

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

**April 20, 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
Chris James
Victor Honorato

Steve Barnes
Ricardo Perez
Amanda Villanueva

Jeanie Hill
Robert Williams
Sharon Pierce

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bob Snoddy
Teresa Swick
Alice Escobedo
Jen Lehman
Eleanor Thomas

Michael Harless
Nicholas Blanchard
Tanner Thompson
P. J. Callahan

Yolanda Hamen
Joyce Bowren
Dustin Combs
Jamie Levin

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Roll was taken and all Directors were present.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Director Engel moved and Director Pascual seconded to adopt the consent agenda (Agenda, Minutes of March 16, 2021, Accounts Payable Check and ACH Disbursements, Annual Review of Board Policies, and Solar Design Project with Willdam for \$149,960. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Temecia Ricks submitted a comment: She is urging the Board to restore night service as quickly as possible, both on weekdays and weekends. Everything is opening up now. She can get to choir practice, but with no night service, she has no ride home. Students have no way home from night classes. There is no way to attend weekend events in the evening with no night service. Please restore night service. (See Exhibit 1)

Mr. Nicholas Blanchard is representing Wheels 4 Bakersfield. He asked that an emergency bid be held to open up night service. He has spoken with Councilmembers Arias, Gonzales, and Gray. The Board of Supervisors and City Council each appoint two members to the GET Board of Directors. They can also replace the members they appoint.

Mr. Michael Harless stated that people are not able to get home from work, school, and activities with no night service. He had to leave the laundromat Saturday before his clothes were completely dry in order to catch the bus home. Brundage and Union bus stop needs work. The State anticipates opening up June 15 or 16. GET needs to open up quickly.

Ms. Yolanda Hamen commented that restoring night service to routes 21, 22, 44, and 61 are a good start but that night service needs to also be added to routes 41, 43, 45, 46, and 62. These routes are low income, minority, and transit-dependent areas. Schools are opening up and after school activities present issues with kids being able to participate as there isn't a way to get home in the evening. Restoration of night service will allow the community to participate in the opportunities that are now opening up in our community. (See Exhibit 2)

Ms. Joyce Bowren stated that she has to wait 1-1/2 hours at Walmart for route 82 and 84 buses. Last weekend she waited for three hours for route 22. She asked that night service until at least 10 pm be restored.

Ms. Alice Escobedo stated that she depends on transit to get to and from work. She is currently paying Uber \$25-\$35 to get home from work each work day. She also has a monthly GET pas and even sometimes uses RYDE to get home. She believes that bus riders are being punished with no night service. People need night service returned.

Ms. Amanda Villanueva shared Tanner Thompson's comments: California is opening and GET is denying night service to the Bakersfield community and leaving passengers stranded on all b four routes because of budget issues and denying service for the disable and all passengers in the community which is unethical. I'm going to the news stations and talking with them about the denial of evening service.

Mr. Dustin Combs commented that he has been a long-term rider and needs night service to return. High school students, Bakersfield College students and CSUB students need night service to attend classes and activities. The community needs night service for economic reasons and to attend events. We riders are being marginalized. News channels 17 and 29 need to be contacted if night service is not restored. We need night service.

HYDROGEN REFUELING PROJECT

After some discussion, Director Pascual moved and Director Bello seconded a motion to award a contract to First Element in the amount of \$7,648,680.91 to construct a hydrogen refueling station including two years of maintenance and estimated fuel for two years. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

MAINTENANCE BUILDING PROJECT

Director Engel moved and Director Bello seconded a motion to award a contract to Klassen Corporation in the amount of \$2,149,000.00 for the construction of a new maintenance building and paint booth. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

THIRD QUARTER FY 2020-21 PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR MOTOR BUS AND DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICES

Mr. Perez shared performance data for the third quarter for fixed route, On Demand (paratransit, NEMT, and microtransit) services. On Demand paratransit boardings (5,473) decreased -61.6% compared to 3rd quarter last year. On Demand microtransit boardings for the quarter increased 1.7% from 8,523 to 8,665. Total unlinked passenger trips on fixed routes for the quarter was 624,264, a -53.3% decrease from the previous year. This was an informational item only.

2021 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Ms. King shared with the Board highlights from the Board Initiatives update. This was an informational item only.

MARCH 2021 FINANCIAL POSITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

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

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/BOARD COMMENTS

Director Bello asked staff what routes were mentioned for night service from comments tonight.

Director Baldwin asked if GET has filed an official claim regarding the CNG billings. He stated that by filing the claim a baseline is then in place in case PG&E comes back later and credits aren't available to cover the new billings. He is also disappointed in all things California High Speed Rail Authority and suggested that the Board move forward in making decisions on what works for GET's business.

Director Parra asked if an emergency bid is possible. Ramping up for service is dependent on the workforce in Operations and Maintenance departments. She asked if our staffing levels currently would allow ramping up service. If staffing is needed, how quickly can we hire and get them trained. She also commented that some riders may have a fear of co-mingling with other passengers on various buses.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/COMMENTS

Ms. King shared that GET is working with the City of Bakersfield to place a memorial bench with a plaque at Brimhall Road in memory of an accident on New Year's Eve in which 3-4 young people lost their lives. Currently, fixed route buses capacity is 15 riders and capacity on paratransit and On Demand is 3. The Governor and State Health Officer has a proposition before them to consider allowing 100% capacity on transit vehicles. No decision has been reached at this time. Congress is considering earmarks for each Congressional District. We have submitted letters of application for five projects to Congressman McCarthy and Congressman Valadao. With the Governor announcing the probable opening of the State on June 15th, the Board may want to consider whether to continue meeting virtually, in person or a hybrid.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved into executive session at 7:37 p.m. to discuss Conference with Legal Counsel – Pending Litigation [Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)] – One Matter; Conference with Legal Counsel [government Code Section 54956.8] Portion of APN 173-200-09, District Negotiator: Karen King; Negotiating with: John Ritchie, ASU & Associates and returned to open session at 7:53 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Attorney Worth stated that the Board met with legal counsel and staff on the items referenced in the executive session on the agenda. No action was taken that would require disclosure under the Brown Act.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Director Parra moved that the meeting be closed. The meeting concluded at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary of the Board of Directors

From: Sharon Pierce
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Jill Smith
Subject: Board Comment - Temecia Ricks

Hi Jill –

I spoke with Temecia last week and again this week. She asked that her comment be submitted to the Board. Her comment is:

She is urging the Board to restore night service as quickly as possible, both on weekdays and weekends. Everything is opening up now. She can get to choir practice, but with no night service, she has no ride home. Students have no way home from night classes. There is no way to attend weekend events in the evening with no night service.

Please restore night service.

Sharon Pierce
Executive Assistant


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4-20-21
Board Mtg

EXHIBIT 2

Hello, my name is Yolanda Hamen and once again I'm here to address concerns our passengers have... but first I would like to address the Board. Last month I sat through the discussions and was surprised that some members spoke up regarding our concerns and I'd like to say "thank you" because I didn't think anyone really cared.

In regards to the night service needed, routes 21, 22, 44 and 61 are good starts but I'm here tonight to express the needs for routes 41, 43, 45, 46 and 62 — all of which are low income, minority, transit dependent areas and routes that service elementary and high schools. In the last week I've noticed after school sports, practices and activities. These kids and families need transportation.

GET ridership has decreased since routes were changed in 2012 and now the 2020 pandemic has decreased ridership even more.

I would think everyone here tonight would be interested in building the ridership up on the buses but how can that be done with no buses on the streets servicing these areas.

If you don't ride the bus you have no idea the hardships of having no bus transportation it brings to our community.

People are already suffering from anxiety and depression due to the COVID restrictions and now they will be able to start going places and doing things and how will they accomplish this with no bus service.

Everyone here tonight should want to keep our city moving and begin to prosper not be a disservice to the community by leaving people stranded and unable to participate in the many opportunities opening up in the city. Other cities our size offer night service.