

Ozark Regional Transit  
Board Meeting Minutes December 15, 2022  
10:00 am at Ozark Regional Transit  
Available VIA Zoom Conferencing

**In Attendance**

Board Members:

Zachary Birdsong  
Rick Barry  
Ryan Carr  
Peter Nierengarten  
Jesse Hull  
Sharon Lloyd

ORT:

Joel Gardner  
Mindy Campbell  
Kendall Luallen  
Jeff Hatley  
Tayler Clark  
Erika Finnestead  
Gail Delancey  
Tiffany Batres  
Bobby Tomlin  
Steve Kinder

Attorney:

Tom Kieklak

NWARCP:

Nicole Gibbs

Other:

Ron Wood – Democrat Gazette

**Proxies:** Peter Nierengarten held the proxy for Lionel Jordan and Chris Brown.

**Agenda:** Rick Barry made the first motion to adopt the agenda. Zachary Birdsong made the second. All members voted unanimously, and the agenda was considered adopted.

**Public Comments:** None

**Adoption of the October 2022 Board Meeting Minutes:** The October 2022 Board Meeting minutes were considered adopted.

**Adoption of the November 2022 Budget Meeting Minutes:** The November Budget Meeting minutes were considered adopted.

**Financial Reports:** Mindy Campbell, CFO, presented the Financial Notes for November 2022. Revenue had a favorable balance of \$53 K, mostly due to Charter revenue of \$47 K from three Razorback Charters in the month. Expenditures had an unfavorable variance of (\$41 K), mostly due to Professional Fees which had a negative variance of (\$12 K) due to the Olsson Bus Stop Survey. Wages also had an unfavorable variance of (\$16 K) due to additional wages and overtime for the charters. Equipment Rental and Repair had an unfavorable balance of (\$10 K) due to additional parts expenses. With revenues running favorably \$53 K and expenditures unfavorably (\$41 K), there is a positive balance of \$12 K for November. Year to date, there is a favorable balance of \$181 K. The Financial Notes were considered accepted.

**Ridership Statistics:** Kendall Luallen, System Information Director, presented the Ridership Statistics Report for November 2022.

- Total passengers in November were 17,917, or 896 per day.
- Daily ridership is up 23% from last year.
- ORT is expected to reach 200,000 passengers by the end of the year, for the first time since pre pandemic.

**2023 Budget Approval:** Joel discussed any changes in the 2023 budget different from what was presented at the November budget meeting. ORT is waiting for the final decision from cities and counties for their funding, as well as news on new grant applications. The budget will be adjusted accordingly. Zachery Birdsong made the first motion to approve the 2023 budget. Rick Barry made the second motion. All members voted in favor.

**Audit RFP Review and Approval:** Przybysz & Associates was the sole responder to ORT's RFP. The board came to the conclusion that Przybysz & Associates has been satisfactory in the previous years doing ORT's audits. Peter Nierengarten made the first motion to approve the RFP. Rick Barry made the second motion to approve. All members voted in favor.

**Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Update Approval:** Joel presented the updates to the safety plan in accordance with FTA requirements. This included establishing a safety committee, update ASP to include strategies to minimize exposure to infectious diseases, ensure ASP is developed in coordination with frontline employees, include a Risk Reduction Program to reduce the number of accidents and injuries, and include staff training that includes de-escalation training. Zachery Birdsong made the first motion to approve the safety plan update. Rick Barry made the second motion. All board members voted in favor.

**Social Media Update:** Erika Finnestead gave an update on Ozark Regional Transit's social media presence. Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn have all shown an increase in likes, followers, and engagement.

**Open discussion on Transit Successes/ Opportunities in Respective Communities:** Ryan Carr expressed his excitement for seeing our ridership reaching pre-pandemic levels and looks forward to growth opportunities.

**Executive Director's Report:** Joel presented the executive director's report.

- The Federal Government 2023 budget has yet to be determined. For transit, there are proposals for a 2% increase in 5307 funding and a 2% increase in 5339 funding.

- Joel presented the next steps of the Bus Stop Enhancement plan with Olsson. ORT will be completing a grant application through the WFF to include line items of construction for the enhanced bus stops. The construction will be a shared expense between WFF and the individual cities.
- Joel discussed the ORT board positions. Based on the Resolution, Springdale and Rogers will be up 1 position for 2023. The rest of the cities and counties will remain the same.
- Upcoming Events:
  - ORT will be closed December 26<sup>th</sup> in observance of Christmas Day and January 2<sup>nd</sup> in observance of New Year's Day.

The next board meeting will be held on February 16, 2023, at 1:00pm

The Executive Committee meeting will be held January 26, 2023, at 10:00am

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Ryan Carr.

**An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.**