



MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

October 10, 2019 7 p.m.

**Ben Franklin Board Meeting Room
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland WA**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. PST

2. ROLL CALL

Representing	Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Pasco	Matt Watkins	Chair	Present	
Kennewick	Bill McKay	Director	Present	
Benton County	Shon Small	Director	Present	
Franklin County #1	Bob Koch	Director	Excused	
Franklin County #2	Clint Didier	Director	Present	
Richland	Phillip Lemley	Director	Present	
West Richland	Richard Bloom	Director	Present	
Prosser	Steve Becken	Director	Present	
Benton City	Lisa Stade	Director	Present	
The Union	Norma Nelson	Non-Voting Union Rep.	Present	

3. FLAG SALUTE – Chair Watkins

Special guests, Troop 1911 led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT/INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

- a. CHAIR WATKINS wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the two people out in Hanford that were injured or killed this afternoon in a traffic accident; the Board is sending thoughts and prayers.
- b. Roberta Montgomery regarding Dial-A-Ride service. Staff followed up with her after she spoke.
- c. Norma Nelson spoke on behalf of the represented members in attendance to express concerns and frustration regarding work conditions related to their routes since changes were made. BFT drivers Serena Grandstaff, Cheryl Irwin and Bradley Mathews also provided comment.

- d. Rick Thorton, speaking from the perspective of a spouse of a driver expressed similar frustration with hours of operation.
- e. The Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1911 asked the Board to share what the role of the Board is related to transit so the troops can take notes for their merit badges. CHAIR WATKINS provided explanation.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A. The agenda was approved as read with DIRECTOR BLOOM moving with the amendment to include resolution numbers to the agenda. CHAIR WATKINS stated we would call out the numbers as we went so the agenda stands as is.

RESULT:	APPROVED UNANIMOUS
MOVER:	BLOOM
SECONDER:	WATKINS

6. RECOGNITIONS

- A. Resolution 65-2019 to recognize BFT employee Dale Engles for his participation in the 2019 Washington State Transit Association Rodeo Competition**
- B. Resolution 66-2019 to recognize BFT employee Gabe Beliz for his participation in the 2019 Washington State Transit Association Rodeo Competition**
- C. Move to approve Resolution 67-2019 to recognize BFT employee Caleb Suttle for his participation in the 2019 Washington State Transit Association Rodeo Competition**

Ken Hamm, Operations Director recognized three Rodeo participants. To qualify for the Bus Rodeo you must have a clean driving record and have a good record overall with Ben Franklin Transit in order to even participate in the rodeo. Dale Engels participated in the paratransit competition, or the Body on Chassis at the state. On August 18, he finished fifth in the state. Gabe is one of our national rodeo champions and this year placed third in the state in the 40-foot competition and Caleb finished first in the 35-foot category for the entire state of Washington.

RESULT:	APPROVED UNANIMOUS
MOVER:	BLOOM
SECONDER:	LEMLEY

- 7. Citizen’s Advisory Network (CAN) Report – Nothing to report**
The group did not meet.

8. Board Committee Reports – Meeting Notes included in the Board Packet

- A. Operations & Maintenance Committee Report - CANCELLED**
- B. Planning & Marketing Committee Report - CANCELLED**
- C. Administration & Finance Committee – Chair Steve Becken**

The Committee was informed that our labor relations employment service contract expired in August. An RFP was put out with one response, from Summit Law. The contract for Summit Law is on as an action item tonight. It's for three years, with the option to extend up to an additional two years. The

other main thing discussed was the budget and the regular standing items.

9. Consent Agenda

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

A. Approval of September 12, 2019 Regular Board Meeting Minutes as presented

B. September Voucher Summary

RESULT:	APPROVED UNANIMOUS
MOVER:	BLOOM
SECONDER:	MCKAY

10. Action Items

A. Resolution 68-2019: Move to authorize General Manager to award Summit Law Group as the Contractor to provide Labor Relations and Employment Law Services

Wendi Warner, Human Resources Director commented that the organization recognizes the need for labor relations and employment law services. An RFP was sent to seven firms and advertised in the Tri Cities Herald. Summit Law Group was the single responsive and responsible reply. We're recommending three years with the option to extend for two more, so we could be working with someone for the next five years. After brief discussion the motion was made.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	BLOOM
SECONDER:	BECKEN

11. Discussion & Informational Items

A. Quarterly Performance Report

Ali Madison, Marketing Director presented the third quarter report.

Ridership - Total year to date system boarding counts were just under 2,343,000. This is down less than 1% from third quarter year to date total from last year due the first quarter that was dramatically impacted by winter snowfall. Starting in April, ridership began to recover considerably. Total system ridership is up 8% for the period over last year. Fixed Rate ridership was at 13.5% in July, 6.6 of August and 3.6. In September. We had dial-a-ride up 8.1% in July, but down between three and 5% in August and September, and Vanpool ridership was up 8% in quarter three overall.

On-time performance continues to be an issue in West Pasco. Our Planning and Service Development staff is aware of the issue and working through it all.

On Boardings, we had some notable increases on routes 47, 65, 110, 123 and 126 last quarter. West Richland and Prosser saw the highest ridership growth rates with 35% and 37% increases respectively over the same period last year.

Our largest seasonal service of the summer was the fair. We had a total ridership on fair and rodeo shuttles this year of 28,422, which is the highest since 2014 and an 18.9% over last year. Friday, ridership was the highest, just over 1000. Other shuttle services were Art in the Park and the boat races during the same week and at the end of July. Both shuttle services were offered by donation this year to the YMCA who presented the proceeds to during the last month's board meeting. We saw a dramatic uptick in shuttle ridership for Art in the Park this year, which was 158% over 2018. We did share more advertising reach between the two events then we did the

previous year, which appears to have had an impact in addition to growth in the event itself, and perhaps a desire to support the YMCA.

Marketing and outreach include Twitter impressions, which held steady over last quarter just under 38,000. Facebook activity was up over the prior quarter, primarily due to an increase in paid advertising for shuttle service promotions. Digital advertising got us just shy of 157,000 impressions in July and August and continue to perform far ahead of national averages for audience engagement.

Safety refresher training for drivers and Operators has begun, with CPR and First Aid completed, and preventable accidents tracking better than target.

12. Staff Reports & Comments

A. Legal Report – No report

B. Financial Report – Paul Genack

Year to date numbers for a total operating revenue were almost flat, less than 1% difference. Year over year compared to last year we are off 4% total revenues and the majority of that is that \$1.2 million differentiate that can be easily made up in the operating section. We are down a little bit on coach fares, but we are up on dial-a-ride. Our expenses are favorable year over year now to be compared to the 2018/2019 budget. We are comparable slightly 5% year over year. Our treasure report shows that we have \$6.2 million net funds available after the reserves. Then our sales tax revenue is up 10.9% year over year. We are looking at an increase of about 3.9% overall and our September receipts for July sales are \$3.4 million.

C. General Manager's Report

a. Governmental Affairs Update:

i. Federal: Continuing Resolution through November 21 with no FTA appropriations as of yet.

ii. State: We are anticipating the I-976 outcome with the November 8 election, which is how transit agencies are funded in the state of Washington. Vehicle weight fees fund the multimodal account, along with State Ferries, State Patrol, etc. We are preparing information for our drivers for when they get questions of what they can and cannot say when they're at work in terms of voting. Every biennium we receive just about \$3 million from the multimodal account so that's what BFT stands to lose.

iii. Operations:

1. Operations made all scheduled pullouts this month.

2. We completed our Federal Triennial review and are preparing response to three minor findings. The review is a huge effort and a great effort by staff.

3. Our state accountability review is in process starting with the entrance conference on-site.

4. The first of our 24 dial-a-ride replacement vehicles made it by September 30th. We have a new federal requirement of Buy America so one of those had to hit the property by September 30 to qualify for the 65% Buy America.

5. An update on Labor Relations will be provided next month.

Ms. Boyce opened for questions to which there were none.

13. Board Member Comments

- A. NORMA NELSON – Feels service is no longer about getting clients to their destination on time but the number crunch, so being on time is now second to pushing more people on the bus at one time.
- B. CLINT DIDIER – Feels we need to gear up for another cold winter according to the Farmer’s Almanac.
- C. LISA STADE – Has heard from a couple of people in the community about the No-Show policy. She wants to make sure we are examining the timeframe about the way we pick up people, the no-shows and qualifications.
- D. BOB KOCH – Absent
- E. STEVE BECKEN - In Prosser, there is not a restroom for the drivers. There is one main pick up station and several bus stops. Getting a porta potty or something for the drivers that are servicing Prosser might be something to consider.
- F. CHAIRMAN WATKINS – 1) Goal is to get the Board Governance done by the end of this year. Gloria will work with the steering committee to get them on the same page. 2) I hope as chair, finding that balance to make sure that it is your meeting to do the business that we need to do. And then also hearing from the public, hopefully I struck somewhere the appropriate balance this evening. 3) He is aware that collective bargaining is being challenged and thinks tonight’s attendance is possibly symptomatic of the stress that goes with that, aside from the safety and bathroom break issues.
- G. RICHARD BLOOM – The City of West Richland and the Port of Kennewick have negotiated the sale of the former race track and will bring back what the possible transit issues may be.
- H. BILL MCKAY – Comment was made tonight about fixed route by staff but not on the Dial-A-Ride side. We heard from a passenger and driver, both of which bring up concerns.
- I. PHIL LEMLEY – Troubling public comments, however two sides to every story. Wondering what the solution is. As well, doesn’t feel anyone should have to come to a board meeting and say they can’t take a bathroom break.
- J. SHON SMALL – Doesn’t want to have anyone come into a Board meeting to talk about a bathroom break.

14. Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, November 07, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA 99352

15. Executive Session - None

16. Other Business

- A. Motion to Release the 2020 Budget for Public Consideration.

RESULT:	APPROVED UNANIMOUS
MOVER:	MCKAY
SECONDER:	BECKEN

17. Adjournment – With no further business, CHAIR WATKINS adjourned the board meeting at 8:23 p.m.