



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 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	Absent
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
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
Teamsters Union 839	Caleb Suttle	Union Representative	Present

BFT Staff: Rachelle Glazier, Bill Barlow, Janet Brett, Imelda Collop, Sarah Funk, Brian Lubanski, Anel Montejano, Rob Orvis, Jonathan Rider, Joshua Rosas, Kevin Sliger, Kathryn Wall, Wayne Welle

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

Emily Pierce, a Fixed Route Dispatcher, spoke in favor of the dispatcher who was terminated.

Solomon Torelli, a Coach Operator, addressed the Board about how the decisions and actions they take affect the employees and the community Ben Franklin Transit serves.

Michael Wells, a Coach Operator, spoke on behalf of Devin Roberts, an ex-employee, regarding his time at Ben Franklin Transit and what led to his departure from the company.

Crystal Vicente, a Dial-A-Ride Driver for almost 20 years, also addressed the Board about staff shortages, not being on time, and working overtime. She stated that the Dial-A-Ride buses need to be promoted more and their buses did not get wrapped like the other buses.

Karla Short, a resident of Kennewick and a Fixed Route Operator, spoke on behalf of Chris Slack, who has been a Dial-A-Ride Driver for over 5 years. He stated how Dial-A-Ride used to have a great on-time rate and the people who had to work overtime were those who wanted to, but that is no longer the case as Dial-A-Ride staff have gone out on disability or have left the company.

Devin Roberts, former Ben Franklin Transit employee, addressed the Board about his concern regarding FleetNet's data security.

Nicole, a resident of Pasco, has been a Dial-A-Ride driver for about 7 years. She stated the same concerns as the other Dial-A-Ride drivers.

Jody Riedinger, a resident of Kennewick, a Dial-A-Ride driver, asked the Board to look at the on-time performance for the past six months and compare it to last year. She also expressed the same concerns as the other Dial-A-Ride drivers.

Traci Bronson, a resident of Kennewick and a Dispatcher who has been with Ben Franklin Transit for about 16 years, commended Megan Schmidt, Manager of Paratransit Operations, for her hard work.

Joseph, a resident of Pasco and Coach Operator for about 7 ½ years, addressed the Board about customers not being able to get where they need to go and are late getting to their destination due to changes in routes.

Marietta Doane, a resident of Pasco and Fixed Route Operator, spoke in favor of Terrel Miller.

Vanessa Walsh, a resident of Kennewick and Fixed Route Operator who has been with Ben Franklin Transit for almost 7 years, addressed the Board about the need for a policies book.

Teresa Smoot, a resident of Kennewick and Fixed Route Operator, stated that things need to change.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McKay asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

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

6. RECOGNITIONS

A. Plaque Presentation from Columbia Basin Veterans Center

The members of the Columbia Basin Veterans Center presented Ben Franklin Transit with a plaque for their support of the local veterans and commitment in enhancing public transportation services to the veterans.

B. Resolution 52-2023 Retirement of Tami Ripplinger

Manager of Paratransit Operations Megan Schmidt read the Board resolution recognizing Tami Ripplinger, who was not present, for her 12 years of service.

Director Bloom moved to approve Resolution 52-2023, and Director Becken seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

C. Resolution 53-2023 Retirement of Terry Christensen

General Manager Rachelle Glazier read the Board resolution recognizing Terry Christensen for his service as a Ben Franklin Transit Board Member.

Director Bloom moved to approve Resolution 53-2023, and Director Becken seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

7. CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN) REPORT

Mr. Dennis Kreutz provided a report on the Citizens Advisory Network. They had three prospective members attend their last meeting held on Monday, November 27, 2023. Mr. Sliger reported at the meeting that there will be an increase in usage of the QR Codes on upcoming signage. Community Relations and Social Media Manager Brittany Nelson presented three new social media videos on the Week Without Driving, how to rack your bike, and using CONNECT services. ADA Eligibility Supervisor David Parra discussed how Ben Franklin Transit handles eligibility requests and addressed questions they had. Ms. Schmidt answered questions about paratransit online and call-in reservation services. The Citizen Advisory Network Recruitment Committee Chair, Dori Luzzo-Gilmour, reported that they had reviewed the eligibility of three prospective members to be on the Citizens Advisory Network. They voted to accept them as new members and will start attending the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2024, and they will hold elections for new Citizens Advisory Network officers to serve for 2024.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. November 9, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

B. November Voucher Summary

C. Resolution 54-2023 Adopting the General Leave Policy, an Excerpt of Policy HR-133

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

9. ACTION ITEMS

A. **Resolution 55-2023 Approving the Updated Capital Improvement Plan, Adopting the Fiscal Year (FY) Operating and Capital Budgets, and Authorizing the General Manager to file all FY 2024 Federal and State Grants**

Chief Financial Officer Sarah Funk presented the proposed 2024 Operating and Capital Budget for Ben Franklin Transit for Board consideration. Chair McKay then opened the public hearing to take comments on the proposed budget; no comments were offered. He then asked for a motion to approve Resolution 55-2023.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 55-2023. The motion was seconded by Director Sandretto and passed unanimously.

B. **Resolution 56-2023 Authorizing the General Manager to Enter into a Contract for Information Technology Support Services with Rockwalla IT, LLC d/b/a Devfuzion**

Ms. Funk presented a resolution to enter into a contract with Rockwalla IT, LLC d/b/a Devfuzion to provide information technology support services.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 56-2023. The motion was seconded by Director Sandretto and passed unanimously.

C. **Resolution 57-2023 Approving the Periodic Review of the Composition of the Board of Directors of Ben Franklin Transit**

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop presented the Periodic Review of the Composition of the Board of Directors of Ben Franklin Transit, which is a statutory requirement under RCW 36.57A.055. No change was deemed necessary at this time; therefore, the existing Board composition is retained.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 57-2023. The motion was seconded by Director Becken and passed unanimously.

10. DISCUSSION & INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. **Annual Special Event Consultation with the Board**

Chief Planning and Development Officer Kevin Sliger is requesting Board guidance and input when selecting special events to ensure there is equitable community access for local and regional events. The event selection will happen yearly every December.

B. **Release Fare Structure for Public Comment and begin Title VI Analysis**

Ms. Funk and Mr. Sliger presented the proposed new fare structure, which is going to be released to the public for comment. Ben Franklin Transit will then conduct a fare equity analysis and will release information to the public giving them ample time to provide input. It will then be presented to the Board for approval.

11. STAFF REPORTS & COMMENTS

A. Legal Report

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop stated there is nothing new and we will be having Executive Session.

B. General Manager's Report

The General Manager stated the BFT Art Bus made its rounds to the high schools of the winning art students. Brittany Nelson and Alejandro Olea attended this event today, so there will be exciting pictures on our Instagram page. She stated that we have the Cable Bridge Run this Saturday. If anyone is interested in attending, Ben Franklin Transit will be providing shuttle service.

She stated that we had our represented staff luncheon, which overall was well received. A couple of individuals did not get their lunch and she apologized. She commended the Marketing Team for doing an exceptional job and trying to encompass everyone for the luncheon.

Ms. Glazier reported that we had our Year-End Review and wanted to highlight that Director Mullen's family was the big winner that Friday night in the team game we played.

12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Union Representative Caleb Suttle stated he was uninvited to the Year-End Review dinner because they were going to be discussing union matters.

Director Christensen stated the City of Richland eliminated the online public comment period, as it was so disruptive to the meetings. The speaker tonight sounded like there was an echo and made it hard to understand. He suggested not doing an online public comment period, but still allow Board members to Zoom in on meetings.

Director Bloom stated that MSRC has an article that some are getting online bots attacking city council meetings during the Zoom comment period. He suggested that as a board, they eliminate the online comment period. He mentioned that Rocky also attended the Ben Franklin Transit Year-End Review dinner and it went quite well.

Director Didier stated he was contacted about some things that people are noticing about Ben Franklin Transit. One is the Via shuttle service that is offered. They are wondering why the vans have California plates. He asked Caleb about it, and he informed him that those vans are rented by Ben Franklin Transit. He stated the stop sign on Road 68 past the Maverick station, when the bus pulls over, it backs up traffic clear across to the overpass. He suggested finding another location for the bus to pull off so more traffic can go by.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bishop announced an Executive Session would be held under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) for 20 minutes with no anticipated action. The Board recessed at 7:16 p.m. and returned to open session at 7:38 p.m.

14. OTHER

There were no other agenda items.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 6 p.m.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McKay adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.



Anel Montejano, Clerk of the Board

01-11-2024

Date