

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

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2023  
4:30 PM**

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

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Carlos Bello  
Charles Van De Voorde

Leasa Engel

Cindy Parra

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:**

Kay Henry

**ATTORNEY PRESENT:**

Jim Worth

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Steve Barnes  
Janet Sanders  
Ricardo Perez  
Yolanda Hamen

Robert Williams  
DeAnna Sanderson  
Chris James  
David Valencia

Deidre Brown  
Toddash Kim  
Melissa Ash

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Sarah Ricks  
Adolfo Sanchez  
Melissa Cabezzas

Irene Enriquez  
Martha Sanchez

Sandra Gomez  
Serah Goldberg

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Roll was taken and Directors Bello (arrived 4:43 pm), Engel, Parra, and Van De Voorde were present. Director Henry was absent.

**AUDITOR'S REPORT – ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT**

Mr. Barnes introduced Ms. Melissa Cabezzas, Audit Manager from Brown, Armstrong Associates LLC. Ms. Cabezza presented the District with a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2022. This is the tenth consecutive year that the District has received this award and the Finance Department, specifically Melissa Ash, were praised for their high professional standards.

## **PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED ROUTE X-92 CANCELLATION**

Mr. Perez presented an overview of the Title VI methodology and analysis required for major service changes. Completion of this analysis revealed no disparate impact on minority or low income populations should Route X-92 be cancelled. This was an informational item only.

Director Parra opened the public hearing on the Proposed Route X-92 Cancellation and stated that the Golden Empire Transit District would now receive public testimony. Any person wishing to present testimony related to the Proposed Route Cancellation may do so at this time. Persons were asked to state their name and address for the record. If they wished their statements to be verbatim, they must be in writing for inclusion in the official record of this hearing. Notice of the hearing was placed in *The Bakersfield Californian*, *The Bakersfield News Observer* and *El Popular* newspapers. Director Parra asked for public testimony.

Mr. David Valencia inquired if the Kern Transit route from Frasier Park could incorporate the Tejon riders.

Director Parra read a public comment submitted by Mr. Jose Ortiz. He suggested that a smaller vehicle be used in lieu of the route being cancelled.

Director Parra read a signed petition from 2<sup>nd</sup> shift IKEA employees requesting the route remain, but the park and ride location be moved to a safer location.

Mr. Adolfo Sanchez spoke on behalf of his wife. She is an employee of the Petro fuel station at Tejon and expressed a financial concern of fuel costs versus a monthly bus pass. Additionally, Mr. Sanchez noted three to four other employees of the Petro station do not drive and rely upon the route to sustain their employment.

No further comments from the community were received on the Proposed Route X-92 Cancellation. Director Parra closed the public hearing at 5:04 p.m.

## **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Director Bello seconded a motion by Director Van De Voorde to approve the consent agenda. (Agenda, Minutes of August 15, 2023, Accounts Payable Check and ACH Disbursements, Board Committee Minutes of September 5, 2023, Adoption of Board Policy #24 – Disaster Service Workers, Worker’s Compensation Settlement Authority Resolution #2023-14, General Business Liability Settlement Authority Resolution No. 2023-15, 2023 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Update). August 2023 Financial Position and Results of Operations, Short-Range Transit Plan, and the Long Range Transit Plan Update..

The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

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

NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Yolanda Hamen read a prepared statement regarding a driver assault. Ms. Hamen expressed dissatisfaction with online training techniques and requested in-person de-escalation training be provided to drivers.

Ms. Sandra Gomez requested assistance from the Board to establish paratransit service for an address that is on the edge of the District’s service boundaries. Ms. Gomez is a caregiver for an individual that would like to attend a new church that has been constructed near the intersection of Issak Lane and Snow Road.

Ms. Sarah Ricks was heard concerning evening bus service restoration.

**AUGUST 2023 FINANCIAL POSITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS – (BARNES)**

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

**ADOPTION OF SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN AND AUTHORIZATION TO SUMBIT TO KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – (PEREZ)**

Director Engel moved and Director Bello seconded a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023-24 to FY 2027-28 Short Range Transit Plan. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Bello, Engel, Parra, and Van De Voorde	NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Henry	ABSTAIN:	None

**LONG RANGE TRANSIT PLAN UPDATE – (PEREZ)**

Mr. Perez discussed with the Board the purpose of the Long-Range Plan for guiding District projects and understanding expansion needs. A website with a community survey and State of the System report can be found at [www.BakersfieldMoves.com](http://www.BakersfieldMoves.com).

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/BOARD COMMENTS**

Director Parra addressed the driver assault. Due to legal issues, this information cannot be released. However, when that information can be released it will be communicated to the employees. Director Parra asked that staff look into in-person training for the drivers.

Director Bello announced that the first Tuesday of October was Clean Air Day, and October 2 – 6 is Rideshare Week. The Director wished to bring awareness to the community of how GET positively contributes to these issues.

Director Van De Voorde asked that District employees stay positive. He questioned staff if counseling after the incident was offered. Staff replied that EAP was available to all District

employees and information was provided with the initial announcement. Director Van De Voorde also inquired whether the District was in talks with the Central California Asthma Collaborative.

Director Engel expressed desire for the District to be more involved in the business community and developing relationships with the entities at Tejon.

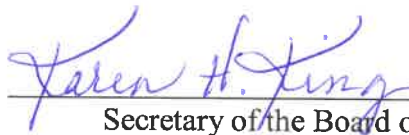
### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT/COMMENTS**

Ms. King was not present at the meeting and provided a video covering recent events in absence of personal comments. The video highlighted an update on the hydrogen bus fire, a recent job fair, welcome of new employees, a reminder of the Long-Range Transit Plan survey and outreach programs, a reminder of the upcoming Strategic Planning meeting, and announced the GET booth at the Kern County Fair and annual employee picnic.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Director Parra moved that the meeting be closed. The meeting concluded at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary of the Board of Directors