



MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
February 11, 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

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

BFT Staff: Gloria Boyce, Wendi Warner, Ali Madison, Jeff Lubeck, Ayodeji Arojo, Rob Orvis, Steve Davis, Keith Hall, Jerry Otto, Bill Hale, Mindy Eakin, Terry DeJuan, Caleb Lenz, Gladys Diaz

Legal Counsel: Jeremy Bishop

3. Flag Salute

VICE CHAIR SMALL led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT/INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

VICE CHAIR SMALL announced there is no public comment.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. BFT Board of Directors

Jeremy Bishop, Legal Council opened nominations for 2021-2022 Ben Franklin Transit Chairman and Vice-Chair for the Board of Directors.

PHILLIP LEMLEY nominated SHON SMALL as Chair and LISA STADE nominated RICHARD BLOOM as Chair. SHON SMALL and RICHARD BLOOM accepted the nomination. Jeremy Bishop made a second call for nominations, for which there were none.

Mr. Bishop asked Gladys Diaz, Clerk of the Board to call for vote by roll call.

After the roll call vote, five directors voted for RICHARD BLOOM. By majority vote, RICHARD BLOOM is to serve as 2021-2022 Ben Franklin Transit Chairman of the Board of Directors. RICHARD BLOOM accepted.

B. Chair/Vice Chair

Mr. Bishop opened nominations for 2021-2022 Ben Franklin Transit Vice Chairman for the Board of Directors.

BILL MCKAY nominated LISA STADE as Vice Chairman and PHILLIP LEMLEY nominated SHON SMALL as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Bishop asked Gladys Diaz, Clerk of the Board to call for vote by roll call.

After the roll call vote, five directors voted for LISA STADE. By majority vote, LISA STADE is to serve as 2021-2022 Ben Franklin Transit Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors. LISA STADE accepted.

C. Committee Selections

CHAIR BLOOM confirmed that as Chair, he can nominate for each of the committees. Mr. Bishop stated that yes, per BFT Bylaws, he can make the appointment with the consent of the Board.

CHAIR BLOOM asked DIRECTOR ALVARADO if he still wanted to chair the Operations and Maintenance Committee. DIRECTOR ALVARADO said yes.

CHAIR BLOOM nominated DIRECTOR ALVARADO as committee chair for the Operations and Maintenance Committee and stated that DIRECTOR DIDER and DIRECTOR LEMLEY to remain there as well.

CHAIR BLOOM asked DIRECTOR BECKEN if he would prefer to say in on the Administration and Finance Committee. DIRECTOR BECKEN stated he preferred to stay there.

DIRECTOR BECKEN then stated that in the past, it has been the Chair and Vice Chairman

on the Administration and Finance Committee. Also, in the past the Chair or the Vice chair were not Chair of one of the committees. CHAIR BLOOM agreed. CHAIR BLOOM and VICE CHAIRMAN STADE would move to the Admin. and Finance Committee. DIRECTOR BECKEN would remain committee chair of the Admin. and Finance Committee.

CHAIR BLOOM then nominated DIRECTOR MCKAY for committee chair for the Planning and Marketing Committee. DIRECTOR SMALL and DIRECTOR MULLEN nominated to the Planning and Marketing Committee.

Mr. Bishop asked for a motion to approve the 2021-2022 BFT Committee Assignments.

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

D. BFCOG Representative

Mr. Bishop deferred discussion about the BFCOG Representative to Ms. Boyce.

Miss Boyce explained to the Board that this topic was touched briefly last month. Gave background information of the BFCOG representation and that their Bylaws changed in September. Stated that representation changed from an elected official being on their Board to a non-elected official. Miss Boyce proposes that the General Manager and one of the BFT staff become representative of the Board and alternate.

CHAIR BLOOM stated that its appropriate to name the General Manager as the BFCOG representative, keep Mr. Hall on the TAC and name DIRECTOR MCKAY as the alternate. After a small discussion between Miss Boyce and DIRECTOR SMALL, DIRECTOR MCKAY accepted the position as alternate for the BFCOG.

After no other questions, CHAIR BLOOM stated that he proposes for the BFCOG representative be BFT's General Manger and the alternate be DIRECTOR MCKAY. CHAIR BLOOM then invited a motion.

RESULT:	APPROVED (Unanimously)
MOVER:	STADE
SECONDER:	BECKEN

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no requested additions or changes to the agenda.

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

7. RECOGNITIONS

None

8. Citizen's Advisory Network (CAN) Report

No Report

9. 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** – 02/03/2021 – RUBEN ALVARADO, Committee Chair Director Alvarado reported that the committee was canceled.
- B. **Planning & Marketing Committee Report** – 02/03/2021 – RICHARD BLOOM, Committee Chair Director Bloom reported that the committee was canceled.
- C. **Administration & Finance Committee Report** – 02/04/2021 – STEVE BECKEN, Committee Chair Director Becken reported that they discussed the resolution to authorize the General Manger to release requests for consulting services to conduct a comprehensive fare study which is on the Consent Agenda. Also, had an informational update on the succession plan which is also on the agenda as a discussion item. The normal upcoming bids and requests for proposals and sales tax information were also presented.

9. Consent Agenda

CHAIR BLOOM read the consent items and invited a motion.

- A. January 14, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes – Approve
- B. January Voucher Summary – Approve
- C. Resolution 13-2021: Authorization for the General Manager to Declare Vehicle 8487 a Surplus and Dispose Per Resolution 62-2014
Resolution 14-2021: Authorization for the General Manager to Release a Request for Proposal for Consulting Services to Conduct a Comprehensive Fare Study

PAYROLL

Check Number	Register	Check Number/Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
500-21		80726 80733	1/1/2021	550,864.27	Payroll
501-21		80734 80739	1/15/2021	538,992.48	Payroll
502-21		80740 80745	1/26/2021	546,146.31	Payroll
			Total	1,636,003.03	

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Check Number	Register	Check Number/Number	Date of Issue	In the Amount	
100-21		76647 76704	1/15/2021	260,265.20	MDSE
101-21		ACH TRANS	1/1/2021	198,265.20	ACH TRANS
102-21		76705 76761	1/13/2021	231,637.46	MDSE
103-21		76762 76845	1/19/2021	155,099.11	MDSE
104-21		76846 76846	1/22/2021	12,000.00	MDSE
105-21		ACH TRANS	1/22/2021	420,891.31	ACH TRANS
106-21		VOID 76326	1/26/2021	(5,447.38)	VOID
107-21		76847 76898	1/26/2021	1,493,532.94	MDSE
108-21		76899 76899	1/29/2021	415.80	MDSE
109-21		ACH TRANS	1/31/2021	723,799.14	ACH TRANS
			Total	3,491,150.36	

CHAIR BLOOM invited a motion.

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

10. Action Items

None

11. Discussion & Informational Items

A. Status Update of Succession Plan Progress

Wendi Warner, Human Resources and Labor Relations Director

Ms. Warner presented to the Board a status update on BFT’s Succession Plan. Stated that BFT’s Strategic Plan was approved by BFT Board of Directors in September 2015 and the primary strategic objective was to implement succession planning, staff development and opportunities to measure performance and measure ability too. BFT has been working towards the completion of the succession plan document for the last four years. BFT has defined competencies, implement internal job posting and identified critical positions. Talked

about the outlook for BFT since there are many current BFT employees who are close to retirement. Explained that it is important to recognize that there is a workforce close to exiting because they are reaching that retirement age and so BFT needs to be prepared.

Ms. Warner finished presented and welcomed any questions.

After a brief discussion with CHAIR BLOOM, Ms. Warner, and Ms. Boyce, CHAIR BLOOM moved to the next item on the agenda.

B. Q4 2020 Performance Report

Ali Madison, Marketing and Communications Director

Ms. Madison presented to the Board BFT's Quarter 4 2020 Performance Report. Stated that while ridership was still significantly reduced, BFT is starting to see a positive trend since the start of the pandemic. Most notably DIAL-A-RIDE and Vanpool had a dramatic decrease in ridership while CONNECT continues to grow. For Fixed Route it was down 48% for the quarter compared to prior year but is on par with nationwide performance.

For DIAL-A-RIDE, Q4 ridership was down about 60% and 55% overall compared to a year end. For Vanpool, ridership remains significantly impacted but it's important to note that nationwide commuter services have been down versus Fixed Route. CONNECT is gaining momentum and showing positive weekly ridership growth in Q4. In Q4, CONNECT saw 86% growth over Q3.

Marketing and Outreach continues to focus on communication around pandemic response and safety as well as a few outreach efforts and planning and preparing for a variety of communication initiatives to be implemented in 2021. Ms. Madison stated that BFT had some opportunities to engage in various community outreach during the 4th quarter.

Stated that BFT participated in the Drive-thru Senior Times Expo in Kennewick and sponsored the City of Richland Board in a Box, partnered with Second Harvest which were able to deliver 60 complete Thanksgiving meals to community members without personal transportation as part of the Second Harvest Turkey Drive Event. Also provided a bus to fill with coats for kids as part of the Communities Coats for Kids Program, and supported Townsquare Media's Christmas for Children Program.

CHAIR BLOOM asked if BFT has any plans on supporting the mass vaccination site. Ms. Madison replied that they are in conversation with the Health District to explore how BFT may be of assistance to that effort.

After a brief discussion with CHAIR BLOOM and Ms. Boyce, CHAIR BLOOM moved to the next item on the agenda.

12. Staff Reports & Comments

A. Legal Report

Mr. Bishop stated that there was nothing noteworthy to report, just normal review of contracts and proposals.

B. Financial Report

Mr. Lubeck presented to the Board the financial status through the end of December 2020. BFT's budgeted revenue for the year came in over budget but taking out the CARES Act funding, and add back the normal operating grant, budget would have been lightly over budget but 1.4%. Expenses were under budget, even though some departments had higher expenses due to COVID, the CARES Act funding was able to reimburse for those expenses. There was a negative impact due to going fare free, roughly half a million dollars down on regular grants and a decrease from advertising revenues 2020. Expenses were slightly higher than last year but due to COVID related responses, BFT ended up with a surplus for the year. Sales Tax remained strong compared to 2019, but in the month of November the amount did decrease compared to November 2019 by around 2%.

After a brief discussion, 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

1. Waiting to see what comes out of the COVID Relief package. Within that package, the House version includes \$30 billion for transit. The President has asked that its on his desk by March 14th.

ii. State

1. There are a few transportation bills to discuss both in the House and the Senate. The current transportation budget is in red and its difficult to see how the current projects will be funded.
2. The House of Transportation Committee has asked for a list of projects to be included on that list ad they'd like that by February 17th, so BFT will do this.

b. Operations

- i. BFT made all scheduled pull outs.

Ms. Boyce wanted to remind the Board that it has approved a number of needed equipment improvements over the last few years and so BFT is ready for the inclement weather and as always, all hands-on deck. She stated that the Maintenance and Facilities Department have failed and so she gives kudos to them over the next couple of weeks as BFT deals with the pending weather. She also wanted to let the Board know that BFT has one of the higher safety records of the drivers, both Fixed Route and DIAL-A-RIDE in the nation and so the Board can rest assured that BFT drivers will be driving safely through the snow and ice if it does come. Stated that in March, BFT has the annual transit drivers appreciation day.

Also, Ms. Boyce stated that BFT is in conversation with the Benton Franklin Health District regarding the gap in transportation to vaccination sites. BFT also spoke about the Kadlec Health Plex site in Richland as well as the county fairgrounds site. She explained that once BFT has understood what the issues are, what the information they need to move forward, BFT will work on a solution to fill the gap of those that do not have transit. At Kadlec, BFT can make some operational changes to help out there but at the county fairgrounds, the size of the vehicles, the bus is an issue, but BFT is looking at ways to help the community with transportation. Too early to give any other information other than the fact that BFT is ready and willing to assist. Ms. Boyce also stated that she and staff have talked about the ongoing need for transportation as the community receives more vaccines to more sites and how BFT is able to address those to the routes.

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

13. Board Member Comments

CHAIRMAN RICHARD BLOOM –

VICE CHAIR LISA STADE –

SHON SMALL – Director Small congratulated Director Mullen on winning their race. Stated that this area is the only place where it has not passed to the next phase.

ROCKY MULLEN –

BILL MCKAY –

STEVE BECKEN

CLINT DIDIER –

PHILLIP LEMLEY –

RUBEN ALVARADO – Director Alvarado stated that he hopes everyone stays safe driving in the snow and great to see Mr. Mullen. Congratulated the new Board Chairs and stated that he is looking forward to working together.

NORMAL NELSON –

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

14. Executive Session

NONE

15. Other

16. Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, March 11, 2021 7:00 p.m.

17. Adjournment

CHAIR BLOOM adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.



Gladys Diaz, Clerk of the Board



Date