

**REDWOOD COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MINUTES
OCTOBER 30, 2023, AT 4:15 P.M.**

ATTENDED: JOEY BORGES (CHAIRMAN), KELLY SCHELLONG (VICE CHAIR) 4:53 P.M., VIDETTE ROBERTS, RAY ALTMAN, DARREN SHORT

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: JOSEPH RYE, FERNANDO HERNANDEZ, NICOLE BURSHEM, ALICIA FERREIRA

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

Chairman Borges called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. Alicia Ferreira conducted roll call. Chairman Borges led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following person(s) addressed the Board: NONE

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

3A. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2023-24-07 APPROVING RCTA 2023 TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE

3B. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 RCTA BOARD MEETING

On a motion by Director SHORT, seconded by Director ALTMAN, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Authority Board of Directors approved the Consent Agenda items 3A-3B.

4. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2023-24-08 ACCEPTING TIRCP GRANT FUNDS & APPROVE PROJECT SCOPE AND SCHEDULE

Discussion was held regarding Resolution 2023-24-08. Mr. Rye reported that this is the large grant that we applied for and were successful securing about a year ago. RCTA has been awarded 7.3 million in TIRCP funding with no match required. This funding will help deliver three key projects. One being the electrification of our yard and upgrading the yard so we can charge electric buses on site, the second being RCTA's initial purchase of 6 electric buses. The third project being the downtown transit center. This money will go a long way towards delivering those projects for RCTA. RCTA now must submit an initial allocation plan to Caltrans and CalSTA who are the funding managing partners of this fund source. They require RCTA to show how we allocate it by year and by phase of each project. RCTA is managed by a part-time consultant team, so must stagger the projects so as not to overload its staff with too much activity at the same time. Staff advises that RCTA start the construction of the charging stations first and then a year later start the construction of the downtown transit station in 2026. While the TIRCP grant included funds for HTA and Yurok Tribe, RCTA only responsible for our

portion. Chairman Borges asks if the award amount is \$8.6 million? Mr. Rye stated yes, however a portion went to Humboldt and Yurok Tribe leaving RCTA's share at \$7.3M. Chairman Borges asked what the actual availability of these electric busses? Mr. Rye said that the new target model for RCTA is the Endera Ford which is now available on the CalACT bid. RCTA intends to use an existing Volkswagen Settlement fund grant to purchase one pilot Endera in FY 2023-24. Then, the larger amount of TIRCP funds will allow RCTA to order six more buses in FY 2025-26. RCTA won't be able to operate multiple EV buses daily until after the Williams drive electric bus charging project is completed, most likely by the end of Fiscal Year 2025-26. Director Short asked what we were going to do about charging to keep the cost down because the cost of Pacific Power has gone up so much? Mr. Rye replied, the cheapest time to charge is at night so RCTA is approaching this project to include a majority of charging overnight.

On a motion by Director SHORT, seconded by Director Roberts, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Board Authority of Directors approved and adopted Resolution 2023-24-08 approving TIRCP Grant funds Approve Project Scope and Schedule.

5. RCTA FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT – SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Discussion was held regarding the Annual report – System Performance. RCTA had its first good year since 2019-20 when the pandemic hit. Fiscal year 2022-23 RCTA are up 51.7% from the previous year, a nice recovery, but still 25% under the ridership RCTA had in FY 2019-20. We provided more hours and did our summer schedule all through the winter and was successful. RCTA Crescent City local routes make up the lion's share of the ridership recovery, up 45% over FY 2021-22.

6. DISCUSSION OF FARE INCREASE OPTIONS AND PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Discussion was held regarding fare increase options and proposed implementation timeframe. Mr. Rye states that the current fare structures are \$1.25 for adults, \$.60 for seniors and disabled and \$1.00 for youth. Veterans, youth, and college students are free (tallied at entry and charged to LCTOP grant). When we talk about a fare increase, RCTA has the Free Rides grant-funded program that will protect many RCTA riders from any fare increase, but allow RCTA to transfer more funding from the LCTOP grant to the farebox recovery revenue line (more free boardings times a higher per-boarding rate equals more farebox revenue). Staff is recommending a modest fare increase of a quarter for youth (\$1.25) and adults (\$1.50), which would equate to \$.15 (\$.75) for seniors and the disabled. Staff is seeking Board direction if you would like us to go out and do a public outreach and get the fare increase ready to happen, then at a future meeting, RCTA could place the fare increase public hearing and approve the increase. Staff feel early outreach is key, especially for our social agency partners who buy most of the passes sold by RCTA. Most of our passes are purchased by our local social service agencies, out of their budget and then distributed to their customers, so a price increase for RCTA passes will need to be budgeted for in advance by the social service agencies. If

RCTA can inform the social service agencies of the upcoming fare increase soon, and perhaps not implement it until near the end of the fiscal year, that would help soften the impact.

Another fare related policy that staff want to reconsider is offering half fares to senior and disabled on the distance-based regional routes (20 and 199). RCTA has been allowing half fare to seniors and disabled and does not need to by law. Staff would like to eliminate the half-fare on regional services to simplify our fare structure and raise fare revenue as well.

Staff suggests a minor increase in pass prices, increasing the monthly Local Adult pass from \$30 to \$35, and the Adult County pass from \$50 to \$55. In an effort to increase monthly pass usage by seniors and the disabled, staff leans towards leaving those prices the same at \$15 and \$25.

The ADA paratransit one way fare is suggested to rise from \$1.75 to \$2.00 and the general public dial-a-ride from \$5.00 to \$6.00. Our current fares are lower than the peer average, and ADA law sets a price ceiling at double the adult fixed route fare, so RCTA could go as high as \$3 per one-way trip if it desired.

Director Short asks how far RCTA is away from the TDA requirement of 10% farebox recovery with this proposal? Mr. Rye replied that RCTA is currently recovering 6.5 % fare box recovery, 3.5 % points down from the TDA requirement. Chair Borges said that Curry County has higher fares than most everyone else, do we know what their ridership is? Mr. Rye replied he does not. However, most of their trips are inter-city and that is probably how they can justify \$4.00 fares. Chairman Borges asks if bumping the monthly pass up to \$5.00, how much will it impact it. Mr. Rye states that it would be a raise at least \$2-5,000 a year at current sales rates.

7. ADOPT RESOLUTION 2023-24-09 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AGREEMENTS WITH CALTRANS TO FUND THE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN USING CALTRANS' SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT FUNDS.

Discussion was held regarding Resolution 2023-24-09, authorizing RCTA to accept Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning funds for the next RCTA SRTP.

On a motion by Director Short, seconded by Director Altman, and unanimously carried on a polled vote the Redwood Coast Transit Board Authority of Directors approved and adopted Resolution 2023-24 09 Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Agreements with Caltrans to Fund the Short Range Transit Plan Using Caltrans' Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Funds.

8. MANAGEMENT REPORT – TRANSDEV (FIRST TRANSIT) GENERAL MANAGER

Fernando Hernandez reported that they are short a management position, as Tech-In-Charge Nick West has left the company. Transdev is currently looking for a new Tech-in-Charge (acts as a maintenance manager) and has identified a potential candidate, and has extended a job offer. Staffing levels are doing good otherwise. RCTA is still not running the Medford/Grants Pass Medical Shuttle route due to road closures on 199. Once that is open consistently, the new service will resume. Chairman Borges asked if there was currently a plan if any major breakages happen, do we have someone that can come assist? Mr. Hernandez said yes, currently the Tech assist (new position that supports the Tech-In-Charge) is working with Transdev corporate team and training so if something major happens, they will send a mechanic to RCTA to help.

9. RCTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Mr. Rye states that there were a few items that fell off today’s agenda that should reappear at the next board meeting. A bus order or two. RCTA has some money from the Volkswagen settlement fund that must be spent soon. RCTA will order its first Endera electric bus with this VW funding, and have a year or more to evaluate the vehicle in revenue service before making a larger order of EV buses in a couple years. Mr. Rye wants to continue the meetings on the last Monday of the month at 4:15, if possible.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following Directors commented on the following: None

11. ADJOURN

Redwood Coast Transit Board of Directors adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m. The next regular scheduled meeting will be on Monday November 30, 2023, at 4:15 p.m.

Joseph Rye, Executive Director
Redwood Coast Transit Authority