

MINUTES
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
TUESDAY APRIL 6, 2021 AT 5:15 P.M.

PRESENT: Darrin Short (Chairman), Beau Smith (Vice Chair), Vidette Roberts, Valerie Starkey, Raymond Altman

ABSENT: Bob Berkowitz

OTHERS PRESENT: Joseph Rye, General Manager, Dan Herron, Fernando Hernandez, Autumn Luna, Silvia Martinez-Palacios

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL

Chairman Short called the meeting to order and Joseph Rye conducted Roll Call.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Short led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

4. AUTHORIZE THE RELEASE OF THE RCTA GENERAL MANAGER REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Autumn Luna reported this is the first part of authorizing issuance for proposals. This proposal was drafted by Martha Rice before the RCTA legal services transitioned from Black and Rice to the County. Ms. Luna did not have time to update the dates and take a final look at the RFP but will prior to release later this week. Because the current General Manger(s) are expected to bid once again, Ms. Luna will be on the point for this project and will guide the Board through the process.

Joe Rye introduced Silvia Martinez-Palacios, a new part of the management team, assisting Joe with public relations. He mentioned that she had already started a Twitter and Instagram account and updated the RCTA Facebook page, showing a tribute to Chuck Clarkson, First Transit's manager who passed away the week prior. Note was made that RCTA will miss Chuck greatly, both as a good manager and as a friend.

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Altman, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved and authorized the release of the RCTA General Manager Request for Proposals (RFP).

5. ANNUAL WORKSHOP—

RCTA HISTORY INCLUDING THE COVID-19 ERA, CURRENT STATUS

Joe Rye covered the early growth of RCTA from a Dial a Ride in 1972 to fixed route within the city, adding an intercity component when Greyhound stopped service

between Arcata and Crescent City in 2005. Ridership was about 100,000 passengers pre-COVID. Ridership has dropped to 50-60% with the pandemic, and service cuts (33%) were made to the least productive routes. He spoke to the safety improvements to deal with Covid, the relatively low wages for driver and the difficulties of obtaining grant funds to replace 2 buses a year, which is what we need. Board members noted that the lack of drivers is universal, with drug test fears and other jobs paying more. The board generally noted that any new funding should go to driver wages to keep good workers and keep the quality up. Ray Altman asked if we are getting grants for electric buses; three applications are currently being reviewed. Discussion of Covid continued, appreciation expressed for Covid relief funding, which will allow us to bring back service as ridership grows again.

FY 2020-21 YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET AND DRAFT FY 2021-22 RCTA BUDGET

Mr. Herron Dan Herron discussed the different funding sources and the restrictions coming with each. He noted the trends for funding over years, spending categories and which are the highest (bus operation-85%, fuel 10%). He showed the year to date expenditures and compared it with the adopted budget, noting RCTA is managing well within budget. Several issues were noted when planning for next years' budget, and two challenges were noted: how to spend Covid funding wisely, and how to build an electric bus fleet by attracting grants.

SERVICE PLAN 2021-22 – RESTORATION STRATEGIES & MARKETING PLANS

Joe Rye noted a conservative or aggressive approach could be taken to reintroducing the services cut by Covid, and recommended a third, more blended approach, which would bring back the school tripper and Saturday services first, perhaps about 2/3 of what was cut a year ago. He cautioned that Covid response funding is one-time funding, possibly leading to unsustainable new service. To build back ridership, a marketing campaign was recommended, mostly centering on messages of safety in riding the bus. Silvia Martinez-Palacios spoke of her ten years' experience in public relations with Petaluma Transit, noting that she currently is doing this type of Covid work for Petaluma Transit, and was excited to help RCTA with some of the same. Vidette Roberts noted she was impressed by the work Silvia had done and her presentation.

FIRST TRANSIT UPDATE – OPERATIONS CONTRACT STATUS & EXTENSION VS NEW RFP

Mr. Rye reported out on RCTA Operations and Maintenance Contract. This critical operating and maintenance contract will be up for bid or extension at the end of this year. The First Transit corporate offices have indicated they will be examining an extension, and may be soon discussing this with RCTA Board and staff.

6. AUTHORIZE RCTA TO SUBMIT GRANT APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL LO OR NO EMISSIONS PROGRAM

Discussion was held in regard to submitting grant applications for Federal Lo or No Emissions Program. Dan Herron noted the opportunity to pursue funding for two Zero Emission electric buses, though we may get only one. The application included charging

stations as well. After discussion, Director Starkey moved approval, seconded by Director Roberts, motion passed unanimously.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following Directors commented on the following: None

8. ADJOURN –

Redwood Coast Board of Directors adjourn the meeting at 7:00 P.M. Next RCTA board meeting & Annual Workshop will be Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.

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