

**MINUTES  
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017 AT 1:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Roger Gitlin (Chair), Darrin Short (Vice Chair), Heidi Kime, Lori Cowen, Jake Smith

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Joseph Rye, Nicole Burshem, Bill Lonsdale, Kevin Heckman

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**1 CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL.**

Chairman Gitlin called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**2 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Gitlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3 APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 15,2017**

On a motion by Commission Short, seconded by Commissioner Kime, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the minutes of March 15, 2017.

**4 PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

**5 APPROVE RESOLUTION 2016-17-13 AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF FISCAL YEAR 2017/18 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SECTION 5311 FUNDING.**

Discussion was held in regard to Resolution 2016-17-13. Mr. Rye reported this is a stable formula-based Federal funding source that RCTA receives upon request annually. Mr. Rye reported the Board needs to approve the resolution in order to receive the funds.

By Consensus of the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors they approved Resolution 2016-19-13 authorizing the application for the acceptance of fiscal year 2017/18 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 funding.

**6 UPDATE ON AVAILABILITY OF OPERATING RESERVE FUNDS AND DISCUSSION OF OPTIMAL USE OF OPERATING RESERVES TO MITIGATE A PORTION OF LOST FTA REVENUES OF FISCAL YEAR 2017/18.**

Discussion was held in regard to operating reserve funds. Mr. Rye reported these funds were mixed in and found inside Funds 645 mixed in with depreciation. The balance was accrued over many years. Mr. Rye explained the funds are not all usable. Mr. Rye is going to ask RCTA's Single Audit auditor to give a more detailed history of how much money has accrued overtime in a few months. Mr. Rye stated that Mr. Schaad from the Del Norte County Auditors office may be here to explain the funds further. Director Smith asked if Caltrans has committed to how much money will be distributed for

5311(f)? Mr. Rye responded Caltrans has programmed only \$122k to RCTA for Fiscal Year 2017-18. The funding level for 5311(f) in fiscal year 2018-19 is completely unknown. Mr. Rye reported that Caltrans has invited him to participate in the working group study process that will clarify the future of 5311(f) statewide, by closely evaluating the program and all the projects statewide that have cumulatively over-committed the funds. Director Smith asked if part of the strategy in this reduction package (maintaining our existing Greyhound connections, including the night service) is based maintaining strong coordination with Greyhound? Mr. Rye responded yes. Chairman Gitlin asked what is the size of the reserve that is truly available for RCTA to use? Mr. Rye responded that the County Auditor indicated the available reserve amount that can be utilized is \$212,374. Chairman Gitlin would like Mr. Rye to invite Mr. Schaad to the meeting to discuss the funds.

**7 DISCUSSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2016/17 BUDGET STATUS REPORT – 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER**

Discussion was held in regard to Fiscal Year 2016/17 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget Status Report. Mr. Rye reported the staff report shows the budget table. This is the host of our budget. At this point, RCTA projects to come in right at budget at the end of FY 2016/17. This is predicated on not enduring any more major mechanical failures. RCTA has to pay for major vehicle component failures, of which there have been several in the last year. The summer arrival of some new buses will help RCTA's aging fleet. Chairman Gitlin reported one of the reasons the meeting was cancelled in April (last month) is because he did not want the transit management contract to go over budget, and the meetings cost money. Mr. Rye responded that he will be bringing the budget forward for preview and approval in one meeting now in June, rather than a preview in May and adoption in June.

**8 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OF RECENT PUBLIC OUTREACH ON POTENTIAL SERVICE REDUCTIONS AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR PACKAGE OF REDUCTIONS OF BALANCE FY 2017/18 BUDGET TO MATCH DECLINING FTA 5311(f) REVENUE FROM CALTRANS AND TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES.**

Discussion was held in regard to recent public outreach. Mr. Rye reported in March the Board discussed a menu of service reductions with the idea that all \$178,000 in reduced FTA 5311(f) funding would need to be offset by service reductions and fare increases. Since that time, it has been confirmed that RCTA has some reserves. Mr. Rye reported that he generated a survey through Survey Monkey which was distributed online through local stakeholder groups, plus the survey was printed and handed out on buses, as well as the all-day workshop on March 31 at Wild Rivers Foundation. RCTA received a lot of feedback. Mr. Rye reported the intent of the survey was to see which routes were most valuable to the customer. There was a lot of votes to reduce Saturday service and strong tolerance to a fare increase. Mr. Rye reported in addition to the reserves being recently confirmed, there was an increase in Fiscal Year 2017/18 TDA funds, largely due to funding being available to the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission from the local CTSA (Consolidated Transportation Services Association – Sutter Coast Hospital) as they will not need their maximum allocation. This increased TDA helps bridge the gap by \$22,700. In addition, the County did a one-time donation of a portion of their bicycle and

pedestrian TDA allocation to help with RCTA's budget short fall. Also, all of the three alternatives developed assume that RCTA will accept First Transit's offer to reduce dispatch office hours/costs by ceasing phone support earlier each evening, therefore allowing First Transit to lower its monthly fixed costs by \$12,000/fiscal year. All three options assume the reduction of one daily hour of Crescent City local fixed route and Dial-A-Ride services (first half hour of morning, and last half hour of evenings). Also, all three options include savings from a slight reduction in Saturday Service frequencies on Crescent City routes, and the extension of this Reduced Saturday platform onto most minor holidays.

Mr. Rye explained the three alternatives he developed for the Board to choose from focus mainly on Route 20, all of which either protect more service or protect more of the newly discovered (but modest) reserves.

Option One improves Route 20 while implementing reductions elsewhere. This would reduce service the least, therefore protecting the reserves the least. Option 1 eliminates Route 10 completely, but takes some of the saved hours from Route 10 and invests in Route 20, which covers the same area between Crescent City and Klamath, but then also extends south to Arcata, and could someday be a more robust route that attracts commuters, students, and tourists, but the current schedule has glaring gaps that inhibit those trips today. Adding a later morning trip would fill the worst of the holes in the current schedule, and allow for immediate marketing of the route for students.

Option Two is essentially the same as Option 1, maintaining the late-night Greyhound trip on Route 20, but rather than create a new fourth daily round trip to Arcata in the morning, it will leave the Route 20 schedule "as is" and harvest all the reduced hours from the Route 10 to help protect the reserves, by lowering service hours.

Option Three, includes the elimination of Route 10, rolling its services to Route 20, but also eliminates the late evening trip of Route 20 (connecting with Greyhound in Arcata after 10pm) that could jeopardize the Greyhound Partnership, and could reduce RCTA's ability to receive the recently lost 5311(f) funding.. Option 3 would reduce the most service hours and therefore protect the reserves the most.

Director Cowen asked if the people who use Route 10 are aware of the other options to travel, such as the Yurok Tribal Transit Service (YTTS)? Mr. Rye reported there was general awareness it seemed from the surveys/outreach. Some of the riders didn't like to have to call in, as YTTS is strictly a demand-response system (dial-a-ride). The Yurok Tribe states that they are able to take on additional riders in general, but when they will run and which directions is less certain. Director Short asked if the Tribe intended to do that even if we were to eliminate that route. Mr. Rye responded that's what the Tribe said. Director Smith asked if there is more capacity of the Yurok transit service. Mr. Rye responded I do believe they do and can't speak for them, but their current vehicles are pretty small. They intend on having larger vehicles soon. They feel they can take on some of these additional passengers.

The difference in the options comes down to Greyhound connection. Option 1 would enable students at HSU or COR/Eureka to be able to go in the morning and returning midday, and it would help with tourists and medical trips also. Chairman Gitlin ask Mr. Rye if he has students that attend College of the Redwoods. Mr. Rye responded RCTA has very few at this time that he is aware of.

Director Short suggested cutting out Route 10 completely and send Route 20 into the Glenn. Mr. Rye responded we could do that, it's about 20 minutes of running time extra. If done in the opposite directions of primary trips this also would not inconvenience our existing customers getting to and from Arcata. Mr. Rye responded the Glenn is isolated and has no other transit options besides YTTS. Director Kime asked if we did a slight fare increase might that reduce ridership? Mr. Rye responded yes, its possible we could actually lose some riders. Director Cowen asked if Mr. Rye has spoken to the college to see if that is even an interest of bringing in revenue. Mr. Rye responded he has not had time to do an outreach to the college.

On a motion by Director Short, seconded by Chairman Gitlin, on a 3-2 vote, the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved Option Two with elimination of Route 10 and a modification to existing Route 20 to serve Klamath Glen twice daily.

**9 DISCUSSION OF REVISED ZONAL FARE AND PASS STRUCTURE INCLUDING POTENTIAL FARE INCREASE AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED PACKAGE OF COST REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES.**

Discussion was held in regard to revised zonal fare in pass structure. Mr. Rye reported that a year ago he presented a fare survey of regional and statewide peer agencies and it highlighted that RCTA fares are generally among the lowest in the state, with the exception of Route 20, whose cash fare of \$30 is among the highest. In addition, RCTA is in the minority by not offering any discounts to students or seniors/disabled and that is likely suppressing ridership. Staff has developed a new fare structure that raises the adult cash fare for most zones by \$.25 to \$.50 and creates a new zone fare that increases with distance travelled, with a maximum of \$10 from Smith River to Arcata, therefore dramatically lowering Route 20 fares, which should increase ridership all along the corridor to Arcata. Mr. Rye explained this zonal, distance-based fare structure. It is a little trickier and less common in bus operations, but we believe we have a mechanism to effectively implement it. Mr. Rye then explained how even the increase adult cash fare is likely to impact only some folks, many RCTA will qualify for the new reduced fare categories being proposed (senior/disabled, youth/student) and therefore will be immune to the base adult fare increase. Regional trips to Klamath and Gasquet will increase from \$1.50 to \$2.00 for adults, but if a rider qualifies as a senior/disabled or student, their cash fares will actually be reduced under this proposal. In addition, discounted value unlimited ride passes for seniors and students will be introduced to further save riders money AND incentiveize more trip taking, and speed of the boarding process.

Mr. Rye stated that if we have support today we will put together a fully developed option for the Board to consider and vote on in June, including a better zonal map.

Director Short stated the staff report made it easy to understand and asked if somebody lives close would they have to pay the extra fair to cross that zone. Mr. Rye responded yes, they would have to pay that if they happened to live near a zone line, but that would be fairly rare, mostly occurring at the edge of the Crescent City Zone.

By consensus of the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors they approved the zonal fare and cash fare increase in concept, and asked the General Manager to bring this back to the Board in June for possible adoption.

#### **10 GENERAL MANAGER VERBAL REPORT**

- **UPDATE ON SHELTER RECOGNITION MARKER FOR MS. ELIZABETH BURROWS-**Mr. Rye reported there's been no progress on the marker and he will try to bring more information to the next meeting.
- **UPDATE ON ADVERTISING REVENUE RFP-** Mr. Rye reported the advertising RFP has had some progress, but hasn't been released. It does no good to release a RFP to an uninterested public. Mr. Rye has approached local businesses that might be a good fit to bid on the project.

#### **11 FIRST TRANSIT (OPERATIONS) VERBAL REPORT**

Discussion was held in regard to the first transit verbal report. Kevin Heckman reported they lost a driver, three drivers are out and there are only 12 active drivers. Kevin did some interviews this week. Mr. Heckman reported at the last meeting we had six vehicles out of service, but they're now only two out of service and feels things are looking much better from the hard work Nick has put in on maintenance. In the last two months, First received four different complaints and there's been no accidents. Mr. Hickman reported that all the old buses are gone and the road paving at the Access Road has been delayed because of the rain. Mr. Heckman reported he worked the last week with the wireless on the Washington fire station and everything is fine as far as the fire station's is concerned but there is a bird's nest on top of the radio tower. Mr. Heckman reported he is going have fish and wildlife take a look, but that this might delay the installation of the new repeater. Director Smith asked Mr. Heckman if there's a potential to add a stop at the new store in Smith River. Mr. Heckman and Rye replied it is under consideration.

#### **12 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Gitlin reported the next meeting will be held on June 21 at 3:30 PM.

#### **13 ADJOURN**

On a motion by Director Short, seconded by Director Kime, and unanimously carried the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:14 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is on June 21, 2017 at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joseph Rye, Executive Director  
TMTP Consulting