



Regular Board Meeting Minutes April 27th, 2025

of the
LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT AREA
(LPTBA dba LEWIS COUNTY TRANSIT)

Held at the Port of Chehalis Board Room located at 321 Maurin Rd. in Chehalis.

Chair Mark Westley called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Directors Present: Mark Westley, City of Centralia
Scott Brummer, Lewis County
Tony Ketchum, City of Chehalis
Kevin Crowly, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of represented staff

Staff Present: Joseph Clark, Executive Director
Rebecca Towner, Director of Finance and Human Relations
Tim Palmateer, Fleet Manager
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager
Allen Unzelman, Lewis County Transit Attorney
Sara Morris, Copper Strategic
Megan Wirtz, CWCOG

A. Discussion Only Items

- Call to the Public – Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.
- Board Member Reports
- Staff Reports – Discussion
 - a. Construction Update
 - i. Mr. Clark explained the permits for the POC H2 Project are expected by the end of next week. Equipment delivery is scheduled for May 17, with slab pouring anticipated to begin in June and then construction to start in July. Mr. Westly requested that a photo progression of the facility construction be documented throughout the process.
 - ii. Mr. Clark explained a lease has been signed for office space in Morton at the Century 21 location near the transit stop. This site was selected for its

convenience and accessibility.

- iii. Exit 77- Mr. Clark explained the permits for the Exit 77 project have been secured. Funding is in place for Phase One, and staff is optimistic about securing additional funds to complete the project and potentially make further improvements to the area.
- iv. Exit 88/ Mineral- Mr. Clark explained the staff is working in coordination with the local tribe on the Exit 88 project. In Mineral, progress is going well. An EV charging station will be installed behind the store, eliminating the need to run electrical infrastructure under the street. The bus pad will be placed next to the store. Smaller buses will be used to serve the area, helping to avoid parking issues. Mr. Zurfluh and Ms. Johnson attended the recent fishing derby in Mineral, where they received several inquiries from residents about when service would begin in the area.
- v. Mr. Westly asked whether a media push could be planned for the second quarter to highlight that construction work is underway. Mr. Clark noted that The Chronicle contacted him earlier in the day requesting an update on current projects. Additionally, Washington Conservation reached out expressing interest in covering the work. As a result, some media coverage is expected to begin in mid-May.

b. Fleet Update

- i. Temporary Hydrogen Fueling- Mr. Palmateer explained that general acceptance testing was recently conducted onsite for the GTL leasing station. Staff is still working with GTL and New Flyer to finalize the fueling protocol. Once that is complete, GTL will return to perform a final review of the unit.
- ii. WSDOT Off-Take Agreement/Site Visit-Mr. Palmateer explained that on May 16, a team from WSDOT—including a trainer and a manager—visited to review the equipment being used and how it is being integrated into the fleet. WSDOT is awaiting the full operation of our system before proceeding with an offtake agreement to support their hydrogen vehicles. Staff noted this as an exciting step forward in the partnership.
- iii. Zero Avia Off-Take Agreement- Mr. Palmateer explained that ZeroAvia, a manufacturer of hydrogen fuel cells for aviation, is partnering with us to support their fueling needs. The plan is to repurpose our old fuel trailer to deliver hydrogen to their operations. As part of a pilot program with Douglas County, the trailer will be used to help commission their fuel system.
- iv. Intercity Transit Off-Take Agreement- Mr. Palmateer explained that Intercity Transit has expressed interest in purchasing hydrogen fuel from us. While they do not plan to produce fuel themselves, they would like to dispense it at their facility. They are expecting delivery of five hydrogen buses from New Flyer this summer. Mr. Clark explained that with the current off-take agreements in place, there are 180 kg of hydrogen fuel available for sale per day. The fuel is being sold at a rate of \$18 per kilogram. Between internal fleet usage and external sales commitments, the available supply is fully allocated.
- v. Hydrogen Bus Training-Internal training has begun for the new hydrogen buses, including an overview of vehicle systems and behind-the-wheel instruction to prepare for their integration into service.
- vi. Mr. Westly inquired about the timeline for bringing the hydrogen buses into the

fleet and what will happen to the older diesel buses. Mr. Palmateer responded that the new hydrogen buses will gradually replace the diesel units. By the time the hydrogen fueling station is fully operational, the transition will begin, and older diesel buses will be phased out accordingly.

c. Operation Update

- i. Ridership Data- Mr. Zurfluh explained Ridership data reflects trends from January 2024 through mid-April 2025. Significant route changes were implemented in March. The Blue route maintained consistent ridership despite these changes, with a slight dip in February attributed to the shorter month and weather-related closures. The Yellow route saw record boardings, even after undergoing a few route adjustments. There have been no major changes to the Orange route; however, an extension to the Great Wolf Lodge began in September 2024. This addition has contributed to an increase in ridership. Mr. Westly asked Mr. Zurfluh to explain the dip in ridership in February. Mr. Zurfluh explained that there was a lot of weather-related closures in that month and the month itself is shorter. Mr. Ketchum asked why there was such a large increase in ridership? Mr. Clark explained that it was due to the change in types of stop as well as the increased timing and people getting to where they want to go.
- ii. Mr. Clark also noted that the team will take a year to plan and assess the potential for expanded service into East County. This includes evaluating whether there is a need to extend service into the mountain pass area to accommodate increased hiker traffic and summer activity. The extended planning period is intended to ensure the expansion is done thoughtfully and effectively.

d. HR Update

- i. Recruiting Update- Mrs. Wilson explained that recruiting had been a little slow, but our two new hires, Machele and Jeremy, are doing well, Machele passed her test, and Jeremy is currently in CDL training. Stephen Nagel started in April. He has been a bus Operator for many years. Mr. Westly asked if these new drivers were bus or DARTT drivers, and Mrs. Wilson explained that they are both all of our Operators, training to do both types of driving. Mr. Ketchum asked how intense the CDL training was and Mr. Clark stated it was two weeks of 8 hours a day and then you take your test. Mr. Ketchum then asked could we train them in house? Mr. Clark explained that we were working with Megan Wertz to see if we could create a collaborative training center that many transit systems could use as a way to save costs.

e. Finance Update

- i. Updated Revenue/Cash Flow Presentation- Miss Towner explained the current budget is on track, with spending aligning as expected. By the end of the biennium, spending will increase to fully utilize remaining grant funds. The agency received operating grant awards for its corridor routes, along with a surprise award for two hydrogen buses and an additional hydrogen bus

designated for regional mobility. Staff is still awaiting notification on the Bus and Bus Facilities grant application.

- ii. Financing Proposal Update- Miss Towner explained the staff is currently awaiting a final proposal from the financing team. There is increased focus on exploring a line of credit as a potential option to support upcoming financial needs.
- iii. Grants Update
 - **CDS Request – Senator Murray:** A Community Project Funding request has been submitted through Senator Murray’s office for \$8.6 million.
 - **OFM Grant:** The agency is waiting to hear back on an application for a \$8.6 million grant through the Office of Financial Management.
 - **CDS Request – Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez:** A new funding request has been submitted for \$3.2 million to purchase four coach buses designated for transporting veterans. This program aims to improve access to VA services by connecting veterans with other transit systems. Transporting veterans is currently costly and often poorly timed, making this a valuable pilot initiative.
 - **Capital Budget:** The agency has also secured \$2 million through the state capital budget.

B. Review of Claims

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #32553 - #32626 including Capital and Operating expenditures for March 31st, 2025.

i. Capital Warrants	\$	11,005.00
ii. Capital ACH	\$	339,984.03
iii. Operating ACH	\$	156,709.13
iv. Payroll ACH	\$	187,003.76
Total	\$	694,701.92

Vice Chair Scott Brummer moved, Secretary Tony Ketchum seconded, motion passed 3-0

C. Action Items

1. Approval of Board Minutes
 - a. Adoption of minutes from March 25, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.

Vice Chair Scott Brummer moved, Secretary Tony Ketchum seconded, motion passed 3-0

2. Request approval to surplus Capital Assets on FOR-104A dated 03/25/2025.
 - a. Vehicle 111

Vice Chair Scott Brummer moved, Secretary Tony Ketchum seconded, motion passed 3-0

D. Executive Session

The Board will adjourn into Executive Session, Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(i), for the purpose of attorney-client privilege discussion of matters with a potential legal or financial consequence to the agency. The session is expected to last no more than 45 minutes.

Adjournment

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 4:18 p.m. No action to follow.

Executive session recessed at 4:46 p.m.

The next regular meeting is on May 27th, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVAL

LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT
AREA AUTHORITY

Mark Westley, Chairperson

Scott Brummer, Vice Chairperson

Tony Ketchum, Secretary

Respectfully prepared by:

Makenzie Wilson