

**MINUTES
REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023**

PRESENT: JOEY BORGES (CHAIRMAN), KELLY SCHELLONG (VICE CHAIR), DARRIN SHORT, VIDETTE ROBERTS, RAY ALTMAN

ABSENT: NONE

ALSO PRESENT: JOSEPH RYE, DAN HERRON, NICOLE BURSHEM, FERNANDO HERNANDEZ, NICK WEST, MARK SHAFFER

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Chair Altman called the meeting to order at 4:10 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Nicole Burshem conducted roll call. Pledge of Allegiance was skipped due to lack of a flag.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Director Schellong nominated Director Borges for Chairman of the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors, Chairman Short seconded and unanimously carried on a polled vote. Director Borges accepted the nomination to be Chairman. Chairman Borges nominated Director Schellong for Vice Chair of the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors, Director Short seconded, and unanimously on a polled vote, Director Schellong accepted the nomination for Vice Chair.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

5A. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-23-07 APPROVING APPLICATION FOR TIRCP GRANT SUBMITTED JOINTLY BY HUMBOLDT TRANSIT AUTHORITY, YUOK TRIBE, AND REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT FOR RCTA ELECTRIC BUSES AND TRANSIT CENTER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION FUNDS.

5B. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 23, 2023.

5C. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-23-08 APPROVING APPLICATION FOR CALTRANS' SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT TO FUND RCTA'S NEXT SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN.

On a motion by Director Short, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote, the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Consent Agenda Items 5a-5c, as presented with the following changes to 5b. “adding Director Schellong name to the attendance part of the minutes”.

6. 2023 RCTA Annual Strategic Planning Workshop

Discussion was held as part of the 2023 RCTA Annual Strategic Planning workshop. Fleet Crisis - Mr. Rye and Mr. West reported on RCTA’s current fleet crisis & maintenance staffing impacts. Director Short asked how often do we replace buses. Mr. Rye responded we need to replace 2 or 3 buses a year if funding allows and the industry is building buses. RCTA buses have useful lives of 6 years, and we have an active fleet of 13. Mr. Rye reported on steps taken through Caltrans to receive funding. Nick reported that Fleet cost per mile rises as buses age, and RCTA has not received any new buses since 2019, first due to delays with Caltrans processing grant funds, then from COVID-impacts and mergers within the light-duty (cutaway) bus manufacturing industry. There is a shortage everywhere on Ford Chassis, but even GM is having trouble fulfilling orders for cutaway style buses, in large part due to Forest River buying out competitor Champion and then shuttering the Champion factory. RCTA has limited options, and may need to acquire more used vehicles. Nick reported on how this bus crisis impacts RCTA maintenance staffing. Mr. Rye asked the board if RCTA should add a budget for a Tech Assistant to assist Nick in the shop? A full time entry level tech would run RCTA about \$75,000 per year but would free up Nick to do more on these older buses, as well as provide coverage for Nick when he is on vacation or sick.

Mr. Rye reported on the Southern Oregon Medical Shuttle Study. The idea for transportation to medical appointments in Southern Oregon (and Humboldt County) has appeared as a voiced “unmet transit need” several times in the recent past. This year, the Del Norte Healthcare District approached RCTA to partner on studying this issue in depth and is also interested in helping fund a solution should a project emerge. The study is funded 50/50 between RCTA and the Hospital District. Phase I of the study was presented today, and has found is that there are many referrals to medical specialists in both Grants Pass/Medford and the Eureka areas. Currently there is no viable route to go to Medford, RCTA runs nothing past Gasquet and SW Point costs \$30 each way and requires an overnight stay in Medford. Mr. Shaffer conducted extensive interviews over the phone/zoom with medical practitioners in Del Norte County as part of gathering Phase 1 existing conditions data. Mr. Shaffer then spoke with current transportation providers involved with transport to distant medical facilities to understand what options currently exist, including the Medi-Cal program, which not everyone qualifies for. What has been found so far is this breakdown of monthly out of county referrals:

	South Oregon	Eureka
Sutter Coast Clinic	32	46
Open Door Clinic	20	32
United Indian Health Services	24	38

Stalliant Health	40	60
Crescent City Internal Medicine	35	10
Redwood Medical Center	20	5
Medi-Cal	58	64
Veterans Medical	5	30
Del Norte Behavioral	5	5
Dental Referrals	12	10
Total per month	251	300

For initial planning purposes, Mr. Shaffer is assuming that 30% of these out-of-county referrals would use the shuttle (assuming it was setup effectively).

Mr. Rye’s recommendation is that there appears to be a market for something not currently being provided to assist Del Norte folks with obtaining specialty medical care out-of-county. Staff are surprised that slightly over half of the referrals are to Eureka, and yet we don’t often hear from existing Route 20 passengers that they are going to medical appointments in Humboldt. A quick analysis of how Route 20 serves (or doesn’t really serve) the main medical facility clusters in Eureka show that there are first mile and last mile challenges on both ends of Route 20 that are likely suppressing these medical appointment riders. Staff recommends that the study proceed into Phase 2, where Mr. Shaffer will work with staff and the community to develop and refine how the two referral target areas (South Oregon, Eureka) can be served best. Route 20 will still be the backbone of service to Eureka, RCTA was already planning to extend Route 20 into Eureka later in 2023 as part of improving regional trip taking, but to attract ridership by eliminating or minimizing transfers, RCTA may need to modify the alignment to directly visit the hospitals in Eureka. On both ends, especially in and around Crescent City, Route 20 may need some dial-a-ride support to cover the first and last mile for patients that live far from a Route 20 bus stop.

Mr. Shaffer also recommends that RCTA expand its CTSA programs to include a one-stop transportation call center, where our dispatchers are not only experts on RCTA services, but become familiar with and refer callers to other options in the area that might work better for their transport needs. The long delayed implementation of a new phone system will be required to enable easy transferring of callers from the call center line to other transportation resources in the region. The RCTA Board of Directors approved by consensus that Mr. Shaffer and RCTA staff continue on the current course and come back next month for official approval of Phase 2 of the study, developing alternatives.

RCTA Transit Technology Projects - Mr. Rye provided a brief update on RCTA’s transit technology projects. Mr. Rye reported that RCTA had in the last year upgraded its AVL/CAD (automatic vehicle location/computer aided dispatch) system from DoubleMap to Swiftly, including replacing the tablets on all the buses. As part of the regional contactless fares project (on-board acceptance of tap credit cards) RCTA

installed state-of-the-art Cradlepoint wifi routers that not only power the credit card validators but also provide the signal for the AVL/CAD as well as pleasure Wi-Fi for riding passengers on all the buses.

7. DISCUSSION OF FY 2022-23 YEAR TO DATE BUDGET AND DRAFT FY 2023-24 RCTA BUDGET

Discussion was held regarding the Fiscal Year 2022-23 year-to-date budget and draft fiscal year 2023-24 budget. Dan Herron reported out on the financial report on the following topics: budget and spending to date; projections of resources; and trends for TDA and other important funding. Mr. Herron asked the Board of Directors what they think staff could do to cut costs to increase our revenue and boost efficiency? RCTA staff was unable to put together the preliminary FY 2023-24 Budget in time for this early workshop, but will bring the draft budget to the Board in April or May. The RFP for the new Attorney has been released and we are hoping to have an award on the Board agenda for March 27th to fill this important position. Director Schellong would like Mr. Rye to send her the current budget and current Routes. Chairman Borges would like a copy as well.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following director(s) reported on the following: None

9. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Transit Board of Directors adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m. The next regular meeting will be on Monday, March 27, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Joseph Rye, General Manager
Redwood Coast Transit Authority