



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

DATE

Monday, April 12, 2021

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board was held on Monday, April 12, 2021 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Vice Chair Gardner at 1:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Gardner, Mono County Supervisor, Vice Chair
Ryan Campbell, Tuolumne County Supervisor
Stacy Corless, Mono County Supervisor
Kathleen Haff, Tuolumne County Supervisor
Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor
Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County Supervisor
Rosemarie Smallcombe, Mariposa County Supervisor
Rey Leon, Mayor, City of Huron
Michelle Roman, Mayor, City of Kingsburg
Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Scott Silveira, Merced County Supervisor, Chair

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Michael Draper, Mono County Local Transportation Commission
Selena McKinney, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Phil Moore, Eastern Sierra Transit Authority
Candy O'Donel-Browne, YARTS AAC Chair
Curtis Riggs, VIA Adventures
Gordon Shaw, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Tyler Summersett, Tuolumne County Transportation Council

STAFF PRESENT

Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Kate Molthen, Assistant Transit Manager
Skyler Summers, Assistant Transit Manager
Xavier Garcia, Transit Administrative Assistant
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director
Nav Bagri, Finance Director
Emily Haden, Legal Counsel
Adam Perez, Multimedia Specialist
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager

1. Roll Call

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

2. Public Comment

Director Menetrey complimented the new agenda format.

3. National Park Service report

Jim Donovan reported that day-use reservations would again be required for entry to Yosemite National Park from May 21 – September 30, 2021. YARTS passengers do not need to have a reservation. Construction will be taking place at Bridalveil Falls to add a new restroom facility. The project must be completed by September 30, but is expected to be done before then. Work will be done along Tioga Road when it opens to address off-road parking as stated in the Tuolumne River Plan. Delays of 15-30 minutes are expected there. PG&E will be replacing power lines on El Portal Road that may cause 15 minute delays. The Yosemite Village parking area is being expanded to add 165 new parking spaces. That work is expected to be completed by Memorial Day weekend. The Park is undertaking a Federal Highway Administration funded pilot project to conduct traffic studies and models in Yosemite Valley to assess how changes to the traffic circulation system can help with congestion. Lastly, there will be no shuttle service in Yosemite Valley or Mariposa Grove this summer.

4. Information items:

a. Service Update, Ridership History and Customer Service Reports for December 2020 – February 2021.

No questions.

b. YARTS Quarterly Marketing and Media Update

No questions.

c. YARTS/Mariposa County Annual Agreement for Services – Fiscal Year 2021-22

Director Smallcombe encouraged Tuolumne County to invite YARTS to participate in their Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) meetings.

d. YARTS/Fresno Council of Governments Agreement – May 2021 – September 2022 Amendment No. 4 and associated Budget for Highway 41 services

No questions.

e. YARTS/Department of the Interior/National Park Service Cooperative Agreement Modification No. 001 – Fiscal Year 2021-22

No questions.

f. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update for July 2020 – February 2021

No questions.

g. Ferguson Rock Shed Update

No questions.

5. Consent calendar:

- a. **Minutes of the January 11, 2021 YARTS Joint Powers Authority regular meeting**
- b. **Minutes of the February 8, 2021 YARTS Joint Powers Authority Workshop: YARTS Capital and Financial Needs of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System**
- c. **Accept the YARTS Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the year ending June 30, 2020**
- d. **Authorize the allocation request for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program for the Fiscal Year 2020-21 and adopt Resolution No. 2021/04-12-01**

No questions.

Director Smallcombe moved to approve all items on the consent calendar.
Seconded by Director Menetrey.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Action items:

- a. **Authorize the Caltrans 5311(f) Program funding, adopt Resolution No. 2021/04-12-02 and hold a public hearing**

Director Smallcombe asked why Tuolumne County was not included in the resolution.

Christine Chavez replied that at the time of the writing of the resolution, Tuolumne County was not a member of the Joint Powers Authority but it can now be revised to include them.

At this time, a public hearing was opened for public comment.

Opened: 1:24 p.m.

Closed: 1:26 p.m.

No public comments were received.

Director Smallcombe moved to:

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comments on the application for funds from the Caltrans 5311(f) grant program for fiscal year 2020-21; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2021/04-12-02 authorizing funding under FTA Section 5311 (49 U.S.C. Section 5311) with the California Department of Transportation for operating assistance; and
- c. Add Tuolumne County to the above referenced resolution.

Seconded by Director Haff.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Approve the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget Amendment No. 1

No questions.

Director Corless moved to:

- a. Amend the FY 2020-21 budget to incorporate \$664,993 of CARES Act funding and offset local funding by moving to the YARTS capital reserve fund; and
- b. Amend the FY 2020-21 capital budget to increase the capital revenues by \$9,219 using the capital reserve fund. The amendment would shift funds from the operations budget to the capital expenditure budget in the amount of \$38,781.

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Authorize the Agreement for Services between the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System and the Merced County Association of Governments for Fiscal Year 2021-22

No questions.

Director Menetrey moved to authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement for Services between the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System and the Merced County Association of Governments for a period of one year commencing on July 1, 2021 and terminating on June 30, 2022.

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

d. Review and adopt the YARTS Operating and Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 and hold a public hearing

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the achievements, service modifications and financial challenges in fiscal year 2020-21.

Director Roman asked when YARTS' contracts were last renegotiated or placed out to bid.

Christine Chavez explained that YARTS has a multi-year contract with VIA and YARTS is required to procure a new contract once the existing contract terminates. Ms. Chavez also explained that most of YARTS agreements are revenue agreements with the member counties. The agreements with VIA and MCAG are expenses.

At this time, a public hearing was opened for public comment.

Opened: 1:48 p.m.

Closed: 1:48 p.m.

No public comments were received.

Director Corless moved to

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comment on the proposed budget for FY 2021-22; and
- b. Approve the proposed YARTS budget for FY 2021-22.

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- e. **Nominate and elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the YARTS Joint Powers Authority for Fiscal Year 2021-22**

Director Corless moved to nominate Director Gardner as Chair and Director Haff as Vice Chair of the YARTS Joint Powers Authority for Fiscal Year 2021-22.

Seconded by Director Campbell.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- f. **Approve the Meeting Schedules for Fiscal Year 2021-22**

Director Corless noted that the NACo Annual Conference would conflict with the proposed July 12 JPA meeting and suggested moving the date.

Director Haff proposed July 26 as the new meeting date.

Christine Chavez suggested moving the July 7 AAC meeting date to July 21.

Director Smallcombe commented that moving the July AAC meeting should be subject to the AAC's availability.

Director Corless moved to approve the staff recommended meeting dates and times for the YARTS Joint Powers Authority and YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2021-22, with the exception of the July 7 YARTS AAC meeting being moved to July 21 at the approval of the AAC and the July 12 YARTS JPA meeting being moved to July 26.

Seconded by Director Haff.

Ayes – Directors Campbell, Corless, Gardner, Haff, Menetrey, Smallcombe

Noes – None

Absent – Directors McDaniel and Silveira

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Discussion items:

- a. **YARTS/Amtrak Thruway Bus Agreement Contract Extension No. 2 – Fiscal Year 2021-22**

No questions.

- b. **YARTS/VIA Adventures, Inc. Contract Extension No. 2**

No questions.

c. YARTS Strategic Plan – Preliminary Recommendation of White Paper

Christine Chavez introduced Gordon Shaw to begin the discussion.

Gordon Shaw gave a PowerPoint presentation on the preliminary recommendations of the Strategic Plan White Paper.

Director Campbell expressed concern with eliminating the Sonora start on the Highway 120 route. Two-thirds of Tuolumne County's population reside in Sonora and Jamestown; starting the route in Groveland would leave those residents out. The current route is so long because it has so many stops. An express route from Sonora/Jamestown would draw in more tourists to travel on YARTS.

Director Haff agreed with Director Campbell's comments and asked for the opportunity to work with the Tuolumne County Transportation Council and visitor bureau to determine if a streamlined route from Sonora to Yosemite is feasible before deciding to cut service.

Director Wheeler asked for staff to be present at the Madera County Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss joining the YARTS JPA.

Director McDaniel commented that Madera County is doing well with YARTS and offered his assistance with getting Madera County to join the YARTS JPA. He also recommended working with the National Park Service to secure more consistent funding to provide service.

Director Campbell suggested looking at ways to leverage increasing ridership rather than reducing service.

Stacie Guzman replied that reducing operating costs will amount to a higher savings than trying to increase ridership and farebox. She emphasized that reductions in service will not be immediate.

Phil Moores encouraged elected officials to be patient and explain to their constituents YARTS' current situation and the steps that must be taken to be able to continue offering service. He also suggested considering acquiring loans to meet local match requirements for the purchase of buses.

8. Executive Director's report

Stacie Guzman proposed that a special meeting of the YARTS JPA take place on June 14, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom to further discuss the Strategic Plan and the Operations and Maintenance Request for Proposals (RFP). She also welcomed Directors Campbell and Haff to the YARTS JPA.

9. Directors' reports

Director McDaniel welcomed Tuolumne County to the YARTS JPA and hoped Madera County will join soon.

10. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:39 p.m.