



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 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	Charles Grimm	Director	Present
City of Kennewick	Brad Beauchamp	Director	Present
City of Richland	Kurt Maier	Director	Present
City of West Richland	Richard Bloom	Vice Chair	Present
Franklin County #2	Stephen Bauman	Director	Excused
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, Shane Anderson, Bill Barlow, Jamie Bergstrom, Zita Brashear, Tina Braswell, Janet Brett, Imelda Collop, Terry DeJuan, Steve Frazier, Sarah Funk, Katy Hamm, Monica Hofstetter, Tony Kalmbach, Tim Kelley, Michael Lohmann, Brian Lubanski, Gabe Martin, Mackenzie Miller, Anel Montejano, Shawna Munyan, Rob Orvis, Jonathan Rider, Joshua Rosas, Chris Slack, Kevin Slinger, Cristina Templeton, 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 turned the meeting over to Jeremy Bishop, who provided ground rules on the public comment period. He stated that this is the only time during the meeting when public comments are accepted. He indicated that the General Manager would be addressing the Via expansion for those who were in attendance for that, so their time had not been wasted attending the meeting.

General Manager Rachelle Glazier wanted to correct some misinformation and stated that the Via expansion will not reduce Dial-A-Ride services, nor will it result in any layoffs or terminations. She advised that the expansion is not ready to launch, and they will be conducting more interviews. They will ensure that there are enhanced background checks and rigorous training protocols in place that are equivalent to or better than what we have, and that Via employees are employees of Ben Franklin Transit. The Via expansion will provide overflow for Dial-A-Ride to ensure that all customers are served in a manner that is timely and appropriate. The expansion will add airport service, and the goal is to provide the best service to the most people while maintaining a sustainable budget. There will be open houses relative to the Via expansion as details become available. Via has been a partner with Ben Franklin Transit for the last three years. If the public wants to provide additional comments in reference to the Via expansion, they can do so online.

Chair McKay stated the Board received 10 or 11 emailed written public comments, and that they do read those. He then opened the meeting to comments from the public.

Casey Kasselder, a Dial-A-Ride customer who was turning 31 years old the following day, addressed the Board and spoke in favor of Dial-A-Ride services. She addressed her concerns to the Board on outsourcing services to Via.

Katelyn Shaff, a Dial-A-Ride customer, spoke in favor of Dial-A-Ride services.

Norma Nelson, a retired Dial-A-Ride driver, and former Board of Director, spoke in favor of Dial-A-Ride services.

Sylvia Howland addressed the Board and spoke about how she uses Ben Franklin Transit services.

Jamie Torres spoke against Via services.

Sharon Zeller, a Dial-A-Ride customer, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Marla, a resident of West Richland, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Valerie Maples, a resident of Prosser, asked to speak for Kendra Ridgeway. She addressed the Board that she heard that services to Benton City and Prosser are possibly being phased out and how she is dependent on Dial-A-Ride services, as she resides at Amber Hills Assisted Living.

Pat Osbourne, a resident of Kennewick, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Kevin Robert, a resident of Richland, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Carmen Forney spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Imelda Salinas, a caregiver, is a part of the SEIU and spoke against outsourcing services to Via. Francine Carr is a retired caregiver, who used to ride the buses with her clients and is now in a wheelchair, asked the Board to think it out on outsourcing services to Via.

Veronica Cardenas, a resident of Richland, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Pamelis, a resident of Richland, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Lisa, a resident of Kennewick, spoke in favor of the proposal to not raise the ticket price for the Dial-A-Ride clients while lowering the price for fixed route in the end. She spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Nancy, a driver who has a brother that rides Dial-A-Ride, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Cheryl Irwin, a resident of Richland and retired Dial-A-Ride driver, spoke against outsourcing services to Via. She stated that if she needs to use Dial-A-Ride, she needs to apply to be a client if she wants to use the service, but she can't use her Lifetime Pass as the only free pass for Dial-A-Ride is the Youth Pass. She was told her Lifetime Pass was good on all services, but now is being told it's not.

Andrew Western, a resident of Kennewick, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Sylvia Estrada, a resident of Kennewick, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Tina Collins, a resident of Finley, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Kenneth Taylor, a Veteran of the Kennewick Police Department, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Nancy Kimsey, a resident of Pasco, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Chelsie Frogoza, a former Dial-A-Ride Driver, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Jeremy Meredith, a resident of Pasco and former Fixed Route Operator, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

Jim Atkins, a resident of Prosser, spoke against outsourcing services to Via.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair McKay asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

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

6. CITIZENS ADVISORY NETWORK (CAN) REPORT

Dori Luzzo-Gilmour provided a report on the Citizens Advisory Network. She presented two recommendations to the Board. The first recommendation was to continue to offer Zoom access

with a Public Comment Option. The second recommendation was to allow Public Comment on any item of public interest. She stated there will be more recommendations for the Board at the next meeting.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Chair/Vice Chair

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop asked for nominations for Board Chair. Director Beauchamp nominated Director McKay; Director Sandretto seconded the nomination. All directors voted in favor of Director McKay remaining Board Chair.

Mr. Bishop then asked for nominations for Board Vice Chair. Director McKay nominated Director Beauchamp for Vice Chair; Director Didier seconded the nomination. All directors voted in favor of Director Beauchamp.

B. BFCOG Representative

Mr. Bishop explained that the BFCOG representative is traditionally the General Manager and then an alternate is named, which is currently Director Bloom. Director Sandretto nominated Director Bloom; Director McKay seconded the nomination. All directors voted in favor of Director Bloom remaining the BFCOG Alternate.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. January 11, 2024, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

B. January Voucher Summary

C. Resolution 05-2024 Authorizing the General Manager to Award General Legal Counsel Services to Roach & Bishop LLP

D. Resolution 06-2024 Authorizing the General Manager to Acquire Property Deeded by Project Oyster Pasco, LLC

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

9. ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution 07-2024 Amend Ben Franklin Transit Bylaws

Mr. Bishop presented a resolution to amend the Ben Franklin Transit Bylaws. The last amendment to the Bylaws was in 2010 to recognize the addition of the Nonvoting Union Board Member. Mr. Bishop gave a background history on the standing committees. It was suggested to adopt one standing committee, that is the Executive Committee consisting of the Board Chair, Vice Chair and two appointees that will meet on a needed basis for special projects, as opposed to monthly, and the Chair will be given the power to consult on setting the agenda with staff. He stated there was an update on the General Manager duties to match the existing policy, the bylaws, and the previous policy, including minor corrections to the policy.

Director Didier moved for approval of Resolution 07-2024. The motion was seconded by Director Sandretto and passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Adoption of Rules Pertaining to Requests for Public Records Submitted Pursuant to the Public Records Act

i. Presentation

Mr. Bishop presented a resolution for public records to adopt a policy that outlines reasonable time frames for response, prioritizing records as appropriate, and limiting the amount of time that staff spends on those public requests monthly.

ii. Public Hearing

He stated that a public hearing was not necessary, as the policy proposed adopts the relatively nominal statutory fees for public records, unless they enact a statutory fee schedule beyond that; then a hearing would be necessary.

iii. Resolution 08-2024 Adopting Rules Pertaining to Requests for Public Records Submitted Pursuant to the Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW, and Agency Responses Thereto

Mr. Bishop asked the Board to adopt Resolution 08-2024 as presented.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 08-2024. The motion was seconded by Director Sandretto and passed unanimously.

C. Approval of New Fare Structure & Acknowledgement of Title VI Analysis Results

i. Presentation

Chief Planning & Development Officer Kevin Sliger presented information on the new fare structure and on the Title VI Fare Study findings. There was discussion among the Board members about the new fare structure.

ii. Public Hearing

Chair McKay opened the Public Hearing on the adoption of the new fare structure. There were no comments related to the new fare structure.

iii. Resolution 09-2024 Rescinding 04-2017 in its Entirety and Establishing all Fares

Mr. Sliger asked the Board to adopt Resolution 09-2024 rescinding 04-2017 in its entirety and establishing all fares as presented.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 09-2024. The motion was seconded by Director Didier and passed unanimously.

iv. Resolution 10-2024 Adopting the 2024 Title VI Service Equity Analysis

Mr. Sliger asked the Board to adopt the 2024 Title VI Service Equity Analysis.

Director Bloom moved for approval of Resolution 10-2024. The motion was seconded by Director Becken and passed unanimously.

10. DISCUSSION & INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Fourth Quarter 2023 Agency Performance Report

Chief Planning and Development Officer Kevin Sliger presented the Fourth Quarter 2023 Agency Performance Report highlighting the continued growth in ridership. He also provided an update

on the capital projects and touched on the community events that BFT staff have participated in during the fourth quarter of 2023.

11. STAFF REPORTS & COMMENTS

A. Legal Report

BFT Legal Counsel Jeremy Bishop announced we will have an executive session later this evening.

B. General Manager's Report

The General Manager stated that Transit Employee Appreciation week will start March 18 and invited the Board of Directors to stop by.

She reported that we hired 12 new bus operators that started on Monday.

12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Didier reported that they met with veterans that morning for breakfast and hired Harris White Leasure for the HAPO Center. They proposed to have the Veterans use the HAPO Center for their meetings because they have a building in Benton County, but it can only seat about 40 people, and they are 130 strong. He was hoping that Ben Franklin Transit can work with the Veterans to get them to these meetings, as they are doing a wonderful service to the Tri-Cities area with the flag salutes and the 21-gun salutes. They meet once a month, and they donated the HAPO Center for the meetings until they can find a new building.

Director Beauchamp asked if there was any data on how many veterans are being provided services by Ben Franklin Transit, or if there is a way of collecting that data to see what the pool looks like. He stated that a couple of people brought up the option of trying to get free rides on Dial-A-Ride; he does not know what the cost of that is but would love to have the ability to offer that to the Veterans. He asked to have that information provided next time.

Director Maier asked if he could get some of the information that was referenced by Chief Planning & Development Officer Kevin Sliger to be provided to him offline so that he can learn more.

Director Grimm introduced himself, as this was his first time on the Board. He stated that it sounds like there is work to be done and looks forward to working with everyone.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bishop announced an Executive Session would be held under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) for 10 minutes with no anticipated action. The Board recessed at 7:42 p.m. and returned to open session at 8:10 p.m.

14. OTHER

There were no other agenda items.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 6 p.m.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McKay adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.



Anel Montejano, Clerk of the Board

03-14-2024

Date