

Minutes
Redwood Coast Transit Authority
September 27, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

PRESENT: Bob Berkowitz (Vice Chairman), Vidette Roberts, Valerie Starkey, Ray Altman (joined at 5:34 P.M.)

ABSENT: Darrin Short (Chairman), Beau Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Rye, Dan Herron, Fernando Hernandez, Nicole Burshem

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER. ROLL CALL.

Vice Chairman Berkowitz called the meeting to order at 5:15 and conducted Roll Call.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Berkowitz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. NONE

5. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 30, 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 as presented.

6. TRANSIT MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – APPROVE RELEASE

Discussion was held regarding the Maintenance and Operations Request for Proposals. Mr. Rye reported the board needs to approve its release so that contract companies can put their proposals together with a submittal due date of October 25. Mr. Rye walked through the RFP schedule, which is unmodified from last month. Caltrans is performing their review concurrent with the release of the RFP, and any Caltrans-required changes will be made via addenda during the process, to avoid delay. Fernando Hernandez asked what happens if Caltrans denies the RFP? Mr. Rye responded he doesn't think they will deny the RFP because it would force RCTA to do an extension, which they oppose. If they did deny the RFP, RCTA would have to delay the process to February or March.

On a motion by Director Starkey, seconded by Director Berkowitz, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Transit Maintenance and Operations Request for Proposals Release.

7. UPDATE ON GREYHOUND HISTORY AND 2015 GREYHOUND INTERLINE PROJECT.
Discussion was held regarding updating the Board on RCTA Greyhound Interline Project. Mr. Rye reported this is an information only item. RCTA launched Route 20 in 2005 after Greyhound eliminated service to Crescent City. Route 20's schedule was setup for Greyhound's scheduled arrival and departure times at the Arcata Transit Center. Unfortunately, prior to the pandemic, Greyhounds arrivals in Arcata have always been late at night or very early in the morning, making it a challenge to meet buses, and suppressing ridership. As envisioned, Route 20 was an extension of Greyhound, but low ridership north of Arcata was no doubt a reason why Greyhound abandoned the segment back in the early 2000s. RCTA ran a low-productive late night trip from 2011 to 2018 that met the late night Greyhound coming into Arcata from the Bay Area. This trip featured little ridership and was an extreme strain on RCTA resources, causing the agency to function nearly 20 hours per day, six days per week.

Since the COVID pandemic, Greyhound has reduced service from two trips/day to one, and dropped service completely on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, further deteriorating RCTA's connections in Arcata. Mr. Rye explained that while Greyhound retrenched further, Amtrak is still running daily service to/from Arcata connecting to trains in Martinez, and the connections with Route 20 work better than Greyhound. The problem with Amtrak is that ancient legislation prohibits the sale of tickets that do not include a train ride segment, thus limiting travel in the far north as the nearest train station is in Martinez. Mr. Rye is aware of legislation to relieve this restriction, and will research the latest and provide an update to the Board in the near future.

Vice Chairman Berkowitz asked if Greyhound could be connected to in Oregon, as an alternative? Mr. Rye responded yes, and noted that the ODOT SW Point bus service runs one round trip a day between Crescent City and Klamath Falls (via Medford and Grants Pass) and this trip connects to both Greyhound and Amtrak. Vice Chairman Berkowitz commented we would get a lot of customers going from here to Medford, and he thinks this would be profitable for us and Amtrak. Mr. Rye responded he agrees but planning must be done in collaboration with ODOT, and likely would require RCTA to apply to Caltrans to seek funding for adding a RCTA trip into Oregon. Director Roberts commented it would be a great thing to get something done with both companies (Amtrak and Greyhound) and work something out. Maybe Greyhound would tweak their hours if RCTA agreed to tweak our hours a little bit. Mr. Rye promised to do further research into Amtrak schedules in both Oregon and Arcata and return to the Board in the future with an update. This issue may also be addressed in the 2021 Mini SRTP.

8. OPERATIONS REPORT – FIRST TRANSIT
Fernando Hernandez reported on employment opportunities, facility updates, buses, and shelter maintenance.

9. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Rye reported RCTA and First Transit are happy to be able to reinstate the service that was approved for restoration in the summer, but delayed due to driver shortages. This reinstatement of much of the service cut back in April 2020 (COVID), including Saturdays, will occur on October 9.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following Directors commented: Vice Chairman Berkowitz is wanting to consider another time/day for the meeting, and asked that this issue be placed on a future agenda for Board action.

11. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Transit Board of Directors adjourned the meeting at 5:55 P.M. The next meeting will be on Monday, October 25, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

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