

**BEN FRANKLIN TRANSIT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, April 10, 2014/7:00 p.m.  
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA**

**CHAIRMAN WATKINS called the meeting to order at 7:09pm**

1. Convene/Roll Call: MATT WATKINS, BOB KOCH, JEROME DELVIN, LISA STADE, BOB OLSON, TERRY CHRISTENSEN, RICHARD BLOOM, RICK MILLER, NORMA NELSON

STEVE BECKEN: EXCUSED

Staff: Ed Frost, Kathy McMullen, Katherine Ostrom, Tony Kalmbach, Terry DeJuan, Jerry Otto, Tom Turner, Gloria Boyce, Debra Hughes, Christy Watts, Rob Orvis, Barbara Hays, Patrick Roach, Legal Counsel, Lisa Hamilton/Scribe

2. Pledge of Allegiance

CHAIRMAN WATKINS invited BOB OLSON 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 or introduce themselves.

No public comment was given.

Visitors: Bill Forsythe, Dennis Solensky, Zachary Ziegler, and numerous BFT employees

4. Approval of Agenda

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that there would be an executive session after the regular meeting

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

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

5. Board Committee Reports

A. Planning & Marketing Committee/Bob Koch, Chair

BOB KOCH stated that the Planning & Marketing Committee met on Tuesday, April 1, 2014, LISA STADE was excused from the meeting. He provided an overview of the items discussed. The minutes were provided in the packet.

B. Operations & Maintenance Committee/Rick Miller, Chair

RICK MILLER stated that the Operations and Maintenance Committee met on Wednesday, April 2, 2014. He provided an overview of the items discussed. The minutes were provided in the packet.

C. Administration & Finance Committee/Steve Becken, Chair

BOB OLSON, (filling in for STEVE BECKEN) stated that the Committee met on Thursday, April 3, 2014. He presented an overview of the items discussed. The minutes were provided in the packet.

- 6. Consent Agenda  
**(Any item is open for discussion at Board or Public Request)**
  - A. Minutes of March 13, 2014 Regular Board Meeting
  - B. Payroll/Voucher Summary

March 2014 vouchers audited and certified by Ben Franklin Transits 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 April 4, 2014.

ACTION: As of this date, April 10, 2014, I, \_\_\_\_\_ move that the following checks be approved for payment:

**PAYROLL**

Check Register Number	Check Number	Check Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
508-14	75329	75374	3/7/2014	346,982.71	Payroll
509-14	Electronic File Payroll Taxes		3/7/2014	134,451.14	Payroll
510-14	75375	75419	3/21/2014	365,657.25	Payroll
511-14	Electronic File Payroll Taxes		3/21/2014	142,773.57	Payroll

**Total 989,864.67**

**NON-PAYROLL VOUCHERS**

114-14	52872	52926	3/6/2014	334,278.66	Mdse
115-14	52927	52936	3/7/2014	95,445.81	Mdse
116-14	52609	Voided Check		(791.28)	Mdse
117-14	52937	52939	3/10/2014	67,947.52	Mdse
118-14	52940	52989	3/14/2014	234,532.38	Mdse
119-14	52990	53054	3/21/2014	242,227.30	Mdse
120-14	53043	Voided Check		(4,779.00)	Mdse
121-14	53055	53066	3/24/2014	130,053.16	Mdse
122-14	53067	53128	3/28/2014	193,086.55	Mdse

**Total 1,292,001.10**

Check Register Nos. 508-14 to 511-14 and 114-14 to 122-14 in the total amount of: **2,281,865.77**

The motion was seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ and approved by a unanimous vote.

- C. Resolution 19-2014-Authorizing the General Manager to enter into a contract with corporate Security LLC, DBA First Security, DBA CWI Security for Security Services.
- D. Resolution 20-2014-Authorizing the General Manager to enter into agreement to transfer seven bus options from the port authority of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, PA to BFT.
- E. Resolution 21-2014-authorizing the General Manager to purchase thirty (30) mini-vans From Northsound Auto DBA Dwayne Lane's Chrysler Jeep Dodge
- F. Resolution 22-2014-Authorizing General Manager to enter into an agreement for Temporary Staffing Services
- G. CAC Membership Applicants

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

CHAIRMAN WATKINS read aloud the items on the Consent Agenda. He 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.

- 7. Action Items
  - A. Resolution 23-2014-Authorizing the General Manager to enter into a contract with RH2 engineering, Inc. on-call Architecture and Engineering services.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called on Ed Frost, Interim General Manager

Ed Frost, Interim General Manager, stated that we have several capital projects that we have secured funding for and would like to get moving on them. One is the Tulip Lane Park and Ride lot and the others are the improvement on 22<sup>nd</sup> street transit center in Pasco and our Knight Street transit center in Richland. We need the help of an architectural and engineering firm because we don't have that type of expertise on staff. Mr. Frost thanked Rob Orvis and the procurement group for their work in evaluating the request for qualifications and recommended that the Board accept the resolution as written and enter into a contract with RH2 engineering to provide services for us. Ed Frost also noted that Jerry Otto will be the lead on the projects and Rob Orvis has the information on the selection process.

Jerry Otto, special projects/maintenance manager, explained that staff selected RH2 because they were a larger firm that provides competent, well-staffed expertise for all aspects of the projects that are needed by Ben Franklin Transit. Rob Orvis,

procurement supervisor went on to say that the firm was chosen by qualifications and experience, not price.

**ACTION:** BOB KOCH made and RICHARD BLOOM seconded a motion to Approve Resolution 23-2014 as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. Resolution 18-2014 – Adopting the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Operations between Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) and Teamsters Local NO. 839

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called on Mr. Frost

Ed Frost, Interim General Manager, recalled that at the last board meeting 3 collective bargaining agreements were brought before the board. The Board approved 2 completed contracts with DAR employees and Maintenance employees. The Board instructed us to take the third, coach operators' contract, and resolve the issue regarding interpretation of language within the contract. Mr. Frost stated that the contract brought before you tonight is virtually the same contract we brought to you a month ago; the issues were resolved when sitting back down with the union. There are 2 slight changes to the contract. There is an \$82.00/month medical savings that was passed on to the DAR and Maintenance group when those contracts were approved. The coach operator's contract was held up so we are asking the board to provide payout to the coach operators this month. The second issue revolves around "first day of hire". There is language attached to the contract that explains "first day of hire" means the hire date of the employees who are hired after the board approves this contract. Mr. Frost recommends that the Board approve the contract as written, along with the attached addendum.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS made clear that the vote was on Resolution 18-2014 AND the attached addendum.

**ACTION:** JEROME DELVIN made and RICHARD BLOOM seconded a motion to Approve Resolution 18-2014 and the attached addendum as written. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS thanked the staff and union for working through the contract in good faith.

C. Resolution 24-2014 – Establishing Medical Benefits for Non-Represented Employees.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called upon Ed Frost.

Ed Frost asks the Board to approve an increase, for non-represented employees, from \$1,068.00 to \$1,150.00 per employee to put the non-represented employees in line with the represented employees under the union contracts which have just recently been approved.

TERRY CHRISTENSEN stated that he has concerns about setting precedence and possible conflict of interest in negotiations. Mr. Christensen also asked about the total cost involved with the increase.

Mr. Frost turned the financial question over to Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager. Ms. Boyce stated that there was a 5.0% increase in medical premiums per employee in the 2014 budget which amounts to \$28.00 per employee. The additional unbudgeted cost, or 7.67% increase adds \$75,000 increase to the 2014 budget. MR CHRISTENSEN noted that health care for everyone is on the rise and thanked Ms. Boyce for her input. Ms. Boyce stated that the \$1,150.00 provides the collective bargaining employees with 95.0% cost of the monthly premiums. While the increase would provide 87.0% to 100.0% cost of the monthly premium for non-represented employees depending on the employees plan choice.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked Mr. Frost to address TERRY CHRISTENSEN's concern regarding conflict of interest.

Mr. Frost agrees with MR CHRISTENSEN that there could be a conflict of interest. He suggested a possible outside firm do the negotiations with the union. The company has historically tried to treat all of the employees equally on the benefit side.

JEROME DELVIN asked if the health care plans for Union employees and Non-Represented employees were similar or completely different. Gloria asked that Debra Hughes address that question. Debra explained that the union groups plan has a flat rate for employee/spouse/child(ren). There is one price whether you have 1 person or 14 on the plan. The non-represented employees have a tier plan. The more subscribers you add to the plan, the more money out of pocket.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS addressed TERRY CHRISTENSEN who restated that what he read was a conflict of interest and he would like to pull the resolution and have PAT ROACH, legal counsel, look at it and bring in a secondary recommendation. Discussion continued. Richard Bloom asked for clarification of cost. The \$75,000 increase is in the 2.67% not budgeted for 2014. However, because the increase is not effective for all 12 months and insurance premiums coverage amounts held at the 2013 rate, the unbudgeted portion totals \$46,000.00

CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked for a motion.

**ACTION:** BOB OLSON moved and RICHARD BLOOM seconded to approve Resolution 24-2014. CHAIRMAN WATKINS informed the Board that they could motion to amend the resolution. LISA STADE moved and TERRY CHRISTENSEN seconded to amend the resolution and pass it to the Administration and Finance committee for discussion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### D. Possible selection of General Manager

CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked for Mr. Frost's update of where we are at in the process

Mr. Frost proceeded to explain the selection, interview, and review of qualifications process. He explained that there are 2 candidates at this time that have interviewed with the Board. That does not mean that the 2 would be the only two considered by the Board; the Board can take any action they choose to.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that the executive session before the regular Board Meeting was to review the qualifications of the candidates. CHAIRMAN WATKINS also stated that there would be an additional executive session following the meeting to discuss the qualifications of the candidates so there will be no action as of now; possibly after the executive session. CHAIRMAN WATKINS was pleased with the communities' response of having over 90 people show up for the receptions and thanked Mr. Frost and staff for all their hard work.

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

- 8. Discussion/Information Items
  - A. CAC Meeting Notes March 10, 2014

CHAIRMAN WATKINS called on Bill Hoage, CAC Member

Bill stated that the CAC group sent three applicants to the Board for approval. He noted that the CAC group would be riding the BYD bus on Monday April 14 for their meeting. He also said that there were many CAC members that attended the reception for the General Manager Candidates and they were very impressed with the applicants.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS thanked Bill for the report.

- B. BFT Employee Recognition Breakfast, Friday, May 9, 2014, 5:00 am to 11:00 am, BFT Operation's Lounge.

Ed Frost wanted to make sure that the Board has this function on their calendar. The unveiling of the 2013 BFT Employees/Team of the Year will be held at 9:30 a.m. Christy Watts, Marketing/Customer Service Manager, stated that the 9:30 a.m. timeframe will provide an opportunity for more employees to attend the unveiling event.

- 9. Staff Reports & Comments
  - A. Legal Report

PAT ROACH, legal counsel, stated that everything is going well and nothing to report.

- B. Boardings Report

Tony Kalmbach, Transit Planner, stated that the Ridership Report was included in the packet. The Boarding's Report has changed slightly, Vanpool will be reported 1 month

behind other modes due to the time it takes to calculate and receive final numbers from the different groups. The information is more streamlined with the month to month and then year to date on the new graph. Ridership for February, Fixed route was down 3.6%, Dial-A-Ride is up 0.3% and Taxi Service (Taxi Feeder, Finley, and Night and Sunday Service) was up 34.4% over February. Vanpool is down 12.1% in comparison to January 2013.

#### C. Treasurer's/Budget/Sales Tax Reports

Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager, stated the ridership is up in for the first two months primarily in fixed route and our Van Pool. Fares are running at 6.7% over budget giving us a 14.6 fare box recovery ratio. Our budget is 12.2%.

Treasurer's Report – Gloria Boyce stated some good news, a good way to start the year. The Treasurer's report shows cash balance of just over \$23.3 million dollars. Approximately 8 million is restricted for operating cost and 3.5 million is reserved for expected capital projects, leaving an unrestricted balance of 11.7 million.

Sales Tax – Gloria Boyce, Administrative Services Manager, stated that March sales tax receipts are in for January business in the amount of \$1,857,670. The change compared to March 2013 receipts is a positive 4.4 percent from last year. We are a positive 4.7 percent over the monthly budgeted amount.

Our Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA's) from around the state and local jurisdiction sales tax reports are not available and are not included in your packets.

#### D. General Managers Report

**At the state level the 2013-2015 Supplemental Transportation** budget was passed by legislature but the Governor has not signed it. The parts of the transportation budget that pertain to Ben Franklin Transit are not being considered for alteration so it still looks good but we cannot give you the official outcome.

**BYD (Build Your Dreams) Electric bus** experiment is off to a good start. The bus will be here next Monday at 5pm to allow the CAC committee and colleagues an opportunity to ride the bus. The Board of Directors are invited to ride along. We are moving the bus to different routes each day to get it out into the community. This is the next generation of electric buses. Because Ben Franklin Transit is on the cutting edge of the use of all electric buses, BYD thought it would be ideal to have the bus here to learn more about it. Jerry Otto is very excited about this project.

**Electric bus** – The E-1 was having some mechanical problems but they are fixed now. We will have 2 electric buses in revenue service tomorrow which are 2 more than any other transit system in the United States will have out tomorrow.

**Request from WSDOT** and our friends in Benton City having to do with a 2014 Tiger Grant application for the SR224/SR225 intersection improvements. They would like a

letter of support which Kathy McMullen has already written up. I would like to sign the letter if there is no opposition. There is no commitment of financial obligations, it is just a letter of support.

#### 10. Board Member Comments

NORMA NELSON – Stated thanks to everyone for coming to tonight's meeting. She thanked the Board for the approval of the Coach Contract. I attended the reception yesterday and was happy to see the general public, CAC, and employees. There were good questions for the candidates. NORMA thanked the Board for allowing the public and employees to meet the candidates and liked the process the Board took. She thanked Jerry Otto, stating that the buses look great.

LISA STADE – Informed everyone to come to Benton City on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Its Spring Barrel Tasting, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Opener Antique Car Show, and the 1<sup>st</sup> annual "Back to the West" event which includes horse drawn wagon rides and Indian Dancers. MS STADE also thanked Lisa Hamilton for jumping on board at such a busy time and taking over when there is such tremendous pressure.

BOB OLSON – No report.

BOB KOCH – No report

JEROME DELVIN – No report.

TERRY CHRISTENSEN – No report but to BILL FORSYTHE AND DENNIS SOLENSKY if you plan to relocate here, Welcome to Richland!

RICHARD BLOOM – stated that he loves the new calendars, can't wait for September to use it. He mentioned that he was very impressed with the turnout at the reception last night. MR BLOOM noted that West Richland is digging holes for and installing drainage.

RICK MILLER – Thanked the candidates for coming to town and sharing their time with BFT.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS introduced BILL FORSYTHE and DENNIS SOLENSKY. CHAIRMAN WATKINS publicly apologized saying that MR SOLENSKY was not told in advance that he could attend the Board Meeting and that although MR SOLENSKY is wearing casual attire now but earlier had worn a very nice suit. CHAIRMAN WATKINS thanked the staff and community for coming out and providing the board with their views and comments of the candidates and encouraged everyone to talk with the candidates during Executive Session. This will be a difficult decision.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS mentioned that JEROME DELVIN had called him a couple of days ago and the Mayor of Cerro de Pasco, sister city to Pasco, will be here to meet our Mayor of Pasco.



PAT ROACH, legal counsel, asked CHAIRMAN WATKINS if he would request that the candidates remain on premise until the Board goes back into open session.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS responded that the Board will be reviewing the qualifications of the candidates and cannot be sure that a decision will be made. In the case that a decision is made, it would be helpful if the candidates were able to stay. Executive session will probably be 45 minutes to 1 hour.

PAT ROACH, legal counsel, stated that his concern is that if they had additional questions for the candidates, it would help if they were on the property.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS noticed the candidates nod in agreement to stay on premise.

11. Next Meeting – Thursday, May 8, 2014 7:00 p.m.  
BFT Administration Building Board Room, 1000 Columbia Park Trail,  
Richland, WA
12. Executive Session – CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that the Board of Directors would recess into Executive Session. Estimated time 45 minutes to 1 hour. CHAIRMAN WATKINS noted that if the estimated time is not sufficient the waiting public will be notified.

PAT ROACH, legal counsel, cited RCW 42.30.110 (1G). The purpose of Executive Session is to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment. The only people who will remain in Executive Session will be the Board of Directors, Mr. Ed Frost, interim General Manager, and himself.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked if Debra Hughes, Human Resource manager, would stand by just in case there are questions regarding the benefit package for the candidates. Ms. Hughes asked CHAIRMAN WATKINS if he would like the benefits summary. CHAIRMAN WATKINS agreed.

Recess into Executive Session – 8:05 p.m.  
8:50 pm CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked for another 20 minutes  
9:10 pm CHAIRMAN WATKINS asked for another 20 minutes

CHAIRMAN WATKINS reconvened Open Meeting – 9:31 p.m.

JEROME DELVIN stated that the Board took their time deliberating and going over the candidates qualifications. It was not an easy decision and both candidates are qualified to run the organization.

**ACTION:** JEROME DELVIN MOVED and BOB KOCH seconded to hire DENNIS SOLENSKY as the General Manager with the salary and benefits to be negotiated by our attorney Pat Roach and an Admin/Finance committee member in the range advertised until a contract comes back to the Board for Ratification.

Discussion:

TERRY CHRISTENSEN thanked the candidates and confirmed that the decision was difficult and that they were exemplary candidates. The feedback from the public was very positive.

MATT WATKINS stated that both candidates were very well qualified. We were not only using experience but also someone that matches what this organization needs in its next chapter. I am confident that we will be able to negotiate with MR. SOLENSKY and look forward to having him on board.

LISA STADE thanked both candidates.

BOB OLSON mentioned that the Board went through many resumes, interviews, and public response and both candidates rose to the top. MR OLSON thanked both candidates.

CHAIRMAN WATKINS stated that there is a motion on the table to extend an offer of employment to DENNIS SOLENSKY. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. Adjourn: The Regular BFT Board of Directors Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Lisa Hamilton/Exec. Assistant/Clerk of the Board  
May 8, 2014