



## Regular Board Meeting Minutes March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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.*

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

Directors Present: Mark Westley, City of Centralia  
Scott Brummer, Lewis County  
Debbie Lytle, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of there  
Kurt Eckerson, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented maintenance staff

Staff Present: Joseph Clark, Executive Director  
Rebecca Towner, Director of Finance and Human Relations  
Tim Palmateer, Fleet Manager  
Maleah Kuzminsky, Community Services Supervisor  
Timi Johnson, Finance and HR Specialist  
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager  
Allen Unzelman, Lewis County Transit Attorney

### A. Discussion Only Items

1. Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.*
  - a. No public discussion at this time.
2. Board Member Reports
  - a. No board member reports at this time.
3. Staff Reports – Discussion
  - a. Construction Update
    - i. Mr. Clark shared that the Lewis County Mall bus pullout is complete. The hydroseed that was put down didn't germinate due to being so wet out. The hydroseed will be postponed for Exit 68 as it just isn't the right time yet.
    - ii. Mr. Clark updated the board on the status of hydrogen fueling station electrolyzer and compressor. The anticipated compressor is not capable of building a sufficient amount of pressure needed to fuel the buses with hydrogen. Until there is a solution, payments or any commitments have been placed on hold.

- iii. Mr. Clark stated that that bids will be coming in on April 18<sup>th</sup> for the Morton e-Transit station. Facilities will pour a concrete pad for the shelter out in front of Arbor Health to ensure ADA compliance and allow people to get out of the weather. With route changes, there will be the opportunity to service that area twice on the way out and on the way in.
- iv. Mr. Clark said that there is a stop in front of Dairy Dan's in Chehalis that is all grass. If there was ever someone in a mobility device, that spot would not work for them. In this spot, there will be about a 50' run of sidewalk with ADA ramps put in so they can use that crosswalk all the way down to the high school. This is not a big project, but it is a very important one as this will help serve the high school in a much better way.
- v. Mr. Clark gave some updates on the legislature. Lewis County Transit was awarded some additional funds that weren't expected. This will fund 2 more cutaway buses to arrive in 2025. Another great thing that happened is that the legislature approved zero match for rural transit agencies on the Green Transportation grants instead of having to come up with a 20% match. The Green Transportation grant is a large part of what was used to fund a lot of the transit stations and the transit bus purchases.

b. Fleet Update

- i. Mr. Palmateer gave an update on the electric buses and issues that have been going on with them. They have not reliable, they aren't safe, and sit more than they are in use. If a check engine light comes on, the inductive charging system cannot be used. When the inductive charging can't be used, the bus is only operable for half the day. If a stop engine light comes on, the driver only has about 10 seconds to pull off the roadway safely before the bus shuts off and you cannot turn it back on. There have been incidences where the operator had a bus shut down on them in the middle of an intersection and the bus will not move. The bus has to have someone physically reset the high and low voltage system to get the bus up and running to get it off the road in a safe location. There have been problems for the past 3 years with these buses and it's a different or new problem each time. There has been a technician sent up numerous times. Their approach is passive, and it is not solving any of the problems.
- ii. Mr. Clark stated that there has been a letter sent out to the vendor for reimbursement. These buses were purchased with state and federal funds. Lewis County Transit is liable for reimbursement of years of service that they are not in operation. The letter is asking for reimbursement of funds or to take them back and correct all the errors within the buses to a proper functioning status.
- iii. Scott Brummer asked what the dollar amount for reimbursement would be.
- iv. Mr. Clark stated if we were to go with a 12-year cycle, that's about \$60,000 a year so nine years remaining would be about \$540,000 left to meet the standards of those federal and state governments, or \$1,080,000 for two buses.
- v. Mr. Palmateer shared that he went on site to inspect the hydrogen buses being built. There was a punch list of items that need to be fixed. Once they are delivered, New Flyer will have a tech onsite for about a week for post-delivery inspection. One has already been delivered. The second one should be delivered in May and the last one should arrive in August.

- vi. Mr. Clark stated that there will be hydrogen delivered from California just for the acceptance testing. Once Douglas County is up and running, Lewis County Transit will begin receiving hydrogen from them. This should hopefully happen in June, July at the latest.
- vii. Mr. Palmateer stated that cutaway buses arrived last Wednesday from Schetky. They are 14-passenger with 2 wheelchair stations. They are currently in the shop getting their new vehicle inspection for safety and make sure everything is in proper working order.
- viii. Mr. Clark shared that these buses will primarily be used to service the corridor routes for Olympia, Longview, Kelso, and Morton. Route data was reviewed earlier in the day and January and February of this year both had higher ridership months than any month of 2023. DARTT is double over last year's numbers. The equipment arrivals are very timely as they will be used right away. The life of these vehicles should be around 12 years.
- ix. Mr. Palmateer stated that there was a purchase for a Ford Transit Van. A Ford Transit van that was purchased in 2023 was involved in a collision with only 1600 miles on it. The insurance company deemed the van as a total loss. WSDOT was the title holder for it, and we were able to go through a process with them and the insurance company to be able to purchase a replacement van and keep the wrecked van at salvage value for spare parts and camera equipment.

c. Communications Update

- i. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that there was a visit from Rachel McDevitt who is a reporter for StateImpact. She works with NPR in Pennsylvania. She is writing about communities who are transitioning from coal to the clean energy space. She came to Lewis County Transit close to late December, met with Mr. Clark, and did a walkthrough of the facility.
- ii. Mr. Clark added that Pennsylvania has a lot of coal. She was out here very interested in the efforts being made. She talked to Lewis County Transit because of the hydrogen work. She was going to visit with First Mode and a few others as well. He said it was a nice visit and will be looking forward to the video documentary.
- iii. Mrs. Kuzminsky said that Lewis County Transit will be hosting some students from the University of Utah and some faculty from Kenworth in March.
- iv. Mrs. Kuzminsky stated that over the past few years, there has been a good relationship built with Kenworth and their staff. They have been helping with the REVIT program and giving feedback. Ryan from Kenworth reached out and asked if they could get a tour of what Lewis County Transit is doing here and show them the WAVE induction chargers. She said he is excited to show the hydrogen bus to them. Mr. Clark and Mr. Palmateer will be out of town, so she put together an itinerary. First hour will be spent with First Mode, then they will meet with TransAlta and the Center of Excellence. They'll walk through different projects that they're working on and then finish the presentation with Bob Russell on bio-economy.
- v. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that Mr. Clark was elected to the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Association (PNWHA) Board.
- vi. Mr. Clark added that he felt like it was important to represent what is trying to be done here in Lewis County. Alan Kraus from Fortescue is on the board also, which means that 2 out of 13 members on the board are from Lewis County.

The PNWHA is hosting the Department of Energy at Centralia College on the 25<sup>th</sup>. They'll be meeting with our community benefits plan leads. Mr. Clark is the node lead for Node 7. All eight nodes will be represented and that will be the first opportunity to meet them face to face and hear what they're imagining for the community benefits plan. Prior to this, there was a meeting and the discussion was that there were certain NEPA requirements that needed to be met defined by OCED and nothing has been heard yet. In order to move to phase 2 of funding, it's really important that it is established. Hopefully there will be a better update at the next board meeting on what that will look like.

- vii. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that she and Mr. Clark attended the Green Hydrogen Summit of North America in Seattle. They were given free admission due to affiliation with the PNW Hydrogen Hub. That saved the company \$1,700 each. It was a very interesting summit, and it was nice to connect with the different transits afterwards and discuss what they're doing.
- viii. Mrs. Kuzminsky said that the Regional Mobility grant preapplications were due earlier this month and that Lewis County Transit has submitted 7 preapplications for different projects. The total between all the grants is \$5.7 million. Those asks are pertaining to two hydrogen buses, operating funds for both the green and brown line, some design work associated with Exit 77, bus pullout improvements at the Boys and Girls club, etc.
- ix. Mr. Clark added that through SCUD, we are writing different grants to develop from 13<sup>th</sup> Street Chehalis to the Newaukum River, a corridor on Jackson Highway that would be left, right, center lanes, curb, gutters, and sidewalks with a bike lane. There will also be new utilities including high speed fiber, sewer storm water the entire way. The first year there was an application submitted. He, Rebecca Towner, and Maleah Kuzminsky hired a federal grant specialist that they met through the U.S. Economic Development group. The first year grant is \$400,000 and that will allow for community engagement and a collective design, and possibly architectural renderings. The second year is \$1.5-\$2.5 million for engineering and design. The third year is about \$18-25 million to actually build it. There will want to be discussions with leadership groups and councils to understand how to best to approach this funding model.
- x. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that she and Sonya Byrd, the DARTT supervisor, will be running events for Lewis County Transit. Maleah Kuzminsky will be handling all external events such as conferences, presentations slides, printing materials, anything public related. Sonya Byrd will handle internal events such as parades and working with HR on employee related events. There are 28 events for the year right now that Lewis County Transit will be participating in with a heavy emphasis on community resource fairs.

d. Finance Update

- i. Miss Towner gave an update regarding the operating and capital budgets. The budget is about 16.78% spent of total budget. Currently admin is a bit above at 18.4%. Facilities is under spent 16.78%, Fleet is at 17.49%, and Operations is at 15.77% spent. An area that is being watched is vehicle supplies. With an older fleet, there are more scheduled repairs and parts that need to be ordered. Another category to watch is hardware and furniture. There were some upgrades to camera systems, particularly on the vans. Lewis County Transit is also getting close to purchasing annunciators; we are just obtaining two more

quotes. There was a payment made to WSDOT for the van that Tim Palmateer mentioned earlier. It had to be purchased back from WSDOT for \$16,000 at salvage value. We will be reimbursed for the van that is being purchased now. Dues and subscriptions is always spent at the beginning of the year which includes items such as Chamber membership dues, the Hydrogen Alliance membership, etc. That is 94.5% spent but it is not anticipated that we will spend much more of that category.

- ii. Miss Towner shared that for the capital budget there has been a total cost of \$320,361 spent on the Lewis County Mall pullout and we are expecting the final invoice from JSA Civil as well as the hydroseeding invoice from Barcott Construction. They were on track with the budget. They had initially quoted \$281,300 for their portion of the project. With JSA Civil, there is about \$60,000 spent with them so far. The final budget vs. actual will be presented on that project once the final billing has been received.
- iii. Mr. Clark added that there is \$2,100 being held back from the contract amount for hydroseeding. Once that is taken care of, there will be a final invoice.
- iv. Miss Towner shared that there was a new member that joined Lewis County Transit. Her name is Makenzie Wilson and she is the new Human Resources Manager. She started about 2 weeks ago. She is going to be a huge help in the recruitment process, especially for operations. Tomorrow there will be one driver being hired, but we are still accepting applications. There is a monthly job fair at the Centralia College that Lewis County Transit plans on attending. There have been advertisements for job positions on the digital billboard by Chehalis Outfitters as well.
- v. Miss Towner went over policies 213, 214, 216, 507 and what was updated for first reading. There were no changes made for the second reading on policies 205, 210, 211, 212.

## B. Consent Agenda

### 1. Approval of Financial Warrants

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #31592-31638 including Capital and Operating expenditures for January 1-31, 2024.

i. Capital Warrants	\$ 100,607.90
ii. Operating Warrants	\$ 178,043.34
iii. Operating ACH	\$ 164,081.59
iv. <u>Payroll ACH</u>	<u>\$ 182,756.61</u>
Total	\$ 625,489.44

- b. Request to approve financial warrants #31639-31704 including Capital and Operating expenditures for February 1-29, 2024.

v. Capital Warrants	\$ 441,759.52
vi. Operating Warrants	\$ 231,940.40
vii. Operating ACH	\$ 118,265.47
viii. <u>Payroll ACH</u>	<u>\$ 181,427.60</u>
Total	\$ 973,392.99

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

## D. Action Items

### Action

1. 1. Approval of Board Minutes

- a. Adoption of minutes from January 30, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

2. Request approval to surplus Capital Assets and Small & Attractive items as listed on FOR-104A dated 03/19/2024.

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

3. Amend 2023 Final Budget

- a. Request approval of Resolution 2024-01 Amending Final Budget 2023.

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to purchase one 2023 Ford Transit T350 passenger van from Schetky Northwest Sales in the amount of \$86,208.88. If approved, the van will be purchased through the WA Department of Enterprise CARS Contract #07621.

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

## **C. New Business**

### **1. Request first reading of POL 213, 214, 216, and 507.**

- a. POL-213: Personnel Records
  - Added annual requirement to review/update driving abstract record for CDL drivers
  - Added language regarding employees' right to request copies of their personnel records and the employer's duty to make these records within 10 business days under Washington State Law.
- b. POL-214: Workplace Safety
  - Updated list of workplace areas that visitors may not enter without an employee escort (HR & Finance Offices, Records Room).
  - Revised length of time that light-duty accommodations may be authorized by the Executive Director to 12 months, to align with current CBA.
- c. POL-216: Grievances
  - Added clarification that management will respond to union-represented employee grievances in accordance with the CBA.
  - Non-represented grievances responses will follow most of the same procedures as the CBA, including the right to representation when speaking with management staff.
- d. POL-507: Business Travel
  - Changed to new policy number under Finance category (previously POL-211).
  - Removed alternative reimbursed mileage rate for employees who choose to drive their personal vehicle; all mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS recognized rate.
  - Added section for other allowable travel expenses such as airfare, train, or rental car.
  - Added requirement for employees to submit a Travel Request form prior to booking/purchasing allowable travel expenses.

### **2. Request second reading and adoption of POL 205, 210, 211, and 212.**

- a. POL-205: Paid Leave
  - Updated PTO Accrual Rate table for exempt (salaried) staff to match the years of service and the equivalent accrual rates as outlined in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement.
  - Added clarifying statement that employees with an anniversary date between October 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of the same calendar year will receive the PTO accrual rate change on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Employees with more than 120 PTO hours (not 40) may donate leave to another eligible employee.
  - Eligible recipients of donated leave receive a maximum of 320 hours (not 480) annually.
- b. POL-210: Employee Conduct

- Added statement that Fleet/Facilities employees receive an annual stipend to purchase work boots in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
  - Added statement that tobacco chewing is only allowed on personal time, off-duty or on a recognized break, the same as what is stated for cigarette smoking.
- c. POL-211: Fitness for Duty
- Brand new policy that defines “Fit for Duty” and “Fit for Duty Examination”.
  - Lewis County Transit may require a fitness for duty examination only if the examination is job-related and consistent with business necessity. A fitness for duty examination may be required when LCT reasonably believes that an employee's job performance may be impaired due to a physical or mental health problem or the employee may pose a risk to the safety of themselves, other employees, and others.
  - Lewis County Transit may require concurring opinions from the employee’s personal healthcare provider and a DOT Certified Medical Examiner.
  - Employees required to hold a Commercial Driver's Licenses are subject to periodic medical examinations every other year as required by applicable law.
  - Refusal to submit to a medical examination requested under this policy shall be considered insubordination.
- d. POL-212: Use of Employer Resources
- Added new section (E) related to the authorization and use of Lewis County Transit-owned vehicles. On an annual basis the Executive Director and Fleet & Facilities Director shall review, approve, and certify that employee requests for take-home vehicles meet specific criteria.

**Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chair Westley seconded, motion passed 2-0**

## **Adjournment**

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 4:28 p.m. No action to follow.

*The next regular meeting is on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.*

APPROVAL

LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
BENEFIT AREA AUTHORITY

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Mark Westley, Chairperson

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Scott Brummer, Vice Chairperson

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Tony Ketchum, Secretary

Respectfully prepared by:

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Timi Johnson  
Clerk of the Board