



MINUTES

**CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK
REGULAR MEETING
Monday October 21, 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	Zoom
Citizen Advisory Network	Ulises Navarro	Member	Zoom not work
Citizen Advisory Network	Vanessa Pruitt	Member	Absent
BFT Staff	Thomas Drozt	CEO	Present
BFT Staff	Janet Brett	Manager of Communication	Present
BFT Staff	Kevin Sliger	Chief Planning / Development	Present
BFT Staff	Gabe Martin	Transit Planning Mgr.	Present
BFT Staff	Heidi Ganum	Project Mgr.	Present

3. COMMENTS BY GUESTS:

Chair, Ed Frost

None

4. SEPTEMBER 2024 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

Chair, Ed Frost

Discussion:

Motion to Approve the Minutes by: Dori Luzzo-Gilmour

Second to Approve the Minutes by: Dennis Kreutz

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

5. OLD BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. In September CAN Meeting 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 Status Report on Ten Business Day Response Requirement: Dennis Kreutz

During the October BFT Board Meeting BFT Counsel Jeremy Bishop requested that the CAN work on a solution to get CAN Recommendations to the Board so that they can be responded to by the Board within ten business days after a Board Meeting.

CAN Discussion and Response: It was determined via coordination with BFT that if:

- a. CAN Recommendation is received by BFT three (3) Fridays prior to the Board Meeting
- b. CAN Recommendation can be reviewed by the Board Executive Committee and placed on the Board Agenda.
- c. The ten (10) business days response period will commence at that Board Meeting.
- d. The CAN recommends that this solution be reviewed and accepted by the BFT and the Board.

- B. In the June and September CAN Meeting we discussed email sent to CAN in June 2024 by Transit Awareness TC

BFT ACTON: Per CEO Tom Drozt: BFT Response to this email is deferred to a later meeting.

- 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.

BFT ACTON: CEO Tom Drozt Response:

1. BFT staff remains deeply concerned and frustrated by the ongoing mismanagement and detrimental decisions within our transit agency.

BFT Response: New CEO is now in place and BFT Staff is encouraged to talk to management.

2. The current trajectory is leading to a breakdown of our transit services at a time when our community needs them the most.

BFT Response: New CEO is in place and evaluating service.

3. There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight.

BFT Response: A new Finance Director has been hired, and a preliminary audit has been completed and finances appear to be fine.

4. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023

CAN Input: 2023 Financial Report put on BFT Website July 23, 2024.

5. and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable.
BFT Response: The latest Budget will be issued soon and presented to the Board.
6. The lack of concern over the missing financial information presented to the board monthly is deeply troubling.
BFT Response: Financial information will be done on a monthly basis starting in November with Key Performance Reports by Department.
7. Staff have provided ample evidence that our entire Finance team is not equipped to run the agency appropriately.
BFT Response: The Finance Department is not yet fully staffed but will be as soon as the new Finance Director has evaluated what is needed.
8. 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.
BFT Response: New CEO is in place.
9. At the last board meeting, it was reported that several vendors had not been paid.
BFT Response: All vendors have been, and continue to be, being paid within contract terms.
10. This failure to meet financial obligations further compounds the issues we are facing and underscores the severe mismanagement within the agency.
BFT Response: This is no longer an issue.
11. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.
BFT Response: This is being addressed by new CEO with many positions having been filled with about 10-12 open staff positions yet to be hired.
12. Proposed service cuts,
BFT Response: There are none anticipated, but this will be addressed after the status of WA I-2117 is determined.
13. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges
BFT Response: More staff is being hired, with Finance Director and Director of Safety and Training already being hired.
14. There is a facade of everything being okay
BFT Response: There are fewer issues, problems are being addressed, but it is not OK. There is still work to be done including monthly reports and holding departments to meeting goals.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. Gabe Martin, BFT Transit Planning Manager
Presented BFT Transit Plan.
 - a. Much of the look-ahead planning to determine traffic patterns is being done using data gathered showing routes used by phone users.

- b. Anticipated growth patterns of residential construction, commercial development, and roads will be used.
- c. The public and get information by accessing the BFT Project website:
Movingtransitforward.mysocialpinpoint.com
[Home | Moving Transit Forward](#)

B. Report of the October 10 BFT Board Meeting – Dennis Kreutz
See 5. Old Business, Item A above for partial report.

During the Board Meeting one of the Public Comments was that some BFT Personnel are not being paid for Overtime and are being discriminated against because they are Union Members. Director Bauman asked CEO Drozt if that was true, and he answered that there were payroll issues but that no discrimination against Union Members was happening.

During this October CAN Meeting CEO Drozt was asked if he could provide more information. He stated that there is an issue with the payroll software that has resulted in some BFT Employees being overpaid, and some underpaid. He stated that the software vendor was arriving later this week to correct the problem.

Status Report on Status of CAN Recommendation 2024-07

- a. BFT Counsel Jeremy Bishop advised the Board that per WA law they cannot take a public position on WA Initiative 2117.
- b. CAN Member Dennis Kreutz asked if the Board would be willing to have BFT issue a statement via local news outlets or BFT social media as have other WA Transit Agencies.
- c. Mr. Bishop stated that would be permissible for BFT to provide that information.
- d. Director Maier asked if the information was available on the BFT Website or social media. He was advised that it was available to the public in the Board Meeting Minutes because it had been frequently discussed.
NOTE: A search of all 2024 Board Meeting Minutes turned up no mention of I-2117 by the Board.

- C. Presentation by CAN Recruitment Committee regarding status of existing members, and proposal to recruit new member(s): Recruitment Chair Dori Luzzo-Gilmour.
 - a. CAN Members have been polled and all ten existing members are now active, it is not anticipated that CAN will recruit for new members at this time.
- D. Election of CAN Officers: CAN Chair Ed Frost
 - a. Election of CAN Officers, per Standing Rules requirements, will be done in the December CAN Meeting.
- E. Assign CAN Member to attend Thursday November 14 BFT Board Meeting:
Assigned: Dori Luzzo-Gilmour

7. BFT BOARD / BFT STAFF COMMENTS:

A. BFT Kevin Sliger requested to do a presentation in the November CAN Meeting regarding the process for an area within the BFT Public Transportation Benefit Area that does not currently have fixed route or Dial-A-Ride service to receive services.

8. CAN MEMBER COMMENTS:

A. On October 17 it was brought to CAN Member Dori Luzzo-Gilmour's attention that Fixed Route Buses have been running on a delayed schedule due to driver availability.

a. Request a BFT Response to delays:

BFT Response: Yes, buses have been delayed due to not enough available drivers. This is mainly due to the large number of drivers on the Disability List. This is an ongoing problem and BFT has a current class of eight drivers graduating, another class starting with two drivers, and a class with an anticipated three drivers starting the following month. BFT expects to continue having ongoing classes on a nearly monthly basis to fill opening due to retirement and person time off.

b. CAN Member Dennis Kreutz attempted to find out how a Rider can find out about delays or cancellations. He was told by BFT Customer Support that the information "... might be on the BFT Website, or on BFT Facebook Page, or maybe on the Transit App....".

1. Browsing the BFT Website showed unspecific delays on multiple routes a week ago on October 11.

2. Opening the BFT Facebook Page and scrolling back though 10 days of posts showed no information Delays.

3. Opening the Transit App showed no Delays.

BFT Response: BFT Gabe Martin stated he researched this and found that delays were not being posted on Transit or BFT My Ride apps. This has been corrected on My Ride app and is being looked at to put delays on Transit app. He will investigate BFT Facebook and Website.

B. CAN Member Dori Luzzo-Gilmour read an email that she received regarding a request for BFT to provide input into providing buses on-site for Hanford Workers. She will share the email with CAN Members and BFT.

BFT Response: This issue has been researched and discussed with Hanford for a number of years and to this point has not been resolved. There is now going to be additional funding at Hanford for worker transportation and materials movement within the area so there might be a possibility to proceed, so BFT will reach out to the author of the email.

9. OTHER:

10. NEXT MEETING:

Regular CAN Meeting Monday November 18, 2024 6:00 p.m.
Ben Franklin Transit Admin Building, GM Conference Room
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland WA

11. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair, Ed Frost

A. Meeting adjourned at: 8:15 pm