



**Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
Joint Powers Authority
MINUTES**

DATE

Monday, January 11, 2021

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board was held on Monday, January 11, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair Silveira at 1:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Silveira, Merced County Supervisor, Chair
Bob Gardner, Mono County Supervisor, Vice Chair
Stacy Corless, Mono County Supervisor
Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor
Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County Supervisor
Rosemarie Smallcombe, Mariposa County Supervisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Jonathan Farrington, YARTS AAC member
Kathleen Haff, Supervisor, Tuolumne County
Gerry LeFrancois, Mono County Local Transportation Commission
Selena McKinney, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Candy O'Donel-Browne, YARTS AAC Chair
Gordon Shaw, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

STAFF PRESENT

Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Skyler Summers, Assistant Transit Manager
Malee Vang-Unruh, Grant Analyst
Xavier Garcia, Transit Administrative Assistant
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director
Nav Bagri, Finance Director
Robert Haden, Legal Counsel
Adam Perez, Multimedia Specialist
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager
Mauricio Torres, Assistant Transportation Planner

1. Roll Call

Chair Silveira led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Christine Chavez introduced Skyler Summers as the new Assistant Transit Manager – Maintenance.

12. Request to review and discuss the role of the AAC

At this time, Item 12 was taken out of order at the request of Director Smallcombe.

Stacie Guzman invited Director Smallcombe to begin the discussion.

Director Smallcombe explained that she requested this item be added to the agenda to encourage the JPA Board to consider encouraging the AAC to think about their role as it relates to YARTS and how they interact with the JPA Board and YARTS staff. The contributions of the AAC have seemingly become less visible over time and some AAC members feel as though they are not active participants in the conversations related to YARTS. She also mentioned that in past years, the Chair of the AAC would provide a report at the JPA meetings but that is no longer the case. She requested that the JPA Board encourage the AAC to form a subcommittee and make a recommendation to the JPA Board as to what their role will be moving forward. She also emphasized that collaboration amongst partners across the region will be important in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this time, Director Smallcombe invited Candy O'Donel-Browne, Chair of the AAC, to speak.

Candy O'Donel-Browne agreed that a subcommittee of AAC members should be formed to look at the relationship between the AAC, JPA Board and YARTS staff and provide a basis for discussion between the parties.

Chair Silveira asked for clarification on what specifically is being asked of the JPA Board.

Director Smallcombe stated that the purpose of the AAC is to advise the JPA Board. She asked if the JPA Board is still interested in people serving on the AAC and whether the JPA members would be comfortable with AAC members reaching out to them and YARTS staff with ideas, questions or concerns and then presenting a recommendation to the JPA Board on how best to maximize the usefulness of the AAC.

Chair Silveira stated that the JPA Board does not govern the AAC actions, so they have the authority to form a subcommittee to explore this issue if they wish.

Stacie Guzman stated that staff was unaware of the severity of the situation or that some AAC members were questioning serving. She stated that adding an AAC report to the JPA meetings is something that staff can do and agreed with Chair Silveira that the AAC has the authority to form their own subcommittee. The recommendations developed in that subcommittee would be taken to the JPA Board for approval. She acknowledged that, at the beginning of the pandemic when JPA meetings were being held very frequently, there could have been more dialogue with the AAC but is unsure how that could have been achieved with all the demands placed on staff at the time. She also added that staff can help with forming an AAC subcommittee to further explore this issue.

Director Corless suggested that this issue can be addressed through the strategic plan to reach the goal of having an active, engaged AAC advising the JPA Board.

Director McDaniel commented that the AAC has their own rules and processes that should be followed before the issue is presented to the JPA Board.

Director Gardner agreed with Director Corless that this issue can be addressed through the strategic plan and suggested that time be devoted to the more pressing issues on the agenda.

At this time, Director Smallcombe invited Jonathan Farrington, YARTS AAC member, to speak.

Jonathan Farrington commented that the AAC would like to make sure that the time they are investing is useful. Many times, the AAC members are the direct connections to the end users of the YARTS service and to the businesses that are impacted. He asked that the JPA Board utilize the AAC to research items that are being considered so they can provide feedback from a feet-on-the-street position.

Chair Silveira summarized that the AAC would like a more defined role and for the work they do to be better received and asked if staff would be able to facilitate forming a subcommittee to better define the AAC's role.

Stacie Guzman replied that it is important for the AAC to feel valued and staff can work on forming a subcommittee. She also mentioned that the distance between the AAC and JPA meetings would likely need to be extended to accommodate this request.

Director Smallcombe thanked the JPA Board for taking up this item and stated the JPA Board appreciates and values the input from the AAC and asked that the AAC define their roles and how they will interact with the JPA Board and YARTS staff.

Chair Silveira requested that the Chair of the AAC communicate to the other AAC members that the JPA members are available should any questions or concerns arise in the future.

3. Minutes of the October 12, 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority regular meeting

No questions.

Director Smallcombe moved to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority regular meeting.

Seconded by Director Gardner.

Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes - None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan presented the National Park Service report in Kathleen Morse's absence. He reported that Yosemite is experiencing high visitation due to the holidays and good weather. The Park is still only open 8am to 5pm with no camping or lodging permitted. Normal operations will resume when the Governor's stay-at-home order is lifted. Food services are limited to takeout only and only Degnan's Kitchen is currently open. High visitation is expected during the last two weeks of February for Horsetail Falls. The Park has a limited ability to deal with emergencies and ask that visitors recreate responsibly. Lastly, the limitations on visitation during Spring of 2020 have affected revenue collection. The Park is expecting a \$358,000 shortfall in their transportation fee accounts for 2021 but will be able to recuperate that by closing some of the operations of the Mariposa Grove shuttle. This means the YARTS agreement will be fine for the Park's 2021 fiscal year, but the longer-term impacts of ongoing closures and reduced visitation is still unknown.

Director Gardner asked for Jim Donovan to relay a request that the Superintendent of the Park visit with the Mono County community to discuss the opening of Tioga Pass.

5. Information /Discussion Only

a. Service Update, Ridership History and Customer Service Reports for September 2020 – November 2020.

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation on service updates and ridership history.

No questions.

b. YARTS Quarterly Marketing and Media Update

Mary-Michal Rawling gave a PowerPoint presentation on marketing and media updates for the second quarter of fiscal year 2020 - 2021.

No questions.

6. Approve YARTS 2020-2023 Title VI Program

Mauricio Torres presented this item and noted that no Title VI complaints were filed during the last fiscal year.

No questions.

Director Corless moved to approve the YARTS Title VI Program 2020-2023 and adopt Resolution No. 2021/01-11-01.

Seconded by Director Gardner.

Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira, Smallcombe

Noes - None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Summer 2021 Service Schedule Update

Christine Chavez presented this item and gave a PowerPoint presentation with updates on the summer 2021 service schedules.

No questions.

8. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update for July 2020 – November 2020

Nav Bagri reported that invoices for the two failed engines totaling about \$110,000 had been received after the date of the staff report. If reserve funds are needed to cover the cost of the engine replacements, a budget amendment item will be taken to the Board in April for approval.

Director Gardner noted that the variance column on the revenues side of the report on page 90 did not seem correct and asked staff to review.

Director Smallcombe exited the meeting at this time.

9. Funding Update on Federal Transit Administration Discretionary Grant Section 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program for the acquisition of six (6) over-the-road electric coach buses

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation with a funding update on the 5339(b) Program.

Stacie Guzman emphasized the severity of the challenges that YARTS faces on the capital front and how the strategic plan will be critical in solving those challenges long term. She also proposed scheduling a JPA Board budget workshop on February 8, 2021 at 1:00 pm via teleconference/webinar to discuss capital needs.

Chair Silveira noted that page 94 of the agenda packed stated the HVIP Bus Vouchers were \$165,000 per bus but Christine Chavez's presentation stated they were \$150,000 per bus and asked which amount was correct. He also asked if the HVIP voucher amount would be applied towards the local match portion of the bus costs.

Malee Vang-Unruh explained that the correct amount is \$165,000 per bus but she was informed by the HVIP program that the amount may be reduced due to the popularity of the program.

Christine Chavez added that the HVIP voucher amount would be applied towards YARTS' local match.

Director Gardner asked if outside private support, such as from the Yosemite Conservancy, has been considered to help with covering some of the bus costs and offered to assist with approaching the Yosemite Conservancy for a contribution.

Stacie Guzman replied that staff can explore those opportunities and will present an item to the Board if formal action is needed.

10. Invitation of Membership to YARTS JPA – Tuolumne County

No questions.

Director Corless moved to adopt Resolution No. 2021/01-11-02 authorizing the admission of Tuolumne County to the YARTS Joint Powers Agreement and Bylaws as a full voting member.

Seconded by Director Menetrey.

Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, McDaniel, Menetrey, Silveira

Noes - None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

At this time, Chair Silveira paused the meeting at 2:23 p.m. to allow for a short break and resumed the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

11. Discussion: YARTS Strategic Plan – Current Conditions Update

Christine Chavez introduced Gordon Shaw to lead the discussion.

Gordon Shaw gave a presentation with an overview of the Strategic Plan Working Paper and posed key strategic questions regarding capital needs, fleet expansion and service changes.

No questions.

13. Executive Director's Report

Stacie Guzman reiterated her proposal for a workshop to be held on February 8, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via teleconference/webinar and stated that the focus of the workshop will be on the budget and capital needs.

14. Board Member Remarks

Chair Silveira and Director Menetrey welcomed Tuolumne County to the JPA.

Chair Silveira confirmed with Directors Gardner, Corless, McDaniel and Menetrey that they will be able to attend the workshop on February 8, 2021.

15. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:00 p.m.