



MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
April 8, 2021
3:30 p.m.

Per the Governor’s COVID-19 Proclamation 20-28 Open Public Meetings Act, the Regular Board Meeting was remote and telephonic, with call-in access provided to all participants and attendees.

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR BLOOM called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

BFT Staff: Gloria Boyce, Ayodeji Arojo, Bill Barlow, Leo Bowman, Carina Cassel, Chad Crouch, Terry DeJuan, Mindy Eakin, Bill Hale, Keith Hall, Jeff Lubeck, Ali Madison, Rob Orvis, Mike Roberts, Wendi Warner

Legal Counsel: Jeremy Bishop

3. Flag Salute

CHAIR BLOOM led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT/INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

CHAIR BLOOM announced there is no public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no requested additions or changes to the agenda.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	MCKAY
SECONDER:	LEMLEY

6. RECOGNITIONS

- A. Resolution 21-2021: Recognizing Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) Assistant Director, Transit Operations, Steve Davis for Completing American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program.

Ms. Boyce presented to the Board recognizing Steve Davis for completing the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program. BFT is fortunate to have Steve Davis as a public transportation employee. By attending training programs Mr. Davis is gaining knowledge and skills in goal-setting communications and project management. This leadership program will also provide Mr. Davis with developing relationships with industry leaders in the peer community.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	DIDIER
SECONDER:	LEMLEY

7. Citizen's Advisory Network (CAN) Report

Leo Bowman presented the Citizen's Advisory Network (CAN) report. Mr. Bowman explained that he is the new chairman of the CAN as of January 1st. He explained that the CAN group met on March 29th where staff presented the Modified Annual Service Plan. Mr. Bowman also shared that due to COVID-related issues, CAN membership has decreased. They are working on recruitment initiatives.

8. Board Committee Reports

CHAIR BLOOM invited the committee chairs to report on their respective committee meetings, which were held remotely. The meeting minutes were in the Board packet.

- A. **Operations & Maintenance Committee Report** – RUBEN ALVARADO, Committee Chair. Director Alvarado reported that the committee meeting was canceled for the month. Resolution 22-2021: Authorizing the General Manager to declare vehicle 8552 as surplus and dispose per Resolution 62-2014 was sent to the Consent Agenda.
- B. **Planning & Marketing Committee Report** – 03/31/2021 – BILL MCKAY, Committee Chair. Director McKay shared that the minutes in the packet were full and complete. He referred the Board members to review the minutes for a summary of the

meeting.

C. **Administration & Finance Committee Report** – 04/01/2021 – STEVE BECKEN, Committee Chair. CHAIR BLOOM reported that the committee was presented with a resolution for temporary staffing services as well as an informational update on BFT being awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for their 2019 Annual Financial Report. Procurement also presented upcoming bids and proposals.

9. Consent Agenda

CHAIR BLOOM read the consent items and invited a motion.

- A. March 11, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes – Approve
- B. March Voucher Summary – Approve
- C. Resolution 22-2021: Authorizing the General Manager to declare vehicle 8552 as surplus and dispose per Resolution 62-2014.

Payroll					
Check Register Number	Check Number	Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
505-21	80760	80766	3/12/2021	\$538,638.11	Payroll
506-21	50767	80773	3/26/2021	\$533,078.02	Payroll
			Total	\$1,071,716.13	
Accounts Payable					
Check Register Number	Check Number	Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
116-21	77145	77202	3/3/2021	\$391,441.87	MDSE
117-21	77203	77249	3/9/2021	\$216,015.18	MDSE
118-21	77250	77332	3/16/2021	\$370,780.90	MDSE
119-21	77333	77379	3/23/2021	\$235,217.83	MDSE
120-21	ACH TRANS		3/23/2021	\$900,229.35	ACH TRANS
121-21	77380	77446	3/31/2021	\$537,528.01	MDSE
122-21	ACH TRANS		3/31/2021	\$246,083.12	ACH TRANS
			Total	\$2,897,296.26	

CHAIR BLOOM invited a motion.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	ALVARADO
SECONDER:	SMALL

10. Action Items

- A. Resolution 23-2021: Authorizing the General Manager to Approve Temporary

Staffing Services – Wendi Warner, Human Resources and Labor Relations Director

Ms. Warner presented to the Board the request to award four temporary staffing service contracts to independent organizations: ANR Group, Inc., Manpower Group, Express Employment, RC Engineering and Construction Management. In December 2020 the Board authorized the General Manager to release proposals for temporary staffing contractors. At the time there were only two temporary agencies under contract, however, it has been a challenge to find diversity of staffing talent. The RFP went out to 35 contractors. There were eight responses. Cost proposals were provided to BFT based on four criteria points that BFT supplied, including experience in the local market. The agencies assist in locating individuals with unique functions, some are senior-level and others entry level. The proposals are based on two individual recruitments and seven unique temporary positions based on 1,000 hours of work each. The estimated cost figure was based on the last twelve months of service.

Director Alvarado requested further information on BFT's procurement process.

CHAIR BLOOM invited a motion.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	SMALL
SECONDER:	ALVARADO

- B. Public Hearing for the 2021 Modified Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis. CHAIR BLOOM opened up the public hearing at 4:04pm. There was one individual, Isaiah Chong, who registered to speak during the hearing. Mr. Chong was called upon and was given time to unmute his phone to speak. There was no response from Mr. Chong. The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed at 4:41pm.

2021 Modified Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis – Keith Hall, Planning and Services Development Director

This topic was presented to the Board in March so Mr. Hall provided a brief overview of the 2021 Modified Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis with comments that have been received since then. The June service changes will require 12 additional fixed-route operators. The August service changes include 13 additional staff (7 operators and 6 operations/maintenance staff). The Dial-A-Ride operator current and budgeted staffing levels are sufficient; however, increase may be needed based on demand. The public comment period was open on March 12th and closes on April 11th. There were two virtual open houses (March 17 and March 24) with a total of five public attendees. The Plan was presented at the CAN meeting on March 29. Public interactive REMIX maps received five comments.

Norma Nelson asked Mr. Hall if any additional Dial-A-Ride drivers will be hired. Mr. Hall explained that the Planning Department worked with the Operations

Department and believe there is sufficient capacity at present staffing levels for Dial-A-Ride. This may be revisited in a year based on demand.

Resolution 24-2021: Approving the 2021 Modified Annual Service Plan and Title VI Service Equity Analysis – Keith Hall, Planning and Services Development Director

After a brief discussion, CHAIR BLOOM invited a motion. Director Lemley moved and Director Small seconded. There was further discussion regarding whether this resolution could be approved prior to the close of the public comment period. Motion was withdrawn. After further discussion and with legal parliamentary guidance, it was agreed to move forward with the motion contingent on no further public comment.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	SMALL
SECONDER:	ALVARADO

11. Discussion & Informational Items

A. Informational: Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA for 2019 Annual Financial Report – Jeff Lubeck, Administrative Services Director

Mr. Lubeck stated that BFT received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA for 2019 Annual Financial Report. This is the eight year in a row that BFT has received the award. The program was established to encourage in assisting in state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirement of generally accepted accounting principles. The government then recognizes those succeeding in that goal following the state audit. Explaining variances, changes, and trends; being open and transparent; and sharing what BFT is proof of a successful financial team that knows and understands the numbers and cooperates with policies and procedures.

B. 2021 Q1 Performance Report – Ali Madison, Marketing and Communications Director

Ms. Madison presented the first quarter performance report. She shared that while ridership is still significantly reduced, we are seeing a positive trend toward recovery. Total system ridership is down by 50% in comparison to prior year. Fixed-route ridership was down 41% for the quarter compared to 2020 but is on par with nationwide performance. Dial-A-Ride is down in comparison to 2020 by 54.8%. Vanpool ridership recovery will depend to some extent on the return of onsite work from some of the major Hanford area employers. Vanpool ridership is down in comparison to 2020 by 73%. CONNECT ridership is frequently seeing multiple weekdays with ridership over 100 daily riders. This service has been expanded to include connections to COVID-19 vaccination sites and interzonal trip support. Via is in the process of onboarding more drivers to minimize wait times for riders.

Ms. Madison also shared that BFT is continuing focus in marketing and outreach for communications around pandemic response and safety including implementation of the federal mask order on public transit in February and providing services to local vaccination sites in March. Communication support was also

provided for the Modified Annual Service Plan public comment period. Masking guideline communications were published via internal and external communications in English and Spanish, including web and social media content, signage at BFT offices, transit facilities, and aboard vehicles. These will continue to be reinforced as the mandate is in effect until at least May. In the first quarter of 2021, services were adjusted to provide transportation support to those needing access to local vaccination sites. BFT is working with the Benton Franklin Health District and other community partners on COVID-19 issues.

Ms. Madison also shared that much work was done to recognize employees on National Transit Driver Appreciation Day.

BFT is seeing an upward trend in website activity across the board, which is expected as ridership continues to trend up.

Ms. Madison also provided an update on 2021 Goals and Initiatives progress.

CHAIR BLOOM asked if the auto-pass count (APC) is still working if BFT is only doing back-door boarding. Ms. Boyce confirmed that the APC is counting from the rear-door.

After brief discussion, CHAIR BLOOM moved to the next agenda item.

12. Staff Reports & Comments

A. Legal Report

Mr. Bishop stated that there was nothing noteworthy to report.

B. Financial Report

Mr. Lubeck presented to the Board the Financial Report. Revenue through February is \$6.9M which is slightly higher than 2020 at \$6.8M but under-performed the budget of \$8.5M. Most of the variance is driven by budgetary estimates and timing around sales tax. Overall, BFT was under budget by about 19%. Revenue without the CARES funding would have been \$6.4M. Expenses are underbudget by 19.9% and are 6% lower than 2020, well under budget. For the year, surplus is \$418K compared to budget of \$392K. Without the CARES funding BFT would have a slight deficit of \$82K. Total cash on hand remains consistent. Reserves leaves a bit of an operating cushion. BFT is currently not charging fares. Vanpool is collecting fares but the data is skewed because of the ridership numbers and cost per boarding. Sales tax is reporting on actual activity received through January 2021 and is \$320K higher than January 2020. This is an 11% increase. Local taxes continue to hold steady and provide a stable base for BFT.

After discussion regarding resumption of fares, plans to reopen front-door boarding, and lessons learned for budgeting and operating expenses during the pandemic, CHAIR BLOOM moved on to the next item on the agenda.

C. General Manager's Report

Gloria Boyce, General Manager, provided the Board with a review of this month's notable topics:

a. Government Affairs Update

i. Federal

Ms. Boyce explained that the President signed the American Rescue Plan in March. BFT will receive up to \$20.8M in formula funds to be used by September 2024. This is a substantial amount. Ms. Boyce is working with Mr. Lubeck and his team to update the financial forecasting model. Ms. Boyce stated that there was a call for projects from Senator Murray's office and the House is also requesting a call for community projects by April 16th. BFT is currently preparing to submit grant requests to both House and Senate.

ii. State

Ms. Boyce shared that the State Senate passed House Bill 1514 for vanpool reform. The modified bill coming from the House lowers the threshold for what constitutes a vanpool from five down to three for public transit only. Once the bill is approved by the House it will be sent to the Governor's office for signature. Once signed, the bill will take effect on September 1st. This allows BFT to utilize rideshare or vanpool.

Ms. Boyce further explained that the House and Senate transportation committees passed their budgets. This week the focus is on budget reconciliation. BFT submitted several projects, three projects were included in the State House bill. The three projects are: fleet electrification for frequent service corridor; frequent service corridor engineering which includes bus stop placement, ADA compliance shelters, and amenities; and three multimodal hubs in Prosser, Benton City, and Southridge in Kennewick.

b. Operations

- i. Ms. Boyce shared that BFT met all scheduled pullouts in March. Members of the BFT team participate in the local biweekly decision makers meetings and the weekly Benton Franklin Health District Community Vaccination Group.
- ii. Ms. Boyce thanked the Board for moving forward on the Modified Annual Service Plan. It is a great move to begin providing fixed-route service on Sundays.

Ms. Boyce closed her report and opened for questions. After a brief discussion, CHAIR BLOOM moved to the next item on the agenda.

13. Board Member Comments

There were no Board Member comments.

CHAIR BLOOM moved on to the next item on the agenda.

14. Executive Session

Executive Session on RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) began at 5:20 p.m. and adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

15. Other

None

16. Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, May 13, 2021 7:00 p.m.

17. Adjournment

CHAIR BLOOM adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Mindy Eakin, Interim Clerk of the Board

Date