



MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
June 11, 2020
3:00 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. CHAIR KOCH called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. PST
2. **Roll Call**

Representing	Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Pasco	Ruben Alvarado	Director	Present	3:02
Kennewick	Bill McKay	Director	Present	
Richland	Phil Lemley	Director	Present	
West Richland	Richard Bloom	Director	Present	3:04
Franklin County #2	Clint Didier	Director	Present	
Franklin County #1	Bob Koch	Chair	Present	
Benton County	Shon Small	Vice Chair	Present	
Prosser	Steve Becken	Director	Present	
Benton City	Lisa Stade	Director	Present	3:02
The Union	Norma Nelson	Non-Voting Union Rep.	Excused	

BFT Staff: Gloria Boyce, Jerry Otto, Keith Hall, Jeff Lubeck, Ali Madison, Wendi Warner, Ayodeji Arojo, Rob Orvis, Paul Holgate, Caleb Lenz and Pam Loa

Legal Counsel: Jeremy Bishop

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
CHAIR KOCH led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance
4. **Public Comment**
CHAIR KOCH announced there is no public comment
5. **Approval of Agenda**

RESULT:	APPROVED [Unanimously]
MOVER:	LEMLEY
SECONDER:	BECKEN

- 6. **Recognitions** - There were no recognitions
- 7. **Citizen’s Advisory Network** – The Citizen Advisory Network did not meet

8. **Board Committee Reports**

CHAIR KOCH 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, 6/3/20 – RUBEN ALVARADO, Chair
The agenda item to Authorize the Disposal of Surplus Vehicles was recommended to the Regular Board Meeting Consent Agenda and the meeting was cancelled.

B. Planning & Marketing Committee 6/3/20 – RICHARD BLOOM, Chair
STADE summarized the discussion was primarily to review the Vanpool Program, how it’s not being utilized currently, insurance costs, sanitizing, and safety.

C. Administration & Finance Committee 6/4/20– STEVE BECKEN, Chair
BECKEN stated that the report is in the packet and will let it stand as presented.

CHAIR KOCH asked if there were any questions, to which there were none. He then continued on to the Consent Agenda.

9. **Consent Agenda**

CHAIR KOCH read the consent items and invited a motion.

RESULT: APPROVED [Unanimously], Items A – D
MOVER: BLOOM
SECONDER: LEMLEY

- A. May 14, 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes – Approve
- B. May Voucher Summary - Approve

PAYROLL

Check

Register Number	Check Number / Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
510-20	80626 80631	5/2/2020	503,305.32	Payroll
511-20	80632 80637	5/22/2020	505,841.72	Payroll
		Total	1,009,147.04	

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Check

Register Number	Check Number / Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
150-20	VOID 74227	5/6/2020	(190.05)	VOID
151-20	74666 74715	5/6/2020	348,250.69	MDSE
152-20	74716 74772	5/12/2020	121,678.71	MDSE
153-20	VOID 74461	5/19/2020	(584.19)	VOID
154-20	VOID 74725	5/19/2020	(590.85)	VOID
155-20	74773 74830	5/19/2020	177,021.78	MDSE
156-20	ACH TRANS	5/19/2020	889,430.92	ACH TRANS
157-20	74831 74886	5/26/2020	186,725.96	MDSE
158-20	VOID 74358	5/28/2020	(323.00)	VOID
159-20	ACH TRANS	5/31/2020	205,462.09	ACH TRANS
Total			\$1,926,882.06	

D. Resolution 19-2020: Authorize the Award of the Employee Benefits Brokerage/Affordable Care Act Consulting Services - Approve

10. **Action Items** - None

11. **Discussion & Informational Items**

**A. Certificate of Achievement Recognition
Presented by Jeff Lubeck, Financial Services Director**

The 2018 Financial Statements were audited this year and submitted to the Government Finance Officers Association for review to receive the Certificate of Recognition. The review process is a very thorough examination of the information presented for the audit. For the seventh year in a row the agency has received the Certificate of Achievement For Excellence in Financial Reporting. Mr. Lubeck recognized the Finance Admin staff that really led the way in getting the report submitted. The 2019 audit was recently completed and will be submitted for the next year award. Jeff then opened for questions, to which there were none.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH moved on to Item B.

B. First Quarter Agency Performance.

Presented by Ali Madison, Marketing Director

Ms. Madison focused on the agency performance for the months of January through March.

Ridership

- Despite the effects of COVID taking over in mid March, the ridership system wide was down just 1% for the quarter.
- March experienced a 28.7% decline in ridership. It was this month that the Governor issued the Stay Home, Stay Safe Proclamation except for essential trips. Despite everything, Fixed Route ridership was up 3% for the quarter.
- Dial-A-Ride ridership for the quarter was down 11.1%.
- Vanpool ridership for the quarter was down 7.1%. Vanpools operating dropped from 243 to 24 between March and April. This provided an idea of where the program was headed as the quarter closed out.
- Ridership in the context of COVID-19 included an average daily fixed route ridership during the first week of March of just over 8,000 and during the last week of March, down 67% at about 2,600. The average daily DAR ridership for the first week of March was just on 1,100 and during the last week of March was down 73.5% from that first week at about 290. Ridership had already begun into downturn before COVID and school closures, based on other available information that was coming forward.

Marketing and Outreach

- Transit launched in January. This replaced MyRide as BFT's official trip-planning app.
- March included service changes and switched all focus to COVID-19 response.
- Outreach included the unveiling of the transit app in conjunction with our participation in Family Expo in January; shuttle support to the annual Polar Plunge event and school resource fairs.
- Internal and external outreach related to Transit Driver Appreciation Day this year with a superhero theme.
- COVID-19 Communications: Most of March was dedicated across agency functions to emergency response. This included lots of internal communication development and facilitation, media notifications and responses, frequent social media and website updates, safety related signage, and other activities in support of keeping both the community and staff informed on a frequent basis. Social traffic and engagement increased with COVID-19, and website traffic followed normal usage patterns.

2020 Goals and Initiatives

- Ms. Madison touched on the 2020 G&I as they were originally drafted, however noted that with COVID-19, the focus and bandwidth have shifted and the target dates will be revised for the remainder of the year due to the delay of projects, such as the campus improvements, new route implementation, Vanpool Transit Operations Accident Prevention and Automatic Passenger Counter data. Labor Relation items were progressing as expected during the first quarter with mediation in process on our collective bargaining agreement.

Ms. Madison concluded her report then opened to questions, which was followed by brief discussion.

ACTION: DIRECTORS BLOOM and STADE questioned the 2019 completion date on the Alternative Fuels Report. Ms. Madison or Ms. Boyce will review and follow up with them.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH continued to Item C.

C. Ridership Changes related to COVID-19.

Presented by Keith Hall, Planning and Development Services Director

Mr. Hall discussed results of the pandemic on BFT as well as around the state in ridership. BFT has seen significant ridership reductions in all modes of service. This includes a 63% drop in Fixed-Route ridership, a 72% decline in Dial-A-Ride ridership, and a 92% reduction in the Vanpool program, as measured from the week of March 2nd and May 25th. During this time, BFT initiated to connect service primarily focused around serving essential trips with added destinations to key grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical care, as well as food banks. BFT will be looking at the Phase III or the resumption of fair timeline to begin offering full hours to complement the fixed route system. That is anticipated to be around mid August. Transits around the region have all experienced declines in ridership, the sharpest decline being Sound Transit. Mr. Hall anticipates the recovery process will take six to nine months. He concluded his update and opened to questions from the Board, which was followed by brief discussion. CHAIR KOCH shared that the primary concern of the Board is having the vans sitting empty in the lots and the perception of the public and safety. Ms. Boyce informed the Board that BFT has supervisors that provide lot checks on a daily basis.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH continued to the next Item, D.

D. Agency Recovery Plan.

Presented by Ayodeji Aorjo, Transit Operations Director

Mr. Ayodeji reviewed Ben Franklin Transit's Service Recovery Plan with the Board. This is based on Washington's Four-Phase approach to reopen the state. BFT addresses the recovery by five categories – Fixed Route, Dial-A-Ride, Vanpool, Connect, and other (MOA, fares, employee safety). In all BFT buildings, masks, daily temperature checks and social distancing practices will remain throughout all four phases. The Vanpool Program is currently being reviewed/restructured as a result of COVID-19. A Comprehensive Recovery Plan is being drafted to address “lessons learned” to plan for future pandemic response in addition to possible State and local funding reductions. Mr. Ayodeji concluded his presentation and opened for questions, which was followed by brief discussion.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH moved on to the Legal Report.

12. Staff Reports

A. Legal Report - Jeremy Bishop.

Wanted to reiterate that the Special Meeting date that was scheduled is within the Governor's Proclamation restriction timeframe of no "in-person" meetings. The Proclamation expires June 17th, so we will have the Special Meeting following the expiration.

B. Financial Report for April – Jeff Lubeck

Revenues are down about 5% overall, however expenses have declined for the year. We had budgeted a minor surplus deficit through the end of April of \$88-89,000 and are actually running at a surplus through the end of May of \$115,000. As far as an operating surplus shows, we had about a deficit for the month of May as a standalone of \$60,000. That brings our year to date operating surplus to about \$54-\$55,000 for the year. The agency is in a good position with such a sudden drastic downturn in revenues, however doing scenario planning on multiple levels of revenues and expenses.

In the Treasurer's Report, we have built up over the last couple of years a reserve of \$33.6 million. At this point, our preliminary modeling and workshop constantly revising that but our preliminary modeling is showing that we will not need to touch these reserves. Our current unreserved available funds are \$4.4 million at the end of May.

In the Sales tax report, the month of March was down about 7%, 2019 to 2020. Year to date, though, we're still up about 4.3% over the prior year. Considering that sales tax is our biggest driver of our revenues, we will be modeling that at different levels if tax revenues see a decline. We continue to track COVID-19 related expenses that include employee leave and protective barriers on various vehicles. Mr. Lubeck then opened to questions, which was followed by brief discussion.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH continued on to the General Manager's Report.

C. General Manager's Report – Gloria Boyce

- Both the Senate and the House have prepared their Five-Year Reauthorization Proposals. The House T&I Surface Transportation Bill is to be released next week, so we're keeping an eye on what the new reauthorization package looks like.
- At the State level, we are waiting to hear the outcome of the Benton and Franklin Counties Variance Request. And we still have not received any other than the ban pool investment program. We have not received any definitive news about a restructured or revised budget for the Department of Transportation Public Transit Division.
- On an Operations front, we continue to put the safety of our employees and our riders first. We have made all pullouts this past month.
- Going forward, we are implementing our full Recovery Plan. It is currently in draft form as we receive State and Federal mandates. Ms. Boyce offered to send a link for the 55-page Plan to the Board, upon request.
- The Benton Franklin Fair and rodeo has officially been canceled this year. That is the last of the events that we provide service to over the summer that has been canceled.
- Staff has been in the community assisting the Second Harvest weekly by providing boxes of food to folks that are transit dependent, and every couple of weeks assisting with Meals On Wheels to deliver foods to shut-in seniors.

Ms. Boyce opened to any questions, which was followed by brief discussion. She addressed DIRECTOR BLOOM'S question of Phase II in the event Benton and Franklin

Counties do not progress at the same time. Ms. Boyce referred to BFT's Service Recovery Plan.

There being no further questions or comments, CHAIR KOCH moved on to the Board Member portion of the agenda.

13. **Board Member Comments**

RUBEN ALVARADO – Nothing to report
BILL MCKAY – Nothing to report
PHIL LEMLEY – Nothing to report
RICHARD BLOOM – Nothing to report
CLINT DIDIER – Nothing to report
BOB KOCH – Nothing to report
SHON SMALL – Nothing to report
STEVE BECKEN – Nothing to report
LISA STADE – Nothing to report
NORMA NELSON – Not present

14. **Next Meeting**

The next Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at 1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland.

15. **Executive Session - none**

16. **Adjournment**

With no other items in front of the board, CHAIR KOCH adjourn and the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Pam Loa, Clerk

7-9-2020

Date Approved