In attendance:
Jerre Van Hoose, Springdale Representative and Chairman
Shawn Shrum, Washington County Representative
Mike Lanier, Madison County Representative and Secretary
Craig Hull, Benton County Representative

Sent Proxy to Jerre Van Hoose:
Lori Ericson
Alan Ley
John Reeve

Peter Nierengarten, City of Fayetteville, attended as proxy for Don Marr

Tom Kieklak, Attorney
Jeff Hawkins, Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission

Jonathan Ely, Benton County resident and guest of Craig Hull

From ORT:
Joel Gardner
Jim McCulloch
Kendall Luallen
Mindy Campbell
Karen Eccles

Scarlett Sims/NWA Democrat Gazette

Meeting was brought to order by Jerre Van Hoose. Mike Lanier made a motion to approve the Agenda and Craig Hull made the second, with all in favor.

Proxies were announced, as noted in the attendance above.

Public comment period: Craig Hull of Benton County announced his intention to formally resign his position on the Board of Directors. He brought Jonathan Ely, a resident of Bella Vista, to the meeting. Mr. Ely has agreed to replace Craig as Benton County representative. It was determined to accept both the resignation and appoint the vacancy at the next Board Meeting. The Benton County judge must approve the appointment.
Minutes from December 18, 2014. Craig Hull made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 18, 2014 Board meeting. Shawn Shrum made a second to the motion and all agreed.

Financial Report: The financial report was noted to be brief. The annual audit is underway; some of the financials may be reclassified, as well as validated, as a result. For the last year, revenues equaled expenses; 2014 ended favorably by less than $1 K. Jim explained that depreciation is not tracked in expenses; it would be approximately a $450,000 in an accounting entry.

Jim explained one way to format the financial statement is to use favorable or unfavorable entries, with the unfavorable noted in brackets. This way is easy to follow; it reverses calculations between revenue and expense items. The budget is the standard and it is compared to the actual.

Joel explained prior to his taking the Executive Director’s position, all the budget preparation was done from the Executive Director’s office. In his position, each department is being trained to prepare their own budgets. It was noted that during a strong period of growth, it is difficult to stay within a predetermined budget. However, ORT lives on a fixed budget and takes very careful stewardship over the finances. Mike Lanier made a motion to approve the financial report; Shawn Shrum made a second and all agreed.

Ridership: Ridership statistics were presented for the 2014 year end, as well as for the month of January 2015.

2014 was a record breaking year in all areas of ORT services, i.e. passengers served, miles driven, operations, hours. Some of the milestones include fixed route ridership at a record high; bike passengers increased 26% from the last year and paratransit passengers increased 43.4% over the last year. Data charts and graphs in complete detail are in the report and were reviewed.

January 2015 performance showed an increase of 9% in Fixed Route ridership and 34% increase in Paratransit compared to January of last year.

Executive Director’s Report: ORT 2015 City funding was reviewed. Joel has secured the following monies from local communities. Each of these amounts will be matched by Benton County:
- Pea Ridge $3,000
- Avoca $1,000
- Little Flock $1,000
- Centerton $2,500

Joel is currently working with the cities of Lowell, Gravette and Garfield for additional financial commitments.

Wash bay update: Westmatic Inc., is contracted to refurbish the wash bay. Severe weather in the north has delayed delivery of the new equipment, but it is anticipated to be in construction by early March.
Maintenance facility update: After an approval to refurbish the roof and all the interior of the Maintenance shop, several local firms attended a pre-bid conference and toured of the facility. However, only a single bid was submitted by Clinard construction. Although the bid was approximately $47,000 over the original independent cost estimate, that estimate was approximately two years old. The additional expense was sufficiently explained to the State Grant Administrators and they are looking for money to fill the gap now.

CNG: The CNG buses are due for delivery by May 25th. Concurrently, Kum N Go has started the construction of their rapid fill fueling station on Old Missouri and East Robinson. ORT will use that fueling station at a rate of 30-35 gallons per bus per day.

2015 Federal Highway Trust Fund: The FTA annual apportionment of the Federal Highway Trust fund is 8/12’s underway in funding. By the end of May 2015, the balance should be funded. ORT is in the process of making its grant application for the first 2/3’s now and will apply for the last 1/3 later on in the year.

Bus advertising: Joel and Jim have been working independently and successfully at securing revenue through bus advertisements. Jim has already secured $100,000 for 2015, which Joel pointed out compares remarkably to the $60,000 total annual revenue amount received from Clear Channel Outdoor Advertising. Joel has offered local non-profit groups the opportunity to utilize available space on the buses for a free advertising; a monthly value of $400.00. The only thing a nonprofit has to provide is the advertising panel/s for the bus.

Customer Appreciation Update: The next free fare week is Spring Break, which is March 23-27, 2015.

SWTA: The South West Transit Association is holding the annual conference Sunday, March 1 - Friday, March 6, 2015 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As Joel will be in attendance, he has put Jason Lance, Scheduling Manager, in charge of all operations in his absence.

Audit: The annual audit is underway, being performed by Przybysz and Associates CPAs. Przybysz purchased Daniel McCormick’s firm last year.

The next meeting was announced for April 23, 2015. Jerre made motion to adjourn; Mike Lanier made the first motion and Craig Hull gave the second.