Meeting was called to order by Jerre Van Hoose. He referred to page 1 of the notebook and entertained a motion for the agenda and proxy for Lori Ericson be approved; Mike Lanier made the motion; Don Marr made the second; all in favor.

Public Comment: none.

Audit Review: Joel Gardner introduced the auditors for ORT, Przybysz and Associates, C.P.A.’s. Matt Przybysz reviewed the audit report for 2014. He was accompanied by Jacob Ashford of his firm. Matt stated the Firm awarded an unmodified opinion that the financial statements provided present fairly the financial status of the company. He explained this to be the highest opinion given by an auditor, as it means there were no material mistakes found or anything that looked out of place during the audit. Financial statements, referred to as the balance sheets, are typically comparative statements between one year prior to and the audit year. As ORT had made a change in fiscal years, the audit could not be made comparatively, but only with 2014 numbers. Matt described it as self-explanatory and pointed out the balances stayed pretty even, which is to be
expected. Matt asked if anyone had questions. Statement of revenue, expenses and changes were the next section.

At that time, Jim McCulloch commented that Matt and his people worked with Mindy and did a good job on the audit. He noted the former CPA firm, The McCormick Group stayed on during a transition time to our new firm of Przybysz.

Matt continued by explaining the statement of cash flow signifies the health of an organization. In the case of ORT, where grants make up the majority of the cash flow, auditing the statement has a different view. While the operating revenue and other income showed a $3.6 million deficit, there was actually a net increase of a little over $70,000 in cash. That is due to how we receive our grants. Don Marr asked if there were any recommendations and Matt stated as the maintenance shop is being refurbished, it is a good time for ORT to prepare to track inventory differently. He suggested performing a periodic count on parts; either monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, or annually. Joel stated there is a program already in place for keeping up with inventory called Fleetwise. Fleetwise can run cycle counting based on frequency of use or value of product; it can generate recommendations for reorder guidelines when product is low, etc. In anticipation of having $50-75,000 of product in inventory and a parts room in the new building, Joel is just waiting to put this module into place. Motion was made by Don Marr to accept the 2014 audit as presented, John Reeve made the second and all were in favor.

February 2015 Board Meeting Minutes: Mike Lanier made motion and John Reeve made the second to adopt the minutes of the last board meeting in February. All approved.

Financial Report: For the quarter, ORT was on budget within $1,000 in revenue and expense. A significant favorable variance in fuel of $14,000 in the month of March allowed a move of $20,000 from the fuel budget into salaries and wages. Don Marr asked if the $20,000 movement was made prior to or after the favorable variance.

Don Marr then asked the status of the ORT conversion to CNG fuel. Joel explained ORT is not converting any vehicles to use CNG fuel, but made a purchase of four vehicles which operate with CNG. Two of the buses should be on site in time for the opening of the CNG fueling station by the end of May. Don rephrased his question to ask if the year to date budget for fuel shown in the financial report was $108,000 prior to or after moving $20,000 to the salaries budget. Mindy answered that it was after moving the $20,000 to the salaries budget. He then asked for confirmation that the YTD fuel budget is the number the board can expect to look at for the remainder of the year. It was confirmed.

No other comments or questions about the financial report were made. Don Marr made a first motion and John Reeve the second to accept the financial report as provided. All were in favor.

Ridership report: Some of the data noted included Fixed Route ridership going up by 6% in March compared to March of last year; up 10% for the year compared to last year. PT ridership was up 22% over the last year, up 30% over the first quarter of 2015. 391 bikes were carried in the
month of March. Overall ridership in Fayetteville was up 15% in first quarter compared to the last year; PT was up 32%, overall ridership up 15%. The free ride Customer Appreciation Week during Spring break free was up 18% over spring break last year. Overall, the Agency is averaging 100,000+ miles a month every month. Since beginning in June of 2014, Route 620 has carried 2240 passengers. Overall, 72,182 passengers were transported in the first quarter of 2015. With some of the exciting new projects Joel will discuss in his Executive Director’s report, ORT is on pace for the projected 300,000 plus during 2015.

Jerre Van Hoose remarked about the 61% increase in PT ridership in Bentonville. Joel told the Board a huge increase in service rides for dialysis treatments attributes to the increase.

John Reeve asked the difference between ADA and Demand Response. Joel explained ADA PT is federally mandated and complements the fixed routes. Anyone with a qualifying disability that is within 3/4’s of a mile to a fixed route is guaranteed a ride to a destination or to the nearest fixed route. Demand response is a request for a ride from someone who is outside the 3/4 mile perimeter to a fixed route. Demand Response still services door to door, but there is no federal mandate which obligates ORT to guarantee the ride. However, Demand Response requests are accommodated on an ‘as available’ basis. Kendall further explained that is why Carroll County and Madison County do not qualify for PT services, because of their distance from any fixed route, but being in our service area, they do qualify for Demand Response.

Prior to the Executive Director’s Report, Joel introduced John McLarty of the NWARPC. Mr. McLarty came to present the long range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (updated every five years). ORT, a key stake holder in the five year plan, will be able to have input in the plan being drafted. John said it is an opportunity for ORT to get visions and/or long range plans into the document that will be considered by local advisory and policy committees and taken to State and Federal agencies for possible approval. John said his presentation is to show the Board the vision, goals and community outreach tools for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan. Members of the policy meetings are from 32 cities, two counties and a small portion of McDonald County, Missouri. Public input meetings have been promoted since early 2015 and are posted on the NWARPC website. Surveys are being distributed throughout the two counties. By September 2015, a draft of the plan will be complete, with an adoption expected in December of 2015. The vision statement is “to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system for the movement of people and goods throughout the area.” The system will include a well-integrated and connected roadway, transit, freight, pedestrian and bicycle network. The system will enhance and sustain a high level of economic vitality, community livability and quality of life by providing good service, choice, mobility, convenience and energy efficiency. This is a multi-modal transportation vision, focused on mobility, accessibility, safety, environmental responsibility and protection of the transportation systems. 569 million dollars is being spent on these various projects, (including the 30 million dollar Razorback Greenway which began in the planning stages in 2000 and opened by a ribbon cutting event on May 2, 2015). One of the principal items of MTP is to maintain and preserve existing transit facilities in good condition. John pointed out that many funding sources are involved in this project; STP-A, TAP, FTA. Growth and development over the past five decades and projected through the next two
decades was reviewed. The projected growth in population, employment, highways, etc. begs the need for alternative transportation, i.e. carpoools, bikes and transit. Utilizing Census statistics, by the year 2040 a conservative projection of population will be 750,000 in NW Arkansas. Part of the intention of the plan is how to preserve what makes NW Arkansas so beautiful, so by the year 2040 we have not become a downtown Dallas-Fort Worth. The roads improvement policy requires all options for a less costly and more efficient development, i.e. transit, bike ped, signalization, access management, congestion management, staggered work hours, ITS (intelligent transportation system) to have been exhausted before there is an increase in capacity or size of a major system. Mr. McLarty noted this to be a good argument for transit; the requirements of the Regional Transportation Plan specify a regional commitment to public transit service.

Executive Director’s Report: Maintenance facility update: This is a 5311 Grant state funded tear out and rebuild. The original building, intact since the mid 70’s had some shoddy construction and was in an unsatisfactory state. At this point the tear out has begun.

CNG buses: The purchase of the four CNG buses came from STPA funding flexed by the Federal Highway Administration and a $60,000 booster from the North West Arkansas Economic Development District. Two of the buses are anticipated to be in use by the late May opening of the CNG fueling station at the Kum N Go on Old Missouri.

Customer Appreciation Week: As noted by Kendall, this was during Spring break and 5,800 passengers took advantage of this ride free opportunity.

Shiloh Square, May 2nd: ORT will be participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Razorback Greenway Grand Opening of the Bike-Ped. This is a huge day for the community and for Transit. ORT is providing trips between Springdale, Fayetteville, and Bentonville to and from the event. This will facilitate citizens with bikes who rode to the opening of the Bike-Ped and want to bus ride home as well as people who want to ride directly to the event from Fayetteville and Bentonville.

Touch a Truck: At the Pinnacle Mall on May 2nd at 10:00 a.m. and sponsored by the Junior League. ORT provides buses for the Touch A Truck display where kids and their families can climb all over large vehicles. It was a huge success last year and is a great PR event again this year.

Siloam Springs Community Meeting: Last Thursday there was a community input meeting at Siloam Springs which included representatives from the City, the Chamber, the casino and other industries, the high school and University from the area. Siloam Springs is considering an undertaking transit connections to part of Kansas, Oklahoma, Gentry and Springdale. They also want to provide transportation for University students to the downtown area. The next level of consideration will be having ORT meet one on one with the City to see if they are going to commit to these routes. Joel was enthusiastic about doing work in Siloam Springs.

Tyson Work Force Routes: Tyson is working with ORT to provide their Berry Street plant employees (approximately 300 addresses in Springdale have been mapped into existing and
modified bus routes). It is Tyson Foods goal to positively impact attendance by providing employees with transit opportunities to work. The money (up to $20,000) being used for this Work Force program is from reserves. Existing routes were only slightly modified to include these work force routes. These are booster buses that will go out for 2.5 - 3 hours per day, supporting all three shifts. The WF project runs from May 25 to Labor Day. Tyson has indicated by verbal agreement in meetings with Joel an eagerness and willingness to fund the project if the results show the financial savings from attendance productivity the company expects to realize. Public transit is here to impact business, shopping, entertainment and education and Joel tells the Board if this is a positive results for Tyson, it will perpetuate a savings for multiple companies.

University of Arkansas: Conversations have begun with U/A to allow Spring International students to ride ORT at no cost. This would involve no route modifications and no investment from ORT. Joel has requested the University consider the offer of paying $5.00 per registered student per semester to ORT beginning at the collegiate fiscal year 2015-16.

Mike Lanier and Lori Ericson both have terms ending in May 2015. Mike Lanier indicated he has communicated a willingness to maintain his position for Madison County.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 25 at NWARPC, but will have to be rescheduled.

John Reeve moved to adjourn the meeting. Jerre asked for all in favor to so speak; all agreed.