

**MINUTES
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
JUNE 28, 2021, AT 5:15 P.M.**

PRESENT: DARRIN SHORT (CHAIRMAN), VALERIE STARKEY, BEAU SMITH, VIDETTE ROBERTS

ABSENT: RAY ALTMAN

ALSO PRESENT: JOE RYE, TAMERA LEIGHTON, DAN HERRON, FERNANDO HERNANDEZ, MARK ELIAS, AND NICOLE BURSHEM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL.

Chairman Short called the meeting to order and Nicole Burshem took 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. CONSENT CALENDAR

NONE

5. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 9, 2021, RCTA BOARD MEETING

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the minutes of June 9, 2021, as presented.

6. TRANSIT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS CONTRACT – DISCUSSION OF EXTENSION VERSUS NEW CONTRACT

Discussion was held regarding an extension versus a new contract. Mr. Rye reported First Transit has been RCTA's operations and maintenance contractor since RCTA's inception. Wages are a major issue with the current contract. While RCTA is compliant by law with California Minimum Wage laws, the current First Transit wages in the bid model have left many staff just slightly above minimum wage, which is now \$14/hour. This issue was discussed prior to the pandemic, but COVID-19 and the robust federal pandemic support funds programmed to RCTA allowed RCTA to implement a \$2/hour hazard pay in April 2020. This was allowing due to the pandemic, but any permanent increase will need to be integrated into the upcoming 2021 Operations and Maintenance RFP so that all bidder can compete on a level playing field. Staff has come up with two Options to consider in trying to address the wage issue. Option one is to initiate a new RFP with language that requires all bidders to meet RCTA's wage targets. This will require an RFP process this fall for a starting contract date of January 2022.

Option two which is a bit risky would be to officially extend the contract one year at the first transit bid rate for 2022 (from 2016 bid) then increase the crisis pay at least from \$2/hour to \$4/hour to bridge the wage gap until a new contract can be approved. RCTA staff would like direction from the Board of which option to approach. Mark Elias explains how he feels regarding which option would be the best and how complex this process is and going to be. Director Smith asked regarding what the starting rate is. Mr. Elias responded the starting wage is \$16/hour. Director Smith responded that RCTA is lucky to have anyone driving right now and asked if drivers must keep logbooks. Mr. Elias responded not required to but will keep logbooks if they work over 12 hours. Director Starkey asked if RCTA was able to retain drivers through the COVID-19 crisis. Fernando Hernandez responded that they lost half of their drivers. General consensus was to direct staff to initiate the full RFP process this fall for a new contract in 2022.

7. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2020-21-12 ADJUSTING FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 BUDGET – AMENDMENT #1

Discussion was held regarding Resolution 2020-21-12. Dan Herron reported that staff recommends the Board approve Resolution 2020-21-12 to increase revenues and expenditures and adjust other line items to reflect changed conditions. Mr. Herron reported the line items that are to be adjusted include reducing fuel costs by \$56,000 to reflect lower prices and reduced service levels; adjusting budget line amounts to fit County line-item budget policies, which require no line item go even \$1 over budget; augments revenues using extra TDA LTF funding to adds \$157,082 to Regional Route 20 Operations line item to match projected expenditures. Director Roberts asked if Caltrans must approve any wage increases that we do. Mr. Herron responded yes; they are part of this process. Director Roberts stated that we can approve an increase, but Caltrans may not approve it. Mr. Herron responded if you are talking about wages yes, but for this it is just an increase of the contract so no it will not need Caltrans approval. On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Smith, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved Resolution 2020-21-12 adjusting Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget – Amendment #1.

8. DISCUSSION OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2020-21-13 ADOPTING THE RCTA FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 BUDGET

Discussion was held regarding Resolution 2020-21-13. Mr. Rye presented the draft final FY 2021-22 annual budget that was previewed a month prior. Good news is the TDA funding is at its all-time high and helps us restore over half of the services cut last spring without negatively impacting reserves. Fares are projected to come in lower but RCTA has COVID-relief funds to backfill the deficit. We have five additional buses, plus other capital projects budgeted for in FY 2021-22. This includes \$20,000 capital PTMISEA facility money for miscellaneous needs, plus \$40,000 of funds to advance the electric Bus project to design the yard improvements, charging stations, and electrical service upgrades. There is also \$66,000 in funds to plan and design infrastructure improvements near the Cultural Center Transit Hub, which includes \$26,000 from DNLTC.

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved Resolution 2020-21-13 Adopting the RCTA Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget.

9. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2020-21-14 AUTHORIZING FISCAL YEAR 2021 22 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT CLAIM

Discussion was held regarding Resolution 2020-21-14. Mr. Rye reported that TDA funding in the FY 2021-22 claims is at an all-time high, amazing considering what the world has been through this last year. RCTA is projected to receive about \$860,000 in TDA funds in FY 2021-22, an increase of 18%. Per direction from DNLTC, RCTA is claiming the maximum amount possible but will adopt a budget based on approved service levels and any excess will be used to add to the reserves.

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved Resolution 2020-21-14 Authorizing Fiscal Year 2021-22 Transportation Development Act Claim.

10. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SUMMER 2021 SERVICE CHANGES – IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

Discussion was held regarding summer 2021 Service Changes. Mr. Rye reported the proposed service changes are to reinstate Saturday service, reinstate and expand Route 300 with AM and PM versions to both DNHS and CEMS, and restore the last hour of Crescent City Local and Dial-a-Ride services on weekdays. Staff recommends approval of the package of service reinstatements, with top priority being Route 300 in August. We will launch Saturday Service as soon as staffing allows, which may not be August.

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved Summer 2021 Service Changes.

11. DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING PROJECTS – SRTP “MINI” UPDATE, ELECTRIC BUS YARD DESIGN, CULTURAL CTR TRANSIT HUB

Discussion was held regarding upcoming projects. Mr. Rye reported on a “mini-SRTP Update” to refresh the 2019 SRTP based on changed conditions, next steps for electric bus project (engineering/final design), and a project to address passenger experience and security concerns by developing a staffed Cultural Center Hub. Director Smith asked if Mr. Rye met with the City about the Hub? Mr. Rye responded he met with Jon Olson three days ago and City is very engaged. Chairman Short asked what is the order of priority. Mr. Rye responded he was thinking that we go first with the Kiosk, then mini SRTP, and then electric bus, but that order could be subject to change.

12. OPERATIONS REPORT – FIRST TRANSIT

Fernando Hernandez reported we got one new driver and received another dispatcher. We recently promoted one of the dispatchers to Safety manager and one of our

dispatchers will go to lead dispatcher to fill those positions. We have done some facility work. The corner support steel i-beam on the northwest corner of the building has been replaced as well as one of the bus bay doors.

13. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Rye reported we continue to participate in the Far North Transit Providers Group. We meet about every other Monday and one of the main topics is a joint project sponsored in part by Caltrans Cal-ITP program. The project is to do a fare standardization and real time transit project that would bring Google Transit Real-Time to our region, while also standardizing fares to use a distance-based format like RCTA adopted in 2017. This would help show real time schedules for the buses. The Cal-ITP project will also include an on-board contactless fare system to use a visa/master card to pay for your fare.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following Directors addressed the board: Director Starkey wanted to thank Mr. Hernandez for participating in the 4th of July parade.

15. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Transit Board of Directors adjourn the meeting at 6:19 P.M. Next RCTA board meeting will be Monday August 30, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

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