

**SOUTH CENTRAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** June 18, 2025

**TIME:** 6:00 PM

**LOCATION:** Reading/Virtual

**PURPOSE:** Regular Monthly Meeting

**ATTENDANCE:** Members: James Schlegel, June Wolf, Gail Landis, Tim Snyder, Bonnie Glover (Virtual), Sandra Burke (Virtual), Cheryl Love (Virtual), Joy Ashley (Virtual), Jessica Jones (Virtual) and Gaetan Giannini (Virtual).

Solicitor: Jill Nagy, Summers Nagy Law Offices

Staff: Gregory Downing, Laura Hopko, Keith Boatman, Dominique Thompson (Virtual) and Erika Gustus

Guests: Michael Golembiewski, County of Berks MPO (Virtual), Steve Newsham with ATU-1345

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**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Schlegel called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

2. Changes to Agenda

Mr. Downing announced that there would be an Executive Session upon the conclusion of the regular meeting to review personnel matters.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None

4. Approval of Minutes from the April 16, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Upon motion by Ms. Wolf, seconded by Mr. Snyder, the Board approved the May 21, 2025 Regular Board Meeting minutes.

5. Bills and Communications

None

6. Reports of Committees

- A. Personnel Committee – None
- B. Operations Committee – Monthly Performance Report for May is included in the packet.

Ms. Glover made the comment that the complaints were steady.

Mr. Schlegel stated that the sixty (60) mechanical breakdowns seemed like a high number for one month. Mr. Downing clarified that this number reflects both Shared Ride and Fixed Route and that it includes minor repairs such as replacing fare boxes.

- C. Finance Committee – Monthly Procurement Report for May is included in the packet.
- D. Marketing Committee – Monthly Marketing Report for May/June is included in the packet.

Ms. Landis noted that the Marketing Team has been very busy and that everything was positive.

Upon motion by Ms. Glover, seconded by Ms. Love, the Board approved the Committee Reports.

## 7. Old Business

- A. **FY 2025-2026 Program of Projects** - A copy of the proposed capital budget for FY 2025-2026 was submitted in the May board packet for review. The Program of Projects proposes how SCTA will utilize the federal funding apportioned to both urbanized areas for transit related projects. Staff recommends approval of the FY 2025-2026 Capital Budget.

Mr. Downing reviewed the public hearings held in both Reading and Lancaster held to answer any questions regarding upcoming projects and there was no public attendance for either hearing and no email comments were received.

Upon motion by Ms. Landis, seconded by Ms. Ashley, the Board approved the FY 2025-2026 Program of Projects.

- B. **FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget** - A copy of the proposed operating budget for FY 2025-2026 is included in the board packet for review. The budget highlights service revisions and time adjustments needed for improved service, shelter and

technology amenities needed for improved customer experience and funding for possible Microtransit Pilot. Staff recommends approval of the FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget.

Upon motion by Ms. Glover, seconded by Ms. Burke, the Board approved the FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget.

- C. **Proposed Lancaster Route & Schedule Changes** - The proposed changes at this time deal with service in Lancaster due to some urgent timing needs and route refining. A public hearing was scheduled for the Lancaster on Monday, June 16, 2025. A final recommendation will be presented at the meeting.

Mr. Downing reviewed the changes that were proposed to each of the routes and that it would add a total of fifteen (15) hours of service per week. Ms. Wolf inquired if these changes were brought about based on feedback from customers and drivers. Mr. Downing clarified that a committee comprised of operators, staff and a member of maintenance discussed changes taking into account comments from the public. Once the proposed changes were decided upon it went out for a thirty (30) day public review and there between six and eight comments received, the majority of which were positive. Mr. Downing also noted that the process would begin soon for the routes in Reading so the changes would be in effect by January.

Ms. Glover asked if Route 5 was for Sterling Place and Mr. Downing responded that Sterling Place is Route 3. Ms. Glover asked which route was going to be stopping at the Golden Triangle only on the inbound run and Mr. Downing clarified that she is referring to Route 5. Mr. Downing went on to state that going to the Golden Triangle on the outbound trip requires crossing Oregon and Lititz Pikes, which is a safety concern as well as not being able to service as many customers. The route will be extended and service the Golden Triangle only on the inbound trip.

Dr. Giannini asked if there is a financial impact to making these changes, Mr. Downing confirmed and explained that the increase has already been accounted for in the budget.

Mr. Golembiewski wanted to confirm that similar changes are expected in Reading for January. Mr. Downing confirmed that January is when the changes should be

expected to take place and that the process for making those changes would be starting in July. The first step is looking for feedback from the customers as well as the operators about the service, which will be due no later than July 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Glover asked if a route between Reading and Lancaster would be considered. Mr. Downing said that it has been suggested and will be one of the things to be considered by the committee when the feedback is under review.

Upon motion by Ms. Burke, seconded by Mr. Snyder, the Board approved the proposed route and schedule changes for Lancaster.

## 8. New Business

- A. **Approval of UPWP for Lancaster** –The summary contract for the bi-annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with the Lancaster County Planning Department is included in the Board packet for review. These federal planning funds assist SCTA in the development of the TAM Plan, Safety and Security planning work, performance analysis of existing services, and update and implementation of the Transit Development Plan. The contract is for a two-year period with SCTA receiving \$67,600 per year. Staff recommends approval.

Ms. Ashley inquired if this was a new or existing program. Mr. Downing replied that this is an existing program but that the amount has gone up approximately \$14,000 for the planning services that the Authority provides.

Mr. Snyder asked if this was federal funding and further inquired if the money was only to be used in Lancaster, Mr. Downing confirmed. Mr. Snyder wanted to know if we had to apply for this funding, Mr. Boatman responded that the application is filed with the county who then designates the amount of funding. Mr. Snyder inquired if there was an option to do the same in Berks County and Mr. Boatman clarified that there was a separate agreement for Berks County.

Upon motion by Ms. Glover, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board approved the Unified Planning Work Program.

- B. **Resolution 14-2025, Certification of Local Match** – Standard and required resolution certifying that Berks and Lancaster Counties will provide the local match for the state operating grant. The local match has been requested from both Lancaster and Berks Counties for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Snyder asked if there were still difficulties in Lancaster, Mr. Downing said he did not believe so.

Upon motion by Ms. Landis, seconded by Ms. Wolf, the Board approved Resolution 14-2025, certifying that Berks and Lancaster Counties will provide the local match for the state operating grant.

- C. **Resolution 15-2025, Adoption of TAM Plan Update** – Every four years SCTA must update its Transit Asset Management Plan to reflect the current state of good repair. This includes any items that may be new or not included in the original plan four years ago, along with the performance targets for reaching a State of Good Repair. A copy of the Plan was included in the Board packet for review. The Plan must also be reviewed and approved by the MPO's in Lancaster and Reading as well as the performance goals in the plan. Staff recommends approval.

Mr. Downing stated that the Board's approval is the first step in the process and it will then be presented to the MPOs for review. The plan is a detail of the Authority's assets and something that Mr. Boatman has been working on since February. Ms. Wolf asked if there was anything exceptional to note in the update and Mr. Boatman stated that there was not.

Ms. Burke asked about the references to an 'anticipated shortfall' in federal funds. Mr. Downing replied that with the possibility of expenditures being greater than income there is always a chance of reaching what is referred to as a fiscal cliff. A Shared Ride Facility would assist in pushing that possibility off, but the report had to be put together based on the numbers as they currently stand.

Mr. Schlegel wanted to know how it was possible to plan as far ahead as 2050. Mr. Boatman clarified that it is a schedule of when the assets would need to be replaced.

Upon motion by Ms. Love, seconded by Ms. Ashley, the Board approved Resolution 15-2025, adopting the TAM Plan Update.

- D. **Approval of May Operating Statement** - For the month of May, ridership in Lancaster showed a 2.2% decrease with fixed route showing a 3.1% decrease and shared ride showing a 3.9% increase. For Reading, ridership showed a 5.9% decrease with fixed route showing a 6.7% decrease and shared ride showing a 6.1% increase. Total ridership was 282,959 for fixed route and 31,930 for shared ride

for a total for the month of May of 314,889 rides compared to 329,882 rides last May, for an overall decrease of 4.5%.

Financially for May 2025, Lancaster recorded \$878,584 in operating revenue combined with operating grants of \$1,031,860 for total revenue of \$1,910,444 against total expenses of \$1,807,917. For Reading, operating revenues of \$987,852 combined with operating grants of \$793,154 for total revenue of \$1,781,006 against expenses of \$1,624,435. For the eleventh month of the fiscal year, operating revenue was at 146% of the projected budget and operating grants were 92% for total revenue of 113% of the projected budget compared to expenses at 94% of the projected budget.

Mr. Schlegel asked if there were any other agencies have been experiencing the steady decline in ridership for fixed route that has been seen in Reading and Lancaster. Mr. Downing responded that there not many authorities that are experiencing a decrease in ridership, many are experiencing an increase. In saying that, he also notes that—especially in Lancaster—there is an increase in the senior population which is giving an increase to Shared Ride more than Fixed Route. The decrease has been happening over the last year in small increments. Other contributing factors would likely be jitney cabs, walking, electric bicycles etc. as were discussed in previous meetings.

Mr. Schlegel asked if there was a rate increase planned in for the near future. Mr. Downing stated that the federal government has asked that all agencies be sure that they are collecting all fares and charging the correct amount for those fares. He further clarified that the last increase was in 2021 and at that time the Authority eliminated the zones and used one rate. Increases are usually done every four to five years so the Authority will be required to increase fares again soon but he is reluctant to do so given the current financial situation of many customers. Mr. Schlegel said that it was important to still be cheaper than things like the jitney service even with an increase, Mr. Downing agreed.

Ms. Wolf noted that though people have been using jitney service quite a bit their unreliability is an issue for their customers and could work in the Authorities favor. Mr. Schlegel pointed out that when people need to do things like go shopping the jitneys are more advantageous as customers are limited to what they can carry on a bus as opposed to packing in the trunk of a car.

Ms. Ashley asked if there was a way to survey customers to see why they no longer use fixed route service. Mr. Downing responded that 92% of customers in Lancaster use the mobile app as opposed to 46% of the customers in Reading and it is easier to track how much customers are changing how often they use service. Additionally, it has been mentioned that a lot of undocumented people had been using the service and may not be using it as much now given the current political climate.

Upon motion by Ms. Burke, seconded by Ms. Glover, the Board approved the May Operating Budget, subject to audit.

9. Public Comment

Ms. Wolf asked for clarification on the letters from RKL that were presented to the board for review. Mr. Downing replied that the letters were the commitment letters presented to SCTA, BARTA and RRTA now that the contract for services has been signed. Ms. Wolf inquired if there were three separate audits, Mr. Downing confirmed. Mr. Downing further stated that all audits have come back clean

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the public meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM upon motion by Ms. Love, seconded by Dr. Giannini.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gail Landis

Secretary

