



**Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
Authority Advisory Committee
MINUTES**

DATE

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

The regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) was held Wednesday, April 1, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair O'Donel Browne at 1:42 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County Economic Development Corp., Chair
Karen Baker, California Welcome Center Merced, Vice Chair
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Jonathan Farrington, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
Dana Hallett, Private Citizen, Mariposa County
Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC
Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
Matthew McClain, Mammoth Lakes Recreation
Jeff Simpson, Mono County Economic Development
Steve Smallcombe, Upper Merced River Watershed Council
Hilda Sousa, Caltrans, District 10 for Tom Dumas
Moses Stites, Fresno Rural Transit
Nanette Villegas, Merced Mall
Hubert Walsh, Private Citizen, Merced County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Terri Peresan, Mariposa County Department of Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT

Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Curtis Riggs, VIA Adventures

STAFF PRESENT

Nav Bagri, Finance Director
Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Xavier Garcia, Transit Admin. Assistant
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manager
Joy Young, Administrative Assistant II

1. Introductions

Chair O'Donel Browne led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:42 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Minutes

No questions. So noted.

Sandy Hogan moved to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2020 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee meeting.

Seconded by Karen Baker

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O'Donel-Browne, Sousa, Stites, Villegas, Walsh

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Peresan, Simpson, Smallcombe

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Information/Discussion Only

- a. Ridership History and Customer Service Reports for December 2019 - February 2020
- b. YARTS Financial Report/Budget Update
- c. Minutes of the January 13, 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority meeting
- d. YARTS Reservation System Update - December 2019 - February 2020
- e. YARTS Quarterly Marketing and Media Update
- f. Meeting Schedule for the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

Item 4c – Sandy Hogan commented that YARTS JPA Director Bob Gardner is a supervisor for Mono County, not Tuolumne County.

Item 4d – Christine Chavez explained that the number of tickets sold online decreased compared to the number sold during the same time period of the previous year, but the revenue increased due to the fare increase.

5. YARTS/Mariposa County Annual Agreement for Services - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

No questions. So noted.

6. YARTS/Fresno Council of Governments Agreement - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 Amendment No. 4 and Budget

No questions. So noted.

7. YARTS/Department of the Interior/National Park Service Cooperative Agreement Amendment No. 1 - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

No questions. So noted.

8. YARTS/Amtrak Thruway Bus Agreement Contract Extension No. 1 - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

Dana Hallett asked if the Amtrak agreement will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Christine Chavez replied that the effects of the pandemic are unknown at this time but regular duties outlined in the agreement will continue until further information is received.

9. YARTS Rebranding

Several AAC members expressed support for an update to the YARTS brand but requested additional budgetary information before deciding on the extent of the update. There was consensus that the update should include a review of the mission statement to ensure it aligns with current goals and values, incorporating the words “Yosemite” and “Transit” more prominently in the logo to better describe what the service does, and keeping the YARTS name in some fashion to retain brand recognition among regional visitors and international vendors.

Mary-Michal Rawling stated she would take all the notes made by the AAC members to the YARTS JPA Board meeting on April 6, 2020.

10. YARTS/Merced County Association of Governments Agreement for Services - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

Christine Chavez suggested that a longer-term agreement be considered the next fiscal year.

Moses Stites moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority 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, 2020 and terminating on June 30, 2021.

Seconded by Jeff Simpson

Ayes – Members Baker, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas, Walsh

Noes – None

Abstain – Member Donovan

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites

MOTION CARRIED.

11. Low Carbon Transit Operations Program - Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 and Resolutions

No questions. So noted.

Nanette Villegas moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Approve the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for the LCTOP Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Free Fares to Yosemite for Merced and Mariposa County residents and the purchase of spare fareboxes for the existing YARTS fleet; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2020/04-06-01, identifying the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for YARTS for Free Fares to Yosemite for Mariposa and Merced County Residents; and
- c. Adopt Resolution No. 2020/04-06-02, identifying the Executive Director as Authorized Agent for YARTS for the purchase of spare fareboxes for the existing YARTS fleet.

Seconded by Matthew McClain.

Ayes – Members Baker, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas, Walsh

Noes – None

Abstain – Member Donovan

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites

MOTION CARRIED.

12. YARTS Application for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program and Resolution

Steve Smallcombe requested to see an overall outline of where the electric buses plan to charge and how long charging will take.

Christine Chavez commented that specifics on the electrification of buses and where and how those buses will be charged are topics for discussion in the coming weeks. She is open to forming a subcommittee to gather input from AAC members with knowledge and expertise in this area.

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority adopt Resolution No. 2020/04-06-03 authorizing the receipt of funding from the 2020 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program for the purchase of EV chargers for bus fleets, six (6) new REI camera systems and additional hard drives, six (6) new sets of auto chains and six (6) manual fare boxes, and authorize the Executive Director as authorized agent to execute the contract.

Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. YARTS Budget Amendment No. 2 - Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020

Steve Smallcombe commented that the change in schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic should be considered before approving a budget.

Christine Chavez clarified that this item is an amendment to the current fiscal year’s budget, not an approval of a new budget.

Sandy Hogan moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Budget Amendment No. 2, which includes an increase of \$5,000 in member contribution from Mono County.

Seconded by Karen Baker.

Ayes - Members Baker, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, McClain, Simpson, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – Members Donovan, Mayo, Smallcombe

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED.

14. Caltrans 5311(f) Funding - Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021; Public Hearing and Resolution

No questions. So noted.

Steve Smallcombe moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- 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 - 2021; and
- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2020/04-06-04 authorizing funding under Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (49 U.S.C. Section 5311) with the California Department of Transportation.

Seconded by Nannette Villegas.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel- Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – Member Sousa

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED.

15. YARTS Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 Budget

Nav Bagri commented that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the budget are currently unknown. The budget will be amended in July when more information is available. In the meantime, YARTS is being conservative with its budget by limiting staff time that is allocated to YARTS.

Karen Baker moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority:

- a. Hold a public hearing to allow for public comments on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021; and
- b. Approve the proposed YARTS budget for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021.

Seconded by Jonathan Farrington.

Ayes – Members Baker, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, McClain, O’Donel- Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – Member Donovan, Mayo

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED.

16. YARTS Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019 Audit

No questions. So noted.

Jeff Simpson moved to recommend the YARTS Joint Powers Authority approve the audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, prepared by Hudson Henderson and Company.

Seconded by Sandy Hogan.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

17. YARTS Authority Advisory Committee Attendance Policy

No questions. So noted.

Jonathan Farrington moved to approve the Attendance Policy for the Authority Advisory Committee and forward to the Joint Powers Authority for final approval.

Seconded by Karen Baker.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

18. Election of Officers for the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021

Candy O’Donel-Browne and Karen Baker offered to serve again as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021.

Sandy Hogan moved to nominate Candy O’Donel-Browne as Chair and Karen Baker as Vice Chair of the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021.

Seconded by Steve Smallcombe.

Ayes – Members Baker, Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, McClain, O’Donel-Browne, Simpson, Smallcombe, Sousa, Villegas

Noes – None

Abstain – None

Absent – Members Peresan, Stites, Walsh

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

19. Transit Manager’s Report

Christine Chavez reported that YARTS has been operating on its emergency operations schedule since Yosemite National Park closed its gates to the public on March 20th. There has been an average of 5-10 passengers per day since the park closed. The YARTS JPA Board will review ridership numbers at the April 6th meeting to determine what the schedule should look like moving forward. Also, there are no expected cuts to funding for the remainder of this fiscal year, but future funding is unknown at this time.

Jonathan Farrington asked if the service could be suspended until the park reopens since ridership is so low.

Christine Chavez replied that would be an option for the Board to decide and the effects that completely suspending the service would have on the contractor will be taken into consideration.

Steve Smallcombe commented that there are riders who still depend on the service to get to work and to access essential services.

Dana Hallett asked if smaller vehicles are available to use to transport riders.

Denise Demery replied that VIA does not have smaller vehicles available, but it would be difficult to implement the required social distancing requirements in smaller vehicles.

20. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan reported that Yosemite National Park is being strict about who can enter the park at this time. Many of the employees live in close proximity to each other so a major concern is that the virus will spread very quickly if it reaches the park. He also mentioned that it is important to keep in mind that funding for fiscal year 2020 - 2021 is based on revenue from fiscal year 2019 - 2020.

21. Member Remarks

Matthew McClain commented that interested parties can visit the Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership website at www.essrp.org for information on how recreation challenges are being met in the Eastern Sierra communities.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:41 P.M.