

**REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MINUTES
March 27, 2020 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT: BOB BERKOWITZ (CHAIRMAN), ALEX FALLMAN, ROGER GITLIN, VIDETTE ROBERTS,
HEIDI KIME**

OTHER PRESENT: JOSEPH RYE, CHUCK CLARKSON, DAN HERRON, LORA MALLORY

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL

Chairman Berkowitz called the meeting to order at 4 P.M. Joe Rye conducted Roll.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alex Fallman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

By unanimous roll call votes, Alex Fallman was elected Chair and Roger Gitlin was elected Vice-Chair.

5. CONSENT AGENDA ITEM: RESOLUTION 2019-20-10 ADOPTING RCTA'S UPDATED 2020 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PLAN

Mr. Rye noted the attached Resolution, which was approved at the January 27th, 2020 previous meeting, but inadvertently not included in the packet that day for signature. The resolution formally approves the 2020 Update to the 2006 RCTA ADA Plan.

6. UPDATE ON RCTA PRECAUTIONS FOR COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Mr. Rye described the precautions taken daily since late February to protect staff and riders of the bus system. Every day, all active buses are being cleaned and sanitized. Free fares were introduced Monday, March 23rd, to reduce exposure of drivers to passengers. Mr. Rye commended the First Transit staff, particularly praising Chuck and Fernando for extra diligence, as most nights finds Chuck and Fernando sterilizing the buses themselves. RCTA has no bus cleaning position, and has historically relied upon drivers to do this task in addition to their driver duties. Director Gitlan asked about funding impacts, and Mr. Rye noted that the COVID -19 (CARE) stimulus package was passed with what appears to be a substantial amount of emergency funding that is slated to come to RCTA as additional FTA 5311 monies. What is uncertain is what exactly the eligible expenditures will be. The CARE Act states that any expenditure that is related to keeping the system operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic is eligible. The amount is uncertain, but may be as high as \$400,000.

7. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE SERVICE REDUCTIONS

Because of decreasing demand and possible driver shortages, staff have been evaluating options for reducing service during the COVID-19 Crisis. The Board showed interest in the passenger decline, which was described as down about 60% from normal, with ridership being especially low at the end of the operating day. The staff report discussed several options and approximate savings, reminding the board that all routes are continuing to be served at this point. Director Roberts expressed concern, as some of the passengers have no other way to make necessary trips, and eliminating Saturday service would remove that option. Saturday was noted as a light day typically. Mr. Rye went over the continuing concern with funding that can be used for capital (purchase buses), stating that there may be a need to shift \$60,000/80,000 annually from operations to capital in the near term in order to have adequate capital funding for buses. Mr. Rye also noted that Transportation Development Act funding largely depends on sales tax, and reduction in that portion will be certainly be felt during this economic shut down, starting in March this year.

First Transit Corporate asked that RCTA fixed costs be fully reimbursed through the pandemic and that driver's pay be continued whether or not service is cut. Mr. Rye found the first request acceptable, but felt the second needs further discussion. Director Kime asked if drivers are afraid to drive; note was made that all routes are currently operating and the drivers are reacting well in a stressful time, so far. A bonus option was discussed, possibly now and/or when the crisis passes. Director Kime was not in favor of the first, feeling the reward should be later for rewarding retention. Director Gitlan felt we risk losing good drivers without a bonus now, as there are competitive incentives elsewhere. He would like driver retention to be reviewed at the April meeting. Director Fallman suggested Mr Rye would need to act on service changes as the need arrives; Director Kime moved that Mr. Rye be empowered make hands-on changes to service as appropriate. Motion was seconded by Director Roberts and passed unanimously.

Delegate Kime asked that masks and sanitizer be made available to drivers, with staff responding that this has been done. Discussion ensued on janitorial costs (an initial bid of \$450 per night was considered high), and Director Gitlin suggested that staff reach out to County Probation to see if their Community Service participants can be utilized for bus cleaning. Staff and First Transit promised to look into this option. First Transit made 8 gallons of homemade hand sanitizer when there was a temporary shortage.

8. OPERATIONS REPORT – FIRST TRANSIT

Mr. Clarkson said he was very proud of his drivers and staff, and that they were working hard to keep passengers safe and well-informed.

9. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Board of Directors adjourned the meeting at 5:20 P.M. The next regular meeting is on Monday, April 27th, 2020, at 5:00 P.M.

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