



## AGENDA – Rev 2

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**CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK  
REGULAR MEETING  
Monday August 19, 2024 6:00 p.m.  
BFT Administration Bldg. GM Conference Room  
1000 Columbia Park Trail, Kennewick, WA**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88161679988?pwd=fxrppdq7U7NCfNysoYymMxYiXmfUTu.1>

Meeting ID: 881 6167 9988 Passcode: 155544 Dial In: (253) 215 8782 or (888) 788 0099

CAN Meeting Agenda, Meeting Minutes and archived Zooms will be available at:  
[Citizens Advisory Network - Board Information | Ben Franklin Transit \(bft.org\)](#)

### 1. CONVENE CAN MEETING

Chair, Ed Frost

Convened at:

### 2. ROLL CALL

Secretary / Recorder, Dennis Kreutz

Representing	Attendee Name	Title	Status
Citizen Advisory Network	Ed Frost	Chair	
Citizen Advisory Network	Dori Luzzo-Gilmour	Vice Chair / Recruitment Chair	
Citizen Advisory Network	Dennis Kreutz	Recording Secretary	
Citizen Advisory Network	Bernie Vinther	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Brooklyn Hufstader	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Frank Cuta	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Laurie Price	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Mathew Howie	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Nayeli Aranda	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Ulises Navarro	Member	
Citizen Advisory Network	Vanessa Pruitt	Member	
BFT Staff	Sarah Funk	CFO / Interim CEO	
BFT Staff	Janet Brett	Manager of Communication	
BFT Staff	Kevin Sliger	Chief Planning / Development	
BFT Staff	Imelda Collop	Planning / Development	
BFT Staff			

### 3. COMMENTS BY GUESTS:

Chair, Ed Frost

**4. JUNE 2024 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:** Chair, Ed Frost

Discussion:

Motion to Approve the Minutes by:

Second to Approve the Minutes by:

Minutes Approved unanimously by a Voice Vote of the CAN Members: YES / NO

**5. OLD BUSINESS:**

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. In the June CAN Meeting we discussed email sent to CAN by Transit Awareness TC  
Email is included below as Attachment A.  
Breakdown of the email by Subject is included below as Attachment B.

Discuss if a response should be made since we received this as a Public Comment.

**CAN ACTION:** Discussion deferred until the August CAN Meeting.

- B. From July CAN Meeting - BFT has been requested to provide information to CAN regarding the rumored late payment of vendors.

**BFT ACTION:** Kevin Sliger reported that he is not sure if this is an issue or not but will bring it up with Sarah Funk / BFT CFO to put together a report for the August CAN Meeting.

**BFT ACTION:** Report by BFT CFO Sarah Funk with status of payment to vendors and discussion of Accounts Payable Aging Report.

- C. From the July CAN Meeting - CAN requested an update on the status of the Ranger System, in light of the many outages over the past 6+ weeks.

BFT Kevin Sliger stated that there have been issues since upgrades were attempted to be installed. This is an ongoing problem that is being worked on by the vendor.

**BFT ACTION:** Update by BFT if issues have been resolved and discussion about technology and plans for preventing future problems with this older system.

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. An email by Transit Awareness dated July 30, 2024 has been received by Citizen Advisory Network, addressed to BFT Board and all CAN Members. The email is attached as Attachment C.  
Breakdown of the email by Subject is included below as Attachment D.

CAN has invited CFO / Interim CEO Sarah Funk to attend the August CAN Meeting to add to the discussion regarding the July 20 email received from Transit Awareness TC.

**CAN ACTION:** Open to questions by CAN Members with an emphasis on the key subject matter that can be answered by BFT Management.  
Suggested topics are shown below, extracted from the July 30 email.

CAN Members should be familiar with email and ready to participate.

4. There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight.
5. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023
6. and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable.
7. The lack of concern over the missing financial information presented to the board monthly is deeply troubling.
8. Staff have provided ample evidence that our entire Finance team is not equipped to run the agency appropriately,
10. At the last board meeting, it was reported that several vendors had not been paid,
11. which is prohibiting our agency from operating effectively.
12. Despite this, over 20 vendors remain unpaid
13. including dozens more invoices,
14. some for more than 60 days.
22. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.
23. The proposed service cuts,
24. despite the pending outcome of Initiative 2117,
25. demonstrate a clear lack of foresight
26. and disregard for the community's needs.
29. The interim General Manager's suggestion to implement even more cuts
33. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges
38. The community relies on these services and any further deterioration is unacceptable.

B. When will the signage be put on the Coaches to make riders aware of the upcoming route changes?

NOTE: Signage has been noticed on some of the Coaches.

C. Issue regarding Public Restroom at BFT Transit Centers, brought up to CAN by concerned Rider to Dennis Kreutz.

1. How would restrooms be unlocked for Public usage?
2. Would they be safe and clean if unlocked?
3. If used by Public would drivers be able to use on short stops at Transit Center?
4. Could self locking portable toilets, to be unlocked by any driver, work?

D. Assign CAN Member to attend September 12 BFT Board Meeting:  
Assigned:

## **7. BFT BOARD / BFT STAFF COMMENTS:**

## **8. CAN MEMBER COMMENTS:**

A. By CAN Member Dennis Kreutz:

1. In the July CAN Meeting it was reported by BFT Kevin Sliger that the contract extension has been executed, but service changes will not go into effect until August.

Status Update by BFT: When will Overflow Para Transit Service commence?

2. Cameras are being added to vehicles.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. Is product data on the installed cameras available?
- b. Installation location in the vehicles of the installed cameras showing field of view?
- c. Storage method of recorded video?
- d. Do cameras have audio storage capability, and what is storage method of audio.
- e. What is the duration of the recorded storage?
- f. How is the recorded storage accessed by BFT?

3. Additional vehicles with Paratransit capabilities are being added.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. Are vehicles ready for service?
- b. Are they available for inspection / usage by CAN Members?

4. Additional driver background checks and training will take place.

Status Update by BFT:

- a. CAN BFT provide a side-by-side curriculum comparison to the BFT Para Transit drivers training course?

B. The WA State Public Transportation Conference was held in Kennewick August 12-14.  
Attended by CAN Members Frank Cuta and Dennis Kreutz

CAN Member Frank Cuta Report:

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report:

C. BFT did three days of social media and User Training Videos recently.

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report:

- D. CAN Members Bernie Vinther and Dennis Kreutz participated with BFT in the Benton Franklin County Fair Grand Parade on August 17.

CAN Member Bernie Vinther Report:

CAN Member Dennis Kreutz Report:

**9. OTHER:**

**10. NEXT MEETING:**

- A. Regular CAN Meeting Monday September 16, 2024, in the Ben Franklin Transit Admin Building, GM Conference Room, 1000 Columbia Park Trail , at 6:00 p.m.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. Meeting adjourned at:

## ATTACHMENT A: JUNE 14 EMAIL SENT TO CAN BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

**From:** transit awareness tc [mailto:transitawarenesstc@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2024 11:08 AM

**To:** brookhuf@gmail.com; catlady126@aol.com; dennis.kreutz@yahoo.com; Dori Luzzo Gilmour; edwinfrosto123@gmail.com; frank@cuta.net; laurie.price@rsd.edu; myorkhowie@gmail.com; naaranda@psd1.org; pvanessa68@gmail.com; ulisesn@alcon.media

**Subject:** Urgent Call for Accountability and Representation

Dear Citizens Advisory Network Members,

I am deeply troubled by recent developments at our agency over the past year. The decisions to replace essential dial-a-ride services with a taxi service, consider discontinuing free youth riding, restrict public comment, propose fare increases, implement service reductions, face impending layoffs, and encounter challenges with the sales tax issue threaten to significantly impact our services. These actions raise serious concerns about the direction and decision-making within our agency.

I have cc'd you on a message to the board that provides insights into the current challenges we are facing. The reality is that the previous general manager's actions led to a significant loss of staff. Unfortunately, the current interim GM is continuing down a similar path, making irrational decisions that have resulted in unpaid bills, vendors unwilling to work with us, and crucial reports not being submitted promptly, jeopardizing our funding and operations. It appears our agency is in a state of disarray.

We are at a crucial juncture where choosing the right CEO is paramount. The current leadership lacks the essential comprehension and expertise needed to proficiently manage our taxpayer funds and effectively serve the community. Instead, we are witnessing the agency falter due to poor leadership and mismanagement. The lack of accountability within the board is equally concerning and unacceptable.

Here's how you can contribute:

1. Advocate for inclusion in the evaluation process of a new CEO.
2. Evaluate the validity of my concerns and their impact on our agency.
3. Request from HR a detailed staff headcount and hire dates.
4. Investigate the number of outstanding bills and the implications.
5. Demand a monthly list of public comments.
6. Request a comprehensive budget analysis with year by year comparison dating back to 2021.

Looking ahead, I believe it's crucial to enhance accountability within our agency. I propose that a member of the Citizens Advisory Network (CAN) be appointed to the board. This step will ensure that your voices are heard and that we have better oversight and accountability for the board, GM, and CEO, thereby preventing such situations from arising again in the future.

As you conduct your evaluation, you will discover that our concerns are justified. Ben Franklin Transit must prioritize the community's needs and restore efficient service. It is crucial that prompt action is taken to appoint capable leadership and resolve the current situation.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. Together, we can ensure our agency meets its responsibilities to the community.

## **ATTACHMENT B: SUBJECT BREAKDOWN OF JUNE 14 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC**

CAN Response to Transit Awareness TC email dated June 14, 2024 DRAFT 01

1.

Dear Citizens Advisory Network Members

I am deeply troubled by recent developments at our agency over the past year.

CAN: Need to respond to BFT and Board since we received as a Guest Comment?

2.

The decisions to replace essential dial-a-ride services with a taxi service

3.

consider discontinuing free youth riding

4.

restrict public comment

5.

propose fare increases

6.

implement service reductions

7.

face impending layoffs

8.

and encounter challenges with the sales tax issue threaten to significantly impact our services.

9.

These actions raise serious concerns about the direction and decision-making within our agency.

10.

I have cc'd you on a message to the board that provides insights into the current challenges we are facing.

CAN: Put message on CAN Agenda.

11.

The reality is that the previous general manager's actions led to a significant loss of staff.

12.

Unfortunately, the current interim GM is continuing down a similar path, making irrational decisions that have resulted in unpaid bills,

13.

vendors unwilling to work with us,

14.

and crucial reports not being submitted promptly,

15.

jeopardizing our funding and operations.

16.

It appears our agency is in a state of disarray.

17.

We are at a crucial juncture where choosing the right CEO is paramount.

18.

The current leadership lacks the essential comprehension and expertise needed to proficiently manage our taxpayer funds and effectively serve the community.

19.

Instead, we are witnessing the agency falter due to poor leadership and mismanagement.

20.

The lack of accountability within the board is equally concerning and unacceptable.22.  
Here's how you can contribute:

20a.

1. Advocate for inclusion in the evaluation process of a new CEO.

20b.

2. Evaluate the validity of my concerns and their impact on our agency.

20c

3. Request from HR a detailed staff headcount and hire dates.

20d,

4. Investigate the number of outstanding bills and the implications.

20e,

5. Demand a monthly list of public comments.

20f.

6. Request a comprehensive budget analysis with year by year comparison dating back to 2021.

21.

Looking ahead, I believe it's crucial to enhance accountability within our agency.

22.

I propose that a member of the Citizens Advisory Network (CAN) be appointed to the board. This step will ensure that your voices are heard and that we have better oversight and accountability for the board, GM, and CEO, thereby preventing such situations from arising again in the future.

23.

As you conduct your evaluation, you will discover that our concerns are justified.

24.

Ben Franklin Transit must prioritize the community's needs and restore efficient service.

25.

It is crucial that prompt action is taken to appoint capable leadership and resolve the current situation.

26.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. Together, we can ensure our agency meets its responsibilities to the community.

## ATTACHMENT C: JULY 30 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC

### Re: Urgent Call for Leadership Renewal: Restoring Trust and Effectiveness at Ben Franklin Transit

transit awareness to [transitawarenesstc@gmail.com](mailto:transitawarenesstc@gmail.com)  
7/30/2024 9:01 PM

To: brad.beauchamp@ci.kennewick.wa.us; cdidier@franklincountywa.gov; csuttle@bft.org; dsandretto@ci.benton-city.wa.us; grimmcouncil@pasco-wa.gov; jbishop@roachlaw.com; kmaier@ci.richland.wa.us; rbloom@westrichland.org; sbauman@franklincountywa.gov; sbecken@ci.prosser.wa.us; will.mckay@co.benton.wa.us Cc: brookhuf@gmail.com; catlady126@aol.com; dennis.kreutz@yahoo.com; Dori Luzzo Gilmour; edwinfrosto123@gmail.com; frank@cuta.net; laurie.price@rsd.edu; myorkhowie@gmail.com; naaranda@psd1.org; pvanessa68@gmail.com; ulisesn@alcon.media; planning@bft.org; [customercomment@bft.org](mailto:customercomment@bft.org)

It has now been almost two months since you received the last email and BFT staff remains deeply concerned and frustrated by the ongoing mismanagement and detrimental decisions within our transit agency. The current trajectory is leading to a breakdown of our transit services at a time when our community needs them the most.

There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023 and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable. The lack of concern over the missing financial information presented to the board monthly is deeply troubling. Staff have provided ample evidence that our entire Finance team is not equipped to run the agency appropriately, yet the board continues to allow our interim GM to hold a powerful title when she can't even manage her own position or her team.

At the last board meeting, it was reported that several vendors had not been paid, which is prohibiting our agency from operating effectively. Despite this, over 20 vendors remain unpaid including dozens more invoices, some for more than 60 days. This failure to meet financial obligations further compounds the issues we are facing and underscores the severe mismanagement within the agency.

How much more evidence is needed to demonstrate that staff have zero confidence in her leadership abilities before the board acknowledges the reality of the situation? The interim General Manager's continued tenure is untenable and immediate action must be taken to address this leadership crisis. These investigations seem pointless and a facade while staff deal with the chaos that continues to unravel, with no accountability in sight. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.

The proposed service cuts, despite the pending outcome of Initiative 2117, demonstrate a clear lack of foresight and disregard for the community's needs. We should be concentrating on enhancing transit, not breaking it down based on unclear financials. The interim General Manager's suggestion to implement even more cuts seems to be a misguided attempt at self-redemption, rather than a strategic move to improve the agency. This is not the leadership our agency requires. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges and mitigate further issues. The facade of everything being okay is not only misleading but also dangerous. The community relies on these services and any further

deterioration is unacceptable.

I urge the board to take immediate and decisive action to rectify these issues. If the board continues to avoid addressing these critical issues, it sends a clear message about your stance on transit and your commitment to improving our community. Ignoring the mismanagement and allowing the current leadership to persist reflects a troubling disregard for the essential services our community relies on. The board's inaction undermines public trust and signals a lack of genuine concern for the well-being and future of our transit system and the community it serves.

Our transit agency's future depends on the decisions you make now.

END OF TRANSIT AWARENESS TC EMAIL

## **ATTACHMENT D: SUBJECT BREAKDOWN OF JULY 30 EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC**

1. It has now been almost two months since you received the last email
2. and BFT staff remains deeply concerned and frustrated by the ongoing mismanagement and detrimental decisions within our transit agency.
3. The current trajectory is leading to a breakdown of our transit services at a time when our community needs them the most.
4. There has been a disturbing lack of financial oversight.
5. The absence of a comprehensive financial report for 2023
6. and an official operating and capital budget report that is more than a few slides is unacceptable.
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12. Despite this, over 20 vendors remain unpaid
13. including dozens more invoices,
14. some for more than 60 days.
15. This failure to meet financial obligations further compounds the issues we are facing and underscores the severe mismanagement within the agency.
16. How much more evidence is needed to demonstrate that staff have zero confidence in her leadership abilities before the board acknowledges the reality of the situation?
17. The interim General Manager's continued tenure is untenable
18. and immediate action must be taken to address this leadership crisis.
19. These investigations
20. seem pointless and a facade while staff deal with the chaos that continues to unravel,
21. with no accountability in sight.

22. They are also adding unnecessary stress to an already overburdened workforce.

23. The proposed service cuts,

24. despite the pending outcome of Initiative 2117,

25. demonstrate a clear lack of foresight

26. and disregard for the community's needs.

27. We should be concentrating on enhancing transit,

28. not breaking it down based on unclear financials.

29. The interim General Manager's suggestion to implement even more cuts

30. seems to be a misguided attempt at self-redemption,

31. rather than a strategic move to improve the agency.

32. This is not the leadership our agency requires.

33. The remaining administrative staff are struggling to manage the increasing operational challenges

34. and mitigate further issues.

35. The facade of everything being okay

36. is not only misleading

37. but also dangerous.

38. The community relies on these services and any further deterioration is unacceptable.

39. I urge the board to take immediate and decisive action to rectify these issues.

40. If the board continues to avoid addressing these critical issues,

41. it sends a clear message about your stance on transit

42. and your commitment to improving our community.

43. Ignoring the mismanagement

44. and allowing the current leadership to persist

45. reflects a troubling disregard for the essential services our community relies on.

46. The board's inaction

47. undermines public trust and signals a lack of genuine concern for the well-being and future of our transit system and the community it serves.

48. Our transit agency's future depends on the decisions you make now.  
END OF TRANSIT AWARENESS TC EMAIL