

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

**April 18, 2023
4:30 PM**

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

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Carlos Bello
Cindy Parra

Leasa Engel

Kay Henry

DIRECTOR ABSENT:

Charles Van De Voorde

ATTORNEY PRESENT:

Jim Worth

STAFF PRESENT:

Karen King
Janet Sanders
Deidre Brown
DeAnna Sanderson

Steve Barnes
Chris James
Michele Warren

Toddash Kim
Ricardo Perez
Melissa Ash

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael Harless
Ellen Walsh
John Vorbeck

Adrian Hernandez
Linda Hurst

Yolanda Hamen
Sarah Ricks

The Chair called the meeting to order at **4:35 p.m.**

Roll was taken and four (4) Directors were present, Director Van De Voorde absent.

Attorney Worth stated that two (2) items arose after the posting of the agenda which needed immediate attention and that pursuant to California Government Code Section 54954.2(b)(2) the Board could place the item on the agenda with a 2/3 vote of the Board. The matters that needed to be added and placed on the agenda: (1) an Open Session informational presentation by Garth Fernandez of the California High Speed Rail Authority, followed by a question and answer session; and (2) Finance Director Steve Barnes needing an item in Executive Session pursuant to California Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1) and (2).

APPROVAL OF REVISED AGENDA

Director Henry seconded a motion by Director Bello to place these items on the agenda to be considered by the Board. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Bello, Engel, Henry, and Parra

NOES: None

ABSENT: Van De Voorde

ABSTAIN: None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Director Bello seconded a motion by Director Engel to approve the consent agenda. (Agenda, Minutes of March 21, 2023, Accounts Payable Check and ACH Disbursements, 2023 Board Goals Update, FY 2024-2025 CMAQ Bus Shelter Solar Lamps Project Grant Authorization Resolution, FY 2024-2025 CMAQ Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus Grant Authorization Resolution, FY 2023 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Authorization Resolution). The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Bello, Engel, Henry and Parra
ABSENT: Van De Voorde

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

Mr. Fernandez addressed the Board via Zoom and reviewed the scope and construction phases of the High Speed Rail project, its current status, and projected timelines. The Board was reminded that the GET property appraisal was completed in August 2022 and that CHSRA is in the process of obtaining grant monies for funding the acquisition and relocation of the GET facilities. Presentation for informational purposes only and the Board will be updated as more information becomes available.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Michael Harless stated that the sidewalk at the Mt. Vernon and Columbus stop is in need of repair.

Mr. Adrian Hernandez requested that Braille indentions at stops and benches need to be deeper and broader to accommodate the sight impaired. He also stated that stops without benches negatively affect the disabled community by not allowing relief from standing for extended periods. Mr. Hernandez requested sidewalks throughout all neighborhoods so that the disabled could walk more safely to their destinations.

Ms. Yolanda Hamen read a prepared statement asking that driver shortages be remedied and night services restored. Ms. Hamen also addressed schedule and compensation differences between coach operator classifications and requested that consideration for more equality between the two be given during the next contract negotiation.

Ms. Ellen Walsh stated that she resides within a senior complex and has long advocated for the use of GET's On-Demand services. She expressed appreciation for the courteous service that she has received from Customer Service and the drivers that she encounters; however, she has noticed an inconsistency in knowledge of policies and services amongst employees. Ms. Walsh suggested that policies be put into writing for reference and consistency. Ms. Walsh also noted that she has experienced prolonged wait times since the expansion of services, frequently during poor weather or in environments which she feels unsafe. Ms. Walsh made the recommendation that a Community Advocate be placed on the Board.

Ms. Linda Hurst complimented the Customer Service Department for their help but feels that more

time needs to be scheduled for each ride. Ms. Hurst stated that she has been late to several important appointments due to multiple stops along the route for other riders. She feels that more communication regarding the rider experience is necessary between the operators and ridership.

Ms. Sarah Ricks stated that she is sight impaired and does not feel that travel on the fixed routes is a viable substitute for On-Demand, and taxi services are cost prohibitive. Ms. Ricks requested that night service be restored so that she may participate in activities that run into the evenings without worry of being stranded.

Mr. John Vorbeck related a situation where he experienced a prolonged wait time for scheduled return service. He contacted Customer Service numerous times to inquire into the arrival time of the driver. Mr. Vorbeck was offered and accepted a ride home from a fellow citizen. Mr. Vorbeck expressed his dissatisfaction with the levels of service since the expansion of services.

3RD QUARTER RIDERSHIP REPORTS AND PERFORMANCE METRICS – (PEREZ)

Mr. Perez discussed with the Board the 3rd quarter ridership metrics and their comparison with the 3rd quarter of 2022. This was an informational item only.

MARCH 2023 FINANCIAL POSITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS – (BARNES)

Mr. Barnes discussed with the Board the March 2023 financial statements and other matters regarding District finances. This was an informational item only.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/BOARD COMMENTS

Director Engel expressed concern that On-Demand route expansion services may have come too soon due to driver shortages and questioned if GET was recruiting from colleges. Ms. King responded in the affirmative and detailed the numerous resources that were being used in recruitment efforts. Director Engel followed up with questioning about the possibility of a driver mentorship program for handling and diffusing difficult situations. Ms. King acknowledged the difficult job that drivers have and the training and discipline tracks prescribed for employees.

Director Parra announced that May was Bike Month and that Kern COG was promoting a rider program through their website. Citizens would have the opportunity to win prizes if they completed challenges. Director Parra was excited about the upcoming 50th Anniversary Celebration and has received lots of positive comments on the bus wraps. Director Parra expressed concern with public's comments regarding On-Demand expansion and felt that more public education may be needed for services and expectations.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/COMMENTS

Ms. King reminded the Board that details outlining the 2023 Strategic Goals update had been sent to each of them as requested in a previous session. Ms. King also distributed an article from a transit agency in Georgia that is experiencing the same problems as GET; i.e., the demand is greater than can be met. The driver shortage is not unique to GET and the entire transportation

industry is struggling. GET is also in need of mechanics and cleaners to support the driver operations. Ms. King reminded the Board that emails with links for Ethics and Sexual Harassment training had been sent out and needed to be completed. Ms. King announced that a Special Board Meeting was being scheduled for Tuesday, June 6, 2023. Brian Beamish will be presenting a workshop on Best Practices for a High Performance Board in the morning session. Department Directors will attend the afternoon session for High Performing Leadership Practices. The Board was asked to remain after the meeting to schedule policy review committee meetings. A video was presented highlighting the upcoming GET 50th anniversary events and an APTA training opportunity for Board practices July 15-18, 2023.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved into executive session at 6:20 p.m. to discuss with Legal Counsel

1. Pending Litigation [Government Code Sections 54956.9(d)(1)(2)] - Two (2) Matters
2. Real Property Negotiations [Government Code Section 54956.8] re: APN 005-442-02

Returned to open session at 6:32 p.m.

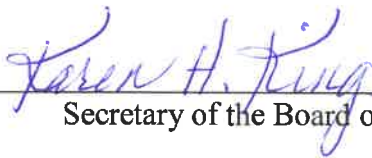
OPEN SESSION

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 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary of the Board of Directors