



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 6 p.m.
Benton County Administration Building, Room 303
7122 W. Okanogan Place Building E, Kennewick, Washington

Meeting attendance options included in-person and virtual via Zoom

MINUTES

1. CONVENE BOARD MEETING

Chair Will McKay called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Representing	Attendee Name	Title	Status
City of Pasco	Joseph Campos	Director	Present
City of Kennewick	Brad Beauchamp	Director	Present
City of Richland	Terry Christensen	Director	Present
City of West Richland	Richard Bloom	Vice Chair	Present
Franklin County #2	Rocky Mullen	Director	Present via Zoom
Franklin County #1	Clint Didier	Director	Present
Benton County	Will McKay	Chair	Present
City of Prosser	Steve Becken	Director	Present
City of Benton City	David Sandretto	Director	Present via Zoom
Teamsters Union 839	Caleb Suttle	Union Representative	Present

BFT Staff: Rachelle Glazier, Janet Brett, Michaela Dimas, Sarah Funk, Brian Lubanski, Tom McCormick, Anel Montejano, Joshua Rosas, Kevin Sliger, Rich Starr

Legal Counsel: Jeremy Bishop

Interpreters: Ruth Medina, Ynez Vargas

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McKay led the meeting participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair McKay opened the meeting to comments from the public. Denise Sommer, a resident of Richland and a Dial-A-Ride driver, asked for a Standard Operating Procedure for active shooters. She addressed the Dial-A-Ride driver and Dial-A-Ride dispatch shortage. She stated that Dial-A-

Ride has to enforce fare, but fixed route does not, and they have to leave Dial-A-Ride clients at their homes if they don't have fare.

Lisa, a resident of Kennewick and a Dial-A-Ride driver, asked the Board to bring back the Safety Service schedule and for the Board to reconsider their decision not to hire new Dial-A-Ride drivers.

Sean Taylor, a resident of West Richland and Dial-A-Ride driver, stated that there are no restrooms available for customers or drivers on Route 170.

Nathan Baker, a resident of Pasco and a driver/dispatcher, stated drivers are being overworked and running late for pickups due to a shortage of workers.

Sara Stephens, a resident of Kennewick and driver/dispatcher, asked the Board for changes and to hire more Dial-A-Rider drivers.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McKay asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Director Bloom moved to approve the agenda, and Director Christensen seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

6. CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN) REPORT

Mr. Matthew Howie provided a report on the Citizens Advisory Network. He reported that Ben Franklin Transit staff have been helpful in getting them up to speed on policies and have responded to their questions about day-to-day operations. He discussed trying to figure out services that can be provided for individuals who face transportation barriers that do not allow them to participate in the daily riding of buses. They are hoping to be a friendly face out in the community and to reach out to different groups to advocate for the services provided by Ben Franklin Transit. He encouraged everyone to participate in the Disability Rights Washington 2023 Week Without Driving challenge and use public transit to participate in the services we advocate for to better understand the opportunities and challenges associated with them. He also provided Board members with a copy of the CAN report.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Chair McKay presented the Consent Agenda items and invited a motion.

A. August 10, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

B. August Voucher Summary

C. Resolution 39-2023 Authorizing the General Manager to Extend Contract #1097 on a Sole Source Basis with Roach & Bishop LLP for General Legal Counsel Services through February 29, 2024

D. Resolution 40-2023 Authorizing the General Manager to Enter into a Contract with Bud Clary Auto Group to Purchase Two (2) Service Vehicles Utilizing State Contract #05916

Director Bloom moved for approval of the Consent Agenda items. The motion was seconded by Director Christensen and passed unanimously.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Resolution 41-2023 Amending Resolution 38-2023 Authorizing the General Manager to purchase (80) eighty replacement Vanpool vehicles; Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Northside Dwane Lane to purchase up to thirty-two (32) 7-passenger vehicles utilizing Washington State Contract #05916; Authorize the General Manager to purchase up to forty-eight (48) 12- and/or 15-passenger full-size vehicles with any approved auto dealership(s) utilizing Washington State Contract #05916**

Chief Planning & Development Officer Kevin Sliger presented a resolution to amend Resolution 38-2023 that was approved by the Board last month. He explained that they want to make the resolution more general to allow for a wider range of approved auto dealership options to purchase vehicles of different makes and models.

Director Beckon moved for approval of Resolution 41-2023. The motion was seconded by Director Sandretto and passed unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION & INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Hanford Update

Mr. Sliger provided an update on the Hanford service. Staff asked for input from the Federal Transit Administration to see if BFT could provide commuter fixed route services to the site, and the FTA stated we cannot use federal dollars. We have been working with the Federal Transit Administration to look for other options, to include to encouraging Hanford to use commuter services, or BFT purchases and operates the vehicles; or we provide services up to the Wye Barricade, then Hanford would provide their own services from that point onward. We are in the process of getting the cost/benefit for each of those options to present at the October Board meeting. Director Bloom asked if we received the Federal Transit Administration response in writing. We do not have it in writing, but we can request it from the Federal Transit Administration.

10. STAFF REPORTS & COMMENTS

A. Legal Report

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop announced we will have an executive session later this evening.

B. Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer Sarah Funk presented the financial report for July. She reviewed the Comparison Revenue & Expenditures to Budget, the BFT Sales Tax Comparison, and the Operating Grants. She stated that we are on track and ahead with fares, sales tax numbers were favorable, and we are working on getting grant money quicker. We are doing better than we planned from a budget perspective.

C. General Manager's Report

General Manager Rachelle Glazier reported that we had 22,000 riders during the fair week, which went off without major hitches.

She stated that Stephanie Barnard took a bus ride with Kevin and herself from Lampson Stadium to the fair.

Ms. Glazier stated that we were also in the Grand Parade on August 19, with a Dial-A-Ride, a bus, and a Vanpool vehicle.

She reported that we are having our Employee Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday, September 20, and invited the Board of Directors to join us as we are starting early from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

We have the 28th Annual Senior Community Picnic on Thursday, September 21, with free shuttle service running from Columbia Point Marina Park to the Senior Center and Howard Amon Park.

She will be attending the Women in Business Conference on September 27. .

She stated that Brian and his Customer Service team started collecting surveys last month at all the transit centers asking customers about their ridership experience and how they perceive safety on the transit. Once we have collected 90 to 120 days of data, we will present all of the findings to the Board in January.

Senior Manager of Customer Service Brian Lubanski reported that they have been collecting surveys for about three and a half weeks. They have temporarily stopped, as they are moving on to the Title VI Fare Study. They are trying to get about 500 responses together for the first study for next year, but currently, they have 95 responses. They were pulling favorably in experience with our drivers and safety with the Anglo population versus the Hispanic population. They will work not only in Customer Service, but in Marketing to help improve our relationship with the Hispanic community. They will continue the surveys throughout the year as soon as they finish Title VI.

Ms. Glazier stated that we kicked off refresher and CPR training again. There are individuals who have not had any refresher training in several years, and we are trying to get everyone caught up and in compliance with training.

She reported that we are working on the interlocal agreement with our local police jurisdictions, and our goal is to have it wrapped up by October to have a police presence at our transit centers and potentially do walk-throughs on the buses from time to time.

She stated that we have had a surveillance project going on for the last eight to nine months to get us up to speed amongst our peers, as we are quite outdated in terms of not having any video surveillance. This will provide support to the police if there are any incidents, and dispatchers will have live feeds of what is going on at the transit centers.

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Clint Didier reported that some counties had Fentanyl mailed to two of them, one in Seattle and the other up north, and as a precaution, Franklin County got ahold of the Health Department, and they distributed Narcan to every department. He suggested that Ben Franklin Transit have Narcan available for the protection of the employees, as Fentanyl is such a powerful drug.

Board members discussed the testimony given about the need for Dial-A-Ride employees. Ms. Glazier reported that we are planning to hire more drivers; interviews will be held on September 30, and the training class is slotted to start the third week in October.

There was discussion among Board members about the lack of restrooms for the drivers and customers to use in Prosser. It was stated that Ben Franklin Transit worked out an arrangement with the gas station in Prosser that the drivers and customers can use. Board members suggested that Ben Franklin Transit get porta potties that are wheelchair accessible in Prosser.

Director Didier stated that on Saturday, September 16, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is doing their first annual fundraiser at the Double Eagle Ranch in Benton City from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and encouraged everyone to attend.

There was also discussion among the Board members about an online public comment submitted that stated that by participating in the West Richland Veterans Day Parade, where Semi Bird is the designated Grand Marshal, Ben Franklin Transit is providing tacit endorsement of a political candidate. It was stated that going through the parade does not represent an endorsement either way. It was agreed that Ben Franklin Transit will move forward and will participate in the parade.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bishop announced an Executive Session would be held under RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) for 15 minutes with no anticipated action. The Board recessed at 6:45 p.m. and returned to open session at 7:00 p.m.

13. OTHER


There were no other agenda items.

14. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 12, 2023, at 6 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McKay adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.



Anel Montejano, Clerk of the Board

10/12/2023

Date