

**GOLDEN EMPIRE TRANSIT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**March 16, 2021
5:30 PM**

**1830 GOLDEN STATE AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301**

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Jim Baldwin
Cindy Parra

Carlos Bello
Rueben Pascual

Leasa Engel

DIRECTOR ABSENT:

None

ATTORNEY PRESENT:

Jim Worth

STAFF PRESENT:

Karen King
Candra Cheers
Robert Williams
Jill Smith

Steve Barnes
Chris James
Victor Honorato
Amanda Villanueva

Deidre Brown
Ricardo Perez
Melissa Ash
Sharon Pierce

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tanner Thompson
Nicholas Blanchard
David Eynaud

Dustin Combs
Bob Snoddy

Teresa Swick
Joyce Bowren

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll was taken and all Directors were present.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Director Pascual moved and Director Bello seconded to adopt the consent agenda (Agenda, Minutes of February 16, 2021, Accounts Payable Check and ACH Disbursements, Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) Authorization Resolution - \$562,762; FY 2021 Competitive Funding Opportunity: Low or No Emission Grant Program Authorization Resolution; and Passenger Media System Change Order with Connexionz for \$20,300. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Baldwin, Bello, Engel, Parra, and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

Item 1F, Passenger Media System Change Order, was removed from the Consent Agenda and was considered separately. Director Engel moved and Director Pascual seconded a motion to approve the change order with Connexionz in the amount of \$20,300.00 and granted the request for a 30-day time extension to manufacture the custom mounts. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Baldwin, Bello, Engel, Parra and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Tanner Thompson submitted written comments which were read by Ms. Amanda Villanueva. His comments stated: Stranded at afternoon appointments. Unable to go to evening family gatherings and community events. Uber and taxis are not accessible for power wheelchairs. Bakersfield is open for business and public transit services are not. This is unethical for the people who depend on public transportation. GET is not working with ADA law. (See Attachment A)

David Eynaud commented that he cannot make the 7:30 pm deadline to catch a bus ride home. He doesn't get off work early enough and so has to ride his power chair 50 minutes home. Covid has hit the disabled community hard. There are no other options for those who use a power chair other than GET. People would use RYDE service even though it is more expensive than fixed route. RYDE needs to run later to compete with Uber and Lyft. GET can't go backwards – it must go forward in thinking. Many people are left stranded due to the service ending so early.

Nicholas Blanchard stated that he is speaking on behalf of Wheels 4 Bakersfield. Wheels 4 Bakersfield is looking for a better quality of life for those who are mobility-challenged. GET has limited service operations which presents challenges for those riders with power chairs. He asked about a power station at the Downtown Transit Center for riders with power chairs. He commented that Bakersfield is opening up, schools, shopping centers, restaurants. He commented that he has spoken to the Bakersfield City Council and will be speaking to the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Board members were removed during the strike – it can happen again. He asked the Board to not strand GET's passengers and that night service be restored.

Joyce Bowren shared that she is a regular rider and would like night service to return to pre-Covid service levels. She is having to walk home in the dark since service has changed. Route 46 used to pass close to her home. She also commented that most of the drivers are courteous and good people, but three drivers recently have not been courteous and words have been said to her.

Dustin Combs commented that he is disabled and would like pre-Covid-19 service restored. He asked that the Board not curtail service as the disabled community is dependent on GET's service. He asked that night service be restored.

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS RESOLUTION

This item was considered later in the agenda after Item #5 – April 2021 Proposed Service Changes in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic.

HYDROGEN TEMPORARY FUELING

Director Parra moved and Director Baldwin seconded a motion to award a contract to Air Products in the amount not to exceed \$1,200,000 for the lease of hydrogen fueling equipment and hydrogen fuel supply. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Baldwin, Bello, Engel, Para and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

APRIL 2021 PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

After much discussion, Director Parra moved and Director Engel seconded a motion to approve the proposed service changes which include continuing all service to the Saturday service schedule with 15 minutes headways being implemented on Routes 21 and 22 during peak weekday hours Monday – Friday and to simultaneously run microtransit and fixed route service on Route 84 with fixed route service possibly being eliminated by January 2022 and approve the results from the Title VI Service Equity Analysis regarding COVID-19 service changes. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Bello, Engel, Para and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Baldwin

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS RESOLUTION

After much discussion, Director Pascual moved and Director Bello seconded a motion to make a finding that there are no unmet transit needs within the Bakersfield metropolitan area that are reasonable to meet and adopt a resolution – Unmet Transit Needs. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Bello, Engel, Para and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Baldwin

PRELIMINARY TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) CLAIM

After much discussion, Director Engel moved and Director Bello seconded a motion to approve the preliminary FY 2021 Transportation Development Act (TDA) claim with revisions to include night service beginning as soon as July 2021 for Routes 21, 22, 44, and 61 Monday-Friday and authorize the Chief Executive Officer to submit the claim to the Kern Council of Governments. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Baldwin, Bello, Engel, Para and Pascual
ABSENT: None

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

FEBRUARY 2021 FINANCIAL POSITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

Mr. Barnes discussed with the Board the February 2021 financial statements and other matters regarding District finances. This was an informational item only.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/BOARD COMMENTS

Director Pascual commented that he is interested in hearing the latest California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) information. He would like to see night service be restored as soon as possible.

Director Baldwin commented that he would ask that service on fixed route 84 not be phased out until replacement service is in place and working. He also asked that comments from riders of that route be surveyed during any transition period to find out what works and what doesn't work. He also is looking forward to hearing updated information from the CHSRA. The completion of the CSUB Transit Center will be appreciated by many riders.

Director Bello stated he would be at the CSUB Ribbon Cutting. He asked for an update on bus shelters in social equity areas with narrow sidewalks. He asked that bringing evening service back to normal be addressed at the next meeting. He also asked that GET promote COVID-10 prevention on buses, social media and promote COVID-10 testing and vaccines.

Director Parra also asked about bus shelters and their locations. She shared that the Bloom project underneath the Beale underpass is now complete. A bike ride on Saturday will begin at 5 pm at 18th Street and Union Avenue.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/COMMENTS

Ms. King shared that there are eight locations that have been identified as needing a bus shelter (Monterey and Niles is one location); however, these locations will require custom bus shelters that have been individually engineered and manufactured. The CHSRA adopted the revised 2020 Business Plan Update at their Board meeting on March 25th. This plan includes completing to Bakersfield. The CSUB Transit Center's Virtual Ribbon Cutting viewing is scheduled for March 31st at 2 pm. Filming for the CSUB Ribbon Cutting will be on March 24th at 3 pm on the CSUB campus. Transit workers are now prioritized in the current tier for vaccinations. In the past year, 453 COVID-19 tests have been administered to 291 employees. 71 employees have tested positive for COVID-19 with 10 exposed at work. On Demand will be expanding on April 4th with a soft launch.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Director Parra moved that the meeting be closed. The meeting concluded at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary of the Board of Directors

Tanner Thompson

Public comment 3/16/2021

Stranded at afternoon appointments

Unable to go to evening family gatherings and community events

Uber, taxi not accessible for power wheelchairs

Bakersfield is open for business and public transit services are not. This is unethical for the people who depend on public transportation.

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