



## Regular Board Meeting Minutes July 16<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.

---

Chair Mark Westley called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Directors Present: Mark Westley, City of Centralia  
Scott Brummer, Lewis County  
Debbie Lytle, Twin Transit, on behalf of there  
Kurt Eckerson, Twin 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  
Sonya Byrd, Operations Supervisor  
Allen Unzelman, Twin Transit Attorney

### A. Discussion Only Items

1. Call to the Public – Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.
  - a. Megan Wirtz introduced herself. She is the new mobility management coordinator for the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments.
2. Board Member Reports
  - a. No board member reports at this time.
3. Staff Reports – Discussion
  - a. Construction Update
    - i. Mr. Clark updated that the Morton transit station is moving along. The bioretention facility is in good shape. However, there was an unexpected change order. The main storm basin off the retention pond had to be cleaned out and the sidewalk needs to be cut. That also got the perimeter curb prepped and poured. Another additional expense was the soil had to have crushed rock added and in a timely manner. The rock came from Winston Creek instead of the Morton Quarry because it had not been washed and approved. Overall, it was about an \$8,000 to \$10,000 expense to the change order.

- ii. Mr. Clark stated that the pad at Arbor Health was poured. Donny Ramacher and Kurt Eckerson will be placing a shelter out there.
- iii. Mr. Clark reminded the board of the extra money, about \$600,000, from a previous project that is being requested to be used on the Exit 77 project. With that, he met with Charlie Severs with JSA Civil last week to talk about preliminary design work for phase one on Exit 77. One design would be if the transit station could be placed in the park-and-ride and not have to lease any of the grounds. The second design will be determining how much of the ground will need to be leased, if any. This could be negotiated with the landowner on either a reduction in lease cost or outright purchase. The third option is an idea of the city wanting additional parking down there because it is right next to the courthouse and there is a lot of parking needed right in that area. The city would like to talk and maybe Lewis County Transit and the city can go into this together.
- iv. Mr. Clark added that Rebecca Towner had been working hard on getting the decarbonization grant contract for \$2.75 million wrapped up so Lewis County Transit can start putting an RFP together for those products.

b. Operations Update

- i. Mrs. Byrd shared that they had been working diligently on routes. They are looking to expand the Green (Olympia) route. There are currently 3 additional stops to be added. There will be 2 stops added in Grand Mound and there will be one stop added at Exit 99 around Flying J. The added stops will add about an additional 10 minutes, which will put the Green line on a closer time to the other corridor routes.
- ii. Mrs. Byrd also stated that they are trying to extend the Morton run to provide services into Packwood. That is a little challenging in trying to figure out exactly how the timing is going to work. This is still a work in progress. The idea is to have something put together by the upcoming route bids in August.

c. Fleet Update

- i. Mr. Palmateer shared that hydrogen technician training is set for the following week. There is some training for the operators the following day on the hydrogen fuel celled buses. There will be some demonstrations on routes, testing things, and see how they're going to fit and accommodate the new routes. So far, everything has been on schedule.
- ii. Mr. Clark added that Lewis County Transit is working on two leasing agreements. One is for a more robust dispenser as opposed to just cascade filling that the GTL 1500 provides. Mr. Clark explained the differences between the two options and why the new dispenser is the optimal way to operate.

d. Communications Update

- i. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that Lewis County Transit will be busy at community events for the next few months. The entire team has done well with working together as far as making sure vehicles and staff are available for these events. Since the last meeting there has been 6 events. There was the Special Olympics Torch Run, Winlock Egg Days, Ride the Willapa, Summerfest, the Pe Ell parade, and Toledo Cheese Days. These events have been well attended and it's great for these more rural communities. We are encouraging feedback and opportunity to

hear from the community members as to what they'd like to see for potential route expansions within the next year or so. Upcoming events in the next month are the Blueberry Festival, the Morton's Logger's Jubilee, and the Southwest Washington Fair. For the fair, the Admin team will be present from open to close and there will be a Hydrogen Bus on site.

- ii. Mrs. Kuzminsky stated that they had been busy with travel training and working with individuals and the community providers. Last month the Boys and Girls Club in Chehalis had about 67 students and 9 teachers that were trained. There was great feedback provided. Training with the kids will continue in the fall once students return back to school. The Centralia Boys and Girls Club had travel training today. There were about 42 students and 3 teachers that were trained from there.
- iii. Mrs. Kuzminsky updated that there were some visits from WSDOT and Office of Financial Management (OFM). They were on site last month and we walked them through the status of the current funding initiatives and the upcoming projects. It was encouraging to have them see the projects in person. They were able to get a ride on the hydrogen bus on the freeway and we gave them a tour of Mellen Street and the successes and challenges with the induction charging.
- iv. Mr. Clark added that Lewis County Transit will be meeting with WSDOT and FTA representation to share with them the PNWH2 hub requirements for NEPA and discuss if those requirements meet what all federal agencies require for NEPA. That way, if Lewis County Transit applies for and receives FTA money for the hydrogen fueling and production project, we will already be abiding by the same or similar NEPA requirements.
- v. Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that there were visitors from the Department of Commerce, PNNL, and the U.S. Department of Energy. The Center of Excellence for Clean Energy had reached out and asked if Lewis County Transit would be willing to show some of these visitors the hydrogen buses.
- vi. Mr. Clark added that the Department of Commerce had funded several of the grants and will continue to do so. There is a Megawatt Solar Array that will be put in the Port of Chehalis. The Commerce liaison and the current hydrogen facility liaison were able to take a ride on the hydrogen bus. It was great to meet and interact with these people.
- vii. Mrs. Kuzminsky stated Lewis County Transit did receive \$2.75 million in grant funding from the Department of Commerce for the community decarbonization program. That is what will fund the solar array, a hydrogen class A tractor, and a high-pressure tube trailer for the ability to transport that fuel to other transit and municipal off-takers.

e. Human Resources Update

- i. Mrs. Wilson updated that a previous operator, Craig McCown, has been promoted to Field Supervisor. He has been doing a good job and adapting well.
- ii. Mrs. Wilson stated that there had been several interviews within the past week with hope for more. There are a few open positions. One is for an Event Specialist & Travel Trainer, which is part time. There is also one more Field Supervisor position available. Then there are 3 Operator positions that we would like to be filled as current employees get ready to retire.
- iii. Mrs. Wilson shared that she is implementing a new software called BambooHR. It is an HR system that has a lot of utility for the admin staff as well as the employees. To name a few, it will store personnel data and documents, and it

has a training section so employees can log in and take training. It will notify you when the employee has taken the training and is complete.

- iv. Mark Westley asked for a description of the Field Supervisor position.
- v. Mrs. Wilson stated that it is preferred that the position holds a CDL, but if they don't, they can be trained. Duties include being available for day to day help for the operators out on route, picking up passengers out on route that were skipped, or to help operators to get back on time, or if the bus is too full in capacity to offload some of the passengers and take them to their desired location. There are a variety of duties this position will hold.

f. Finance Update

- i. Miss Towner shared that Lewis County Transit is still about 3% over where the budget should be with 50% of the year being complete. The operations side comes down to three categories that have been watched, as discussed over the last few board meetings. The categories are dues and subscriptions, casualty and liability costs, and vehicle supplies that has now exceeded its budget. Next month there will likely be a budget amendment brought forward for approval by the board to adjust for rising costs in maintenance supplies and services.
- ii. Miss Towner said on the capital side, there have been three hydrogen buses that have been paid for. The deposit down has also been paid for on the hydrogen fueling station equipment. However, all the WSDOT and other grant reimbursement requests have all been caught up. Right now, all that is outstanding is the current quarter through June 30<sup>th</sup>. There are payments coming up in the near future for the hydrogen fueling station equipment, including the electrolyzer, the compressors, and the storage. There is the potential of looking into financing options because some of the other grants are often slow to process reimbursement requests. There are two meetings within the next week with banking institutions that can offer financing. One is with Security State Bank and the other with WaFd Bank. They are both well-known institutions and both deal with municipality financing. Bonding is being looked into as an option, as well as a line of credit. Lewis County Transit has used bonding in the past and we have only used \$1.5 million out of a capacity of \$5.4 million according to Foster Garvey, our bond counsel. The amount that is being targeted for financing is between \$2.1 to \$3.2 million according to our detailed cash flow analysis for the whole hydrogen fueling station project.
- iii. Mr. Clark stated that there would be an email with the terms and interest rate sent to the board after the meeting with the banks.
- iv. Miss Towner continued to update the board regarding the upcoming **SAO audit**. She met with the auditor today during the kickoff meeting. There is a risk management meeting that Mark Westley as the chairman will have to do with the auditor; Joe Clark and herself will also be interviewed. The audit is expected to start next week and it sounds like it is going to be pretty fast paced as long as the information is given to them in a timely manner.
- v. Miss Towner stated that the team just began Collective Bargaining negotiations on the 10<sup>th</sup> and there have been two meetings with the union so far. Much of the language has been tentatively agreed to, and the negotiations really come down to wages and some of the benefits. The next meeting will be August 9<sup>th</sup>.
- vi. Miss Towner reviewed the policies that were being presented for first reading. There had been some changes to the drug and alcohol policy as some of the laws had changed within Washington State. Kirk Ehlis will review this policy from

a labor law standpoint. There were also a few different law changes within the Passenger Rules policy. The third policy for review is the Purchasing policy. There have been some changes to purchasing thresholds to bring the policy in line with FTA recommended thresholds. The policies were presented to the board with all the reflected changes outlined in the New Business section of the agenda.

## **B. Consent Agenda**

### **1. Approval of Financial Warrants**

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #31840-31924 including Capital and Operating expenditures for May 1-31, 2024.

|                        |    |              |
|------------------------|----|--------------|
| i. Capital Warrants    | \$ | 1,562,792.98 |
| ii. Operating Warrants | \$ | 252,100.13   |
| iii. Operating ACH     | \$ | 144,795.54   |
| iv. Payroll ACH        | \$ | 184,920.45   |
| Total                  | \$ | 2,144,609.10 |

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

## **D. Action Items**

Action

- 1. 1. Approval of Board Minutes
  - a. Adoption of minutes from May 28, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

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

- 2. Approval of Resolution 2024-02 voiding warrants 31697 and 31766 payable to MXTreality in the amount of \$4,166.00 each.

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

- 3. Request approval to surplus Vehicle 379 as listed on FOR-504A dated 7/16/2024.

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

- 4. Request for approval of additional security personnel through contract amendment with SecurUs Asset Protection for an estimated annual amount of \$72,800.00.

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

## **C. New Business**

- 1. Request first reading of POL 215, 301, and 501.
  - a. POL-215: Drug and Alcohol Program

- Added language that employers may only base initial hiring decisions for non-safety positions on scientifically valid drug screening conducted through methods that do not screen for non-psychoactive cannabis metabolites.
  - Changed procedure for a negative dilute test; LCT will accept the test result and there will be no retest unless specific criteria are met and an immediate recollection under direct supervision is required.
  - Added a new section that gives LCT the right to substitute urine specimen testing with oral fluid testing; this method is not yet certified by two laboratories but once this requirement is met, the FTA will allow for oral fluid collection methods.
  - Updated contact information and Medical Review Officer information.
- b. POL-301: Passenger Rules
- Added clarification that operators are not required or expected to push passengers in mobility devices up/down the ramp while boarding or alighting, or to lift items to stow in overhead storage.
  - Added definition of poor or offensive hygiene that is not permitted.
  - Updated illegal weapons section of policy to include RCW definitions; added new language from Senate Bill 5444 which prohibits people from carrying firearms in transit facilities, unless they have concealed-carry permits.
  - Added language that LCT operators are trained to recognize and report signs of human trafficking.
  - Added language requiring car seats for children who meet the characteristics as defined in the Washington State Child Restraint Law.
- c. POL-501: Purchasing
- Revised language authorizing micro-purchases from \$0-9,999, limited to the pre-assigned purchasing limit for each organizational position.
  - Updated small purchase threshold requiring a formal bid process to \$150,000 to align with FTA standards.
  - Raised the threshold for procuring personal or purchased services without a competitive bid process for projects costing less than \$100,000. This change is proposed due to an inflationary rise in professional services costs.
  - Removed the purchase threshold for Cooperative Purchasing Contracts previously limited to \$100,000.
  - Updated language for emergency purchases, stating the Board Chair's responsibility to approve said purchase in the event that neither the Executive Director nor the Director of Finance & HR are available.

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

## **Adjournment**

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 4:20 p.m. No action to follow.

The next regular meeting is on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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:

---

Timi Johnson  
Clerk of the Board