

**REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING
MARCH 2, 2021 AT 5:15 P.M.**

PRESENT: Darrin Short (Chair), Vidette Roberts, Valarie Starkey Beau Smith (Vice Chair)

ABSENT: Alex Campbell

OTHERS PRESENT: Joe Rye, Chuck Clarkson, Dan Herron, Tamera Leighton, Autumn Luna, Nicole Burshem

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL.

Chairman Short called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and Nicole Burshem called roll.

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

4A. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2020-21-07 AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO CALTRANS FOR RCTA'S FY 2020-21 ALLOCATION OF LCTOP FUNDS FOR RCTA'S ELECTRIC BUS PILOT PROJECT

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 Consent Calendar item(s) 4A.

5. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2021 RCTA BOARD MEETINGS

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 February 2, 2021, as presented.

6. APPROVE TRANSITION OF RCTA LEGAL SERVICES FROM BLACK AND RICE LLP TO DEL NORTE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mr. Rye reported RCTA has obtained legal services from Black and Rice, LLP since 2007. Black and Rice is downsizing its client base and suggested we use Del Norte County Attorney's Office. At Black and Rice, LLP RCTA was working with Autumn Luna who announced in late 2020 that she was leaving them to go and work for Del Norte County Attorney's Office. RCTA would like to utilize this change and contract with Autumn Luna and the Del Norte County Attorney's Office for legal services. Mr. Rye recommends the Board approves the transition from Black and Rice, LLP to Del Norte County Attorney's Office that will be effective March 3, 2021.

Autumn Luna commented that she is glad to be back and hopes the Board will approve the change. The rates for the services are less than you will find at any firm and it is a good deal for RCTA. Martha Rice the current attorney has reviewed the agreement that is being proposed. Chairman Short asked if the agreement being proposed today will present a legal problem. Ms. Luna doesn't think it will be a problem from a legal standpoint. Ms. Starkey asked for 15 minutes to read over the document. Tamara Leighton, Executive Director of the Local Transportation Commission, commented that she totally respects the idea to delay, but would like to be bold enough to give a summary of her experience with legal services. Back in 2006 DNLTC moved to Black and Rice because it was having some problems with getting contracts and items moved forward. Mr. Black saved us back then by becoming DNLTC's counsel. Tamara stated that it makes sense to move back to Del Norte County Council because there is a lot of history with them and the County now has staff to get items moved forward. Ms. Leighton encourages the Board to vote yes on this item today. Director Smith arrived in the meeting at 6:04 P.M.

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 transition of RCTA Legal services from Black and Rice LLP to Del Norte Attorney's Office.

7. RECEIVE THE RCTA FISCAL YEAR 2019-20 FINANCIAL AUDIT

Mr. Rye reported out on the Financial Audit. The Audit was clean with no significant findings. Mr. Rye noted the positive impact on the RCTA reserves over the prior year because CALTRANS came in late with reimbursements due the previous year. RCTA's cash reserves have grown to \$350,000.

By Consensus of the of the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors the RCTA Fiscal Year 2019-20 Financial Audit was received.

8. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FY 2019-20 ANNUAL RCTA ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Rye reported this is done annually, with a performance report in the fall, then the final annual report later once the annual financial audit is completed.

Fiscal Year 2019-20 was not a great year for RCTA, or the world. Ridership was down 2-3% before the pandemic, then crashed in late FY 2019-20, finishing down 20%. Our best route was the regional Route 20. Director Starkey asked if the long-term ground lease include any buildings or just the ground. Mr. Rye responded it just includes the leasing of the ground and that RCTA built and owns the building. Mr. Rye reported we are looking for a long-term commitment and expect our relationship to continue. We will bring back for those terms in 2023, as the initial ground lease comes up for renewal. Director Smith asked how much room is actually needed. Mr. Rye responded we are pretty adequate right now and pretty happy with the size of the building. Dan Herron reported we suffered with COVID but took proactive measures to protect the agency.

9. APPROVE PURCHASE ORDER 2020-21-10 TO CREATIVE BUS SALES FOR PURCHASE OF ONE REPLACEMENT CHAMPION FORD E-450 BUS FOR RCTA LOCAL ROUTE AND DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE

Mr. Rye reported this is a routine thing. RCTA is ready to order another new replacement bus. This will be a gas-powered Champion (Ford) low-floor cutaway bus. The 5310 Grant that funds this purchase also has funding for another bus, which staff hopes will be a smaller vehicle, possibly RCTA's first electric bus. If the purchase is approved today, RCTA should see the bus late in 2021. Chairman Short asked what the time line is to be all electric. Mr. Rye responded we have a plan in place by 2024 we should be purchasing some electric buses. We need to start purchasing electrics by 2026 and convert to all zero emissions buses purchased by 2030. Director Smith asked if there is any minimum wage employees and have you budgeted for the \$15 minimum wage increase. Mr. Rye responded minimum wage is the California minimum wage and is already built into First Transits current contract. Even with the recent raising of the CA minimum wage, most of First Transit's RCTA employees are slightly above minimum wage.

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 Purchase Order 2020-21-11 to Creative Bus Sales for purchase of one replacement Champion Ford E-450 Bus for RCTA local route and Dial-A-Ride service.

10. DISCUSS VOLKSWAGEN SETTLEMENT FUND GRANT APPLICATION AND 2018 RCTA BOARD AUTHORIZATION FOR STAFF TO APPLY FOR GRANTS THAT MEET BOARD-ADOPTED GOALS WITHOUT PRIOR SPECIFIC BOARD ACTION

Mr. Herron reported staff intends to apply to the Volkswagen Settlement Fund to support the Electric Bus Project. In 2018 the Board directed staff to apply for grants as long as they support Board adopted goals and priority projects. RCTA recently began receiving LCTOP grants that are dedicated to the Electric Bus Project. RCTA will likely need to bank 3-4 years worth of LCTOP funds in order to launch the Electric Bus Project, as funding is restricted to implementation.

This VW Settlement Fund Grant opportunity poses a chance to obtain meaningful funding for the Electric Bus Project. The grant is similar to most competitive grant funds that RCTA pursues, in that RCTA must pledge to retire an older, higher polluting bus with a newer model, in this case an electric bus and some funding for the required yard improvements and electrical service upgrades. RCTA is seeking about \$280,000 total for a bus and charging infrastructure. Mr. Herron asked the Board if this was still ok for us to go and pursue other sources without prior Board approval of each opportunity? Chairman Short states this makes sense to go after things business wise and gives staff freedom to go ahead. Director Starkey agreed with Chairman Short. Director Roberts asked if the electric bus has a universal Charger. Mr. Herron responded that most do use a standard charging systems. Director Smith agrees with Chairman Short.

11. OPERATIONS REPORT-FIRST TRANSIT

Chuck Clarkson reported staff is adequate, but we need to hire a couple more people. We do receive one new driver next week. We have a couple of buses down, one needs a motor the other needs a blower. Route 20 has been challenging with the inconsistent and disruptive closures and delays at Last Chance Grade. Chuck does a good job keeping RCTA staff informed about whats going on and getting the route done as best we can. Morning run is less impacted, versus the afternoon run, which gets delayed frequently.

12. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Rye reported specifically about an emergent issue with the Fairgrounds receiving landslide debris coming from Last Chance Grade, and using a portion of RCTA's new asphalt access roadway for heavy dirt trucks transporting the fill onto the Fairgrounds lot, just south of RCTA's leased property. Joe talked with Kim and she stated they will be keeping an eye on that and keep the road as clear as they can. Kim asked RCTA to modify how the employees come in and out in their personal cars until the dirt haul is over. Joe and Kim discussed the renewal of the ground lease and hope to be together with the fairgrounds for another 20 years (lease comes up for extension in 2024). Mr. Rye reported that our next meeting in April is the perfect opportunity to do our annual workshop out at the facility on April 6th. Chairman Short asked if we could change the meetings to a different day. Mr. Rye stated that whoever would like to be on site for the tour we can do that at the next meeting. Director Starkey stated would love that if she is still here. Director Smith stated that would be great for the next meeting.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Director Smith stated he would really like to see RCTA get involved in the tourism effort with the City. Mr. Rye asked if Director Smith could send him an email when those meetings are with the City, so he can be involved.

14. ADJOURN –

Redwood Coast Board of Directors adjourn the meeting at 6:30 P.M. Next RCTA board meeting & Annual Workshop will be Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.

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