

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 14, 2014/7:00 p.m.
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA**

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

1. Convene/Roll Call: MATT WATKINS, BOB OLSON, LISA STADE, TERRY CHRISTENSEN, RICHARD BLOOM, STEVE BECKEN, BOB KOCH, JEROME DELVIN, CHRIS LILYBLADE

RICK MILLER, NORMA NELSON: EXCUSED

Staff: Dennis Solensky, Kathy McMullen, Katherine Ostrom, Barb Hays, Jerry Otto, Debra Hughes, Tom Turner, Tony Kalmbach, Terry DeJuan, Patrick Roach/Legal Counsel, Delsa Pospical/Scribe

2. Pledge of Allegiance

CHAIRMAN WATKINS invited Chris Lilyblade to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens Public Comment/Introduction of Visitors

CHAIRMAN WATKINS invited public comment on any item that is not on the agenda
No public comment given.

Visitors: Ed Harvill, DAR Driver; Austin Neilson, CAC Representative from Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce

4. Approval of Agenda

CHAIRMAN WATKINS referenced the removal of Item #5 and the correction of item 8C to read "...Release Bids to Purchase Fixed Route Bus Tires," and called for a motion to approve the Agenda as corrected.

ACTION: BOB OLSON made and RICHARD BLOOM seconded a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. MOTION CARRIED unanimously

5. Retirement Recognition

Item removed

6. Board Committee Reports

A. Planning & Marketing Committee/BOB KOCH, Chair

BOB KOCH stated that he and LISA STADE met with staff members on Tuesday, August 5. RICHARD BLOOM was absent. He noted that the Planning & Marketing committee's platform has changed a bit; only items pertaining to the committee will be presented. Christy Watts,

Marketing & Customer Service Manager, showed ridership video clips currently being aired on radio, television and at movie theatres. Kathy McMullen, Service Development Manager, shared information about the 5309 Ladder of Opportunity Grant Application. LISA STADE reported her ideas resulting from attending the APTA Board Member Seminar in Cleveland, Ohio, July 18-22. Tony Kalmbach, BFT Planner, presented the latest ridership report and Rob Orvis, Procurement Supervisor, reviewed the 90-day Procurement Outlook. Kathy McMullen invited committee members to attend the joint open house with BFT and the Benton Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG) at 3-Rivers Transit Center on August 12 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The committee minutes are in the board packet.

B. Operations & Maintenance Committee/RICK MILLER, Chair

JEROME DELVIN stated that he and TERRY CHRISTENSEN met with staff members on Wednesday, August 6. Chair, RICK MILLER, was absent. JEROME DELVIN reported that five (5) resolutions were reviewed, discussed and placed on tonight's CONSENT agenda. These resolutions include Resolution 43 to release bids to purchase rather than lease tires; Resolution 44-2014 to release bids for constructing a Diesel Exhaust Fuel Filling (DEF) System; Resolution 45-2014 to contract with SunWest Sportswear for driver uniforms; Resolution 46-2014 for RH2 Engineering, Inc. to design improvements to the 22nd Street Transit Center and; Resolution 47-2014 declaring eight BFT vehicles surplus. The committee minutes are in the board packet.

C. Admin & Finance Committee/STEVE BECKEN, Chair

STEVE BECKEN stated that his committee (including MATT WATKINS and BOB OLSON), met with staff members on Thursday, August 7. One (1) resolution was reviewed, discussed and placed on tonight's CONSENT agenda: Resolution 48-2014 to contract with Summit Law Group for labor relations and employment law services. One (1) resolution was reviewed, discussed and placed on tonight's ACTION agenda: Resolution 49-2014 authorizing implementation of "Unpaid Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience." An additional item, authorizing payment of the 2014 APTA Member Assessment of \$27,276.00, was placed on tonight's CONSENT agenda. The committee minutes are in the board packet.

7. Informational Items

A. CHAIRMAN WATKINS called on Kathy McMullen, Service Development Manager, to provide information to board members about the 5309 Ladder of Opportunity Grant Application.

Kathy McMullen stated that the Federal Transit Association (FTA) notified transit agencies that unused funds from previous discretionary programs have been made available with strict guidelines. With this funding staff would like to apply for the following: 1) purchase three (3) new buses to operate several new routes providing fixed route service in East Pasco, South Kennewick, and linking Dayton Street, 3-Rivers Transit Center, and Kennewick high schools with CBC and employment opportunities along the way. Letters of support for this proposal have come from CBC and the Benton Franklin Council of Governments; 2) Pave and improve BFT property adjacent to the 22nd Street Transit Center for better use by the community.

Discussion was held.

Highlights of the discussion are as follows:

- Dennis Solensky, General Manager, stated that discretionary funding has not been available for the last couple of years and we are excited about this opportunity. It would be unlikely for us to get our entire funding request, but we will adjust the plan to whatever money we receive. Our intent is to do a system-wide restructuring as part of our aggressive approach to ridership. Having three new buses would help out as we work to restructure, and the areas mentioned have been identified as underserved by transit. At the end of the grant period we would have the choice of whether or not to continue running these bus routes if they have not been productive.
- RICHARD BLOOM shared his concerns about the need to make transit routes be as efficient as possible and he likes the idea of restructuring. However, he wonders if it would be better to concentrate on restructuring in areas we currently serve before expanding into funding new areas. Dennis Solensky stated that restructuring is a way of improving our service. In doing that, we need to look at the options as a whole. He is confident that with a complete revision of service the changes made will be profitable.
- MATT WATKINS stated that he sees the question being voiced here is--are we using our existing resources enough? It does seem that we have stretched service as far as we can in trying to serve some areas of Pasco; having an additional bus would address that issue. Kathy McMullen added that Taxi Feeder service to the areas in Pasco such as Terra Vista has more than tripled.
- Kathy McMullen reported that any buses we might get from this grant would not be here for up to 2-1/2 years, and by then we will have determined exactly where they need to go.
- LISA STADE stated that students from Kennewick's high schools, who now take transit to CBC, have to take the "milk run," so to speak, in order to get there. These extra bus routes would be good ones, providing service to a broad range of locations, i.e., the Southridge area, the Intermodal Center, the Airport, as well as providing a needed link to and from CBC. She sees that providing service to these areas is a need and she hopes we can go forward with the funding opportunity.
- JEROME DELVIN inquired about the time frame for submitting applications. Kathy McMullen stated that August 4 was the deadline, and it will be a month or two until we hear anything. At that point we will update the board before we consider signing any kind of commitment.
- MATT WATKINS thinks that the board is interested in what happens after the grant ends—would this new service be sustainable? Dennis Solensky stated that the long term expectation of this grant would result in three additional routes. What we are trying to do with the restructuring is to make it easier for people to get around, even within the existing routes. We do anticipate ridership growth in doing that. The restructuring process will be done through the public process.
- Dennis Solensky thanked Richard Bloom for being pragmatic and looking at the bottom line and stated that his question to staff members is a good one.

8. Consent Agenda

(Any item is open for discussion at Board or Public Request)

- A. Minutes of July 10, 2014
- B. Payroll/Voucher Summary

July 2014 vouchers were 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 was emailed to Board members on August 8, 2014.

ACTION: As of this date, August 14, 2014, I, move that the following checks be approved for payment:

PAYROLL

Check Register Number	Check Number / Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount of	
529-14	75840 75894	7/11/2014	\$364,482.68	Payroll
530-14	Electronic File Payroll Taxes	7/11/2014	142,631.15	Payroll
531-14	75895 75940	7/25/2014	364,779.61	Payroll
532-14	Electronic File Payroll Taxes	7/25/2014	143,884.49	Payroll
			Total \$ 1,015,777.93	

NON-PAYROLL VOUCHERS

154-14	54002 54056	7/3/2014	431,683.53	Mdse
155-14	52887 VOIDED CHECK	7/3/2014	(5,029.65)	Mdse
156-14	54057 54058	7/7/2014	43,519.00	Mdse
157-14	54059 54110	7/11/2014	230,347.00	Mdse
158-14	54111 54122	7/14/2014	129,308.45	Mdse
159-14	54123 54187	7/18/2014	151,250.56	Mdse
160-14	54188 54188	7/18/2014	1,327.50	Mdse
161-14	Electronic File May Excise Tax	7/25/2014	1,182.14	Mdse
162-14	54189 54253	7/25/2014	466,179.69	Mdse
163-14	54254 54254	7/25/2014	403.05	Mdse
164-14	54255 54265	7/28/2014	142,840.03	Mdse
165-14	54266 54332	7/31/2014	114,691.85	Mdse
			Total \$ 1,708,703.15	

Check Register Nos. 529-14 to 532-14 and 154-14 to 165-14 in the total amount of:

\$ 2,724,481.08

The motion was seconded by----- and approved by a unanimous vote.

- C. Resolution 43-2014 Authorizing the General Manager to Release Bids to Purchase Fixed Route Bus Tires
- D. Resolution 44-2014 Authorizing the General Manager to Release an Invitation for Bids for Construction of a Diesel Exhaust Fuel Filling (DEF) System
- E. Resolution 45-2014 Authorizing the General Manager to enter into a contract with U.S. Linen & Uniform, Inc., DBA SunWest Sportswear, for Supply of Driver Uniforms
- F. Resolution 46-2014 Authorizing the General Manager to Utilize Contract #942, with RH2 Engineering, Inc., to Design Improvements to the 22nd Street Transit Center
- G. Resolution 47-2014 Declaring Three (3) Fixed Route Coaches, One (1) Dial-A-Ride Vehicle and Four (4) Vanpool Vehicles Surplus
- H. Resolution 48-2014 Authorizing the General Manager to Enter into a Contract with Summit Law Group for Labor Relations and Employment Law Services
- I. Authorize APTA 2014 Member Assessment of \$27,276.00

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

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

ACTION: BOB OLSON made and BOB KOCH seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Action Items

- A. Resolution 49-2014 Authorizing Implementation of "Unpaid Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience"

CHAIRMAN WATKINS read the resolution and called on Debra Hughes, HR Manager, for further explanation. Debra Hughes reported that the resolution is the result of a bill approved by the Legislature that went into effect in June 2014; whereby, agencies are required to have a resolution allowing two unpaid holidays per calendar year for "a reason of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization."

Discussion was held.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called for a motion to adopt Resolution 49-2014 as presented.

ACTION: BOB OLSON made and STEVE BECKEN seconded a motion to adopt Resolution 42-2014 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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

10. Discussion/Information Items

- A. No CAC Meeting was held in July.

Austin Neilson, CAC member and Governmental and Economic Affairs Coordinator for the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce, addressed Board members and staff. He stated that he attended the CAC meeting on Monday, August 11 and would like to commend BFT for their efforts to promote transit services. The CAC thanks the Board for their support of extended late night service and service on Sundays. He stated that the CAC has been nominated for the Transportation Choices 2014 Transit Heroes People's Choice Award, and he invited Board and staff members to provide their support by voting for them at this website-- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/transitheroes>. The CAC would appreciate your votes in order to bring home that honor. BFT's Citizens Advisory Committee was the only citizens group nominated for the award from Eastern Washington, and the winner will be announced on September 11. The CAC would like to formally invite Board members to join them on Monday, September 8 at 6:00 p.m. for the annual CAC/BFT Board Roundtable here in the Board Room. The CAC always looks forward to this opportunity to meet with Board members and discuss important issues for Ben Franklin Transit. We hope you will be able to attend!

12. Staff Reports & Comments

A. Legal Report

PATRICK ROACH, legal counsel, stated that no new legal matters have been brought to his attention and there is no need for an Executive Session tonight.

B. Boarding Report

Tony Kalmbach reported on Ridership for June 2014 compared to June 2013. Fixed route was up 6.7%, Dial-A-Ride was down 4.3% and Taxi Service (Taxi Feeder, Finley and Night and Sunday Service) was up 50.6% over May 2013. For May 2014 Vanpool was down -6.0% compared to May 2013. Overall, boardings were down 0.9%.

Tony Kalmbach also summarized the BFT Quarterly Ridership Report by route stating that, for the most part, routes are performing well. MATT WATKINS stated that he did notice this report in the board packet and he appreciates the interesting and good data provided, making the discussion of ridership much more qualitative. What surprised him was that intercity routes are so well used. He encouraged Board members to look at this report.

C. Treasurer's/Budget/Sales Tax Reports

Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager, stated that the Fare Box recovery ratio YTD is 13.1% above a budgeted 12.2%.

Treasurer's Report – Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager, stated the Treasurer's report shows the cash balance of \$28 million dollars. Approximately \$8 million dollars is restricted for operating costs and \$3.5 million is reserved for approved capital projects, leaving an unrestricted balance of \$11.2 million dollars in surplus funds.

Sales Tax – Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager, stated the sales tax report for May business was presented to the Admin & Finance Committee on August 7. Receipts for May business are \$2,276,324. Compared to May 2013 receipts are up 6.5 % and YTD up 1.9 %. This is a positive 5.2 % over the 2014 monthly budgeted amount.

Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBA's) from around the state as well as local jurisdiction sales tax reports are on your desk tonight. They were unavailable for the Board packet mail out.

D. General Managers Report

Dennis Solensky, General Manager presented his report to the Board, as follows:

- This year was his first opportunity to attend the boat races and he was impressed with the size and magnitude of the event. It was tremendous! He appreciated Patrick Roach's invitation for his family to view the action from his son's house. He was able to walk through the gate and travel through the crowd, taking in much of the festivity. His son couldn't get over the fabulous boats. We are now aggressively looking at ways in which we could project and create a more visible presence for transit at this event. He thinks we can do this if we start planning now for next year.
- Ongoing conversations are in place with staff about ridership and we are developing the first draft of a service plan by looking at all the services where we could be pushing harder. We are doing this in preparation for coming to the Board with a strategic plan.
- He has now talked with most of the Board members to get their feedback on what we could grow into, and he sees some synergy there. The management staff is developing "grocery lists" of where we can improve and tweak what we have.
- We have been looking at hiring the best people for this organization.
- Our labor issues are down considerably. He is enthusiastic about the nice rapport he has developed with the Teamsters Representative, Russell Shjerven.
- He and Gloria Boyce have been talking about next year's budget. They have similar views of transit and funding, as well as the importance of getting the staff involved in long-term planning for capital projects and capital project funding. This emphasis will help us prioritize appropriately.
- He met with a representative from the City of Connell, Bruce Blackwell, regarding transit helping to serve their community. We met with the State Planning Department and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to discuss how we can provide service. Their request has been responsible, the meetings have been encouraging, and the fact that the State has been willing to participate has been encouraging. Mr. Blackwell understands the sensitivity on the funding issues, but it seems likely that all those things can be handled. We are keeping an open mind on the issues regarding their request.
- He visited with Dale Learn, our lobbyist in Washington, D.C., about some large capital projects. There has been a moratorium on projects and a very large reduction in the availability of Federal capital funding. We talked about some funding opportunities outside of transit, i.e., energy, grants, homeland protection, economic development, etc., that could be used for projects we might develop. Dennis stated he wanted to understand what these funding options are in order to be able to discuss this intelligently with Board members. So far, he has had a phone interview with Dale, and Dale also came to visit and they spent a couple of hours together.
- BFT's marketing efforts are being ramped up and he is now meeting with the marketing folks on a weekly basis. He noted that Lisa Stade weighed in on some things she would like to see, we are looking at ideas that other transits have found successful, and staff members are contributing good ideas, as well.

- The three August Board committee meetings were awesome and all had full agendas.
- He will attend the State Transportation Conference meetings in Yakima August 18-20. This will give him opportunity to learn and to bond with other transit agencies.

12. Board Member Comments

CHRIS LILYBLADE – He is sitting in for Non-union Board member, Norma Nelson. He has noticed a lot of summer passes being used every day this summer. He would like to encourage everyone to ride the bus to the Benton-Franklin County Fair August 19-23. For the drivers the Fair is a nice change of pace.

LISA STADE -- She rode the bus to the Fair last year and it was a great opportunity...and they took her right up to the front. She appreciated the drivers that advocated for having a bus at the Benton City Days Parade, letting people know that BFT is involved in the community.

BOB KOCH –He thinks that the talks with the City of Connell are interesting and sees the support for potential funding encouraging, since in the past money for helping out has not been there.

Dennis Solensky asked if Board members would like him to go into more detail about the options for Connell, and they concurred. Dennis stated that there has been ongoing conversation about this. The impression he has is that funding requirements have not been acceptable in the past. The approach by Bruce Blackwell was that people in Connell would like to have one day of service per week to allow elderly and others to get to medical appointments, etc. This was really a discussion of people who slip through the cracks, which led into a conversation about sales tax. There are several mandates for them to find funding as well as opportunities through the Washington State Department of Transportation. They are trying to get permanent funding that is cost containable to provide service to that specific group of people. Dennis stated that it might also be possible to provide some service to outlying areas at the same time. The next meeting with Mr. Blackwell will be to discuss some of these options. Dennis stated that he probably would not have continued the conversation if they were not ready to commit to providing funding; the fact that they were willing to bring money to the table makes such a discussion reasonable. There may be a couple of taxing mechanisms to develop as well as other funding resources. The discussion was that all of the folks in Connell shop in the Tri-Cities and what they want from transit is service one day a week—just one trip up and one trip back--for people who are presently falling through the cracks. The State was openly willing to consider a significant contribution for that.

MATT WATKINS shared that he has had concerns previously about extending transit service the distance to Connell. However, he thinks the service they are now asking for is probably a do-able thing. Dennis Solensky added that it is a challenging issue, and he tried to keep the conversation on track to assure that if we provide service it would need to be contained. MATT WATKINS spoke for the Board members and asked Dennis Solensky to move forward with his discussions with the City of Connell.

JEROME DELVIN – The Public Safety Tax proposal passed and we are in the process now getting the resolution ready. The tax won't take effect until January 2015. The county plans to keep a separate budget for these funds so everyone can go in and see how that money is being spent.

TERRY CHRISTENSEN – He thinks it may be a year before the City of Richland will see funds come in from the Public Safety Tax. He is not going to the APTA Conference in Houston in October and would like to encourage another Board member to step into his spot. Dennis Solensky stated that we will try to do better in the future in arranging at least three months ahead for Board members to attend the APTA Conference so we can get them into the host hotel. APTA sets the timeline and we have to meet it.

RICHARD BLOOM – He apologized for having to miss the Planning & Marketing meeting, but he did enjoy being with his grandchildren. The news in West Richland is not good news...the West Nile virus is still active. The city has a wetland that has too much growth and we can't get to the mosquitoes that we know are infected. That means the birds have it and will carry it throughout the Tri-Cities. There has already been a case of West Nile virus in Franklin County.

MATT WATKINS – He reminded Board members that elected officials are required to attend training on the Open Meetings and Public Records Act. I attended the training through the City of Pasco and other Board members may also have completed the training through their city or county; otherwise, please consider that BFT has scheduled training on Thursday, September 25. Dennis Solensky asked that Board members provide us with an e-mail to document that they have attended the training, so when the FTA audits us we can make that documentation available. MATT WATKINS also stated that he looks forward to further updates on the 5309 Grant.

BOB OLSON – He is curious about ridership at the boat races this year. Dennis Solensky stated that ridership was poor, but considering the magnitude of the event we are going to try to enhance the service provided in the future.

STEVE BECKEN – He reported that Prosser had three events this year. Attendance was down on the last two events where transit provided service.

PATRICK ROACH, LEGAL COUNSEL – Jim Thaelke sent him an e-mail regarding the Records Management Seminar that BFT is hosting here in the Board room on Thursday, September 25, 2014 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. [Nancy Krier, a State attorney, will address requirements of the Public Records Act and Scott Sackett will address requirements for Open Meetings. BFT Board members are invited to attend and there is no charge. Several municipalities are also sending officials to the seminar. Reservations can be made by e-mailing Jim Thaelke at jthaelke@bft.org or by calling Scott Sackett at 509-413-3296.]

13. **Next Meeting** – Thursday, September 11, 2014 7:00 p.m., BFT Administration Building Board Room, 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA

14. **Executive Session**

None.

15. **Adjourn:** The Regular BFT Board of Directors Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Delsa Pospical, CMC, on behalf of the Exec. Assistant/Clerk of the Board
August 14, 2014