanchez stated it is amazing the progress made with funding through the El Paso MPO and the milestones over the past couple of years. He would like a graph to show the growth.

8. A DISCUSSION TO INTRODUCE THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT'S NEW EMPLOYEES - ADAM SHEA

Sara Vasquez introduced Armando Baltazar. He has been hired as the budget analyst. He has 18 years of accounting and financial experience including extensive expertise in budget management, financial analyst and forecasting. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from UTEP and MBA from Baylor University. His background includes senior financial roles in healthcare, higher education, utilities, and corporate environments with experience in budget development, cost reduction, financial reporting, and strategic decision support.

9. DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION FOR THE SANTA TERESA PORT OF ENTRY PEDESTRIAN INTERCEPT SURVEY AND BORDER/WORKFORCE CONNECTOR PLANNING - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo stated they are asking the board to approve a recommendation to endorse continued evaluation of the Santa Teresa Port of Entry as part of a planned Workforce Mobility Service. SCRTD has been working to provide some level of service up to BIA and whole area and bus shelters in Santa Teresa. David Armijo feels that this is going to take more than one route to connect with the Border Industrial Alliance and the whole economy that is up there with all those companies. In researching found 5-20% of people coming across the border are using bus service. To do this correctly a point survey would capture the information. This is a good opportunity for this agency to work with the El Paso MPO and work with the city of El Paso and Sun Metro and the regional players and the county. This is asking the board to begin conversations with the appropriate organizations.

Javier Perea asked if this considers a circulator route once the border highway connection is completed. David Armijo stated in the report that a route has been identified and this could be a modification of that route. This would be dependent on the information coming from the intercept survey and working with the partners on the project. Manuel Sanchez stated the board gives the okay to move forward with this.

10. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT AMENDMENT TO SCRTD HR MANUAL - LIZA ALONZO

Liza Alonzo stated she is requesting the board's approval on a few changes to the HR manual. Change the "Human Resources Manuel" to Employee Handbook." The next change is on bereavement, three days remain the same, and then to immediate family members only, excluding grandparents and in-laws. The next change is the PTO. Right now, employees can cash out up to 80 hours of PTO, and the change is to reduce that to 40 hours. Transferring of 809 hours is the same with the PERA accounts. The fourth change, in the current manual there is a specific list of holidays, this will be changed to a determination annually by the Human Resources person and Executive Director and approved the year prior. There are some other minor changes that are listed. The old manual was in 27 sections that were not categorized. The new handbook has 12 categories with subsections. This has removed redundancies in language. The remaining changes are really formatting and structural changes.

John Munoz stated it looks like some good upgrades. And asked about the other 40 hours of PTO. Liza Alonzo stated employees will be able to use the 40 hours as

vacation, just not cash them out, but they can roll that into their PERA savings. Manuel Sanchez asked about the holidays. David Armijo stated the actual holidays, number of holidays does not change, unless by the board or budget process.

Resolution motioned by John Munoz, second by Igno Hoeppner. Passed unanimously.

11. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT AMENDMENT TO SCRTD DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY REFLECTING FTA CHANGES - SARA VASQUEZ

Sara Vasquez stated there are very small changes to the Drug and Alcohol Policy that the FTA requires. On page 13 remove "conducting by a person of the same gender as a donor." Also, on the footer reference v0623 and added v0623.1. SCRTD updated the attachment changes and went from using "operators" to "transit operators." Dispatchers and her driving duties changed to "Director drivers on route and drive as needed." Contacts were updated, Loretta Gallegos' title is "Transit Manager" and address is 2001 Futurity Dr., Sunland Park, NM 88063."

Resolution motioned by John Munoz, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

12. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES MEMBERSHIP DUES ADJUSTMENT AN DRAFT AGREEMENT - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo stated the only member that requires an MOU is City of Las Cruces. When the board took action to raise the membership fees last February/March, that went forward and became effective July 1st. However, the City of Las Cruces, because they have an agreement, did not approve, so they felt that their agreement still holds, and from a legal basis that is true. The only way to change the agreement is to cancel the agreement and either side can do that with 30 days' notice. That became a problem as SCRTD still needs to get paid for the year. So, what is being asked today as an interim measure until next year's agreement, and they will be advocating for a new agreement, is simply based on the resolution items one through four. Item one, SCRTD hereby approves a budget adjustment to account for the reduction in anticipated membership revenue resulting from Las Cruces declining to pay the approved membership increase. So, this is budget adjustment to reduce the funds out of the budget. Secondly the Executive Director is hereby authorized to make the necessary budget adjustments to revenues and expenditures to maintain a balance of fiscally responsible district budget. And three, the Executive Director is further authorized to prepare and submit any required budget adjustment documentation to the appropriate federal, state, or local agencies and take all actions necessary to implement the approved adjustment. And lastly, the adjusted budget shall be administered in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and district reporting requirements. They would begin discussion and dialogue with the City of Las Cruces that would entertain a new agreement. David Armijo is hoping to have that discussion without cancelling the current agreement, as cancelling the agreement becomes problematic for the SCRTD. This has been reviewed by the attorney for SCRTD, and he approves everything in this resolution.

John Munoz asked since he is a member of the City of Las Cruces, should he abstain. Manuel Sanchez stated that is up to him.

Resolution motioned by Biviana Cadena, second Igno Hoeppner. Passed, one abstention.

13. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT FY2028 SECTION 5311 GRANT OVERVIEW - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo states these grants are very important to the district. When service was first rolled out in 2016, they did not have federal funds. With the support of the state SCRTD was allowed to apply for their first grant. The 5310 allows for capital funds for paratransit or small urban (5307). The 5311 is really the core of the budget where most of the funds are for providing rural and intercity service. There are only four agencies in the state of 27 that do get these funds that are used both for rural and intercity. David Armijo's when he is doing the NTD report he has to break it out as to how much intercity service is in the El Paso service area under the El Paso MPO and how much is in the Mesilla Valley MPO area.

This resolution is asking for funding for two vehicles. The vehicles being used right now as a standard on the blue route up in Elephant Butte and Sierra County and Truth or Consequences and the Village of Williamsburg. That is a low floor vehicle that is a little more expensive, about $200,000 per vehicle. SCRTD currently has four of these and they are currently performing well. These buses have a ramp and a lift, and do not break down, and operate with good efficiency. These could also be used for ADA as they grow in the Las Cruces area. They will have to come up with a 20% match, approximately $80,000.

Resolution motioned by Majorie Powey, second by Manuel Sanchez. Passed unanimously.

14. A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT FY2028 SECTION 5310 GRANT OVERVIEW - DAVID ARMIJO

David Armijo stated this application is due in about two weeks. Total budget increase of about 16%. Need to either add more service frequency like on weekends or at night, and in some cases improve service frequency during the day which may add another vehicle. So additional funds are being programmed for that. Also been catching up to other systems, they have been number one for four years in a row, number one in ridership the last two years. They do not get funded as well as NCRTD, and some others have been doing this lower than SCRTD. Total budget is estimated to be $2,889,468.63. That is about six times what it was in the first grant application, a decade ago. This breaks down to $344,427 for administration, $587,926 for capital, and $1,957,114 for operations. The key to the resolution is the commitment for SCRTD to commit $1,165,028.05 for the local match. These will be with the applications to be submitted in two weeks.

Resolution motioned by John Munoz, second by Manuel Sanhcez. Passed unanimously.

15. ADJOURNMENT - NEXT BOARD MEETING - OCTOBER 28, 2026

Meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.



Chairperson