

**Ozark Regional Transit Authority  
February 26, 2026, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
10:00 am at Ozark Regional Transit and VIA Teams**

In Attendance:

Board Members

Ryan Carr  
Peter Nierengarten  
Dane Eifling  
Marlee Stark  
Tristan Hill  
Dan Weese  
Kent Laughlin  
Juliet Richey  
Clay Kendall  
Tim Stachowiak  
John McCurdy (online)  
Jesse Hull (online)

ORT

Joel Gardner  
Mindy Campbell  
Kendall Luallen  
Tayler Clark  
Lakisha Bradley  
Bobby Tomlin  
Franco Tompeterini  
Tina Bowers  
Savannah Earnest  
Jeff Hatley  
Maricruz Roman  
Christian Batres

NWARPC

Tim Reavis

Legal

Tom Kieklak

Other

Brandi Holt  
Sarah Moore

**Proxies** – no proxies were announced

The **agenda** has one change needed; the year needs to be changed from 2025 to 2026. Otherwise, the agenda was accepted as adopted.

**Public Comments** – no public comments were made.

**NWARPC Update/ WSP Presentation** – Tim Reavis presented their update. At the Regional Planning Policy board meeting they adopted the Transit Alternatives Study and the locally preferred high-capacity transit alternative, bus rapid transit. The policy committee also adopted Forward 2050.

**December 2025 Board Meeting Minutes** were approved for adoption.

**Audit RFP Approval** – Ozark Regional Transit had two responses to their RFP for the annual financial audits, Przybysz & Associates and Jacobs & Company. Both companies were scored in five categories: experience, technical, qualifications, thoroughness, and cost. Przybysz & Associates scored higher and it was recommended to the board for approval. Peter made the first motion. Dan made the second motion. All in favor.

Mindy presented the **Financial Report** for December 2025. Revenue had a favorable balance of \$47 K as compared to the budget. Contract Revenue had the largest favorable balance of \$320 K primarily due to Walmart funding their routes in Bentonville. Expenditures had a favorable variance of \$3 K. This was largely due to Fuel, Equipment, and Insurance. These were somewhat negated by the unfavorable balances in Professional Fees and Software totaling (\$151 K). Overall, there is a positive balance of \$50 K for 2025 Year End as compared to the budget. Peter suggested that, going forward, the financial revenue report can include a separate line for the Walton Family Foundation Grants instead of that being included in the Miscellaneous category.

Joel presented **Ridership Statistics**. Some key points from his presentation:

- ORT has seen a 25.6% increase in ridership YTD compared to last year at the same time
- ORT is projected to have over 400 K riders this year, beating last year's record of 345,370

Franco presented the **TAMS Update**. The Transit Asset Management System is used by ORT to track the health of their vehicles. Some key points from his presentation:

- The Equest fleet, Promasters and Transit vans are still in good condition and have not reached the extent of their useful life.
- The Cutaways and several mini vans are approaching their useful life.

As the vehicles reach the end of their useful life, ORT will try to keep a variety of vehicles in the fleet to accommodate the needs of different routes. When the time comes to purchase new vehicles, the plan is to apply for FTA funding and apply for grants.

The **Communication Update** was presented by Lakisha. The team has created a brand-new website for Ozark Regional Transit. Their goal was to create a website that was more accessible and educational. She showed the Board the different features available on the website. Some of the features include user friendly access to the routes in different cities, a section for riders to submit a testimonial of their experience, and a chat option available to make it easier for users to ask questions.

**Open Discussion on Transit Successes/Opportunities** – Joel talked about several new routes that ORT is working on including Route 17 in Bentonville, converting Springdale ODT to fixed route service, working with Razorback Transit to have them do some work on Route 10, and possibly adding more fixed routes in Rogers.

**Executive Director's Report** was given by Joel.

Congressionally Designated Spending Request – ORT submitted a request for 8.8M in CDS in 2026 and the request did not make it through to the 2026 budget. They have been asked to submit a request for 2027. Their request includes 30 additional shelters and small and large transit vehicles

ADA/ Para Transit Software – ORT will be transitioning from Para-Plan to Via for the ADA Para-Transit scheduling software. They are expecting the transition to be complete on March 23.

ORT Shelters – ORT still has 13 shelters available for installation.

2026 Budget – The 2026 budget is now complete.

ODT Group Riders Updates – Beginning on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, riders are now able to ride in a group up to five people at \$1.25. This has not significantly impacted ridership, but there has been a slight increase in ODT trips.

Regional Route Discussion – Joel presented a regional connector along 71B with 20/30/60-minute headways. He believes it would be achievable if the 490 was back to a 30-minute headway, which requires additional vehicles. His concern is how they'd be able to come up with approximately \$500 K for transit signal priority for the line of route along 71B which includes about 67 intersections.

The Executive Director's report was accepted by the Board.

Joel also shared with the Board that they have been doing "Transit Chats" with city council members. So far, they've done them with Springdale and Bentonville and hope to meet with members from the other two cities soon. One suggestion that has come from these chats is that a couple of times a year there could be a public discussion. The idea is to get city representatives and elected officials in the same room as regular citizens to talk about transit. With the board in agreement, Joel will work with Regional Planning to organize the event in Bentonville for hopefully the second quarter, as well as another one towards the end of the year in Fayetteville or Springdale.

**ORT Upcoming Meeting Schedule:**

March 19, 2026 – Executive Committee Meeting

April 23, 2026 – Regular Board Meeting

Ryan adjourned the meeting. The next Board Meeting will be on April 23, 2026.

AN AUDIO/VIDEO OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST