



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

DATE

Monday, September 21, 2020

A special meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board was held on Monday, September 21, 2020 via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Chair Silveira at 1:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Silveira, Merced County Supervisor, Chair
Stacy Corless, Mono County Supervisor
Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor
Miles Menetrey, Mariposa County Supervisor
Rosemarie Smallcombe, Mariposa County Supervisor
Tom Wheeler, Madera County Supervisor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Bob Gardner, Mono County Supervisor, Vice Chair
Rhonda Armstrong, Council Member, City of Kerman
John Gray, Tuolumne County Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT

Peggy Arnest, Fresno Council of Governments
Denise Demery, VIA Adventures
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park
Darin Grossi, Tuolumne County Transportation Council
Sandy Hogan, Mono County LTC

STAFF PRESENT

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

1. Roll Call

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

2. Public Comment

Denise Demery commented on behalf of Curtis Riggs that he is appreciative of the cooperation from the YARTS Board and staff in modifying the payment structure of the operations and maintenance contract.

3. National Park Service Update

Jim Donovan reported that Yosemite National Park remains closed due to poor air quality. The gates are open for pass-through traffic, but individuals must remain in their cars as the park is closed for recreational purposes. Lodges and food establishments are closed as well. There are several fires burning in Yosemite, including the Creek Fire, the Blue Jay Fire, the Wolf Fire and two small wilderness fires. Park staff is monitoring air quality and waiting for three consecutive days in the unhealthy range before reopening. Also, the day-use reservation program will continue until at least October 31, 2020.

Director Smallcombe asked for clarification about the three consecutive day range required for reopening the park.

Jim Donovan explained that park staff is using the broader air quality categories of hazardous, very unhealthy, unhealthy, etc. that have been established by air quality officials and fire officers to determine when to reopen the park. Park staff is looking for the air quality to improve from the hazardous range to at least the unhealthy range before reopening.

4. Minutes of the July 20, 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority regular meeting

No questions.

Director Corless moved to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2020 YARTS Joint Powers Authority regular meeting.

Seconded by Director Smallcombe.

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

Noes - None

Absent - Director Gardner

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Authorize execution of YARTS/VIA Adventures, Inc. Agreement Amendment No. 2

Christine Chavez explained the basis for the modified payment structure of the operations and maintenance contract with VIA Adventures, Inc. and noted that YARTS would realize a savings of about \$60,000 over the previous payment structure.

Chair Silveira thanked staff for their work on this item and liked that the modified payment structure is more in line with other transit contracts throughout the state. He also commented that the modified payment structure will allow VIA Adventures, Inc. to better budget their finances as well.

Director Smallcombe moved to authorize the Executive Director to execute Amendment No. 2 between YARTS and VIA Adventures, Inc.
Seconded by Director Corless.

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

Noes - None

Absent - Director Gardner

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. YARTS Strategic Plan

Stacie Guzman explained the process and timeline of conducting an update to YARTS' 2019 Short Range Transit Plan to include a sustainable operating, capital improvement and funding plan. She also thanked Chair Silveira and Director McDaniel for their support of the MCAG Governing Board providing the necessary funding for this strategic plan.

Chair Silveira commended the MCAG Governing Board for being willing to provide funding for this strategic plan and for their support of the YARTS service.

At this time, Chair Silveira apologized for not taking public comment on item 5 and allowed for comments to be made. None were received.

Director Corless thanked the MCAG Governing Board for their support of this strategic plan and commended YARTS staff for recommending this project as it is necessary for making YARTS more sustainable.

Director Smallcombe also thanked the MCAG Governing Board for allocating the funds for this strategic plan. She asked if those federal planning funds permit sole source solicitation and if park staff will be involved in the process.

Stacie Guzman replied that MCAG's procurement department confirmed that a sole source solicitation is allowed. She also stated she has been in contact with Jim Donovan since the beginning of the process and will continue to work closely with him and other park staff moving forward.

Director Wheeler commented that he is pleased this strategic plan is being done and thanked staff for making it possible.

7. Transit Manager Update

Stacie Guzman reported that she and Christine Chavez would be attending the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors meeting where their Transportation Committee will be discussing YARTS' invitation to Tuolumne County to join the YARTS JPA Board.

Christine Chavez gave a PowerPoint presentation with an update on YARTS summer service ridership, summer service end dates, and the impacts that wildfires and the Yosemite National Park closure have had on service. She also reported that YARTS' agreement with Amtrak has resumed as of September 1, 2020 and reservations will resume on October 1, 2020.

8. Board Member Remarks

Director Menetrey asked if the park allowing through-travel was figured into YARTS ability to travel through the park.

Christine Chavez replied that park staff encouraged YARTS not to enter the park, except on September 18, 2020 where YARTS did travel into the park to pick up passengers who were left behind. Since the fires have been happening for a while, most visitors who utilize YARTS have already left the park so there is not a large

demand for the service. Additionally, it would be a challenge for the buses to travel into or through the park with the restriction that visitors must remain within their vehicles.

Jim Donovan added that roads are open for through-travel, but visitors using YARTS would mostly be traveling to Yosemite Valley instead of just passing through.

Director Wheeler commented that air quality readings are available by location at www.purpleair.com.

Chair Silveira commented that he is grateful that Tuolumne County is considering joining the YARTS JPA Board. For YARTS to be successful in the long-term, all parties need to be committed to its success. He would like for Madera County to consider joining as well.

Director Wheeler asked for information on joining the YARTS JPA Board to be sent to him so he can share it with the Madera County staff.

9. Adjournment

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1:44 p.m.