

**MINUTES
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2019 AT 1:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: ROBERT BERKOWITZ (CHAIR), ROGER GITLIN, VIDETTE ROBERTS

ABSENT: ALEX FALLMAN (VICE CHAIR), HEIDI KIME

ALSO PRESENT: JOSEPH RYE, NICOLE BURSHAM, CHUCK CLARKSON, MARK ELIAS

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL

Chairman Berkowitz called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Berkowitz led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. APPROVE AMENDMENT #1 TO AGREEMENT WITH FIRST TRANSIT FOR OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE TO AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL ONGOING EXPENDITURES FOR DOUBLE MAP BUS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM.

4B. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2018-19-08 AUTHORIZING FY 2019-20 FTA 5311(f) OPERATING FUNDING.

On a motion by Director Gitlin, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote, the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Consent Agenda Items 4 A and B, as presented.

5. APPROVE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2019

On a motion by Director Gitlin, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried the Redwood Coat Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the minutes from February 22, 2019, as presented.

6. 2019 RCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF WORKSHOP – DISCUSSION TOPICS INCLUDE:

RCTA STRATEGIC PLANNING – REGIONAL VERSUS LOCAL, QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY OF SERVICE? (RYE)

RCTA FINANCIAL PLANNING – REVENUES WITH RISING COSTS IMPLICATIONS (RYE)

Mr. Rye reported out on Strategic and Financial Planning. RCTA future funding trends show operating funds are doing well, but capital funding is inadequate, which if not mitigated somehow, will eventually be a challenge. RCTA faces rising operating costs in the future due to labor costs. RCTA's reserves protect against sudden funding loss but

also might have to be used as local match for capital projects, especially in the near future when the last of the Prop 1B PTMISEA funds are exhausted. Chairman Berkowitz asked what happens with old vehicles. Mr. Rye responded the old fleet gets declared as surplus, bid out and if no bids are received, taken away for auction at fleet auctions. Last time all buses sold locally. Chairman Berkowitz asked how much the new buses cost. Mr. Rye responded it depends on the type of bus, \$50-175k each. Director Gitlin asked if leasing the buses make more sense. Mr. Rye responded he doesn't think so, but they will keep it in mind. Director Roberts asked if it would be cheaper to refurbish the buses. Mr. Rye responded RCTA currently applied for the latest round of 5339 funding with a midlife refurbishing project as a main component, to rehab and extend the life of RCTA's two largest diesel cutaways. It's unknown if the project will be funded. Director Roberts asked how long the life of the bus is. Mr. Rye responded about 6 years, but 10-12 years is achievable with a full mid-life rehab.

RCTA OPERATIONS CONTRACT LABOR COSTS DISCUSSION (ELIAS/CLARKSON)

Chuck Clarkson reported out on issues facing First Transit at the Crescent City location, including staff wages. Mark Elias and Chuck Clarkson introduced some RCT Staff and reported to the Board how phenomenal they are doing. Mr. Clarkson reported there is a challenge attracting and retaining vehicle operators, that has worsened in recent months. Chairman Berkowitz asked what the qualifications are to be a bus driver. Mr. Clarkson responded you must be 21, pass a background/drug/alcohol check, drivers license, pass a physical, and there is no education required. Director Gitlin asked what the Board can do about the money issue. Mr. Rye responded we could keep an eye on funding and how the raises that First Transit just gave their drivers impact morale and retention. Chairman Berkowitz asked if there was a graduation wage scale. Mr. Clarkson responded yes there is. Chuck explained that First Transit asks a lot from our drivers. We ask for a level of responsibility and training, high level of stress, life style restrictions, and combine all that with low wages. With fewer drivers, those that remain will be extended, risking potential safety issues, service coverage issues, increased costs in overtime, and morale challenges. Mr. Clarkson reported First Transit's RCTA contract is behind other local agencies in hourly average wage by approximately \$2.00/hr. First has to increase minimum wage by \$1 per year through January 1, 2022 to comply with California State Law, but so does every other employer in town. To meet the challenge, First is considering a referral bonus and to retain drivers we need to advertise online and at local outlets. Mr. Clarkson reported the goal is to get to \$15.00/hr. as a starting wage soon, not in 3 years when \$15/hr will be the minimum legal wage. Director Roberts asked how many qualify for medical benefits. Mr. Clarkson responded all full-time drivers and any drivers who have been with us for 6 months at 30+ hours. Director Gitlin asked Mr. Rye and Mr. Clarkson to bring a proposal on what intervention to enhance staff wages might look like and would cost RCTA at the June 24, 2019 meeting. Director Gitlin left the meeting at 2:37 p.m.

ADVERTISING REVENUE PROGRAM – YEAR 1 RECAP AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Mr. Rye reported out on the new advertising revenue program. This program has taken in almost \$21,000 in revenue in FY 18-19, its first year, but policy guidance is needed. RCTA has the ability to barter or trade space to gain like value in advertising on radio or print, such as with the Triplicate. The Board of Directors advised Mr. Rye to do a trial period of three months at a time to see how it will work out. Chairman Berkowitz asked if the advertisement has happened at the apartments. Mr. Rye reported no, there hasn't been time to do that yet. The Board of Directors agrees to follow up with the barter with the Triplicate and investigate getting some radio spots as well.

Mr. Rye reported out on the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), which will be ready for review in May and ready for adoption by mid-June. The plan will include projections on funding for RCTA over the next 5 years, looks at increases in labor and administration costs, assess service options and costs, fleet replacement capital, and investigate strategies for expanding ridership. One of those expansions may be school trippers, or at least bell time deviations of existing routes, or a combination. School trippers will require extra buses and drivers. RCTA generally has enough buses to add a couple of morning and evening routes, but we may not have enough drivers currently for this service. SRTP and RCTA staff are working together to figure out the staffing and run cutting issues to minimize the staffing issues. Director Roberts asked if this could be incorporated into Dial-A-Ride. Mr. Rye responded it works best when it is a route, especially considering that trippers often require high seating capacity. Director Roberts asked if someone is going to go in and speak with the students about this service. Mr. Rye responded yes; we plan on attending back to school events to market the service.

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 PRELIMINARY BUDGET (HERRON)

Mr. Rye presented the preliminary budget. This will be placed on the agenda for the meeting in May as a discussion item and up for adoption at the June meeting.

RCTA SRTP CTSA CHAPTER UPDATE (RYE/HERRON)

Mr. Rye reported out on the SRTP CTSA. This project is addressed in its own chapter of the SRTP and is proposed to be adopted with the SRTP at the June meeting.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following Directors addressed the following: None

8. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Board of Directors Adjourned the meeting at 3:13 P.M. The next regular meeting is on May 31, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.

Joseph Rye, General Manager
Redwood Coast Transit/TMTP/Herron Consulting