



**Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
Authority Advisory Committee
MINUTES**

DATE

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

A regular meeting of the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) Authority Advisory Committee (AAC) was held Wednesday, April 6, 2022, via teleconference/videoconference and was called to order by Vice Chair Hogan at 1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Hogan, Vice Chair, Mono County representative
Jim Donovan, Yosemite National Park representative
Jonathan Farrington, Mariposa County representative
Dana Hallett, Mariposa County representative
Lisa Mayo, Tuolumne County representative
Matthew McClain, Mono County representative (left at 2:04 p.m.)
Candy O'Donel-Browne, Mariposa County representative
Rhonda Salisbury, Madera County representative
Hilda Sousa, Department of Transportation representative
Moses Stites, Fresno County representative
Nanette Villegas, Merced County representative

MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Baker, Madera County representative
Karen Baker, Chair, Merced County representative
Terri Peresan, Mariposa County representative

GUESTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Denise Demery, VIA Adventures

STAFF PRESENT

Alexandra Arroyo, Transit Admin Assistant
Nav Bagri, Deputy Executive Director
Christine Chavez, Transit Manager
Xavier Garcia, Staff Services Analyst
Mary-Michal Rawling, Public Affairs Manger
Skyler Summers, Assistant Transit Manager

1. Call to order

- a. Roll call
- b. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Sandy Hogan led the introductions and called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. National Park Service Report

Jim Donovan presented the National Park Service report and discussed the following topics:

- Repeating traffic management pilot program – May 20, 2022 through the middle of October 2022.
- Day-Use Reservations (May 20, 2022 through September 30, 2022) – No reservations required after 4:00 pm and as of March 23, 2022, 70% of the reservations were released for all days (30% will be released 7 days before the arrival date for visitors).
- Yosemite Valley Shuttle Service - resumed December 18, 2021
- Mariposa Grove Closed until Memorial Day weekend in 2022 – Renovation projects
- Mariposa Grove Shuttle Service - expected to resume Memorial Day weekend in 2022

Matthew McClain asked if there was an anticipated opening date for Highway 120 through Tioga Road.

Jim Donovan responded the opening date is generally around Memorial Day weekend. If the weather conditions allow it, it may open sooner.

Christine Chavez asked what the start date was for the Tuolumne Meadows construction.

Jim Donovan responded the construction date follows the road opening date and should last for a few years for a meadow restoration project.

4. Information items:

a. Service Update, Ridership History and Customer Service Reports for January 2022 – February 2022

Sandy Hogan asked Denise from VIA Adventures which buses were associated with the mechanical issues.

Denise Demery responded that the buses used in January and February were YARTS buses. Due to reduced services, a low percentage of VIA buses are used during the winter season.

b. YARTS Quarterly Marketing and Media update

No questions.

5. **Consent calendar:**

- a. Approve the minutes of the February 2, 2022 YARTS Authority Advisory Committee regular meeting
- b. Authorize the YARTS/Merced County Association of Governments Agreement for Services – Fiscal Year 2022-23

Sandy Hogan requested to amend Item 5a – AAC minutes to add that ‘Mammoth Lakes is now a regional airport’.

Sandy Hogan asked how the \$43,641 reduction was realized on Item 5b – MCAG Agreement.

Christine Chavez responded that the \$43,641 is savings from reduced staff time and reduced overhead from the new administration building.

Jonathan Farrington moved to approve the consent calendar with the revision to the minutes as noted.

Seconded by Moses Stites.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Members Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, O’Donel-Browne, Salisbury, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. **Action items:**

- a. **Authorize the YARTS/Amtrak Thruway Bus Agreement Contract Extension– Fiscal Year 2022-23**

Christine Chavez summarized the request to authorize the YARTS/Amtrak Thruway Bus Agreement Contract Extension for the 2022-23 Fiscal Year.

Moses Stites moved to recommend the YARTS Governing Board authorize the Executive Director to execute the YARTS/Amtrak Thruway Bus Agreement amendment for a three-year agreement extension with tiered rates.

Seconded by Candy O’ Donel-Browne

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Members Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, O’Donel-Browne, Salisbury, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Notes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Authorize the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Fiscal Year 2021-22 and adopt Resolution No. 2022/ 04-11-01**

Christine Chavez summarized the request to authorize the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Fiscal Year 2021-22 and adopt Resolution No. 2022/04-11-01. LCTOP funds will be used to offer free rides for public-private partnerships.

Rhonda Salisbury stated that Madera County is interested in participating in this program and applauded Christine Chavez for thinking outside the box.

Jonathan Farrington commented that this is an excellent program and idea. He suggested that vouchers are offered at the Visitor Center to travelers who arrive without knowing about the reservation system and to promote this program during off-seasons.

Sandy Hogan commented that this was a great idea and asked if we had three years to use this funding and if this could be a pilot project.

Christine Chavez responded that we have three years to use this funding and that the program description will remain as proposed, if approved.

Dana Hallett moved to recommend the YARTS Governing Board adopt Resolution No. 2022/04-11-01 authorizing the allocation request submittal for the distribution of free fare vouchers for YARTS at corridor businesses and attractions; and authorize the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System Executive Director as an Authorized Agent to sign and execute related grant documents, including the Certifications and Assurances.

Seconded by Moses Stites.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Members Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, O’Donel-Browne, Salisbury, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Nominate and elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Xavier Garcia summarized the request to nominate and elect a Chair and Vice Chair of the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Jonathan Farrington moved to nominate and elect Karen Baker as Chair and Sandy Hogan as Vice Chair of the YARTS Authority Advisory Committee for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Seconded by Candy O’Donel-Browne.

Roll call vote:

Ayes – Members Donovan, Farrington, Hallett, Hogan, Mayo, O’Donel-Browne, Salisbury, Sousa, Stites, Villegas

Noes – None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Discussion items:

Nav Bagri and Christine Chavez gave a presentation on the YARTS Budget and provided the fiscal year 2021/2022 achievements and financial challenges, anticipated financial challenges/opportunities in FY 2022/2023, and operating revenues and expenditures.

Moses Stites asked Nav Bagri to elaborate on the Professional Service contract and the increase.

Nav Bagri stated our current contractor absorbed some costs that were not realized until now. Examples of the expenses are engine replacements and expected increases in the costs of operations.

Christine Chavez added that YARTS operates on a variety of schedules, and services do not align or overlap month over month. The budget will encompass some of the new contract starting November 1, 2022. The contract we have in place has been in place for three years, and at the end of the three years, YARTS is potentially looking at an increase in costs.

Nav Bagri added that another cost included in the service contract are the lease and maintenance of buses.

Christine mentioned to the AAC members that this item would be brought back as an action item during the YARTS Special meeting in May 2022 as well as the approval of the Operations and Maintenance contract.

Nav Bagri also mentioned that at the October 2022 meeting, there would be a discussion on funding opportunities.

8. Transit Manager's report

a. FTA 5339 Grant award (5 OTR clean diesel Coaches)

Christine Chavez reported that YARTS has been awarded funding for five over-the-road, clean-diesel coaches and mentioned that YARTS did not have to contribute a local match and was able to work with the state, and Caltrans was able to sponsor via Toll Credits.

b. Current YARTS Bus Order

Christine Chavez reported that YARTS currently has on order six over-the-road coaches.

c. Private-Public Partnership subcommittee

Christine Chavez is looking for volunteers and would like at least one AAC member per corridor per county to join the subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet to brainstorm ideas on possible funding opportunities.

d. AAC update to Governing Board

Chair Karen Baker to give AAC Update to the YARTS Governing Board.

e. AAC Orientation Binder

YARTS staff offered to reach out to AAC members to get updated contact information into the binders and get them distributed.

Mary-Michal Rawling reported that YARTS is once again submitting a request through Congressman Jim Costa's office for community project funding capital needs.

9. Member remarks

Sandy Hogan welcomed Madera County representatives Chris Baker and Rhonda Salisbury.

Jonathan Farrington shared that he looks forward to the return of events and that Mariposa is having its annual Mariposa Butterfly Festival (April 23, 2022 through April 25, 2022).

Lisa Mayo shared Tuolumne is having its second-year annual Art Week (April 10, 2022 through April 16, 2022) and that Tuolumne County just launched a Craft Beverage Trail.

Candy O'Donel-Browne praised staff for the excellent work and high level of professionalism they constantly demonstrate.

Rhonda Salisbury shared that she looks forward to a busy summer.

Hilda Sousa shared that resources are available at the FTA headquarters if anyone needs help with the FTA5311, FTA5311F and CMAQ program application.

Nanette Villegas shared that the renovation project for The Merced Mall is back on track and that she is happy and thankful to be a part of the AAC.

Christine Chavez reminded AAC members about the YARTS AAC Special Meeting on May 11, 2022.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE YARTS AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:15 P.M.