



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 11, 2024, 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		Director	
City of Kennewick	Brad Beauchamp	Director	Present
City of Richland		Director	Present
City of West Richland	Richard Bloom	Vice Chair	Present
Franklin County #2	Steve Bauman	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: Rachele Glazier, Janet Brett, Imelda Collop, Terry DeJuan, Sarah Funk, Katy Hamm, Tony Kalmbach, Brian Lubanski, Mackenzie Miller, Anel Montejano, Rob Orvis, Joshua Rosas, Kevin Sliger, Kathryn Wall

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

Chair McKay opened the meeting to comments from the public to agenda items only.

Emily Pearce, a Fixed Route Dispatcher, wanted to address the Board about Terrel, but it was not an agenda item.

Cindy Fish wanted to address the Board about the inclement weather, and there are two warming stations opening tonight in Kennewick and Richland for homeless people.

Solomon Torelli, a resident of Richland and Fixed Route Coach Operator at Ben Franklin Transit, spoke against Resolution 04-2024 and outsourcing services to Via for ADA Dial-A-Ride overflow trips. He addressed his concerns about the qualifications of the Via drivers.

Denise Sommer, a resident of Richland and Dial-A-Ride driver, spoke against outsourcing services to Via and expressed her concerns about Via.

Nancy Kimsey, a resident of Pasco and a substitute teacher at the Richland School District, stated she does not qualify for Dial-A-Ride services and uses Via to get to a transit station to get on a bus to get to work. She addressed her concerns about outsourcing services to Via and wanted to be considered for the Citizens Advisory Network.

Michael Wells, a resident of Pasco and Coach Operator, spoke against outsourcing services to Via and asked the Board to research it out.

Angelica Gutierrez spoke against the resolution that contracts two law firms and groups joining the union.

Nathan Baker, a resident of Pasco and Dial-A-Ride Dispatcher Reservationist and Trainer, spoke against outsourcing services to Via. He spoke about his concerns and experience using Via.

Lisa, a resident of Kennewick, spoke against outsourcing services to Via for ADA Dial-A-Ride overflow trips. She expressed her concerns about Via.

Aimee Ramirez, a Dial-A-Ride Driver for Ben Franklin Transit, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McKay asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

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

6. CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. December 14, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

B. December Voucher Summary

C. Resolution 01-2024 Authorizing the General Manager to Declare the Items Identified on Exhibit A: "List of Surplus Information Technology Items" as Surplus and Dispose of per Resolution 62-2014

- D. **Resolution 02-2024 Authorizing the General Manager to Award Two Contracts for Employment and Labor Legal Services to Steel Rives LLP and Summit Law Group, PLLC**
- E. **Resolution 03-2024 Adopting the Revised Policy HR-132, Total Rewards**

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

7. ACTION ITEMS

- A. **Resolution 04-2024 Approving the General Manager to Increase Budget of Associated Supplemental Contracted Transportation Services Contract #1160 by \$2.99 Million and Approve Nomad Transit LLC, dba Via (VIA) to Operate Expansion Services Through the End of the Contract in April 2025**

Chief Planning and Development Officer Kevin Sliger presented a memorandum and resolution for Board approval to increase the budget to expand services to provide public and student-focused on-demand services in Benton City and Prosser, address overflow services on the ADA Dial-A-Ride and provide direct service to the Tri-Cities airport. After discussion and questions by Board members, they agreed with the proposal. It will be brought back to the Board for input on the expansion services.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 04-2024. The motion was seconded by Director Beauchamp and passed unanimously.

8. STAFF REPORTS & COMMENTS

A. **Legal Report**

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop stated he doesn't have anything new or exciting this month. Next month will have amended Bylaws and hopefully a public records policy for the Board.

B. **General Manager's Report**

The General Manager reported that Ben Franklin Transit won first place in the APTA AdWheel Award for our recruitment video for mechanics. There are two members from the Marketing and Communications Department that will be traveling to New Orleans to receive the award on our behalf.

We are in the process of rolling out an employee recognition plan for milestones.

She reported working on updating the employee handbook and all the policies; Director Bloom has received a copy and was asked to be a part of that review. She asked if there were any other Board members who wanted to be involved in the creation of the handbook and policies to reach out to her, and we will make sure to schedule time with them. In addition, it will go to Mr. Bishop before anything goes to the Board for approval.

Lastly, we have the APTA Legislative Conference in April, and if any Board member is interested in going, it is the first week in April. If anyone is interested, reach out to the Executive Office, and we can get that scheduled.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Suttle commented that we spoke about cost savings tonight, but a resolution was adopted for a second law firm to do labor relations and expressed his concerns.

Director McKay commended Rachelle for doing an amazing job running Ben Franklin Transit and that she is trying to make the operation cost-efficient.

There was discussion and questions on the resolution to approve two law firm contracts and grievances that were filed.

Director Beauchamp spoke about sitting on boards throughout the counties. He stated the importance of having people keep to the agenda in a respectful manner, so it does not go off the rails.

Director Didier stated he chose to sit on the Board for Ben Franklin Transit as he believes there is good leadership and it is moving in the right direction. When he heard that people were not getting to their doctor appointments because there are people on the sidelines not getting in the game and not doing their responsibilities, the resolution approved tonight is a viable solution. He spoke about watching the process of this and wanting a status on what is going on every three months. He wants the people to be happy with Ben Franklin Transit.

Director McKay stated that we can look into this and if it's not working out in six months to a year, then we can change it.

Director Bloom stated Director Didier brought up what the problem was and the lack of head count, we need to ask what is going on there. There were complaints of too much overtime, and we are fixing that.

Director McKay spoke about the hearing in December about the gentleman that was terminated. He spoke about needing to be efficient and be cost effective for the taxpayer dollars. He is glad that the staff is doing what they are doing.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was held.

11. OTHER

There were no other agenda items.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 6 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McKay adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.



Anel Montejano, Clerk of the Board

Date

2/08/2024