



Minutes of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board Meeting – September 12, 2023

A meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at Houston TranStar and via video conference. In attendance at the meeting were Directors Angelique Bartholomew, Robert A. Fry, Jr., Veronica Chapa Gorczynski, Kendrick Jones, Jon Keeney, Carol Abel Lewis, Robert Maldonado, Jr., Bruce Mann, Jean Mann, Allen Owen, and Jeff E. Ross. Absent were Directors Ronald Beeson and Stephen Gilbreath. Written notices of the meeting including the date, hour, place and agenda for the meeting were posted with Harris County, with the Secretary of State, and at the Gulf Coast Rail District office located at Houston TranStar in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The inaudible portions of the recording were removed from these minutes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Good afternoon, everyone. It is 2:01 p.m. I'd like to call the meeting of Gulf Coast Rail District to order. Today is September 12th, 2023. Today's meeting is being conducted with options to participate in person or by video conference. The public meeting location is Houston TranStar, 6922 Katy Road, Houston, Texas, Conference Center, Room 120A. The video conference is conducted through Microsoft Teams and that link can be found in the meeting invites, agenda, and public postings. The meeting is open to the public. The public will have the opportunity to address the board during Public Comments with a limit of three minutes per speaker. If you wish to address the board, please approach the podium or raise your hand if you're online during the Public Comments period. Board members may participate by video conference in accordance with the provisions of Section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code applicable to a governmental body that extends into three or more counties. Based on Open Meetings Act requirements, the Gulf Coast Rail District board members participating in Microsoft Teams need to be seen and heard throughout the meeting for attendance and for our recording of votes. Therefore members calling in by telephone will not count for quorum or voting. As required, I am physically present for the board meeting and ask that the secretary conduct the roll call. Please answer audibly when your name is called. Director Keeney, please.

Director Jon Keeney: Yes. Ronald Beeson? Robert Maldonado?
Director Robert Maldonado, Jr.: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Veronica Chapa Gorczynski?
Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Present.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Stephen Gilbreath? Jeff Ross?
Director Jeff Ross: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Carol Lewis?
Chairperson Carol Lewis: I'm here.

Director Jon Keeney: I know I'm here.

Director Jon Keeney: Bruce Mann?

Director Bruce Mann: Present.

Director Jon Keeney: Angelique Bartholomew?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Present.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Allen Owen?

Director Allen Owen: Present.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Kendric Jones?

Director Kendric Jones: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you, sir. Jean Mann?

Director Jean Mann: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. And Mr. Fry?

Director Robert Fry: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Madam Chair, we do in fact have a quorum.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Wonderful. Thank you so much. We'd like to go to number three, confirm our posting of the meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes, that was completed.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Ms. Patke confirmed that for us. Thank you very much. Our next item is presentation of a resolution letter in honor of Ms. Tina Arias Peterman who is going to move on to other things and we will certainly miss her, but we ask her to come forward as we provide this letter in her honor. Thank you.

So, we have a couple of things. Can you see, Tina? Tina, come on, need to scoot back. That's perfect. So, we have a couple of items for Tina. The first thing we have for Tina is our letter that just acknowledges all of your time and thanks you for all that you've done. It reads: Whereas Ms. Tina Arias Peterman has served as City of Houston appointee for position six on Gulf Coast Rail District since March 9, 2021, recognized in Resolution 21-05, where in furtherance of our organization objectives, she graciously contributed her time and expertise, provided valuable insight, perspective, and guidance. Whereas through our District board appointment, she served as vice treasurer from May 2021 to August 2023, co-chair to Legislative and Funding, and committeeperson for Marketing and Outreach, so we appreciate all of that. So, we just thank you for that. We resolve that we acknowledge and extend our gratitude to you for your distinguished service to Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors and deeply appreciate all your contributions.

Now, that's item number one. But as you all know, Director Peterman led us in our restructuring of our fee structure which we hadn't had since the GCRD started in 2007. So, she led that effort for us to have a formalized fee structure that has exactly... guidance.

Director Tina Peterman: Well, some people are clapping.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: There was one applause. I was applauding, yes. But it will take us forward because it has guidance for us to review ourselves. And so we so appreciate that, so in honor of that we don't want you to ever forget it so we framed it for you and will provide that fee structure for you so you can put it on your wall. Thank you very much.

Director Tina Peterman: Thank you, Doctor. Can I have a hug? Is this for me too?

Director Jon Keeney: Speak?

Director Tina Peterman: Oh, no.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I asked her if she wanted to make a speech.

Director Tina Peterman: No, no, no. No, no, no. I'm good, I'm good.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Said no to a speech. Thank you. So, we are ready for item number five, discussion and possible action on the minutes for July 11th. Director Keeney please.

Director Jon Keeney: Do we have any corrections or additions to the minutes? Hearing none, all those in favor?

Board: Aye.

Director Jon Keeney: Any opposed? Then, it's unanimous. Thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you very much. On to report from the treasurer, Director Owen please.

Director Allen Owen: Madam Chair, I would ask that David Banos give us his report first.

Mr. David Banos: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is David Banos and I'm here for Burton Accounting. We have a bookkeeping report dated for today, September 12th, 2023. Pass the cover page, you have cash flow for your checking account, beginning balance \$127,767. We have checks 2672 through 2675 that were signed and approved at your previous meeting. We have check 2676 that will be approved today. I also have an additional check that's not on this report. That will be reflected on next month's report and that's for Texas A&M Transportation Institute for \$534.98. Like I said that check will be reflected on next month's report. Total disbursements is \$5,585.61, leaves ending balance of \$122,181.55. Next page is the account balances for the District that shows a grand total of \$1,513,333.20. Page four is the actual versus budget comparison—that's for August 2023, and also has the year-to-date budget. The following page is the same report and that's for your grant and professional contract services and in kind and pro bono items. And the balance of my report is the grant status report which has no activity since your previous meeting. And that's all I have for your report and let me know if you have any questions.

Director Allen Owen: Thank you, David. Anyone have any questions of him?

Director Jeff Ross: I've got a question. This is Jeff Ross. How come we have bank service charges? Twice? It's only 5 bucks each time, but I would think we have enough money in the bank to not pay service charges.

Mr. David Banos: Yes. It's just part of the agreement that we have. Only certain banking entities that can handle the public funds and also have any other requirements that you require with the bank. So, because of it, there are service charges. Each of those service charges are for the month of July and August.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay. So, it's \$5 a month.

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Director Allen Owen: David, are there any pledges against those funds on the back?

Mr. David Banos: I'm sorry. What was that?

Director Allen Owen: Are there any pledges on the securities backing those deposits above the insured limit?

Mr. David Banos: Yes. All your deposits are guaranteed by the FDIC up to \$250,000.

Director Allen Owen: What about that that's above that?

Mr. David Banos: Oh, yes. We do have pledging for your money market account. That's actually a pool of funds that is guaranteed by the State of Texas.

Director Allen Owen: Yes, that's what I was asking. I thought so. Are there any other questions of David? If not, I'll entertain a motion to approve Resolution 23-17 ratifying our payments. Is there a motion?

Director Jeff Ross: Motion, Ross.

Director Allen Owen: Is there a second?

Director Jon Keeney: Second.

Director Jeff Ross: All those in favor?

Board: Aye.

Director Jeff Ross: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's our report.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you very much, Director Owen.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Can we go back to the minutes? Could you confirm a motion and a second? Did we get that?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Oh, for the Peterman resolution?

Ms. Lisa Patke: No, for the minutes.

Director Bruce Mann: I'll make that. I think we just voted without the motion and the second.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: He motioned.

Director Jon Keeney: I motioned.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Okay, okay.

Director Jon Keeney: Then, we had a unanimous.

Director Bruce Mann: So you can put me as the second. That's fine.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Okay.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes. I understand.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I understand. I understand the question. Thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, the next item we have is item number 8, discussion and possible action on Resolution 23-18 ratifying committees for GCRD Board of Directors. So, you have before you a resolution. So, we probably I think according to Robert's Rules of Order need a motion and second, and then under discussion, I would like to offer some changes to what we're looking at.

Director Bruce Mann: I'll make a motion.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you, Director Mann.

Director Jeff Ross: Second, Ross.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you. So, we've got a motion and a second, so I guess people want to say, "Okay, so what is she going to ask in terms of changes?" So, here we are. You have on this particular document the Houston Area Rail Transformation Committee, and we have been talking with our partners and among... Page 39 if people are looking for it... among our members about how best to orchestrate both the Houston Area Rail Transformation and the Roadway/Railway Committee. So, we will have a committee report shortly, but the decision was made to merge those two committees. So, we only have one committee that deals with the roadway/railway interfaces. So, what we're going to be asking you to consider and thusly someone would ask, if you all agree, someone would have to make a substitute motion that we want to... The Houston Area Rail Transformation, what's shown there, becomes the Houston Area Rail Transformation Working Committee Steering... I'm sorry, Working Group...

Director Bruce Mann: Dr. Lewis?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes.

Director Bruce Mann: I think we can just delete that off of here, period.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Off of our sheet?

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, we talked about deleting it off of our sheet, but I think it probably matters that GCRD does officially recognize that group from which it will get recommendations. So, what we're recommending it become is a subcommittee of what you see on your document

as Railway/Roadway Projects should transition to, if you approve this, the Houston Area Rail Transformation. So, that would be accompanied by, with their concurrence, adding Director Keeney and Director Chapa Gorczynski to THE HART. So, THE HART committee of GCRD would be the names you see listed under Roadway/Railway which would go away with that name and transition to the Houston Area Rail Transformation with the names you see—Ron Beeson, who would not be chair; Robert Maldonado; Bruce Mann, who would be chair; Jean Mann; Robert Fry; David Abraham from HCTRA would stay; Tyson Moeller would not be listed; and Jeremy Wagner would not be listed. So, THE HART Houston Area Rail Transformation Committee of GCRD would be comprised of only GCRD board members, and I would be happy to repeat the names if you'd like me to.

So, then secondarily, what you see as the Houston Area Rail Transformation would transfer to the Houston Area Rail Transformation Working Group Steering Subcommittee. So, what Director Mann brought up was since this working group with the steering committee, it actually emanates from THE HART Working Group—it doesn't really emanate from us. And so that was why he made that suggestion but we're admittedly kind of talking through these things right now. But I'm thinking that THE HART Committee of GCRD listed of our Board members is anticipated to take recommendations from this HART Working Group Steering Subcommittee. So, that's what I was thinking, that it might make sense to have that group of individuals formally recognized by our GCRD Board.

Director Bruce Mann: I think my only concern is we haven't got agreement on that structure of the working group.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: From the working group steering committee?

Director Bruce Mann: Right. So, maybe we just put Katherine and myself and put the rest TBD.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Bruce Mann: So, we have the structure but maybe not the people.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. So, what we can do is go back and confirm that. I actually remembered them agreeing to the list but not the functioning of that committee, right?

Director Bruce Mann: Well...

Chairperson Carol Lewis: But if you are unsure, then let's take it back to them for a more formal confirmation.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes, because there was some dialogue around the city/county thing.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Alright.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, for information, you see THE HART Houston Area Rail Transformation Working Group Steering Subcommittee recommended format. What we're going to do is go back to THE HART Area Working Group to confirm this.

Director Jeff Ross: Defer this item?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. There's a recommendation to defer this item until next month.

Director Jeff Ross: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. That's a motion. Is there a second?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I second.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Second by Bartholomew. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Anybody opposed?

Director Bruce Mann: Well, just discussion.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Bruce Mann: We could probably approve THE HART Committee and defer the subcommittee.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Bruce Mann: If you'd accept that...

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right.

Director Bruce Mann: ...friendly amendment to that.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Director Ross, so what the recommendation is that instead of deferring the whole thing, you can just defer THE HART portion. Actually, Director Mann said just defer the working group but accept the other committee.

Director Bruce Mann: So, we'd defer the subcommittee and keep the committee.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: And keep the committee.

Director Bruce Mann: If you'll accept that amendment.

Director Jeff Ross: That's fine with me. I think you can come back and make it clean in the next month. Nothing's going to change anyway.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So... That's true in terms of THE HART.

Director Jeff Ross: Committee assignments, right?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right. But there's really no reason to delay Legislative and Funding, Marketing and Outreach, and Passenger Transit, right?

Director Jeff Ross: I'm good.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, just in the interest of moving forward and sort of the...

Director Jeff Ross: So, let's back up.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes.

Director Jeff Ross: We'll withdraw the other motion to defer. And seeing as I seconded the first motion, I'll modify the first motion to say we approve everything except THE HART and the Railway/Roadway group.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Perfect. Okay, is there a second to that?

Director Bruce Mann: Second.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, that was the same thing, Ross and Mann again. Alright. All in favor of that?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Any opposed? Okay, great. Thank you. So, we will get clarification on THE HART portion and come back next month.

Director Jeff Ross: Great.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, we would now like to open for Public Comment if there's anyone who would like to comment. Hand raise? Any hands raised? Ms. Patke?

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes. Jean Mann.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Director Mann, go ahead please.

Director Jean Mann: That's okay. You moved on past it and I can't lower it.

Director Jeff Ross: You can't put your hand down.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Jeff Ross: She'll lower it.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Ms. Patke lowered it for you. I apologize, I didn't see it earlier. Alright. Anyone else? Alright. We will go on to item 10, report from our GCRD committees. You will recall that during the month of August, we did not have our regular monthly board meeting, but we asked each of the committees to meet and bring forward recommendations that will guide us through at least the next year and in some cases perhaps beyond. So, we're going to individually ask for reports from the committee chairs. Let's start off with Houston Area Rail Transformation, THE HART Committee, Director Mann.

Director Bruce Mann: Sure, thank you. So, we've been meeting for a while now as a steering group. And today what you saw is the first step maybe of trying to put some formal structure around THE HART Committee and the working group and trying to come up with some delegations for grant submissions and support letters. But we continue to work... I think hopefully – this is now September – hopefully sometime this month there's an announcement from FRA on whatever, is it CRISI?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: The RCE.

Director Bruce Mann: RCE.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: CRISI will be awarded.

Director Bruce Mann: CRISI. Yes, they're waiting. They haven't announced it, right?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Right.

Director Bruce Mann: So, hopefully this month and then the Rail Crossing Elimination will come out shortly after that. But we'll come back again next month with the subcommittee structure and talk a little bit more about that next month. That's it for now.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Legislative and Funding, Director Owen. Could you unmute your mic, Director Owen?

Director Allen Owen: It would help, wouldn't it? Anyway. Madam Chair, I agree to take Committee Chair Peterman's position on this committee as she's left us now, so it's my responsibility. We had our meeting on August the 21st. And we talked about a number of things but the thing that I think we talked about most was how we consult TxDOT on the TRZ and what percentage of money is set aside for that particular program. I think that we were told that Hays County has implemented a TRZ already and I think we're going to contact them about finding out what they're doing with it. Then we're setting up a meeting with Representative Canales'

office for the latest updates on the TRZ legal issues and Director Jones said he would reach out to Senator Campbell on the Senate Finance Committee to talk to him about that, and then we also need to find out what the benefits are for the counties to apply for TRZ and figure out what's involved in that and how we can get our counties, if they're not already setting up a TRZ, how they set it up and are we eligible to get any of the money from their TRZ to do the things we want to do. And we want to meet with the TxDOT officials to discuss matches for railroad projects that we might have, that the Gulf Coast Rail District might have in place, and either railroad relocation or different programs that allows for matching in funding for those rail-related projects. We're going to continue to look for opportunities for 3Ps that might be out there that would help us in some of our funding and I think we're going to talk later about the fee structure that we talked about for people that are in it, but that was our report.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, great.

Director Allen Owen: More about TRZ than anything else, Madam Chair, and finding out what counties have established those and how they work and whether we're eligible to participate and even get funding from their TRZ for projects that we might have. And I know I sent you all some stuff this past week that my former lobbyist in Washington sent me that there's some grants available. I don't know if we're eligible to apply for them but there's some grants available out there for crossing relocation and stuff like that. We need to be looking for opportunities from the federal government to help us.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Absolutely. Let me just kind of do if I could just a tail end on the Transportation Reinvestment Zones. For those who may not have had the backdrop on it, it was passed by the Legislature in the 2021 Session. We as Texas voters voted to approve it that fall, November 2021, and then there was a lawsuit about the language. So, that's what we're talking about, seeing if we get clarification on that. It's a Transportation Reinvestment Zone and just kind of want to make sure that there's solid understanding that it's different from a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. So, municipalities can do the TIRZ, which is Tax Increment. The counties can do the Transportation Reinvestment, which is the TRZ. So, just a backdrop to that. We're really wanting to talk to our counties to see if some of them are pursuing it and if they would indeed sort of decide that GCRD might merit a portion for the working group. So, other... Director Bartholomew?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Serving on the Legislative Committee, of course, Mayor Owen asked that we look into TxDOT, and we can have a presentation from them. She's going to be able to answer those questions and she will put our committee a direct Zoom together that we can just watch what it's about. And she shared that it is being heavily used by city and county and port authorities. They have had studies on rails but nothing particularly around that, so just an update but we can set a date outside of our committee meeting if you wanted.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: We would like that. So, that's coming out of TxDOT in Austin?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: This is the person, her name is Ms. De Hoyos. She's over the TRZ Board, TxDOT, and she answered directly. I can share that number and everything with the group. Julie De Hoyos.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, I think we would love for you to maintain that contact since you started it because we don't want multiple folks contacting her. So let's just allow you to be GCRD POC on that.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Okay. Well, I'll ask Mayor Owen when he wants to send out an invite to have our committee meet with her.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. So, Mayor Owen that would be baton hand to you. Get your microphone again for us. I know you're trying to make sure that we don't get background noise, but would you click the microphone for us please. You're on mute. Not yet.

Director Allen Owen: I think you keep muting me. Yes, just let me know what we need to do. And I think going back to what we talked about, I assume we need to also be identifying projects that we could ask the counties to participate within that TRZ if they're sitting there with funds and not knowing what to do with it. I think we can come up with some projects that shows them what we can do with some of the money if they're willing to let us participate with them.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I appreciate that point. I'm trying to think do we have Mayor Keeney on to talk about the strategic plan where that would come. It's probably not on the agenda per se. So, Executive Director Parker is helping with when we could get that conversation in because I think that that does go hand in hand with what you're saying about what we could show that we're wanting to do after the strategic plan is finalized, which I think we're in the last stages of it. Any other questions or comments on Legislative and Funding? Director Owen?

Director Jon Keeney: Just one.

Director Allen Owen: No, ma'am. I have nothing.

Director Jon Keeney: Just one quick comment. We had a meeting down in our area, which I made you aware of. And as a result of that meeting, I've had conversations with two Congressmen from our region, Weber and Babin, and they are both willing to support any of the grant efforts we had on the federal level. I've also begun conversations with Senator Cruz' office and I'm sure we can get his support. So, I guess the message legislatively is once we start going after grants, let's get all of our heads together and solicit input from as many of our federal folks as we possibly can. And from a state legislative viewpoint, I initiated some conversations with at least two state reps at a recent event. And when we start talking about changing funding mechanism, whether it be through TxDOT or a separate funding mechanism, we need to be very, very succinct and direct in terms of what we're looking for and how it's going to fit with federal grants and eliminate any confusion between Texas money and federal money and create the alignment that's necessary to make it happen. And the only red flags I got from the Texas folks were when I mentioned changing funding structure. That's when we have to be very succinct and direct.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Anyone else? Alright. Thank you, Director Owen. Marketing and Outreach Committee, Director Bartholomew.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Okay. Thank you so much, I appreciate it. The meeting for the Marketing and Outreach Committee took place on August 9th, and our group included Ms. Andrea French which is outside of the board but from Scenic Houston but has quite a bit of

transportation experience, so it was great to have her on the call as well as marketing and transformative marketing background. Jeff Ross was on the call and of course Katherine and myself to really just look at the points that were initially on the agenda. And in listening to the points that were on the agenda, we came up with a pretty creative fast way to get all of it done. It's just going to depend on of course dollars and the agreement of the board with the strategic move for marketing forward. We looked at the brochure and the annual report, and traditionally they have been excellent. It's great information; however, it is not as forward thinking in terms of just like attraction and what media and branding and marketing really looks like in terms of transportation today. So, we looked at the brand to evaluate if there was really a need for. There was one suggestion about a complete overhaul and if it had really appropriately been marketed. So, during this first call, I really just tried to listen to the various comments. Jeff brought up a really good point about the current board members and it being their appointment as opposed to like their title so that people will know what area they're representing I think was...

Director Jeff Ross: Right. And that we're regional. You can't tell regional of it but here you'll see Montgomery County, Waller County, all the entities at a point will be listed on that.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Which was an excellent point because as a new member from the board, I didn't recognize that.

Director Jeff Ross: Including the Port.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Or the agency of representation so that people will recognize kind of where we're all coming from. And then looking at what it was going to take to really build a following. The committee and GCRD has been around and very effective for many years and in its privacy state almost. But looking at where transportation and rail really is headed today, it's going to require a targeted audience, even if it is going to be the agencies and partners that we're looking to team up with for funding and projects. So, with that said, I met with Katherine shortly after to consider what the options really were around budget to just transform the current report and brochure and really questioning the use of those and how those items were being used. We looked at the brand overall. I don't think that we really had a lot of issue around the actual brand of GCRD, but it had not been targeted. And then increasing the mailing list. It's ironic that we're saying mailing list because now, those are old, like mailing list. I saw mailing list, I said, "Hmm." If we're still doing a mailing list then we've really, really got to consider what are the transformative options around marketing that could take GCRD to the next level. And of course, I'm going to say a bad word to some, but it's social media. So, looking at the development and linking professionally the purpose, the cause, and developing or having a following with the proper messaging is what I think our committee will evaluate over the next several months. We were forward thinking to put out an RFQ because these things take time and they take money, so I didn't want to delay on what the option is because it's truly something that we should be considering at this stage. So, an RFQ was put out on the 18th to the committee and sent out the following week to the entire board and it is due on the 15th. Director, is it Director Katherine?

Director Jeff Ross: Parker.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Parker will certainly let us know if those are coming in and we'll just consider them at that time and get the input, but that's it unless there's something else that I missed.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Well, I would say wonderful and social media is here and I would just like to ask, so we don't call it a mailing list anymore. What do we call our distribution and communication linkages? Is there a name?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It's your media market.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Media market, okay. Media market, there you go. Alright, media market.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: And just so everybody knows, I don't know if you saw the recent post about the bullet train just yesterday where they actually sent that out and it kind of went viral without it being back on track. So, those types of things are just kind of considerations that will help gain awareness and prepare our legislators for who we are when they see us because a lot of people don't know.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right. No, I think that's really important and as a matter of fact, Director Keeney just added to our strategic plan that we focus on people knowing who we are. So, the things that she's talking about are with the persons that we're talking about paying to help structure both the strategic plan and the annual piece. You all may recall that we put out an annual piece every year kind of about what we've done. So, those are the two pieces that we've got on plan for someone to help us pull together with I'll say a really modern eye that moves us into 2023 so we don't look like we're 2010 even though 2010 was yesterday to some of us. Please.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, on the marketing piece we talk about our annual report and our brochure. We will basically reevaluate those because we talked about having a leave behind in each of these meetings that we attend so that they know our goals, our initiatives, and who we are, so in addition to social media. So the social media request for quotes is what we'll be doing on the 15th. We're asking each director to reach out to your sphere of influence ask. But those two pieces I will talk with Sara Tristan, who did our website update, and she'll look at those to see whether we can combine this or whether we change them, but she'll work on that leave behind piece as needed. Thank you so much.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. That makes sense, we may only need one. Any other questions for Marketing and Outreach? Passenger Transit, Director Ross.

Director Jeff Ross: Hello, everybody. This committee met on August 8th. It seems like quite a while ago. And the things that we're going to focus on are the things that we've been talking about focusing on. I think for the 24th month of gestation of H-GAC and doing our US 90A Study and they were still grappling with the budget versus the available funds issue. So, we're not starting on that yet, but I think it's really key that we got to get that thing kicked off. And Allen will be on the steering committee, and we'll try and push them to a resolution to look at these alternatives, 90A and Alan mentioned another one going down the Fort Bend Toll Road Alignment. So whatever we can get out of them, that's what we want to try and do here so we can define a project that we can then start to gather energy around. The Westpark Corridor is not as far along but, in some respects, METRO has actually finished their study to take it from the northeast side of town at 59 and Tidwell all the way out to Westpark Toll Road and Beltway 8 on the west side of town. There is some money available to extend that to the Harris County border,

Harris/Fort Bend boundary, and then if Fort Bend wants to piggyback in, we'll be re-meeting to probably ask them for funding to continue on out unless the H-GAC funding can cover all that.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: It can.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay. When the committee was meeting, we were talking about trying to take the Westpark Study and move it directly underneath GCRD, but I think a day or two later Carol called me and said, "That's not going to work." So, we're going to be married into the same HGAC system that we're married into on 90A. The third spoke is the 290 spoke and at the time that we were meeting, the high-speed rail was effectively dead. We decided that we needed to move forward in trying to find a project regardless, whether it was dead or alive. And while Amtrak has come in and sort of breathed life into it, it's one of these I'll believe it when I see it situations. So, the outcome of this is we decided one of the people, one of the elected officials we needed to meet with first was Commissioner Briones from Harris County Precinct 4 who's new to the county, new to her position, and with the redrawn lines she actually has the 290 and the Westpark Corridors within her commissioner's precinct. So, Steve Gilbreath offered to make that contact. He has done so, and we have a meeting set up on Friday, October 20th, two o'clock. We'll need to figure out who all needs to go to that meeting besides Steve—he set it up, he needs to be there—and talk to her specifically about the work that we're trying to pursue on these two corridors as well as the TRZ concept because she's... county to set up a TRZ. So, we may as well put that on the table with her as well. And then looking even further out and now that we have active participation of Montgomery County and Galveston County, I guess, we want to sit down with their representatives to this board and try and figure out what's the next round of projects and that would serve those two counties that are aligned with this BRT spoke system. And so put that on your agenda, Jean, that we need to visit with you at some point and we need to meet with Galveston County as well.

Director Jean Mann: That sounds good.

Director Jeff Ross: I think that's the end of it.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Questions for Director Ross? Director Owen.

Director Allen Owen: Am I back? Somebody keeps turning me off, I think I'm back on. I sent you all an article this week and, Jeff, what's interesting is that Fort Bend County had just approved a \$6.6 million project for a park and ride on 1093. Yes, right there where we're talking about to improve transportation for the workforce that's coming out of Fulshear and that area. So they just approved it. SpawGlass has a contract to build it and it would be just, I guess, north of 99 on 1093. It's actually a Richmond address. So, that's going to be quite a project to help us get the 1093 project up and running as well, now having a park and ride that's going to be built similar to the one that's built on the toll road in Missouri City that will help us with trying to work with that. I don't know if you all saw that or not, but I sent to the chairman this week and I think it's of interest to know and it helps us with that project.

Director Jeff Ross: Is there going to be a surface parking with retail or how is it going to be designed?

Director Allen Owen: Yes, Jeff, I don't know what the details are. I just know that the commissioners in this last meeting approved it, and they awarded the contract to SpawGlass to

do it, but I don't know. I can't remember whether there was anything in the article whether it being... Let's see if I can see. Doesn't say. But it says that the timeline is not yet, to be determined by the Transportation Department. It's in the planning phase but it is approved.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay. That's great. Well, that's the Westpark Corridor that we're talking about.

Director Allen Owen: Exactly.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I don't know if you all said, I did check, 90A is on H-GAC Board meeting for this month for September.

Director Allen Owen: Very good.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, anything else on Passenger Transit?

Director Jeff Ross: That's all I've got, Madam Chair.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, Roadway/Railway, Director Beeson is not with us, but I will ask Director Mann and Executive Director Parker if they will negotiate and handle that particular report for us between the two of them.

Director Jeff Ross: Impromptu.

Director Bruce Mann: We killed the committee. No. Alright, maybe a nicer way to say that is we merged it into THE HART. So these two committees are now going to be one committee, so that is the report for that committee.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, would it be of value to talk about the categories of projects that we've discussed? Because that was part of the background discussion about retaining Roadway/Railway, and then how we ended up coming to the recommendation on that.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes. I think what we did was looked at the projects and said you've got major investment, regional-type projects, and then you've got some smaller local projects like putting in cross arms or rail crossings that don't cost a lot of money, that don't have regional impacts. So, we kind of looked at that and said there's these regional projects, there's local projects, we kind of created a threshold around, what was it, \$5 million, and said anything that really goes over \$5 million is really into a grade separation. Those are going to be regional impactful projects, that's kind of where we drew the line. And part of the next meeting I suppose is going to start to have the conversation of what that means for THE HART, what that means for the Rail District, some delegation for decision making, and we'll come back next month and talk a little bit more about that as it relates to the merged committee. So, thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Wonderful. Director Parker.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Just to piggyback on what Director Mann said, so those projects that are GCRD projects proper, which could be any TRZ project, that's what we'll have to kind of flesh out that stays with the Rail District. Because every project may not... It will affect HART, but it may not necessarily be a HART-sponsored project. And if we keep in mind that HART is a

committee of the Rail District, and we keep things kind of focused for the Board. HART as we know is gaining a lot of traction, a lot of positive inputs and really a lot of exposure as we meet each month. I'm hearing more and more about the work that we're doing and so just so that we know that we're in lockstep as far as the Rail District and this committee is part of.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you. Tyson Moeller from UP is also on Roadway/Railway. Do you have anything you'd like to add to the conversation?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Just a couple items as I was kind of listening in on some of the conversations. I'm here as a resource for any of those corridor projects, even if it is the passenger side. Understand part of my role for Union Pacific, I facilitate passenger services in certain corridors, and I handle 10 of our 23 states so I can be a resource on the 290 corridor. I have lots of insight on that because the high-speed rail project is one of mine and so I've spent quite a few years working with high-speed rail as far as that corridor. So, it's very tight utilities, our facilities as well as the roadways, Hempstead Road and 290. So, part of it's just continuing to offer resources. You don't have to kind of reinvent the wheel. So, as you get into those conversations, you can use me as a resource and kind of understand what conversations have already taken place with TCR and some of the other folks. The one other item as you engage TxDOT at the state level with the funding and the TRZ is also utilize the district as well. Sometimes when you go to the state level district, they want to be engaged in part of that conversation, and so find out who that local contact is. Some lessons learned from our side as we engaged the Rail Division and working with the district as well. Thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you. Just want to remind everyone too that GCRD has a Memorandum of Understanding with Texas Central that we are under their right of way from 610 to Beltway 8. I know they're under new personnel, so we probably want to make sure that we sort of pull that MOU and remind them that it is this. So, is there any other comment on any of the committee reports?

Director Allen Owen: Madam Chair, this is Director Owen. I saw something this week about Harris County not taking advantage of some federal funding, and that federal funding is being converted to Fort Bend County. Do you know anything about that? It's for transportation purposes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right. It was under the umbrella of the fact that our air quality attainment has not been approved by Federal Highway Administration so we're still waiting for that. And when that air quality approval has not come, that money could not be expended by... It was actually Houston METRO, so I don't know if Director Fry was aware that all this had happened but it was \$4 million specifically for senior and services for people with disabilities. And METRO Houston could not spend it because of that air quality cap, so they worked out an agreement with Fort Bend Transit to transfer that \$4 million for Fort Bend Transit so that they can use it on elderly and services for people with disabilities. So, that's the backdrop of what happened.

Director Allen Owen: Okay. Well, I saw that it happened. I just didn't realize what all it was about; I didn't know whether we were able to take advantage of any of that or not.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Not yet. We've got to get further down the road on having some project design before we can jump on some of those opportunities that become available at the

last minute. Sort of like you almost have to be in position for those. Alright. Well, if there's nothing else, I would like to thank Director Mann, Director Owen, Director Bartholomew, Director Ross, and Director Beeson in his absence for chairing those committees and managing those meetings over the last month. Thank you for everyone who participated. We could not have gotten to where we are without all of the contributions and comments and thoughts of all of our directors. So, thank you very much. I think as part of an overall arching of our committees A through E, I'd like for Director Keeney to say a little about the strategic plan because it is the umbrella under which all of our committee functioning occurs.

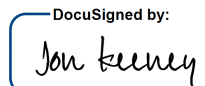
Director Jon Keeney: We met today and updated the strategic plan. I think we are ready to release it to everyone here, all the commissioners and we're especially interested in Marketing's response to it because I think it gives you the basis for some additional horsepower for this agency and don't be bashful about pushing on any of us who have worked on this plan to clarify as we move forward because the marketing component is a huge piece of this. And I just thank my colleagues very much for all the work that we have done. Katherine has done a good deal of work as has Dr. Carol, as has Bruce Mann and it's a product of multi heads and I think we have the basis for moving forward with a little bit more visibility and a little bit more clarity of purpose.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, most appreciated. So, Director Keeney was the one who started asking us about the strategic plan when he asked us... we need it, so let's get it done. So, appreciate that.

Director Jon Keeney: My pleasure.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: On to item 11, announcements by me. I just made the one about the US 90A, it is on H-GAC's agenda this month, so we should be seeing some real momentum. Although the first momentum is for them to negotiate the contract with the awardees, so that momentum may be unseen momentum but we're going to trust that it's going to happen. And then our next meeting is scheduled for October 10th, 2023. Thank everyone for your attendance here and we will adjourn (2:59 p.m.).

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

A64A3BB75E8546C...

Jon Keeney, Secretary
Gulf Coast Rail District

Transcription services provided by Transcription Panda.