



MINUTES

**CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK
REGULAR MEETING
Monday September 16, 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	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Frank Cuta	Member	Zoom
Citizen Advisory Network	Laurie Price	Member	Present
Citizen Advisory Network	Nayeli Aranda	Member	Absent
Citizen Advisory Network	Ulises Navarro	Member	Absent
Citizen Advisory Network	Vanessa Pruitt	Member	Present
BFT Staff	Thomas Drozt	CEO	Present
BFT Staff	Janet Brett	Manager of Communication	Present
BFT Staff	Kevin Sliger	Chief Planning / Development	Present
BFT Staff	Brittany Archibald	Marketing	Present

3. COMMENTS BY GUESTS:

Chair, Ed Frost

Macy – Questions about BFT rides from Othello to Columbia Basin College.

CAN ACTION: requested that BFT respond with availability.

BFT – Kevin Sliger – responded that the area in Othello is not included in an area that has opted into service. He will get Macy info on putting on ballot.

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

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve the Minutes by: Lori Price

Second to Approve the Minutes by: Dori Luzzo Gilmour

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 ACTION: Discussion deferred until the October CAN Meeting.

- 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 BFT Finance to put together a report for the September CAN Meeting.

BFT ACTION: Kevin Sliger reported that all accounts payable are current.

- C. 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 ACTION: Discussion deferred until October CAN Meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. CAN Member Vanessa Pruit has invited two people to join our meeting by Zoom to discuss Washington Week Without Driving which begins September 30.
1. Guest Cecelia Black – Community Organizer for Disability Mobility Initiative
cecelialab@dr-wa.org
 2. Jaime Torres
99301@gmail.com

PRESENTATION:

If you can drive or afford a car, you may not understand what it's like to rely on walking, rolling, transit and asking for rides. But for nearly a third of people living in the United States – people with disabilities, young people, seniors and people who can't afford cars or gas – this is our every day.

We created the Week Without Driving challenge so that those who have the option to drive can learn firsthand about the barriers and challenges that nondrivers face and work with nondrivers to create more accessible communities for all.

- "Week withoutdriving.org"

How does it work?

You can get around however you want, but the challenge is not to drive yourself in any car. This applies to all your activities — not just your work commute. If you normally transport other family members or friends, it applies to those trips too.

You can ask someone else to drive you, but make a note of how much you “owe” this person in their time, and if you felt obligated to support them in other ways (ie, doing all the dishes). You can ride hail or taxis if they exist where you need to go, but again, think about how the cost could impact your decision to take this trip if this was regularly your only option.

This isn't a disability simulation or a test of how easily you can find alternatives. We know that it is far easier to give up your keys if you can afford to live in a walkable area well served by transit, or can outsource your driving and other transport and delivery needs to other people.

Having to drive during the challenge does not signify failure. Sometimes the best reflection comes when someone participating in the challenge has to drive. The point is to consider how someone without that option would have coped, and what choices they might have made.

I am organizing an event with the assistance of disability rights in Washington on September 28th, next Saturday at Cafe Con Arte. This is a great opportunity to meet with community leaders and advocates to ask questions that you may have. Ulysses Navarro is one of the panelists and we are excited to have him! Catering will be provided by Picante Mexican restaurant. The event starts at 2:00 and ends at 4:00 p.m. Monday, September 30 – Sunday, October 6, 2024

- B. BFT Marketing – Brittany Archibald presented the BFT Week Without Driving plans.
 - 1. Video and photo ops of different transportation methods including BFT Services and Bicycling.
 - 2. Most of the CAN Members are participating as well as BFT Director Maier.
- C. Introduction of BFT CEO Thomas Drozt, with open discussion by CAN Members.
 - 1. A brief review of his work history and responsibilities within the transit industry.
 - 2. Responded that he has been involved with other agencies making transition to Clean Energy.
- D. Report of the September 5 BFT Board Meeting – Dennis Kreutz
 - 1. CAN Recommendation 2024-07 Vote No on Initiative 2117 was read to the BFT Director and Management
No response by BFT Board.
See Attachment E below:

2. BFT Management reported that there were approximately 25,000 rides to the Benton County Fair.
3. Director Didier reported that his relatives went to the fair on the same night, one driving the other via BFT and even though they left the fair at the same time the one riding BFT got home 1 ½ hours quicker. Said that was a great success.

E. Assign CAN Member to attend October 10 BFT Board Meeting:
Assigned: Dennis Kreutz

7. BFT BOARD / BFT STAFF COMMENTS:

BFT Kevin Sliger –

1. Eastgate Transit Center is now fully operational.
2. Route 50 Mall Service is operational and picking up increasing rides.
3. A new DAR Class started this week, and new classes will start frequently.
4. Discussion for securing new Broadmoor Pasco transit center land is being discussed in BFT Executive Session.

8. CAN MEMBER COMMENTS:

A. CAN Member Bernie Vinther stated that he has noticed a number to indications of mechanical issues on BFT Vehicles but does not know the best means of reporting to BFT.

BFT – Kevin Sliger stated that there should be comment cards on the vehicles as well as QR Code to link to online Comments. He will check if that is correct.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz suggested that the online comments can be used and that there is BFT Policy in place for comment tracking and response.

B. CAN Member Dori Luzzo Gilmour asked if a response had been received from BFT Board and Directors regarding CAN Recommendation 2024-07 presented in the September 2 Board Meeting.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz responded that the agreed upon response is 10 business days, which is today, and that no response has been received.

It was discussed as presented to CAN that the Board be reminded regarding their prior to commitment in April 2024 to respond within 10 business days.

Motion: Dori Luzzo Gilmour

Second: Bernie Vinter

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

9. OTHER:

10. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Regular CAN Meeting Monday October 21, 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: 7:40 PM

Chair, Ed Frost



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>

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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

- D. 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.

- E. 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.

- F. 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:

- B. 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:

Chair, Ed Frost

- B. Meeting adjourned at: 7:35 PM

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.

39. I urge the board to take immediate and decisive action to rectify these issues.

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.

49. END OF TRANSIT AWARENESS TC EMAIL

ATTACHMENT E:

The BFT Citizen Advisory Network (CAN) is tasked in CAN Standing Rules – Section 1.1.a to assist BFT by serving as an advisory body to BFT Management and to the BFT Board of Directors. In that capacity the following recommendation is offered.

CAN Advocacy Item - Recommendation 2024-07 August 22, 2024
BFT Board and Directors take a public stance to Vote NO on I-2117

Issue:

Washington Initiative 2117 to Repeal the Climate Commitment Act is on the November ballot, and if passed will cause Ben Franklin Transit to lose approximately \$5.4 Million per year in funding.

Ben Franklin Transit had more than 1 million Youth Rides in 2023. In recent BFT Board Meetings it has been discussed by Directors and in Public Comment that the Kids Ride Free Program provides vital transportation services to school age youth, especially to after hour activities.

The Citizen Advisory Network has previously brought to the Board attention that \$70 million over the next 13 years would be lost as revenue to Ben Franklin Transit and the local community if the Move Ahead Washington funds are not available.

One of the Mandatory Requirements for BFT to receive the Move Ahead Washington funds is that all riders 18 years and younger ride free. Another mandatory requirement is that the Transportation Sales Tax cannot be reduced from the current 6/10 of 1 percent. Another requirement is that Initiative 2117 not pass.

In order to meet the first two requirements, the BFT Board wisely voted unanimously in April 2024 to table until 2026 a BFT Resolution to reduce 6/10 of 1 percent Transit Sales Tax. Now the funding of the Kids Ride Free Program is threatened to be lost if WA Initiative 2117 is passed.

This lost revenue to BFT likely will need to be made up either by increasing fares, reducing services, or both. In addition to reducing service coverage, it may be necessary for the BFT Board to eliminate the existing Kids Ride Free Program, and Seniors Ride Free, and Veterans Ride Free and Reduced Fare rates to disadvantaged riders. The Citizen Advisory Network believes that these services need to continue to be provided by BFT.

Additionally, if Initiative 2117 is passed the BFT Board may need to reconsider the previously announced Fare Reductions and introduce higher fares than currently in place. These reduced services, increased fares, and loss of free and reduced fares will significantly affect those people using BFT Services via the anticipated 3.7 million Rider Boardings in 2024.

Recommendation:

Therefore, the Citizen Advisory Network in our advisory capacity to the BFT Board as a voice for the Riders and Public, recommend to the Board and the Directors that they take a stance as advocates for Public Transportation, stating publicly that they urge voters to vote NO on Washington Initiative 2117.