1. Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call: MATT WATKINS, JIM BEAVER, RICH BUEL, STEVE BECKEN, LISA STADE, NORMA NELSON

Staff:

Gloria Boyce, Kevin Hebdon, Tony Kalmbach, Christy Watts, Jerry Otto, Barbara Hays, Katherine Ostrom, Rob Orvis, Paul Singer, Patrick Roach, Gladys Diaz/Scribe

3. Pledge of Allegiance

CHAIR WATKINS invited JIM BEAVER to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Citizens Public Comment/Introduction of Visitors

CHAIRMAN WATKINS invited introductions of guests or public comment on any item not on the agenda.

No public comment was given.

5. Approval of Agenda

CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked for a motion to approve the revised Agenda.

ACTION: JIM BEAVER moved for approval of the revised Agenda with the addition of the Executive Session. Seconded by LISA STADE. No discussion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Employee of the Year Recognition

A. Resolution 24-2015 – NORMA NELSON, Employee of the Year (Operator)

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that since one of the Board members was not present, a follow-up Employee of the Year recognition would be presented today.

Katherine Ostrom, Dial-A-Ride Manager, presented a letter written about NORMA NELSON which recognized her for her accomplishments. Norma has embraced her roles as Dial-A-Ride Driver, Teamster Shop Steward, and non-voting Board member. She represents the best of what Ben Franklin Transit stands for while providing excellent customer service to passengers of BFT. She goes out of her way to help her coworkers in their time of need and is involved in charitable work with domestic violence services. She is always thoughtful and balanced in her duties for the agency and in the marketing unit by providing a consistent, reasonable voice for both. Norma is an excellent employee and an advocate for BFT employees and passengers, and as she enters her 25th year of service with BFT, we would like to
thank her for her many years of great service, safety, and loyalty. Thank you to Norma for all that she does.

ACTION: STEVE BECKEN moved for approval of Resolution 24-2015. LISA STADE seconded the motion. No discussion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NORMA NELSON was presented with a plaque. The Board and staff congratulated her for the award.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS commented that the award is presented on a yearly basis, and the Board looks forward to 2016.

7. Board Committee Reports

A. Planning & Marketing Committee

No Board members who were present at the Committee meeting were present at the Board meeting. No report given. CHAIRMAN WATKINS encouraged those present to reference the meeting minutes.

B. Operations & Maintenance Committee

No Board members who were present at the Committee meeting were present at the Board meeting. No report given. CHAIRMAN WATKINS encouraged those present to reference the meeting minutes.

C. Admin & Finance Committee

STEVE BECKEN stated that a couple of informational items were on the agenda, including announcement procedures for the buses, presented by Tony Kalmbach. The Committee also discussed the Affordable Care Act. There is a resolution on the Consent Agenda tonight for the appointment of Kevin Hebdon as Treasurer and Auditor, and an Action Item on the adoption of the BFT Investment Policy. Bids, sales tax, and a few other minor things were also discussed.

8. Consent Agenda (Any item is open for discussion at Board or Public Request)

A. Board Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2015
B. Payroll / Voucher Summary
C. Approval of the 2015-2020 Transit Development Plan
D. Resolution 25-2015 - Authorization to Release Bids for 22nd Street Transit Center Renovation
E. Resolution 26-2015 - Authorization to Utilize Contract Option to Extend Contracted Services with TC Transportation Services For One (1) Final Year
F. Resolution 27-2015 - Authorizing the Appointment of Administrative Services Manager as Treasurer and Auditor of Ben Franklin Transit

June 2015 vouchers audited and certified by Ben Franklin Transit’s auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing which has been emailed to the Board members, July 3, 2015.

Payroll

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Total $1,773,297.63

Check Register Numbers 570-15 to 572-15 and 161-15 to 173-15 in the total amount of: $2,525,341.91

ACTION: Motion to approve Consent Agenda, Items A - F made by STEVE BECKEN and seconded by LISA STADE. No discussion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

(BFT Board Standing Committees recommended approval of Consent Items to the Full Board of Directors)

9. Action Items

A. Resolution 28-2015 – Authorizing the Adoption of Ben Franklin Transit Investment Policy

Kevin Hebdon, Interim Administrative Services Manager, stated that BFT has been operating under the authority of the Treasurer position which was authorized by Benton County for BFT to have its own treasurer. One of the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer is to invest BFT’s funds. Staff seeks to go above and beyond what is authorized per RCWs and actually create an investment policy. The investment policy was drafted using a Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) format. Patrick Roach, Legal Counsel, has reviewed this policy, and it will provide further guidance and direction for investing public funds.

Last month, staff brought to the Board the resolution to allow BFT to begin to use the local government investment pool, and that resolution was passed. The investment policy will give guidance to the Treasurer, who is the Administrative Services Manager, in the investment of these funds.
Kevin Hebdon stated that he will be receiving treasury training before beginning to invest in anything outside of the LGRP. Staff is not taking any any action at this time to move funds but is just lining the policy up to be able to do that in the future.

Staff recommends the adoption of Resolution 28-2015 in order to clearly appoint the Administrative Services Manager as the Treasurer and Auditor of Ben Franklin Transit.

NORMA NELSON asked Kevin Hebdon if he has ever had experience as Treasurer before or if the training will set him up to perform those duties. Kevin Hebdon replied that the training will certify him as Treasurer. His background is in first in banking as well as education and finance. He has been with the State Auditor’s office for four years and at BFT for four years, and previously he was essentially in charge of BFT’s funds. It is anticipated that brokerage services will be brought on to assist in managing the funds, which is the standard in investing public funds. NORMA NELSON clarified her question and asked if he has ever had any experience in investment like what is being talked about. Kevin Hebdon replied that he has not invested public funds with what is proposed in the policy.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that his understanding is that there is a state pool that is available to various public agencies that is the default place to go and it generates a certain amount of interest income, but there are better possible options. Transit is pursuing possible better return than the default state. Kevin Hebdon replied that that is correct. BFT staff’s main focus is on security and public transit funds. The other item that staff is cognizant of is liquidity, meeting the needs of the transit agency. The local government investment pool (LGIP), monitored and put on by the Washington State Treasurer, is just an average, non-aggressive yield and its is 100% liquidity. What BFT will be doing is putting out a laddered approach in a portfolio that will earn a better return on BFT funds. LGIP is currently about 0.18%, and BFT can do significantly better through a laddered approach of different investment instruments.

Gloria Boyce, Interim General Manager, stated that she is a certified municipal treasurer. When staff looked at treasury services to get the paperwork in order, it was sorely lacking in terms of direct delegation of authority for the movement of funds, as well as in the area of having no actual investment policy at BFT. That does not protect BFT or the employees. Now, staff is working on getting the house in order: developing internal policies, developing investment policies, and training additional staff to be certified in investing municipal funds. There are staff members who have many years of experience in this. As Kevin noted, surplus funds have been moved from a bank account to state LGIP for a little bit better yield. Once Kevin completes his training and becomes certified as a municipal treasurer, then he will begin to look at other instruments while clearly in line with the investment policy which states safety, liquidity, and yield, in that order for civil funds.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS added that Gloria’s point is that as transit has shifted from a small transit agency to a medium in the eyes of the federal government, BFT has been embarking over the past couple of years in tightening up procedures. This procedure is not just to go into the foray of a new investment vehicle; this will also be to tighten up general financial procedures. Gloria Boyce replied that this is the GFOA’s best practices. There is also the Washington State Finance Officers Association (WFOA), which also follows best practices for investing public funds. There is certification for a certified public finance officer, which takes three years to obtain. The five areas in which to be certified as a public finance officer are accounting, investing, pension, budgeting, and debt issuance, and Kevin will start with the investment piece to be certified.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS commented that this is a significant policy update for transit. It is important that everyone has looked through it and recommends approval.
ACTION: STEVE BECKEN made a motion for approval of Resolution 28-2015, motion seconded by LISA STADE. No discussion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

(BFT Board Standing Committees recommended approval of Action Items to the Full Board of Directors)

10. Discussion/Information Items

A. Update on Community Member Comments During the July 11th Board Meeting

Tony Kalmbach, Planning & Service Development Manager, stated that he had an update about the comments suggested by community member Bernie Vintner during last month’s Board meeting. Bernie suggested that there some deficiencies on our routes, so staff did research to see what ADA requirements would be applicable to BFT. Staff discovered that operators should be making announcements for major intersections; destinations, such as malls, hospitals, and points of interest on a route which are intervals along the route sufficient to permit individuals who are blind or otherwise impaired to be aware of their location; any requested stop along the way; transfer points; route announcements upon arrival and departure; or for when long layovers occur. Staff is currently working with the Operations Department to update the Operator handbook on ADA stop announcement procedures and will evaluate current internal policies and procedures to identify how announcements should be conducted—not only to ensure compliance, but also consistency while holding staff accountable for completing announcements correctly. The operator handbook updated to ADA compliance within the next 60 days. At that time, a final update will be given to the Operations & Maintenance Committee and to the Board, and a final draft of the operator handbook will be presented at those meetings as well.

Tony Kalmbach thanked Bernie Vintner for taking the time to address the Board and staff about BFT deficiencies in meeting ADA compliance. Community feedback and suggestions on how to improve services are greatly appreciated.

Tony Kalmbach also presented slides showing what the 9th Street Transit Center looks like in regards to consistency in signage and where the routes are located. In comparison, at the Dayton Center, the buses just line up along the street, so they do not line up consistently and periodically throughout the day.

Bernie Vintner stated that the drivers do a pretty good job of announcing stops and locations of business, but they could see some improvement in their announcing. The major problem is transferring buses, especially at Dayton Street and Three Rivers Transit Center.

A brief discussion was held on announcements made during bus layovers. Bernie Vintner commented that announcements that can be heard outside the bus need to be much more frequent than every 5 minutes. He added that he will bring these issues up during the next United Blind meeting which occurs once a month. The only trouble is that most of those people don’t use the Fixed Route service while he is one of the few who does. Part of the reason that a lot of the blind don’t use the Fixed Route service is because of some of the problems mentioned, especially when it comes to transferring buses and knowing which bus that they’re on. The drivers all announce what route the bus is as they’re ready to pull out, which doesn’t allow enough time. There is a lot of room for adjustment in this policy.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that staff is committed to taking a look and seeing how the adjustments go and if there needs to be more adjustments later on. The Board looks forward to a report on how these
updates are working in a few months. The Board appreciates staff and Bernie Vintner for bringing this issue up.

B. CAC Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2015

Buddy Sosa, CAC Member, stated that he would bring the prior ADA matter up during the CAC meeting next Monday. The CAC appreciates everyone’s participation at the picnic, and everything turned out really well. There hasn’t been a CAC meeting since then, so there is nothing to report. There were likely be reductions in services and federal funding for contractors out on the Hanford site in June and July, which will result in a dip in Vanpool services.

The next CAC meeting will be held next Monday night. Senator Brown will give a legislative update, and Tony Kalmbach will give a services government update. The Board is always welcome to attend.

11. Staff Reports & Comments

A. Legal Report

Patrick Roach, Legal Counsel, stated that he and Kevin Hebdon would like to discuss with the Board about the upcoming General Manager selection process. Staff is now in the process of putting together a proposal for executive hunting companies to search for a General Manager. Gloria Boyce and Debra Hughes have indicated they would like to apply for this position as well, so we have an inherent conflict because normally they would help with selection process.

As discussed internally and in the last Administration & Finance Committee, Rob Orvis will continue in his position and work with the RFP. The RFP is nearly completed but requires a few tweaks with the help of the Board. Kevin Hebdon will lead in the handling of the candidate review process once the executive hunting company is chosen, along with the help of other staff. That is how we will take care of the conflict issue since we have two internal people applying for the General Manager position.

The RFP has been put together, but it needs the Board’s feedback on three different items. Patrick Roach stated that he hoped to speak with more of the Board members who are familiar with the history and background of where BFT has been the last year or two on selecting General Managers. Staff intended to discuss this with the Board tonight and could continue doing that, or if the Board feels it more appropriate, staff could also confer this to the Administration & Finance Committee and have them review it and give input by email or during a special meeting.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS declined discussion during tonight’s Board meeting due to the light number of Board members and suggested sending an email to all Board members requesting review and response. If for some reason staff is not getting the feedback, let the Chairman know. The topic could also be taken up next month if necessarily, but preferably not. Hopefully, a recommendation can be reached via email and brought forward during the next Board meeting after reviewing the Board’s feedback.

RICH BUEL asked who RICHARD BLOOM should provide the feedback on this topic to. Patrick Roach replied that either he or Kevin Hebdon will send out the email to the Board members but that the feedback can be sent to both of them.

LISA STADE asked if there is a previously established policy on how a General Manager search is conducted. Patrick Roach replied that there’s never been a set process developed to go through and create an RFP, but once an executive search company is selected, the company will define the duties of the job description and perform the search together with staff. Last time, the search was conducted internally, so
a lot of the steps performed internally last time will have the assistance of the recruiting company this time. Some questions won’t be answered until the company is selected.

Patrick Roach commended Rob Orvis and Kevin Hebdon for their work so far on putting together the Request for Proposal (RFP).

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that the Board looks forward to an update during the next Board meeting.

B. Boarding Report

Tony Kalmbach, Planning & Service Development Manager, stated that in addition to the boarding report this month, he has included a report on Dial-A-Ride and Taxi Feeder Services to address the question brought up by JEROME DELVIN in last month’s Board meeting regarding potential shifts in ridership due to BFT’s different services.

There has been consistent ridership growth in both Dial-A-Ride and Taxi Feeder services, but there was a dip in ridership for Dial-A-Ride in May across all modes. Staff suspects that the loss in ridership might be due to the high number of medically fragile customers which Dial-A-Ride serves. Riding transit can affect them more heavily than others. Other than that, there has been consistent growth in those modes of transportation. Tony Kalmbach stated that he did not think these modes affected the Fixed Route since Dial-A-Ride is primarily eligibility driven and Taxi Feeder services are in place to help support the Fixed Route, with the exception of Sunday service and night service. There has still been strong growth in night services.

Bernie Vintner asked if there has been any change in Fixed Route service ridership. Tony Kalmbach stated that there is still a downward trend occurring for ridership. Bernie Vintner asked if it was typical for this time of year, and Tony Kalmbach replied that last year, there was positive growth in ridership but this year, there has been a downward ridership trend which may have a lot to do with the economy. Staff has done some data analysis and found that unemployment is down across Washington state and gas prices are lower. Some of the ridership decline is due to positive economic conditions.

NORMA NELSON suggested that the Memorial Day holiday may be a reason for the downward trend in May. Tony Kalmbach replied that yes, it is a likely possibility. There was a 10% decrease in ridership in May, and there was one less day of operation which would result in a decrease of about 11,000 riders. With the addition of the school lockdown in May, a decrease in school riders, which are a large portion of BFT’s ridership, would account for another 3,500 to 4,000 riders. Out of the 26,000 rider decrease, about 15,000 of that number can be attributed to those two circumstances. The rest of the decrease can be attributed to the holiday and economic factors. Overall, YTD Fixed Route ridership is down 3.6%.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS commented that the continuing downward trend is something to keep an eye on.

Tony Kalmbach continued and stated that April Vanpool ridership was down slightly at 2.8%. The overall total operational boardings for April were down 1.3%.

A. Treasurer’s/Budget/Sales Tax Reports

Kevin Hebdon, Interim Administrative Services Manager, presented the June 2015 Treasurer’s Report. The cash balance is at $25.1 million of which the Board has restricted $8.6 million for three months’ operating expenses and approximately $2.6 million for approved capital expenses. This leaves approximately $13.9 million in surplus fund balance. Operating revenues are continuing to exceed
budgeted amounts and expenses continue to fall under budgeted amounts. There are no notable changes in allocated cost per boarding and fares per boarding. Fare box recovery YTD continues to be steady at about 13.2% versus the budgeted amount of 11.7%. It should be noted that additional revenues and under-budget expenditures lead to a higher ratio.

For the sales tax report for April business, BFT received $2.4 million, which is 7.9% higher than this time last year. Currently, sales tax revenues are 10.5% higher than this time YTD. The budgeted amounts are steady at 9.6% of what was budgeted.

RICH BUEL asked what percentage of the cash balance is allowed by Board policy to be moved into the aforementioned investment pool. Gloria Boyce, Interim General Manager, replied that staff is currently building a five year cash flow trend. There has been some major accounting structure and organizational changes to ensure that expenses are reported in the correct period, so BFT’s cash flow history has changed in the five-year period. Staff develops a cash flow analysis to determine what cash flow needs are, and that is what would remain liquid in BFT’s bank account for current expenses. Staff then determines what major expenses are per year and ladder investments to BFT’s expense needs in terms of fleet replacement and capital expenses. The funds will now be split between the US Bank account and LGIP, both of which are 100% liquid at this time. To provide an estimated figure, staff would probably keep just over $5 million in the US Bank account. In addition to cash flow analysis, banking fees are offset by a bank balance. So this is about $17 million.

RICH BUEL asked if the Board has set a policy which directs the administration about how those investment strategies would move. Gloria Boyce replied that staff has been working for the past year on cleaning up and revising this. BFT is now a larger transit agency than in the past. Currently there are a number of idle funds, but that will not always be the case as capital projects come in. Staff realizes that policies and procedures do need to be in place for the proper cash management of BFT funds. These are being created internally, and staff is looking at its banking relationships and making adjustments. An investment policy is also being lined up for when BFT has staff who are certified to do this. This will all be brought back to the Administration & Finance Committee and ultimately the Board as staff proceeds. BFT is not doing anything more than it is capable of and designed to do through policy and procedures.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS added that policy-wise, the Board needs to be more involved and think about what things should be set as policy. This is something that the Administration & Finance Committee needs to work on.

A brief discussion followed in regards to BFT’s growing reserves and the need to consider adding additional sustainable services for the future. CHAIRMAN WATKINS requested Gloria Boyce and staff to continue thinking about services that BFT could add in the future.

D. General Manager’s Report

Gloria Boyce, Interim General Manager, stated that there is still no movement on the federal level in terms of federal fiscal year apportionments, and staff is waiting for the last two months. The Senate subcommittee is looking at appropriating 2016 funds as the money will run out as of July 31, 2015. Staff believes the two will go hand-in-hand at the end of this month and will report on the update in August.

At the state level, BFT has received the transportation funding, and the House will perhaps vote tomorrow on the new transportation revenue spending and transportation bond bill. Regarding Prosser operations, staff has secured a temporary office space; however, staff’s plan A for vehicles has fallen through, so staff is moving to perhaps a plan B or C for Prosser operations’ vehicle parking. The old building must be vacated by July 31. Jerry Otto and Katherine Ostrom are working on that.
With the Strategic Plan Retreat, strategic priorities, major initiatives, and work plans are still being developed. Staff will bring the draft presentation to the Board in August.

All contracts are signed and the construction schedule has been created for the Tulip Lane Park & Ride project. The Board will receive invites on Monday for the groundbreaking ceremony which will be held on Tuesday, July 21, with more details to follow. Construction scheduled to be completed by October 9.

For the past month’s accomplishments, Dial-A-Ride Supervisor Paul Singer graduated in the 20th class of the Leadership Tri-Cities Program. Paul looks forward to assisting BFT and further its community presence. His experience has been put to immediate use, and Paul has volunteered to lead a BFT safe zone feasibility study. This will be brought back to the Board when complete. The Board congratulated Paul Singer on his achievement. BFT also received notice in June that it had won Washington State Transportation Insurance Pool’s (WSTIP) brand-new Safety Stars Award for large systems. This means that BFT has consistently been the best performer in its class in terms of auto losses over last 5 years. The agency received a $5,000 cash award to use for employee recognition. Great job to all BFT employees, especially the coach and Dial-A-Ride operators.

No major malfunctions have occurred within the fleet due to the prolonged heat.

Kevin Hebdon has been appointed Interim Administrative Services Manager in Gloria Boyce’s stead, and he will be serving in that capacity.

Events staff participated in three successful community events over the last month. Thank you to Christy Watts, Marketing & Customer Service Manager, for organizing BFT’s involvement.

For the upcoming calendar, on July 18, BFT will be involved in the Element Fire at the Hanford REACH. On the weekend of July 24 to 26, there will be seasonal route changes for the Allied Arts Art in Park event and the Water Follies. BFT anticipates expanded service for the Water Follies this year. Committee meetings will be held on August 4, 5, and 6. On August 22 through 26, staff will be traveling to Vancouver, Washington for the Washington State Transportation Symposium. The Benton-Franklin County Fair will be held from August 25 to 29.

12. **Board Member Comments**

JIM BEAVER no comment

RICH BUEL thanked BFT staff for all the work they did at the Hogs and Dogs event.

NORMA NELSON stated that things going very well with Dial-A-Ride. Thank you very much for the Employee of the Year award; it is a humbling experience. Thanks to maintenance for working hard to keep the buses in service in the hot weather. She added that she will be going out to State to help judge on the competition and will be the first woman driver competing for BFT in paratransit.

LISA STADE congratulated NORMA NELSON for her award. A round-a-bout will be constructed in Benton City, which is something that will affect BFT. Benton City Days is on September 19, and there may need to be some adjustment of routes for that. Connie Meredith will be present as alternate at the Board meeting next month.
STEVE BECKEN stated that Prosser had many hydros out on the Yakima River this last weekend. These are smaller versions of boats that will be out for the Water Follies in a couple of weeks. Coming up, we have a much tamer event during the second weekend of August, the Prosser Wine & Food Fair.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that legislature did approve the transportation package, and some examples of how it will affect the community include the construction of the Lewis Street overpass in Pasco, which should be helpful for at least one transit route. Also, Duportail Bridge, Red Mountain Interchange, and some other projects are included in that package. That is a significant transportation change for the Tri-Cities which will affect everyone, including transit.

13. **Next Meeting – Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.**  
   1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland WA

14. **Executive Session**

CHAIRMAN WATKINS announced that the meeting would recess into Executive Session. He asked Patrick Roach, Legal Counsel, for details. Patrick Roach indicated that the meeting will last for about 10 minutes under RCW 42.30.110(a)(i) to discuss potential litigation with attorney. The Board will reconvene afterwards and take no action.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS recessed the Regular Board meeting and stated that after a short break, the session will begin at about 8:05 p.m. and will end between 8:15 to 8:20 p.m. The session will be attended by voting Board Members, Legal Counsel, and a Consultant.

The Executive Session convened at 8:05 p.m.

Reconvened Into Open Session

CHAIRMAN WATKINS reconvened the Regular BFT Board of Directors Meeting into Open Session at 8:20 p.m.

15. **Adjournment**

CHAIRMAN WATKINS adjourned the Regular BFT Board of Directors meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Meeting recorded by:  
Gladys Diaz, Vanpool Coordinator  
July 9, 2015