



MINUTES

**CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK
REGULAR MEETING
Monday August 19, 2024 6:00 p.m.
BFT Administration Bldg. GM Conference Room
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Kennewick, WA**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88161679988?pwd=fxrppdq7U7NCfNysoYymMxYiXmfUTu.1>

Meeting ID: 881 6167 9988 Passcode: 155544 Dial In: (253) 215 8782 or (888) 788 0099

CAN Meeting Agenda, Meeting Minutes and archived Zooms will be available at:
[Citizens Advisory Network - Board Information | Ben Franklin Transit \(bft.org\)](#)

1. CONVENE CAN MEETING

Chair, Ed Frost

Convened at: 6:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Secretary / Recorder, Dennis Kreutz

Representing	Attendee Name	Title	Status
Citizen Advisory Network	Ed Frost	Chair	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Dori Luzzo-Gilmour	Vice Chair / Recruitment Chair	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Dennis Kreutz	Recording Secretary	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Bernie Vinther	Member	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Brooklyn Hufstader	Member	Absent
Citizen Advisory Network	Frank Cuta	Member	Zoom
Citizen Advisory Network	Laurie Price	Member	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Mathew Howie	Member	Zoom
Citizen Advisory Network	Nayeli Aranda	Member	Absent
Citizen Advisory Network	Ulises Navarro	Member	Absent
Citizen Advisory Network	Vanessa Pruitt	Member	Present
BFT Staff	Janet Brett	Manager of Communication	Present

3. COMMENTS BY GUESTS:

Chair, Ed Frost

Guest Tom stated that he was getting used to the area.

4. JULY 2024 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL: Chair, Ed Frost

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve the Minutes by: Dori Luzzo-Gilmour

Second to Approve the Minutes by: Lauri Price

Minutes Approved unanimously by a Voice Vote of the CAN Members: YES

5. OLD BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. In the June CAN Meeting we discussed email sent to CAN by Transit Awareness TC
Email is included below as Attachment A.
Breakdown of the email by Subject is included below as Attachment B.

Discuss if a response should be made since we received this as a Public Comment.

CAN ACTON: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting after meeting with new BFT CEO.

- B. From July CAN Meeting - BFT has been requested to provide information to CAN regarding the rumored late payment of vendors.

BFT ACTION: Kevin Sliger reported that he is not sure if this is an issue or not but will bring it up with new BFT CFO to put together a report for the October CAN Meeting.

- C. From the July CAN Meeting - CAN requested an update on the status of the Ranger System, in light of the many outages over the past 6+ weeks.

BFT Kevin Sliger stated that there have been issues since upgrades were attempted to be installed. This is an ongoing problem that is being worked on by the vendor.

BFT ACTION: Update by BFT if issues have been resolved and discussion about technology and plans for preventing future problems with this older system.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. An email by Transit Awareness dated July 30, 2024 has been received by Citizen Advisory Network, addressed to BFT Board and all CAN Members. The email is attached as Attachment C.
Breakdown of the email by Subject is included below as Attachment D.

CAN has invited CFO / Interim CEO Sarah Funk to attend the August CAN Meeting to add to the discussion regarding the July 20 email received from Transit Awareness TC.

CAN ACTON: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting after meeting with new BFT CEO.

- B. When will the signage be put on the Coaches to make riders aware of the upcoming route changes?

NOTE: Signage has been noticed on some of the Coaches.

C. Issue regarding Public Restroom at BFT Transit Centers, brought up to CAN by concerned Rider to Dennis Kreutz.

1. How would restrooms be unlocked for Public usage?
2. Would they be safe and clean if unlocked?

3. If used by Public would drivers be able to use on short stops at Transit Center?
4. Could self locking portable toilets, to be unlocked by any driver, work?

CAN Action – No further action at this time.

D. Assign CAN Member to attend September 5 BFT Board Meeting:

Assigned: Laurie Price

1. CAN Member Dori Luzzo Gilmour proposed that a CAN Recommendation be drafted for presentation in the September Board meeting asking BFT Directors and BFT Board take public stance in opposition to the Repeal Initiative 2117.
2. CAN Chair Ed Frost assigned Dori Luzzo Gilmour, Dennis Kreutz, and Frank Cuta to generate the Recommendation.

7. BFT BOARD / BFT STAFF COMMENTS:

- A. BFT Kevin Sliger reported that Benton County Fair BFT Rides will be free this year due to having a sponsor.
- B. BFT Kevin Sliger reported that the Digital Art show this year was a success and will be repeated.
- C. BFT invited CAN Members to participate in the Monday November 11 Veterans Parade.

8. CAN MEMBER COMMENTS:

A. By CAN Member Dennis Kreutz:

1. In the July CAN Meeting it was reported by BFT Kevin Sliger that the contract extension has been executed, but service changes will not go into effect until August.

Status Update by BFT: When will Overflow Para Transit Service commence?

BFT Action: Contract is not in place yet.

2. Cameras are being added to vehicles.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. Is product data on the installed cameras available?
- b. Installation location in the vehicles of the installed cameras showing field of view?
- c. Storage method of recorded video?
- d. Do cameras have audio storage capability, and what is storage method of audio.
- e. What is the duration of the recorded storage?
- f. How is the recorded storage accessed by BFT?

CAN ACTION: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting

3. Additional vehicles with Paratransit capabilities are being added.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. Are vehicles ready for service?
- b. Are they available for inspection / usage by CAN Members?

CAN ACTON: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting

4. Additional driver background checks and training will take place.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. CAN BFT provide a side-by-side curriculum comparison to the BFT Para Transit drivers training course?

CAN ACTON: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting

- B. The WA State Public Transportation Conference was held in Kennewick August 12-14. Attended by CAN Members Frank Cuta and Dennis Kreutz

CAN Member Frank Cuta Report: Very beneficial, has technical information being provided.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report: Very impressed with quality of presentation and especially with the experiences of other agencies transitioning to Clean Energy. Many of the agencies have experienced major technical difficulties the with codes and restrictions of older facilities.

- C. BFT did three days of social media and User Training Videos recently.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report: New Video company very professional.

- D. CAN Members Bernie Vinther and Dennis Kreutz participated with BFT in the Benton Franklin County Fair Grand Parade on August 17.

CAN Member Bernie Vinther Report: Encourage other BFT Board and CAN Members to participate next year.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report: Very well attended, suggest BFT come up with something unique to set themselves apart from those throwing candy.

9. OTHER:

- A. CAN Member Mathew Howie announced that he is moving from the area and will need to resign from Citizen Advisory Network as of this meeting.

10. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Regular CAN Meeting Monday September 16, 2024, in the Ben Franklin Transit Admin Building, GM Conference Room, 1000 Columbia Park Trail , at 6:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

- A. Meeting adjourned at: 7:35 PM

Chair, Ed Frost

ATTACHMENT A: JUNE 14 EMAIL SENT TO CAN BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

From: transit awareness tc [mailto:transitawarenesstc@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 11:08 AM

To: brookhuf@gmail.com; catlady126@aol.com; dennis.kreutz@yahoo.com; Dori Luzzo Gilmour; edwinfrosto123@gmail.com; frank@cuta.net; laurie.price@rsd.edu; myorkhowie@gmail.com; naaranda@psd1.org; pvanessa68@gmail.com; ulisesn@alcon.media

Subject: Urgent Call for Accountability and Representation

Dear Citizens Advisory Network Members,

I am deeply troubled by recent developments at our agency over the past year. The decisions to replace essential dial-a-ride services with a taxi service, consider discontinuing free youth riding, restrict public comment, propose fare increases, implement service reductions, face impending layoffs, and encounter challenges with the sales tax issue threaten to significantly impact our services. These actions raise serious concerns about the direction and decision-making within our agency.

I have cc'd you on a message to the board that provides insights into the current challenges we are facing. The reality is that the previous general manager's actions led to a significant loss of staff. Unfortunately, the current interim GM is continuing down a similar path, making irrational decisions that have resulted in unpaid bills, vendors unwilling to work with us, and crucial reports not being submitted promptly, jeopardizing our funding and operations. It appears our agency is in a state of disarray.

We are at a crucial juncture where choosing the right CEO is paramount. The current leadership lacks the essential comprehension and expertise needed to proficiently manage our taxpayer funds and effectively serve the community. Instead, we are witnessing the agency falter due to poor leadership and mismanagement. The lack of accountability within the board is equally concerning and unacceptable.

Here's how you can contribute:

1. Advocate for inclusion in the evaluation process of a new CEO.
2. Evaluate the validity of my concerns and their impact on our agency.
3. Request from HR a detailed staff headcount and hire dates.
4. Investigate the number of outstanding bills and the implications.
5. Demand a monthly list of public comments.
6. Request a comprehensive budget analysis with year by year comparison dating back to 2021.

Looking ahead, I believe it's crucial to enhance accountability within our agency. I propose that a member of the Citizens Advisory Network (CAN) be appointed to the board. This step will ensure that your voices are heard and that we have better oversight and accountability for the board, GM, and CEO, thereby preventing such situations from arising again in the future.

As you conduct your evaluation, you will discover that our concerns are justified. Ben Franklin Transit must prioritize the community's needs and restore efficient service. It is crucial that prompt action is taken to appoint capable leadership and resolve the current situation.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. Together, we can ensure our agency meets its responsibilities to the community.

ATTACHMENT B: SUBJECT BREAKDOWN OF JUNE 14 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

CAN Response to Transit Awareness TC email dated June 14, 2024 DRAFT 01

1.

Dear Citizens Advisory Network Members

I am deeply troubled by recent developments at our agency over the past year.

CAN: Need to respond to BFT and Board since we received as a Guest Comment?

2.

The decisions to replace essential dial-a-ride services with a taxi service

3.

consider discontinuing free youth riding

4.

restrict public comment

5.

propose fare increases

6.

implement service reductions

7.

face impending layoffs

8.

and encounter challenges with the sales tax issue threaten to significantly impact our services.

9.

These actions raise serious concerns about the direction and decision-making within our agency.

10.

I have cc'd you on a message to the board that provides insights into the current challenges we are facing.

CAN: Put message on CAN Agenda.

11.

The reality is that the previous general manager's actions led to a significant loss of staff.

12.

Unfortunately, the current interim GM is continuing down a similar path, making irrational decisions that have resulted in unpaid bills,

13.

vendors unwilling to work with us,

14.

and crucial reports not being submitted promptly,

15.

jeopardizing our funding and operations.

16.

It appears our agency is in a state of disarray.

17.

We are at a crucial juncture where choosing the right CEO is paramount.

18.

The current leadership lacks the essential comprehension and expertise needed to proficiently manage our taxpayer funds and effectively serve the community.

19.

Instead, we are witnessing the agency falter due to poor leadership and mismanagement.

20.

The lack of accountability within the board is equally concerning and unacceptable.22.
Here's how you can contribute:

20a.

1. Advocate for inclusion in the evaluation process of a new CEO.

20b.

2. Evaluate the validity of my concerns and their impact on our agency.

20c

3. Request from HR a detailed staff headcount and hire dates.

20d,

4. Investigate the number of outstanding bills and the implications.

20e,

5. Demand a monthly list of public comments.

20f.

6. Request a comprehensive budget analysis with year by year comparison dating back to 2021.

21.

Looking ahead, I believe it's crucial to enhance accountability within our agency.

22.

I propose that a member of the Citizens Advisory Network (CAN) be appointed to the board. This step will ensure that your voices are heard and that we have better oversight and accountability for the board, GM, and CEO, thereby preventing such situations from arising again in the future.

23.

As you conduct your evaluation, you will discover that our concerns are justified.

24.

Ben Franklin Transit must prioritize the community's needs and restore efficient service.

25.

It is crucial that prompt action is taken to appoint capable leadership and resolve the current situation.

26.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. Together, we can ensure our agency meets its responsibilities to the community.

ATTACHMENT C: JULY 30 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

Re: Urgent Call for Leadership Renewal: Restoring Trust and Effectiveness at Ben Franklin Transit

transit awareness to transitawarenesstc@gmail.com
7/30/2024 9:01 PM

To: brad.beauchamp@ci.kennewick.wa.us; cdidier@franklincountywa.gov; csuttle@bft.org; dsandretto@ci.benton-city.wa.us; grimmcouncil@pasco-wa.gov; jbishop@roachlaw.com; kmaier@ci.richland.wa.us; rbloom@westrichland.org; sbauman@franklincountywa.gov; sbecken@ci.prosser.wa.us; will.mckay@co.benton.wa.us Cc: brookhuf@gmail.com; catlady126@aol.com; dennis.kreutz@yahoo.com; Dori Luzzo Gilmour; edwinfrosto123@gmail.com; frank@cuta.net; laurie.price@rsd.edu; myorkhowie@gmail.com; naaranda@psd1.org; pvanessa68@gmail.com; ulisesn@alcon.media; planning@bft.org; customercomment@bft.org

It has now been almost two months since you received the last email and BFT staff remains deeply concerned and frustrated by the ongoing mismanagement and detrimental decisions within our transit agency. The current trajectory is leading to a breakdown of our transit services at a time when our community needs them the most.

There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023 and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable. The lack of concern over the missing financial information presented to the board monthly is deeply troubling. Staff have provided ample evidence that our entire Finance team is not equipped to run the agency appropriately, yet the board continues to allow our interim GM to hold a powerful title when she can't even manage her own position or her team.

At the last board meeting, it was reported that several vendors had not been paid, which is prohibiting our agency from operating effectively. Despite this, over 20 vendors remain unpaid including dozens more invoices, some for more than 60 days. This failure to meet financial obligations further compounds the issues we are facing and underscores the severe mismanagement within the agency.

How much more evidence is needed to demonstrate that staff have zero confidence in her leadership abilities before the board acknowledges the reality of the situation? The interim General Manager's continued tenure is untenable and immediate action must be taken to address this leadership crisis. These investigations seem pointless and a facade while staff deal with the chaos that continues to unravel, with no accountability in sight. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.

The proposed service cuts, despite the pending outcome of Initiative 2117, demonstrate a clear lack of foresight and disregard for the community's needs. We should be concentrating on enhancing transit, not breaking it down based on unclear financials. The interim General Manager's suggestion to implement even more cuts seems to be a misguided attempt at self-redemption, rather than a strategic move to improve the agency. This is not the leadership our agency requires. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges and mitigate further issues. The facade of everything being okay is not only misleading but also dangerous. The community relies on these services and any further

deterioration is unacceptable.

I urge the board to take immediate and decisive action to rectify these issues. If the board continues to avoid addressing these critical issues, it sends a clear message about your stance on transit and your commitment to improving our community. Ignoring the mismanagement and allowing the current leadership to persist reflects a troubling disregard for the essential services our community relies on. The board's inaction undermines public trust and signals a lack of genuine concern for the well-being and future of our transit system and the community it serves.

Our transit agency's future depends on the decisions you make now.

END OF TRANSIT AWARENESS TC EMAIL

ATTACHMENT D: SUBJECT BREAKDOWN OF JULY 30 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

1. It has now been almost two months since you received the last email
2. and BFT staff remains deeply concerned and frustrated by the ongoing mismanagement and detrimental decisions within our transit agency.
3. The current trajectory is leading to a breakdown of our transit services at a time when our community needs them the most.
4. There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight.
5. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023
6. and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable.
7. The lack of concern over the missing financial information presented to the board monthly is deeply troubling.
8. Staff have provided ample evidence that our entire Finance team is not equipped to run the agency appropriately,
9. yet the board continues to allow our interim GM to hold a powerful title when she can't even manage her own position or her team.
10. At the last board meeting, it was reported that several vendors had not been paid,
11. which is prohibiting our agency from operating effectively.
12. Despite this, over 20 vendors remain unpaid
13. including dozens more invoices,
14. some for more than 60 days.
15. This failure to meet financial obligations further compounds the issues we are facing and underscores the severe mismanagement within the agency.
16. How much more evidence is needed to demonstrate that staff have zero confidence in her leadership abilities before the board acknowledges the reality of the situation?
17. The interim General Manager's continued tenure is untenable
18. and immediate action must be taken to address this leadership crisis.
19. These investigations
20. seem pointless and a facade while staff deal with the chaos that continues to unravel,
21. with no accountability in sight.

22. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.

23. The proposed service cuts,

24. despite the pending outcome of Initiative 2117,

25. demonstrate a clear lack of foresight

26. and disregard for the community's needs.

27. We should be concentrating on enhancing transit,

28. not breaking it down based on unclear financials.

29. The interim General Manager's suggestion to implement even more cuts

30. seems to be a misguided attempt at self-redemption,

31. rather than a strategic move to improve the agency.

32. This is not the leadership our agency requires.

33. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges

34. and mitigate further issues.

35. The facade of everything being okay

36. is not only misleading

37. but also dangerous.

38. The community relies on these services and any further deterioration is unacceptable.

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40. If the board continues to avoid addressing these critical issues,

41. it sends a clear message about your stance on transit

42. and your commitment to improving our community.

43. Ignoring the mismanagement

44. and allowing the current leadership to persist

45. reflects a troubling disregard for the essential services our community relies on.

46. The board's inaction

47. undermines public trust and signals a lack of genuine concern for the well-being and future of our transit system and the community it serves.

48. Our transit agency's future depends on the decisions you make now.
END OF TRANSIT AWARENESS TC EMAIL