



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

**DATE**

**Monday, April 8, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Joint Powers Authority Board was held on Monday, April 8, 2019 at Merced County Association of Governments, Front Conference Room, 369 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, CA and conducted by video/teleconference at, Mariposa County Government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers, 5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA, Sierra Center Mall, Board of Supervisors Conference Room, Third Floor, 452 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, CA, and Fresno Council of Governments, 2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, Fresno, CA and was called to order by Chair McDaniel at 1:02 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor, Chair  
Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County Supervisor, Vice-Chair  
Stacy Corless, Mono County Supervisor (via videoconference)  
Bob Gardner, Tuolumne County Supervisor  
John Gray, Tuolumne County Supervisor  
Scott Silveira, Merced County Supervisor  
Rosemarie Smallcombe, Mariposa County Supervisor

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Rhonda Armstrong, Council Member, City of Kerman  
Nathan Vosburg, Council Member, City of Coalinga  
Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Denise Demery, VIA Adventures  
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park  
Darin Grossi, Tuolumne County Transportation Council  
Candy O'Donel Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Nav Bagri, Finance Director  
Stacie Dabbs, Executive Director  
Xavier Garcia, Transit Administrative Assistant  
Emily Haden, Legal Counsel  
Cindy Kelly, Assistant Transit Manager  
Artis Smith, Transit Director

## 1. Introductions

Chair McDaniel led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

## 2. Public Comment

None.

## 3. Minutes

Director Menetrey moved to approve the minutes:

- a. January 14, 2019 YARTS Joint Powers Authority meeting
- b. July 23, 2018 YARTS Joint Powers Authority meeting

Seconded by Director Corless.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## 4. Information/Discussion Only

- a. Monthly Ridership and Customer Service Reports for December 2018 - February 2019
- b. YARTS Ridership History
- c. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update
- d. Minutes of the January 9, 2019 YARTS AAC meeting
- e. YARTS Social Media Statistics First Quarter 2019
- f. YARTS Reservation System Update
- g. YARTS Federal Lands Access Program Free Days Update
- h. YARTS Summer 2019 Schedules

Item 4a - Director Smallcombe asked what communications channel are in place to inform passengers of road closures or other service delays.

Denise Demery stated that in addition to information being posted on social media and text alerts being sent out, the dispatch team also contacts hotels, visitor centers and other partners to inform them of service delays.

Item 4b - Director Gardner noted that ridership seemed particularly high in the 2015 - 2016 year in comparison to other years and asked what the reason for that might be.

Cindy Kelly stated the 2015 - 2016 year had many anniversaries which led to an increase in ridership. Cindy commented that ridership numbers are low this year due to the lasting effects of the Ferguson fire as well as difficult weather that has impacted service.

Item 4f - Director Corless asked if any information was available on reservation numbers for this summer.

Cindy Kelly stated the summer reservation numbers hadn't been gathered yet but she can run a report and send it out by email.

## 5. Social Media Report - Year in Review

No questions. So noted.

**6. YARTS/Fresno Council of Governments Agreement Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Amendment No. 3 and Budget**

Cindy Kelly commented that the agreement is not included in the agenda packet as it is currently being reviewed by counsel. Ms. Kelly said once the review is complete, the Executive Director will execute the agreement.

No questions. So noted.

**7. YARTS/Department of the Interior-National Park Service Cooperative Agreement Fiscal Year 2020 - 2025**

Director Gardner commented that the Highway 120 East service was increased from one to two round-trips but only one round-trip is listed in the agreement.

Cindy Kelly stated that two round-trips are in the agreement but they are listed separately.

**8. YARTS/MCAG Agreement for Services Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

Cindy Kelly stated that MCAG administers YARTS and the agreement is reviewed annually by counsel. Ms. Kelly said that once the agreement is signed by the Chair, it will be forwarded to the MCAG Board for approval.

No questions. So noted.

Director Smallcombe moved to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement for services between the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System and Merced County Association of Governments for a period of one year commencing on July 1, 2019 and terminating on June 30, 2020.

Seconded by Director Menetrey.

**Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, Menetrey, Smallcombe**

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**9. Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019**

Director Smallcombe asked how the program will be promoted in Mariposa.

Cindy Kelly shared that YARTS will be working with Terri Peresan from the Mariposa County Department of Community Services to promote the program. Ms. Kelly mentioned that a limit of 4 tickets per household will be enforced this year which should help the program stretch to April or May of next year.

Director Smallcombe commented that it is a great program.

Emily Haden mentioned that the Chair only votes if needed for a quorum or to break a tie.

Director Smallcombe moved to:

- a. Approve the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for the LCTOP fiscal year 2018 - 2019 Free and Reduced Fares to Yosemite for Merced and Mariposa County residents; and
- b. Adopt Resolution 2019/04-08-01 identifying the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for YARTS.

Seconded by Director Corless.

**Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, Menetrey, Smallcombe**

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **10. Public Hearing - Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Caltrans 5311(f) Funding; Public Hearing and Resolution**

Cindy Kelly stated that the applications for funding were released on Thursday and she has begun working on the grant. Ms. Kelly mentioned that the grant is competitive this year.

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

Opened: 1:17 p.m.

Closed: 1:17 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 2019 - 2020; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2019/04-08-02 authorizing funding under FTA Section 5311 (49 U.S.C. Section 5311) with the California Department of Transportation.

Seconded by Director Menetrey.

**Ayes - Directors Corless, Gardner, Menetrey, Smallcombe**

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **11. Public Hearing - YARTS Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 Budget**

Nav Bagri gave a brief PowerPoint presentation to provide a better understanding of the YARTS budget. Mr. Bagri discussed YARTS' various revenue sources and expenses as well as the challenges YARTS faces, including finding funding for the sustainability of YARTS and adhering to the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit measure.

Director Menetrey noted the maintenance costs were reduced and asked if that was due to the pending sale of the park and ride.

Nav Bagri explained that the reported maintenance costs are listed at actual cost plus an additional 2-3 thousand dollars.

Director Smallcombe asked why the Capital Revenue and Expense entries were different.

Nav Bagri stated that only \$15,000 in capital improvements was identified for the installation of cameras on the buses; however, the quote received was much higher than expected so another vendor will likely need to be identified to provide that service.

Darin Grossi asked why the revenue from Fresno is not listed in the budget.

Nav Bagri explained that Fresno has its own budget that is tracked separately.

Director Silveira arrived to the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Director Silveira asked for the reasoning behind the increase in the National Park Service revenue.

Cindy Kelly explained that the new cooperative agreement with NPS includes a 15.67% increase in revenue.

Nav Bagri mentioned that \$145,000 is being allocated for an extended service run in Mono County.

Cindy Kelly added that those funds were transferred to the Mono service from the Fresno service since the Fresno service was reduced by 83%.

Stacie Dabbs commented that transferring those funds from Fresno to Mono was a recommendation made in the Short-Range Transit Plan.

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

Opened: 1:37 p.m.

Closed: 1:37 p.m.

No public comments were received.

Director Silveira moved to:

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comments on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2019 - 2020; and
- b. Approve the proposed YARTS budget for fiscal year 2019 – 2020

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## 12. **YARTS Park & Ride Facility Mariposa**

Stacie Dabbs provided a brief history of the sinkholes at the park and ride, the options available to address them and staff's proposal to sell the property.

Director Gray asked if an appraisal had been done on the property.

Stacie Dabbs stated that an appraisal has not been done as it still needs to be determined if an FTA appraisal will be required. Stacie mentioned that it might be prudent to use an FTA appraiser as a precaution.

Director Silveira asked what the confidence level is that FTA does not have an interest in the property.

Cindy Kelly stated that she will contact the FTA disposition team to determine whether the FTA has an interest in the property. Ms. Kelly commented that she was waiting for approval from the JPA to move forward with the sale before she begins further research.

Director Silveira asked if a memorandum of understanding (MOU) would be drafted with Mariposa County, if they are the successful buyer, that states YARTS would be able to keep its existing bus stop.

Director Menetrey replied that Mariposa County's intent is to keep YARTS existing bus stop on the property and would be open to an agreement that says as much. Director Menetrey mentioned that Mariposa County would be willing to purchase the property as is.

Director Silveira moved to direct staff to begin the sale process of the YARTS-owned Park & Ride facility located at 4974 Joe Howard Street, Mariposa, CA.

Seconded by Director Corless.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13. **YARTS Short-Range Transit Plan Appendix E**

Director Smallcombe asked if the report satisfied Tuolumne County's request for additional ridership information.

Director Gray replied that the report is very useful and it will help their Visitors Bureau target prospective clients.

Director Corless moved to adopt Appendix E – Reservation System Ridership Profile as part of the approved YARTS Short-Range Transit Plan.

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

14. **Invitation of Membership - Tuolumne County**

Director Gray stated that Tuolumne County is looking forward to joining the JPA as a full voting member.

Darin Grossi noted that Tuolumne County has added the annual contribution amount to their budget for next year.

Director Smallcombe asked what the basis is for determining each member's contribution amount.

Cindy Kelly stated that the Short-Range Transit Plan addresses how the contributions are determined, but ridership and service hours are determining factors.

Director Silveira noted that being a member of the JPA and collaborating with a regional transit provider can make it easier to apply for grants.

Director Silveira moved to authorize the Executive Director to issue a formal invitation to Tuolumne County to join the YARTS Joint Powers Authority.

Seconded by Director Menetrey.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

15. **YARTS Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018 Audit**

Cindy Kelly noted that there were no findings in the audit.

No questions. So noted.

Director Menetrey moved to approve the audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, prepared by Price Paige & Company.

Seconded by Director Silveira.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

16. **Application for the Federal Transit Administration Low or No Emission Grant Program**

Cindy Kelly stated this grant application will be submitted to request funding for 6 electric buses, which will allow YARTS to adhere to the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit measure that takes effect in 2023. Ms. Kelly said if YARTS is awarded the grant, YARTS' local match portion could be funded through the Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) which means the buses would be acquired at no cost to YARTS.

Darin Grossi asked if demo runs had been conducted from Merced to Yosemite using electric buses.

Cindy Kelly replied that Complete Coachworks has conducted a successful test run from Merced to Yosemite using an electric bus.

Darin Grossi asked if the electric bus was able to make a complete loop on one charge.

Cindy Kelly replied that the electric bus could not make a complete loop on one charge; however, the electric buses would be equipped with chargers inside the bus which would only require an industrial plug to charge.

Director Smallcombe expressed some concern with the availability of electricity in the park but said discussion on how to solve that issue could take place once the grant is awarded.

Director Smallcombe moved to:

- a. Approve Resolution 2019/04-08-03 authorizing the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for the Federal Transit Administration Low or No Emission Grant Program; and
- b. Authorize the Chair to sign the Letter of Support on behalf of YARTS.

Seconded by Director Corless.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

17. **Election of Officers for the YARTS Joint Powers Authority Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020**

Director Corless moved to nominate Director Menetrey as Chair.

Seconded by Director Silveira.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Director Menetrey moved to nominate Director Silveira as Vice Chair.

Seconded by Chair McDaniel.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

18. **Approval of the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority and YARTS Authority Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule**

Cindy Kelly mentioned that several of the Directors would not be available to meet on the proposed July 15, 2019 date so Director Corless suggested moving the date to July 22, 2019.

Stacie Dabbs commented that discussion had taken place at the Authority Advisory Committee meeting about the JPA giving the AAC authority to set the times or their own meetings.

Director Corless moved to approve the staff recommended meeting dates and times, with an alternate meeting date of July 22, 2019 instead of July 15, 2019, of the YARTS Joint Powers Authority for fiscal year 2019 - 2020, noting that Authority Advisory Committee would be allowed to determine their own meeting times.

Seconded by Director Menetrey.

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

**Noes - None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**19. National Park Service Report**

Jim Donovan stated that there are several issues occurring in the park at this time. Jim mentioned that Mariposa Grove will be open beginning April 12, which is later than usual. Jim said that the restrooms in the Upper Pines Campground had been damaged by falling trees. Jim commented that snow clearing in Tuolumne Meadows began on April 1, but it will likely not open until after Memorial Day due to the amount of snow on the ground. Jim stated that the park is unsure if White Wolf Lodge will open at all this year, but the campground will open later in the season. Jim informed the committee that the park is moving forward with two major projects – the addition of a comfort station at Bridal Veil Falls and the addition of a visitor contact station in Big Oak Flat.

**20. Transit Director's Report**

Artis Smith stated that YARTS' Emergency Operations Plan is currently being reviewed and updates will be made as needed. Artis mentioned that YARTS has partnered with United Airlines to provide free rides to passengers flying into Fresno Yosemite Airport or Mammoth Yosemite Airport. Artis mentioned that YARTS is participating in General Mills Foods' sampling program which will provide riders with free NutriGrain or FiberOne bars. Artis stated that YARTS has sold their existing fareboxes and was able to purchase new fareboxes with the proceeds from the sale. Artis commented that he will be attending the IPW tourism trade show and conference in Anaheim in June.

Director Menetrey asked if the goal of attending IPW is to market YARTS and Yosemite.

Cindy Kelly stated that the main purpose of attending IPW is to market YARTS, but considering the relationship between YARTS and the park, Yosemite will receive some marketing benefits as well.

**21. Director's Report**

Stacie Dabbs commented that she is looking forward to welcoming Tuolumne County as a full voting member of the YARTS Joint Powers Authority.

**22. Member Remarks**

Director Gray thanked the JPA for the inviting Tuolumne County to join as a full voting member. Director Gray mentioned that there will be an Environmental Impact Report was recently conducted for a new 175-unit hotel and a 150-unit upscale campground along the Highway 120 corridor which will likely lead to increased ridership.

Director Gardner asked if the signage will be updated to inform the public about the route change to June Lake Loop.

Cindy Kelly replied that she is working with Caltrans to change the signage at the 158/395 Junction but permitting to take a while.

Director Corless asked if it would be helpful for her to reach out to Caltrans on YARTS behalf.

Cindy Kelly said that would be great.



Director Menetrey mentioned that a new business enterprise at the KOA campground will open 80 Airstream “glamping” sites which could increase ridership. Director Menetrey also mentioned that Tenaya Lodge would be adding 47 new cabins in June that could increase ridership along Highway 41. Director Menetrey thanked YARTS staff for the thoroughness of the reports in the agenda and said they provide a lot of great information.

Chair McDaniel thanked the JPA for allowing him to serve as Chair and welcomed Director Silveira as the new incoming Chair. Chair McDaniel stated he is looking forward to welcoming and working with Tuolumne County.

Stacie Dabbs asked if the emails she sends to the Directors informing them of service delays due to road closures are helpful or if they cause confusion.

Director Corless replied that the emails are helpful.

Stacie Dabbs commented that she will continue to send out the emails unless instructed otherwise.

23. **Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 2:24 p.m.**