



MINUTES

CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK REGULAR MEETING

Monday June 17, 2024 6:00 p.m.

Three Rivers Transit Center, Conference Room 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

Convened at: 6:00 PM

Chair, Ed Frost

2. ROLL CALL

Secretary / Recorder, Dennis Kreutz

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

3. COMMENTS BY GUESTS:

None

Chair, Ed Frost

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

Discussion:

Motion to Approve the Minutes by: Frank Cuta

Second to Approve the Minutes by: Mathew Howie
Minutes Approved unanimously by a Voice Vote of the CAN Members: YES

5. OLD BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. Frank Cuta asked BFT if it is possible for CAN Members to attend the August 12-14 Washington State Transit Association Conference in Kennewick WA.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Janet Brett confirmed that two CAN Member all-sessions tickets will be provided by BFT.

CAN agreed that we would make sure that two CAN Members will be available to attend various sessions over the three days of the Conference.

- B. Dennis Kreutz asked BFT if it possible for BFT Users and/or CAN Members to take part in workshops or groups that are exploring solutions for technical or policy issues.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Janet Brett stated that CAN Members can participate in the workshops for RFP for Mobile Ticketing. Kevin Sliger said that that process is in its final decision making and too late for CAN Involvement.

CAN discussed the fact that the intent of CAN involvement will be to provide User and Transit Advocacy input to BFT in the early stages of program development. An example was stated that if the VIA Connect Contract Extension had been brought forward for CAN involvement early on instead of the first discussion with the Public was a Resolution to the Board for Approval of \$2.9M it might have been a much less chaotic process.

It was requested that the CAN be aware of upcoming project much earlier in the process.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Chair, Ed Frost

- A. An investigative CAN Team consisting of Vanessa and Frank presented their findings regarding their on-site review of the BFT Audio Rollout.

Subsequently CAN Recommendation 2024-05 was sent to BFT for Action.

CAN Recommendation 2024-05 is included below as Attachment A.

BFT ACTION ITEM:

Kevin Sliger - Reported on the Status of CAN Recommendation 2024-05

BFT will be using a DB Meter to test the audio levels inside vehicles as well testing the levels exterior to the Coaches at stops and Transit Centers.

Audio Equipment Manufacturer and Model information will be provided to CAN by BFT for investigation of functionality by Frank Cuta.

There was discussion that it would be beneficial for repeated audio messages from Coaches that are stopped at Transit Centers and that the audio might be more useful if it contained detailed route information rather than just Coach number and direction.

BFT believes that the repeat option is not available.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Find out if messaging is technically available, and if it can be repeated at Transit Centers.

B. BFT Reported on the Status of the VIA Connect Contract Expansion.

Kevin Sliger reported that BFT will not be using VIA for Prosser and Benton City School runs, and that the Airport Service will not be implemented by BFT.

C. BFT 2024 Service Plan Proposed Changes

Service Plan Update modifications are included below as Attachment B.
Kevin Sliger said that the plan will be presented to Board at the July 18 meeting.

D. Discuss email sent to CAN by Transit Awareness TC

Email is included below as Attachment C
DRAFT of possible CAN Response is included below as Attachment D

Chairperson Ed Frost will contact the email address to see if they will meet with him to discuss

E. Assign CAN Member to attend BFT Board Meeting:

Dori Luzzo-Gilmour is assigned to attend the July 18 Board Meeting.

7. BFT BOARD / BFT STAFF COMMENTS:

Janel Brett invited CAN Members to attend the BFT Family Food Truck Fest at Columbia Point, Richland on June 23.

BFT and CAN Members discussed using the Owl Zoom Camera/Audio device during BFT Board Meetings so Directors talking can be identified by Zoom attendees.
BFT Kevin Sliger will discuss with Board and implement if they are in agreement.

8. CAN MEMBER COMMENTS:

CAN Members requested status of CEO search.
BFT reported that it is still on-going.

9. OTHER:

10. NEXT MEETING:

- A. Regular CAN Meeting Monday July 15, 2024, in the Three Rivers Transit Center Office, at 6:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair, Ed Frost

A. Meeting adjourned at: 7:55 pm

ATTACHMENT A:

CAN Recommendation 2024-05

Title: Audio and Announcements on Buses

Required Routing: To BFT Management – YES
To BFT Board - OPTIONAL

Presented to BFT Management May 29, 2024, Revised June 3, 2024

- A. Background: From the Citizen Advisory Network (CAN) Standing Rules as approved by the BFT Board of Directors in August 2023:

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) Citizens Advisory Network to advocate for public transit, to serve as a resource to BFT Management and to the BFT Board of Directors in accomplishing the BFT Mission and Goals.

- B. Two CAN Members, Vanessa Pruitt and Frank Cuta, met with BFT to evaluate the Audio Assistance and Signage available on Coaches / Dial-A-Ride / Transit Centers.

The following are the finding of that meeting as reported back in the CAN Regular Monthly Meeting on May 20, 2024:

1. The Audio Levels of the exterior audio announcements on some of the Coaches were too low to be understood from more than a few yards away.

CAN Recommendation: If not currently being done it is recommended that BFT Staff use an accurate Decibel Meter to determine and set the audio levels.

From several Transit sources it appears that it is recommended that the sound level of announcements not be lower than 70 dB, and at least 10 dB higher than the surrounding sound level.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Report to CAN June 17 of how this issue is currently handled and future actions if required.

2. It was noted that the Audio Announcement at a Transit Station (and stops) activates when the Coach door is opened but does not repeat even though the door remains open or closed while the Coach is at the Transit Center.

It would be advantageous for riders depending on Audio Announcement if the announcement continued to announce while the Coach is stopped in order to assist Riders depending on the Audio Announcement to assist them in finding the correct Coach.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Report to CAN June 17 of how this issue is currently handled and future actions if required.

3. It has been noted that the Audio Announcement with details regarding stops that a particular Coach makes is not activated until about a minute after the Coach leaves a Transit Station.

It would be beneficial if the Audio Announcement with details regarding stops were made while the Coach is at the Transit Station.

BFT ACTION ITEM: Report to CAN June 17 of how this issue is currently handled and future actions if required.

END OF CAN RECOMMENDATION 2024-05

Ben Franklin Transit

2024 Modified Annual Service Plan Update

Appendix A

Route	Original Plan	Modified ASP for 2024
Route 10	30 Min. Peak Service	60 Min. Service
Route 110	Removal	Removal
Route 123	Sunday Extension	Sunday Extension (June 2024)
Route 123s	Removal	Reassess in 2025
Route 170	60 min. Peak Service	60 min. Peak Service
Route 25	Realignment	Realignment
Route 50	30 min. Weekday/ 15 min. Saturday	30 min. Weekday/ 30 min. Saturday
Route 67	Extend Alignment	No Changes to Current Route 67

ATTACHMENT C: 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 D: CAN RESPONSE TO EMAIL BY TRANSIT AWARENESS TC DRAFT 01

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.