



Regular Board Meeting Minutes
February 25th, 2025
of the
LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT AREA
(LPTBA dba LEWIS COUNTY TRANSIT)

Held at the Port of Chehalis conference room located at 321 Maurin Rd, Chehalis.

Chair Mark Westley called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Directors Present: Mark Westley, City of Centralia
Scott Brummer, Lewis County
Tony Ketchum, City of Chehalis

Staff Present: Joseph Clark, Executive Director
Rebecca Towner, Director of Finance and Human Relations
Tim Palmateer, Director of Fleet & Facilities
Mrs. Maleah Kuzminsky, Community Services Supervisor
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager
Allen Unzelman, Lewis County Transit Attorney
Rafael del Castillo, Copper Strategic
Megan Writz, CWCOC
Debbie Lytle, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented operator staff
Kurt Eckerson, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented maintenance staff

A. Discussion Only Items

- Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.*
- Board Member Reports
- Staff Reports – Discussion
 - a. Construction Update
 - i. POC H2 Project-Mr. Clark explained that the permitting process with the City of Chehalis is still pending, awaiting a Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting, which may extend the commissioning timeline to July, with project completion anticipated in September. Discussions are ongoing regarding an MOU with WSDOT for an offtake agreement to supply hydrogen fuel for WSDOT vehicles, and a conversation

was held today with Zero Avia about the potential use of hydrogen fueling. The final design meetings are pending the arrival of necessary equipment and permitting approvals, specifically for the civil construction phase. Mr. Westley asked about the commitments being made to other entities and at what capacity LCT is in making this commitment. Mr. Clark stated that two of the projects are at 90% capacity, while one is only at 60%, and no further payments will be made until the installation of the dispenser is verified. Miss Towner mentioned that although a proposal was received from Holman, the decision was made to proceed with soliciting a proposal from a second company, Sustainability Partners, which retains ownership of the asset until it is fully paid off and does not require payments until the asset is in service. This option offers a lower interest rate and is classified as an operating expenditure rather than debt. Mr. Clark added that with Sustainability Partners, Lewis County Transit borrows the whole five million up front, but with Holman Capital, it is more like a line of credit, and Lewis County Transit pays the interest on the principal owed at that time.

b. External Transit Engagement

- i. Pacific County Transit- Mr. Clark explained that a significant amount of time had been spent working with Pacific County Transit, as they did not apply for many grants, resulting in a \$2.5 million shortfall. Efforts were made in collaboration with WSDOT to extend existing grants and utilize savings to help meet budget requirements. While they are adequately staffed, the primary focus is on getting them back on track.
 1. Mr. Ketchum asked if LCT and PTS shall remain as two separate entities. Mr. Clark clarified that LCT needs to stay separate and unique to help close the gap in transit connectivity.
 2. Mr. Ketchum then asked if Pacific County Transit's debt would remain their debt and wouldn't use any of Lewis County Transit's funds. Mr. Clark stated that the financials for each entity would remain separate.

c. Communications Update

- i. Website Update-Mrs. Kuzminsky explained that the site layout draft will be completed for review by the administrative team before its planned launch in mid-March. An accessibility designer has been brought in to ensure the website is equipped with features that effectively serve the community.
- ii. Grants
 1. PROTECT- Mrs. Kuzminsky explained that the grant application was removed from the website on the 10th due to federal budget cuts. However, there are plans to potentially reuse the draft application in the future.
 2. Mrs. Kuzminsky and Mr. Clark met with John Anderson, who is the regional representative for Governor Bob Ferguson, who requested an agency update. They also revisited a budget request for the electrolyzer and other equipment, but he did not have any updates at this time. He requested quarterly updates for ridership numbers

and the hydrogen station project, so the group will meet again in August.

- iii. H2 Transit Network- Mrs. Kuzminsky stated this month's topic focused on tax credits, with a presentation by Matthew Potter. During the meeting, the Renewable Hydrogen Alliance was announced, bringing valuable technical expertise, and LCT is excited to have them on board.

d. HR Update

Makenzie

- i. Recruiting Update- Mrs. Wilson explained that applications have slowed, but LCT is still receiving some applications and is conducting interviews. The job posting remains active on multiple online platforms, and banners have been placed in key locations to attract candidates.
 - 1. Mr. Westley asked about the number of hires until LCT is fully staffed. Mrs. Wilson explained that two to three more operators would put us fully staffed without the expansion plans. Mr. Clark said that up to eight more operators would mean we would expand and add more to our DARTT services.
- ii. Operator Assessments & 2025 Training Model- Mrs. Wilson explained the operator assessments for 2024 have been finalized, highlighting a few areas that need improvement. One critical issue identified was the airbrake test, which all operators failed. This failure was largely due to not following all required steps and was seen as a preventative measure. These assessments have helped LCT map out the training plan for 2025, which includes a well-rounded mix of skill-based learning and soft skills development.
- iii. Safety & Wellness Committees- Mrs. Wilson explained Robert McGrath will be heading the Safety Committee, which has been progressing well, and LCT is cultivating a solid sense of safety culture. Additionally, the Beautification and Wellness committees have been merged to ensure continuous operation throughout the year. The Wellness Committee has several initiatives planned, including an employee cookbook and other community-focused activities.

e. Finance

- i. 2024 Year-End Financial Review - Miss Towner provided an update on the 2024 year-end financial results. The only difference from the budget vs. actual presented in the board packet was the final sales tax figure, which increased by 1.2% compared to last year. LCT received \$492,667 over the budgeted amount. Operating costs totaled \$7,197,408, or 5.2% over budget. The Operating ending fund balance decreased by \$98,335, only 1.4% of the total Operating budgeted expenditures. A significant portion of the Capital spending of \$8,658,819 was for the hydrogen fueling equipment down payments. With the Board's approval, the minimum fund balance requirement was reduced to below \$500k for the Capital Fund which had an ending balance of \$343,582. As mentioned above, LCT is investigating

- financing options and plans to use federal tax credits to pay off the financing. The investment tax credit and solar tax credits total \$3.2 million.
- ii. Miss. Towner reviewed the list of completed capital projects and purchases throughout 2024. She mentioned the Morton Transit Station was recently completed and shared the final budget results; LCT received a grant of approximately \$490k, and LCT's portion of the total project cost equated to roughly a 20% match. In addition, the fleet grew to include four new cutaways and three hydrogen buses, marking significant activity for 2024.

B. Review of Claims

- a. Review financial warrants #32440 - #32500 including Capital and Operating expenditures for January 1-31, 2025.

i. Capital Warrants	\$	119,087.31
ii. Operating Warrants	\$	282,878.73
iii. Operating ACH	\$	198,166.03
iv. Payroll ACH	\$	224,086.03
Total	\$	824,218.10

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

C. Action Items

- 1. Approval of Board Minutes Action
 - a. Adoption of minutes from January 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting.

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

- 2. Request approval to surplus Capital Assets and Small & Attractive Items listed on FOR-104A dated 02/25/2025.
 - a. Van 351
 - b. Van 352
 - c. Van 108
 - d. Van 110
 - e. Front Sign 212 E Locust

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

- 3. Amend 2024 Final Budget
 - a. Request approval of Resolution 2025-01 Amending Final Budget 2024.

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

D. Executive Session

Board Chair Westley announced that the Board will adjourn into Executive Session at 4:01 p.m, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(i) for the purpose of attorney-client privilege discussion of matters with potential legal or financial consequence to the agency. The Board was set to return at 4:46 p.m.

No action to follow.

E. Adjournment

Board Chair Westley called the Board back into open session at 4:42 p.m.

No decisions were made.

The Board adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

The next regular meeting is on March 25th, 2025, 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:

Makenzie Wilson