



**Salem Area Mass Transit District  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIRTUAL MEETING  
February 25, 2021**

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Pursuant to Governor Brown's Executive Order issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually.

- **Zoom ID:** <https://cherriots-org.zoomgov.com/j/1608361530?pwd=MHNSRGZ3a1FITE5XSHIGdzYvRWpuUT09>
- **Cherriots Facebook Live:** <https://www.facebook.com/cherriots>
- **YouTube** via <https://www.capitalcommunitymedia.org/all>
- **Comcast Channel 21**

SAMTD Board of Directors meetings are video recorded and are available for viewing on YouTube through the Capital Community Media website at <https://www.capitalcommunitymedia.org/all>



Salem Area Mass Transit District  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIRTUAL MEETING**  
 February 25, 2021

**MINUTES**

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	President Ian Davidson; Directors Charles Richards, Chi Nguyen, Colleen Busch, Maria Hinojos Pressey, Robert Krebs, and Sadie Carney
<b>Board</b>	
<b>Staff</b>	Allan Pollock, General Manager; David Trimble, Deputy General Manager; Patricia Feeny, Director of Communication; Paula Dixon, Director of Human Resources & Labor Relations; Steve Dickey, Director of Technology & Program Management; Tom Dietz, Director of Operations; Chris French, Service Planning Manager; Roxanne Beltz, Transportation Options Coordinator; Wendy Feth, Accounting Manager; Chip Colby, Information Technology Manager; Gregg Thompson, Maintenance Manager; SueAnn Coffin, Contracted Services Manager; Scott Kirkland, Network Administer; Linda Galeazzi, Executive Assistant; Kathryn Pawlick, SAMTD Legal Counsel
<b>Guests</b>	Tim Williams, General Manager, MV Transportation; Clark Williams, Hetzel Williams PC   SAMTD Counsel for Retirement

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**6:30 PM**

President Davidson called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendance was noted and a quorum was present.

Mr. Pollock shared a *Safety Moment* reporting that the Governor lifted the restrictions for Marion County from extreme risk to high risk beginning Friday. People should continue to wash their hands, wear their mask and watch their distance being mindful of the people around them to safeguard against the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

**B. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

President Ian Davidson and each member of the Board expressed their sentiments and offered their condolences to the family and friends of former board member, Jerry Thompson; and for MV Transportation transit operators Rachael Bunting and Ralph Starkweather.

Jerry Thompson who passed away peacefully on February 13 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, will be greatly missed. Jerry served on the Cherriotics Board for 20 years from 1999 to 2019 as an officer of the board, as a mentor to his fellow board members, and on numerous committees representing the District at the local, regional



and state level. President Davidson provided written testimony honoring Jerry and his service while on the Board that is posted at the end of these minutes.

MV Transportation general manager Tim Williams was introduced and thanked everyone who sent their condolences. He thanked Cherriots for their most caring attitude toward their staff during this very rough time. Rachel Bunting and Ralph Starkweather were transit operators for MV Transportation's Cherriots' Regional contracted services, and were two of their top ten drivers with spotless records. They were both great drivers with good hearts and a lot of life to offer. Mr. Williams said they were loved by everybody at MV, and he knew that Cherriots felt the loss deeply.

Ralph Starkweather had been diagnosed with brain cancer in November 2020 and passed away on February 6 after a brave fight battling the cancer. Rachel Bunting died on the evening of February 4 from a fatal accident involving a Cherriots regional bus and another vehicle that took the lives of three people.

Upon review of the video of the crash as part of the investigation, Mr. Wilson could see that Rachel did everything right. She could not have done anything different that night to change the outcome. Mr. Wilson announced that beginning in 2022 on every February 3rd, MV will recognize and celebrate their top drivers, for as long as they can, in Rachel's name.

**C. PRESENTATION - None**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**E. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Shall the Board approve the Consent Calendar?

Presenter: President Davidson

Staff Report: 3-14 of the agenda

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 22, 2020 Board Work Session
- b. October 22, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting
- c. October 22, 2020 Executive Session re: Labor Negotiations

Motion: **Move to approve the Consent Calendar.**

Motion By: **Director Colleen Busch**

Second: **Director Chi Nguyen**

Vote: **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):**

**Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

**F. ITEMS DEFERRED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR - None**



## **G. ACTION ITEMS**

1. Shall the Board adopt Resolution No. 2021-01 to approve an amendment to the current non-bargaining retirement plan to define eligible employees as those first hired before March 1, 2021 and for certain positions currently under recruitment?

Presenter: Paula Dixon, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations  
Clark Williams, Hetzel Williams PC | SAMTD Retirement Counsel

Staff Report: Pages 15-18 of the agenda

Ms. Dixon introduced Clark Williams who provided his expertise during the District's review and analysis of its retirement plans. He prepared the amendment and the resolution that the Board will take action on. The Board discussed details of the new retirement plan under agenda item G.2 first to have a better understanding of their vote for amending the current plan.

Staff recommended adoption of Resolution No. 2021-01 to amend the definition of eligible employees to those hired before March 1, 2021, and to include the two new positions that are currently under recruitment, in the current non-bargaining (NB) retirement program.

In response to questions from the board, Ms. Dixon explained that going forward, employees hired on March 1 or after will be eligible for the new plan with the exception of the new positions currently under recruitment. The current plan is a defined benefit and defined contribution plan. The new plan is a defined contribution plan with an employer match program.

Mr. Williams said the current plan is more generous to employees in terms of a defined benefit they're receiving. That is why it is vested over five years. The only reason an employee might want to shift to the new plan, if given the opportunity, is because they knew they were leaving a year or two before the five year vesting period.

Ms. Dixon recalled the August 27 work session in 2020 where the Board reviewed an analysis of the current plan design and some alternative plans design and factors for evaluating them. From the feedback of that meeting, after reviewing four different plan designs, the District concluded that the defined contribution plan was best suited for the District. It was a common model and easily understood. Through an employer match of certain employee contributions, it provided an incentive for employees to also save for their own retirement. It was portable and employees could self-direct their funds. Under the proposed plan, the district contributes five percent of wages with an additional match of up to five percent if contributed by the employee. The employee can choose their own investments within the ICMA pool or they can select what is known as a targeted fund.



To the question about “opting in,” the current plan is automatic; the District makes the contributions and provides all of the funding. With the proposed plan, it would be automatic for the first five percent but the employee would have to opt in for the second five percent as the agreement is written. President Davidson was supportive of making a change to the agreement to “opt out.” The language to “opt in” infers that a person has to let someone know that they want to make an additional five percent, for instance. If the language states to “opt out” it makes it easier to invest. You get more people saving for their futures and retirement.

There was further discussion about increasing the retirement age from 60 to 65; the decision for choosing ICMA to manage the plan, and making sure than an orientation is provided for employees about the new retirement program.

Motion: **Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-01 amending the current “floor offset” non-bargaining retirement program to limit eligibility to those positions hired before March 1, 2021 and those specified in the resolution.**

Motion By: **Director Chi Nguyen**

Second: **Director Charles Richards**

Vote: **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):  
Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

2. Shall the Board adopt Resolution No. 2021-02 to authorize the proposed new plan design for a Defined Contribution Retirement Plan for new non-bargaining employees?

Presenter: Paula Dixon, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations  
Clark Williams, Hetzel Williams PC | SAMTD Retirement Counsel

Staff Report: Pages 19-36 of the agenda

President Davidson recommended that language in the new retirement plan be amended to state that employees can “opt out” of the employee contribution.

Motion: **Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-02 authorizing an additional Defined Contribution Retirement Plan for non-bargaining employees hired after March 1, 2021 except as noted; and with the amendment that the election shall be an “opt out” for employer contributions.**

Motion By: **Director Colleen Busch**

Second: **Director Sadie Carney**

Vote: **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):  
Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

3. Shall the Board adopt Resolution No. 2021-03 to approve the Special Transportation Fund and FTA 5310 (through ODOT) Projects for the 2022-2023 biennium?

Presenter: Steve Dickey, Director of Technology and Program Management



Staff Report: Pages 37-90 of the agenda

Mr. Dickey summarized his staff report and asked for questions. There were no questions.

Motion: **Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-03 to approve the Special Transportation Fund and FTA 5310 (through ODOT) Projects for the 2022-2023 biennium.**

Motion By: **Director Robert Krebs**

Second: **Director Sadie Carney**

Vote: **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):**

**Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

4. Shall the Board adopt Resolution No. 2021-04 to support the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Discretionary and Statewide Transportation Network (STN) Projects for the 2022-2023 biennium?

Presenter: Steve Dickey, Director of Technology and Program Management

Staff Report: Pages 91-160 of the agenda

Mr. Dickey read his staff report and fielded questions for clarification about the requests for the STIF discretionary and STN projects, and its purpose to improve connectivity and coordination between agencies.

Motion: **Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-04 to support the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Discretionary and Statewide Transportation Network Projects for the 2022 - 2023 biennium.**

Motion By: **Director Maria Hinojos Pressey**

Second: **Director Robert Krebs**

Vote: **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):**

**Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

5. Shall the Board authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Western Bus Sales, Inc. for the purchase of seven revenue service vehicles which include, four (4) Category B buses for replacement, and three (3) Category B expansion buses for the Cherriots Regional service, for an amount not to exceed \$1,769,353?

Presenter: Gregg Thompson, Maintenance Manager

Staff Report: Pages 161-162

Mr. Thompson reviewed the information provided from his staff report and asked if there were questions. Having none, the Board took action.

Motion: **Move to authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Western Bus Sales, Inc. for the purchase of four (4) replacement buses and three (3) expansion buses for the operation of the Cherriots Regional service in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,769,353?**

Motion By: **Director Sadie Carney**

Second: **Director Maria Hinojos Pressey**



Vote:

**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7):**

**Davidson, Nguyen, Richards, Busch, Carney, Hinojos Pressey, Krebs**

## **H. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **1. FY2021 Performance Measures Second Quarter Report**

Staff Report: Pages 163-192 in the agenda

Presenter: Chris French, Service Planning Manager

Mr. French used a PowerPoint presentation to report on Cherriots overall performance from October to December 2020 with the COVID 19 restrictions. He fielded questions and provided clarification on the data and how it is gathered for reporting. Of note, Cherriots Local weekday ridership was just over 700,000 rides; a 55% decrease compared to last year. Cherriots Regional service showed a 50% decrease. Cherriots Saturday service provided 88,498 rides. Year-to-date for the entire system totaled 840,653. All of the buses now have an automatic passenger count (APC) system which allows staff to look at stop level data for boardings and alightings to evaluate the activity. The top stop location in the system is at Lancaster and Sunnyview Road with an average of 135.7 boardings or activity during the day.

### **2. FY2021 Second Quarter Trip Choice Report**

Staff Report: Pages 193-204 in the agenda

Presenter: Roxanne Beltz, Transportation Options Coordinator

Ms. Beltz summarized her staff report using a PowerPoint presentation. She announced that she had been appointed vice-president of the Monmouth Independence Chamber of Commerce board. She noted that staff continues to keep in touch with the employee transportation coordinators through an e-newsletter. Staff also finished their digital teleworking tool kit. Both the ETC e-newsletter and the digital teleworking tool kit are available resources for those who would like to receive one by contacting the Cherriots transportation options team. She spoke about the poster contest, vanpool program, the future of bike share, and provided results of the Drive Less Challenge. She spoke about the Oregon Department of Transportation's safety message on a video that can be watched on this link <https://youtu.be/bBVRE0ofyYg>.

### **3. FY2021 Second Quarter Finance Report**

Staff Report: Pages 205-212 in the agenda

Presenter: Wendy Feth, Accounting Manager

Ms. Feth reported on the second quarter financial report by division. Total revenue in the second quarter came to 47% of the budgeted amount. Expenses were 41% of the budgeted amount.



#### 4. **Albany-Salem Feasibility Study Update**

Staff Report: Verbal

Presenter: Steve Dickey, Director of Technology and Program Management

Mr. Dickey updated the Board on the Albany-Salem Corridor feasibility study project that is funded by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF). It is a joint project between the Albany area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the District to evaluate the service feasibility between Albany and Salem, and potentially Millersburg and Jefferson, working with the consulting firm of Jarrett Walker and Associates (JWA). JWA established a needs assessment and existing conditions, and are now gathering input from the public through a virtual open house and survey from March 2 to April 2. They have focused on two alternatives. The first is an express-type service that would operate primarily during peak commute times between two endpoints in Albany and Salem. The second alternative is a coverage service circulating from Albany through Millersburg, Jefferson and then to Salem, for example. To get more information about this study and to participate in the survey, go to: <https://openhouse.jla.us.com/salem-albany-corridor>.

#### I. **GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT**

Mr. Pollock thanked the Board for their comments in remembrance of MV Transportation operators Rachel Bunting and Ralph Starkweather, and former board member, Jerry Thompson who served the District from 1999 to 2019. He announced that Governor Brown updated the risk levels from extreme risk to high risk for Marion and Polk counties effective February 26 to March 11. The Cherriots Administration Office will be open again but it will not change the District's street level protections on the buses. Mr. Pollock spoke about the Salem-Albany Feasibility Study Open House and encouraged people to participate. He will also provide more information in his weekly report about the Wheatland Road project and open house hosted by the City of Keizer.

#### J. **BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS**

**7:33 PM**

**Director Nguyen** introduced her son, Alexander who attended the virtual meeting briefly. She reported that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee's work so far was to open up the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for DEI Consulting Services. The District received five responses at the close of the solicitation. The selection committee will score the proposals and meet on March 6 to do an initial scoring.

**Director Busch** reported that she attended Coffee with [Mayor] Cathy Clark. She attended Senator Wyden's town hall meeting where the focus was on the wildfire cleanup efforts, and several chamber greeters' events in Keizer, Woodburn and Salem. She also attended the Marion County Commissioners meetings where it is always good to get that level of information. From the chamber meeting in Woodburn on March 5,





Cherriots received a “shout out” for their transportation coordination to the vaccination clinic there. Bill Post was the host of a Keizer chamber meeting where he encouraged people to participate in the legislative process verbally or with written testimony. Director Busch sent her condolences to the families of the people who lost their lives, and she thanked all of the first responders, electrical companies, hospital workers who helped throughout the ice storm. She said they were important, they made a difference to those around them. We need each other to make our community work.

**Director Carney** expressed huge kudos to those who helped with the storm clean up including the Cherriots workers who cleared the bus stop areas for people. She experienced significant tree loss, a fence that got crushed in a couple of spots and a basement that filled up with water when the sump pump didn't have electricity to run. One great lesson she learned from the storm had to do with the traffic signals not working with the loss of electricity. In some places, there was an obvious need for traffic signals where there were huge backups. In other places where traffic wasn't as heavy, people operating their vehicles were much more mindful of what was going on at the intersections. They were watching and making eye contact with other people at the intersection to make sure they were all on the same page about who went next, turning left or right. So often, as motorists, we get focused on the signal and our whole situational awareness is diminished. It was a really nice lesson from the storm, and a great opportunity for her family because they had sheltered in place for so long, to have a reason to connect with their friends and spend time outside picking up tree limbs. She noted that the Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is March 23. The *Our Salem* stakeholder advisory committee meeting is scheduled for April 3. Director Carney will connect with Director Hinojos Pressey before then to talk about those efforts. She also received an email invitation from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to attend a public meeting scheduled for May 25 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. about the DLCD commission's rulemaking on transportation planning rules that are related to both housing and transportation. They are asking for the District's participation and feedback so she will send that information forward to staff. She felt it was important to attend and provide feedback.

**Director Hinojos Pressey** reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee will meet in March. She was excited to hear that the City of Salem's *Our Salem* advisory committee will reconvene. She is also on the DEI Committee where they have been working through the procurement process to hire a consulting service. She expressed her condolences to all of the families who lost someone in the Cherriots family. The year 2020 has been such a crazy time and we are all hanging in there as best as we can. She appreciates everyone that is working with our communities, our marginalized communities, and our underserved communities. The ice storm made her realize a lot while she gave



support to her in-laws who felt isolated in their home without power in Silverton. She had a really hard time finding propane in Salem.

**President Davidson** spoke about one of the ways he processes his grief is by taking action. After learning about Rachel Bunting's death, he emailed the chair of the Mid-Willamette Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT) to see if he could say a few words at their meeting that day. The ACT is able to make recommendations for funding to ODOT, and 99E is a road that ODOT owns and maintains. He was given an opportunity to speak about the accident that killed Ms. Bunting and two others on the 99E corridor and asked that the commission make that corridor a priority for safety improvements; it has been dangerous far too long and too many people have been impacted and harmed along the corridor. So at the next MWACT meeting, the commission will be briefed on the different safety measures for the corridor to make changes there. President Davidson hopes that the influence that MWACT has can wield more influence at the state level to reduce the likelihood that this will happen in someone else's life because of the way the road is designed.

President Davidson attended Congressman Schrader's round table with Director Krebs. President Davidson was able to thank the congressman for his support on transit and transportation funding; in particular, the funding for the electric buses that the District will use on Route 11; and his support of the Climate Action Plan. He asked the congressman for his continued support in the next round for the infrastructure bill at the federal level. He also attended an optional meeting held by the City of Salem on greenhouse gas emissions because their regularly scheduled meeting was cancelled.

**Director Krebs** said he really misses the camaraderie and interaction of the in-person meetings and will be glad when people can get back to their new normal lives again. He did get his first COVID vaccination and encouraged people to go online to sign up. The Statesman Journal had an article with vaccine information that people could look up about the local vaccine clinics. He attended the Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organization Commission (OMPOC) meeting where there was discussion about ODOT funding at \$2.1 billion in the budget, and \$100 million additional funds for transit. It was projected that there will be additional COVID funds coming from the federal government that may help to offset some of the costs transit has incurred in dealing with COVID. ODOT noted that they have been doing a lot of work for the forest fire damage by clearing the trees off the roads and working with other agencies to clean up the trees and other hazardous waste materials so that people can get back on their properties. FEMA has also provided additional fund to take care of some of these things. Director Krebs again expressed condolences to the Cherriots family.



**Director Richards** expressed his sorrow for the losses of the members of the Cherrlots family and the others who died in the vehicle accident. He serves on the board for Northwest Senior Services that provides the Meals on Wheels program. They were very busy handing out food and water to those in dire straits. After the ice storm, he and eleven other people met to clean up much of the tree debris in front of seven houses along the street that he lives on. He said it really showed what you can do when you work together. Director Richards also volunteers at the air museum in McMinnville and announced that the museum will open on Friday after almost a year.

**President Davidson** invited the Board to recommend any items they would like to add to the agenda for future discussions. He adjourned the meeting in memory of the three members of the Cherrlots family that they lost to Jerry Thompson, Rachel Bunting, and Ralph Starkweather.

**K. ADJOURN BOARD MEETING**

**8:55 pm**

**Respectfully Submitted**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian T Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Ian Davidson, President**



Remembering  
The service of Jerry Thompson, Rachel Bunting, and Ralph Starkweather

*by Board President Ian Davidson*

I would like to take a moment to share a series of tragic events that have occurred this past month. It has been a sad few weeks for everyone at Cherriots and MV Transportation, which operates our regional bus service. We have lost three members of our Cherriots family.



On the night of February 4<sup>th</sup> there was a fatal accident involving a Cherriots bus and another vehicle. Three people died. Among them was Transit Operator Rachel Bunting.

Friends and family described her as kind-hearted, often taking in stray animals. She was loyal and caring, sticking up for and always focusing on the needs of her coworkers and her passengers.

Her husband Carl said that she just had a big heart, a heart of gold.

Rachel was a transit operator for eight years with MV Transportation and was proud of her spotless driving record.

The other two people who died from injuries sustained in the accident were the driver and passenger of the other vehicle.

On behalf of all the members of the Cherriots board of directors, I offer our condolences and warmest thoughts to Rachel's husband Carl, her friends and family, and her MV Transportation family.

We also express our condolences to the family and friends of the others who died in this tragic accident.

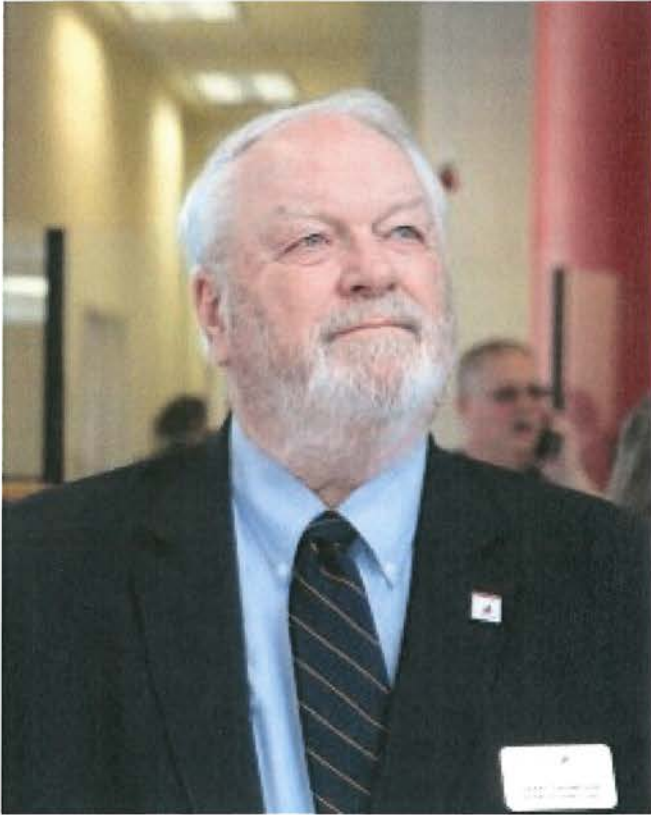


Sadly, that same week MV Transportation transit operator Ralph Starkweather, who was diagnosed with brain cancer in November 2020, passed away, after a courageous battle, on February 6.

Our condolences also go out to MV Transportation and Ralph's family and friends.



Lastly, I am deeply saddened to share the February 13 passing of my predecessor on the board, Jerry Thompson.



Jerry was a consummate public servant. He was a 38-year military veteran and a 25-year veteran of the Salem Police Department. As a 20-year Cherriots board member, he served as president, vice-president, and secretary.

At the dedication of the Keizer Transit Center Jerry said that events like that celebrate the hours, days, months, and in some cases, years of hard work that go into putting together such a wonderful facility. I think the same can be said about Jerry, who was instrumental in making Cherriots the mission-minded and value-driven organization it is today.

We all benefited from the hours, days, months, and years of hard work that Jerry put into Cherriots and our community.

Jerry, thank you for your dedicated service.

To Sue, his wife, and the rest of his family and friends, we send our deepest sympathy and heartfelt thoughts.

Even though Rachel, Ralph, and Jerry are no longer with us, the memory of them lives on in our hearts.