



Regular Board Meeting Minutes September 28th, 2021

of the
LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT AREA
(LPTBA dba TWIN TRANSIT)

Held via audio conference application (Microsoft Teams) due to COVID-19 pandemic. The board agreed that an audio conference was best to protect the health of those in attendance.

Chair Rebecca Staebler called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Directors Present: Rebecca Staebler, City of Centralia
Tony Ketchum, City of Chehalis
Debbie Lytle, Twin Transit, on behalf of represented bus operators

Staff Present: Joseph Clark, Executive Director
Melissa Shoemaker, Director of Operations
Jennifer Dowdy, Human Relations Manager
Andrea Culletto, Director of Communications
Tim Palmateer, Fleet Manager
Rebecca Towner, Director of Finance
Maggie McCarthy, Operations Manager
Timi Johnson, Finance Specialist
Eric Rosane, The Chronicle

A. Discussion Only Items

1. Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.*
 - a. No public discussion at this time.
2. Board Member Reports
 - a. Debbie Lytle stated that there are a lot of issues with the free fare. People are getting on the bus that are not necessarily wanting to comply with the rules. A man was trying to train his children to ride the city bus to go to school. By the time he finished his day, he was stressed out. He said he was going to figure something else out. Rebecca Staebler asked why Twin Transit was going fare-free. Mr. Clark replied it was to help reduce the spread of Covid at this time. Mr. Clark would like to continue this conversation later to find a solution.
 - b. Rebecca Staebler talked about the special route that was made for Girls Night Out and Country Chicks. Rebecca Staebler had been working with Andrea Culletto and Jason King and appreciated the work that they had put in.
3. Staff Reports – Discussion
 - a. HR Update

- i. Mr. Clark stated that CDL operating recruitment is kicking into high gear. Jennifer Dowdy is going through applications trying to find additional qualified CDL drivers. Twin Transit is going to be scheduling interviews. Twin Transit hopes to hire more drivers as the company grows.

b. Operations Update

- i. Mr. Clark shared that in November 2020, 20 people were riding DARTT and last month Twin Transit had 700 people riding DARTT. DARTT continues to expand. Some days there are 2 to 3 drivers and other days there are 4 to 5 drivers. Twin Transit needs to staff up to ensure that there is an adequate number of drivers for the people who call in and schedule a ride.
- ii. Mr. Clark stated that Jodie Ditch and Maggie McCarthy are working on CDL training. As many as 6 new drivers may need training. There are some upcoming retirements, attrition in staff, the need to cover the DARTT vans, and potentially new routes coming this January into the new winter route program.
- iii. Mr. Clark said that there are internal and external surveys being sent out. The internal surveys are being sent to the drivers and staff. The external surveys are for the public, which will be on the Twin Transit website.
- iv. Mrs. Culletto explained that the surveys are short. The idea is to get the community's input on what area they think Twin Transit needs to service.
- v. Rebecca Staebler asked where the external survey will be posted to direct the public to participate in this survey.
- vi. Mrs. Culletto replied that the survey will be posted on the website. This information will also be shared through all the social media platforms, direct text contact with anyone who has bought a digital bus pass over the last year, media channels such as The Chronicle or the radio, and advertising on the bus as well. There is also talk about doing a paper version for anyone who doesn't have the internet or a device or anything like that. The survey will be out there for about 2 weeks as discussed.
- vii. Miss Towner shared that the Regional Mobility Grant is \$389,000 per year over 4 years. Originally Twin Transit asked for it to cover 2 routes to Olympia. However, Twin Transit is not seeing the ridership on that route as expected. Twin Transit would like to alter the scope slightly. Twin Transit had to submit a description to WSDOT as to why the scope needed to be altered. The cost goes down because the Longview route is fewer miles in total. WSDOT is currently working on editing the scope agreement.
- viii. Mr. Clark explained that this comes about from the DARTT service and the operations team sharing that a lot of people would like to see routes and DARTT service go down to Longview. Several people in the area choose not to use the Olympia medical community but instead use the Longview medical community. Mr. Clark highlighted that Regional Mobility is connecting rural areas to urban and metropolitan areas. Rural Mobility is inclusive to be able to give people within our community and service area rides by using DARTT and Paratransit. For this project, Twin Transit will be using Regional Mobility grant money.
- ix. Rebecca Staebler asked if there was dialogue behind the graphs that were provided, such as why 3 p.m. is a peak time.

- x. Mr. Clark replied that Twin Transit is looking at data thoroughly and analytically. The information across all five of the routes is total ridership per day and there is a frequency model. This shows what times of day are the most active. Twin Transit also looks at any challenges that may happen within the route such as the red route is having a hard time getting back to Mellen St. 10 minutes before to give the drivers a break or to charge the e-buses with an adequate amount of time. Twin Transit dissected the data. There are 24 stops on the red route. Each loop has been looked at. There are 14 loops a day within the operating hours. Twin Transit found out that the drivers are not stopping at all 24 stops on any loop. What was found is that they're stopping for mobility devices which is what is holding them up. Sometimes there are two or three at a stop. Red is a long route already without having to stop and secure the mobility devices, so it is hard to fit all the stops into a loop on this route. Twin Transit is looking at this data and that information to make the adjustments for the winter route planning. In DARTT and LIFTT, some trends are starting to be noticed. Particular times of the day, particular times of the week, some days will have 2-3 drivers other days there will be 4-5. The operations team just scheduled a meeting for later in the week where the team can sit down and discuss how the process is going and if there are ways that this can be adjusted so Twin Transit can get a better service model out to the public at the same time being more efficient with our staff. The data is constantly being analyzed and use that data to drive decision-making. Rebecca Towner has been instrumental in compiling the data taken from Route Match, which is the ridership software, and pushing them into excel and Power BI for further analysis. That is where the charts that are shared are coming from.

c. Facilities Update

- i. Mr. Clark shared that the Locust Street location is paved. It is nice to not walk through the mud when trying to get to the doors. Everyone is happy about this.
- ii. Mr. Clark also shared that the stormwater is done. Twin Transit is waiting on some good weather for the striping to be done. Then there will be some charging devices installed as Twin Transit is looking into electric vehicle purchasing that is planned for next year and into 2023.
- iii. Mr. Clark said that Twin Transit is getting everything ready for bus stops, pull-outs, and shelters. Rebecca Towner and Mr. Clark have been working with the facilities team on getting the permits done in both Centralia and Chehalis. There is an engineering firm helping Twin Transit with some drawings. There will be a new bus stop over by Safeway in Centralia. The stop is going from Harrison and is being put on Johnson because it was getting difficult without a light to get back into the flow of traffic. There is one going in at Rite Aid. Twin Transit has been working with the school districts about where it's best to put in a bus stop on Harrison going North as they begin to do some of that street work. Twin Transit is also looking at alternatives for shelters. As you know, shelters are very expensive to maintain. Twin Transit has looked at the State of Washington and some other places. What Twin Transit is thinking is over the benches, use a sign

pole. It is very convenient, very easy, and the footprint is smaller and much easier to install.

- iv. Mr. Clark explained that Twin Transit is going to be getting ready to start a storage project out in one of the bays at Locust Street. Twin Transit has a lot of facility equipment, lawnmowers, and things like that, and it needs a place where it can be stored neatly and safely out of the weather and out of the way. Twin Transit will also be adding a restroom out in the shop. While doing the pavement, Twin Transit found out that there was a conduit line that isn't needed that runs out to the shop. The city helped make that change, so there will now be a restroom installed on that side of the building as well.
- v. Mr. Clark said that Twin Transit has engaged a company called Engineering Procurement Construction LLC. They are specifically a hydrogen fuel consulting firm to help with the design and implementation of the hydrogen fueling station. The port approved last week what was approved in our last board meeting for the MOU to begin discussions about sighting the hydrogen fueling station in the Port of Chehalis. It looks like this firm has been in the field since about 2003. They came and gave a presentation to the EIC (Energy Innovation Coalition) and it was well-received. Kelly Smith-Johnson and Richard DeBolt presented to the Chehalis City Council and Andrea Culletto and Mr. Clark will be presenting to the Centralia Council on an update around what the EIC is doing, the progress they've made, and some of the next steps they are going to be taking.
- vi. Mrs. Culletto shared that it has been exciting to see all the different City Councils for their excitement and the attendee's excitement about this project and what it means for our community. It used to be about logging, and it used to be about coal, but just because those things are being transitioned out doesn't mean we're done. It just means we're on the cusp of something new and even bigger. Mrs. Culletto thinks that this is starting to catch fire in our community and it's fun to be a part of it. There will be more exciting things and updates to come on this as well.
- vii. Mr. Clark stated that Twin Transit continues to work with the landowners at Exit 68 to design a transit station that will fit in the available area that is just south of Spiffy's on the south edge of the parking lot. The environmental engineer that was hired did come back and say there were some wetlands there. The recommendation was to not go down into that lower field, so Twin Transit has to keep the station away from that. The project has been scaled back a bit, but Twin Transit will still have ample room for bus parking, wave induction charging, and EV charging. Twin Transit is trying to articulate a conceptual design in a fashion that meets the property owner's needs, Twin Transit's needs, and Energy Northwest's needs. This is a part of the electrification of Highway 12. That is going well, those sites have been identified. The number of engineering and design documents have been presented to the various permitting agencies and Twin Transit hopes that by late Fall or early next Spring to begin construction on those EV charging and transit station sites. The Morton transit station is a part of Twin Transit's DARTT expansion and part of Energy Northwest electrification. There is a landowner out there who has been generous in donating land to help design that and put that in place.

d. Fleet Update

- i. Mr. Palmateer stated that Twin Transit has been working with Gillig out of California. They have been going through specifications on two 35' electric buses like the ones that came from Complete Coach Works including wave charging. There are some meetings set this week to try to move forward with the proposals and to move forward with that project.
- ii. Miss Towner shared that Twin Transit was awarded one bus up to \$750,000 through the DERA grant. There is also a Green Technology grant that will cover a portion of the bus as well.
- iii. Mr. Clark shared that there is some money left over from the first Green Technology grant to buy purchase another wave induction charger for Mellen Street. As these buses come online, Twin Transit will be ready with dual wave induction charging that will operate 4 buses throughout the Twin Cities.
- iv. Mr. Palmateer said that Creative Bus Sales approached Twin Transit with a Pro Master Van and asked if Twin Transit would like to demo it on some of the routes. These are recognizable in more of a commercial setting, but these have been converted with a lower floor option. They have lowered the floor about 9 inches and added an election side door and a manual wheelchair ramp. It's consumer-friendly, easy to get in and out of, ramp operation is simple, has a lot of room for mobility devices to enter, and it holds a max. of 8 passengers. There is a lot of headroom. Twin Transit is in the process of trying to acquire three of those vans to potentially use on our routes.
- v. Mr. Clark stated that, in the past, Twin Transit purchased cutaways. Those cutaways are used for Paratransit or LIFTT operations. These vans are more efficient vehicles. The purchase cost is lower as well as the cost to run the vehicle. These vehicles are also non-CDL vehicles, meaning that if Twin Transit gets into a situation where we don't have enough CDL drivers, we can use other staff to do those DARTT and LIFTT routes. Twin Transit's goal is to have all CDL drivers and not have to worry about that because that gives Twin Transit the greatest flexibility. It does not seem as though Twin Transit is going to be able to recruit as many CDL drivers as Twin Transit has been able to in the past. Twin Transit must make some contingency plans on how to go about servicing the customers. These vehicles help make that happen. While doing this, Twin Transit also purchased a smaller Ford Transit Van. This van will be used for DARTT and LIFTT, but as soon as it gets back from having a decal wrap put on, Twin Transit is going to pilot the van on the Olympia route. It's a smaller vehicle, much more economical, and is easier to get in and out of than the bigger vans that are being used now. Tim Palmateer had shared with Joe Clark previously that with the Olympia route they are doing preventative maintenance on these vehicles about once a week with the miles that are accrued during this time. Twin Transit is looking for less expensive options to help meet the needs of the clients, our routes, and ridership. One of the drivers, Rhonda Feris, really enjoyed the Pro Master. She told Mr. Clark that she liked it, the customers liked it, and it was easy to maneuver, get in and out of traffic, and park up at the Olympia Transit Center. Mr. Clark stated that he thinks it is a good option going forward.

e. Communications Update

- i. Mrs. Culletto shared that Twin Transit is doing the Girls Night Out Shuttle. Twin Transit is very excited to be able to offer that again. This will provide a special service route through downtown and over to Country Chicks over at the fairgrounds. Twin Transit will be in the parade and will have a booth at the Apple Harvest event. This is a continued effort to get the word out about DARTT and make sure the community knows about this service, how to use it, and have that awareness of that program. There is a similar booth set up at Country Chicks for the same purpose. Trick or Treat Transit is at the end of the month. Twin Transit is working with the Chehalis Chamber of Commerce on all the details on that and finalizing things. Twin Transit is going to be keeping an eye on public health and safety. If anything needs to be changed, then it will, but as of right now the plan is to move forward.
- ii. Rebecca Staebler asked what day the Trick or Treat transit is happening.
- iii. Mrs. Culletto replied that the Trick or Treat Transit is happening on Saturday, October 30th. That gives the kids the whole weekend for some fun instead of having to pick and choose.
- iv. Mrs. Culletto said that Twin Transit is working on a TransAlta bus wrap. That will go on the one unwrapped electric bus. This will be a special thank you to the community bus wrap with TransAlta. The wrap is going to feature anyone from local food banks, Riverside Fire Authority, an aquaculture project with fish by the Tumwater School District, and a solar project by another school district. The backdrop for the wrap will be a picture of the wind farm.
- v. Mr. Clark shared that the Economic Alliance, which used to be the Lewis County EDC, is going to be taking a group of potential businesses, industry leaders, and manufacturers on a tour using one of Twin Transit's electric buses around the Ports, potentially down to Winlock where the Lowe's Distribution Center is going, just to give those folks and understanding of all the exciting things that are happening here in Lewis County.
- vi. Mrs. Culletto explained that this is going to put some of our leaders on one of our buses and show them what that experience is like. It is a good collaborative effort. We will give an update once that tour has been completed.
- vii. Mrs. Culletto shared that one of the drivers, Eileen Bauman, has a passenger who is now using a mobility device. Eileen went to go pick this person up and saw that they were struggling to get out of their home because they were having to navigate this mobility device on the stairs. This wasn't a good situation, and she was concerned. Eileen started asking around to see how to get this person a ramp. Eileen finally decided she was going to find a way to pay for it herself and get other team members to do the same. Eileen started chatting to Joe Clark about it and found out he is the president of the Twin Cities Rotary, and they do those kinds of projects all the time. They were able to connect this passenger with the Rotary, who also works in coordination with Love Inc and some other community organizations to build ramps. Now this passenger can get in and out of the house and navigate the mobility device. It is cool to see how much our

drivers care for our passengers and how far they'll go out of their way to make sure they are safe and have what they need.

viii. Mr. Clark added that during the ramp construction, one of the Love Inc folks noticed that the passenger's home was in disrepair. They reached out of their network and found some contractors. They sent this person over and knocked on the door. They said, "We noticed that your house needs some work, so we'd like to get some bids on these things, we'll pay for it all and put it in for you." Twin Transit's efforts led to another effort that is going to benefit this person for a long time. He was very very happy about it. This gentleman enjoyed the socialization. He was able to come out and chat with the people building the ramp.

ix. Mrs. Culletto explained that Twin Transit's strategic planning effort is revisited once per year. This time Twin Transit wanted to do a more in-depth effort from everyone in the organization. Twin Transit wants feedback from everyone, whether they work in fleet, admin, operations, or facilities. That's where some of the best ideas come from. We are going to grab a few people at a time to look at a few areas, whether it's DARTT, Fixed Route, community outreach, whatever it might be, and brainstorm ideas. There are a few ideas that will be fun and engaging. We'll take that and put it all together to make a recommendation list and then hone and refine it later.

x. Mrs. Culletto talked about how Twin Transit's travel trainer is now doing community engagement at the schools. Particularly with children who have mobility concerns or other concerns that may affect their ability to drive later in life and it has been well received across the board. This will be extended out to Reliable Enterprises, the general student body, retirement, and senior centers. There will be individual travel training as well.

e. Financial Update

i. Miss Towner stated that Twin Transit is about 2% under budget for expenditures. Twin Transit is at about 64.5% and typically Twin Transit would be around 67% spent being 8 months completed.

ii. Miss Towner highlighted the Paratransit Formula Grant funds. Twin Transit received confirmation that the funds could be split. Normally it is used for fixed-route and paratransit operating costs. However, it was able to be split between operating and capital funds to be able to cover DARTT. Twin Transit is going to split \$414,000 toward the capital budget. That will purchase 5 Pro Master vans. Twin Transit will purchase 3 now and 2 the following year to break up the cycle so they don't all have to be replaced the same year going forward. That leaves about \$264,000 for operating funds over 2 years for DARTT.

iii. Mr. Clark wanted to compliment Rebecca Towner on working collaboratively with WSDOT to understand how these funds can be used and aligning that strategy on what Twin Transit is trying to accomplish from a business perspective. She has done a great job on that.

iv. Miss Towner updated that there is a meeting with the Department of Commerce. This is to prepare a contract for the Commerce \$2.5 million funding to build the hydrogen fueling station. They sent several documents to Twin Transit. It is tedious work, but Twin Transit is getting help from the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) firm to put together a

very detailed budget and a set of milestones. Twin Transit can't invoice for reimbursement until each of those milestones has been met, so Twin Transit must be very detailed on what those are.

- v. Mr. Clark added that yesterday was the audit exit conference. Twin Transit did receive a clean audit and the State Auditor's Office made special mention of Rebecca Towner and her efforts regarding that. She was very timely with her responses, coordinating the data in a way that was easy to understand, they were very complimentary to her and Timi Johnson for doing a great job.

f. Policy Updates

- i. Mrs. Shoemaker shared that she has been revising some policies. The first policy is 305. The 300 series is the operations series, so that is where we started. The first policy is passenger relations. This one looks at how Twin Transit employees interact with our passengers and customers. In the old policy, there was a lot of language that should not have been in there because it belonged in other policies. So that language, such as passenger rules and customer complaints, are being moved out of there and will have their own policy. That will be presented in the next few meetings. Another big thing that was edited was in the previous policy it essentially said that if an illegal substance was found on the bus, it would be accounted for like any other lost and found item. This is not the case. If Twin Transit finds an illegal substance on the bus, there is a process in place. The drivers are excellent. We get dispatch on the line, we send a supervisor out, then we allow law enforcement to go ahead and take and remove the substance.
- ii. Mrs. Shoemaker stated that the next policy that was edited was 307. That is the adherence to schedule policy. That talks about the drivers remaining on schedule as it pertains to the route schedule and the route times. This also talks about what happens if something occurs such as weather or other events that cause Twin Transit to be off schedule. There is a lot of old language, a lot old transfer stations in there, language about Amtrak, that was edited to stay neutral so the policy doesn't need to be updated every time a route is changed. Flag language was removed as Twin Transit is no longer operating on a flag stop system.
- iii. Mrs. Shoemaker updated that there was an emergency response plan embedded into the old policies. That was taken out to create a new policy, which is 311. That policy talks about what the agency responsibilities are and how to respond when the community experiences a natural disaster or any other disaster. An example of that is a few years ago when Twin Transit was contacted by authorities that there was an accident with the train and the train was full of passengers. We needed to get them back into town. Twin Transit was asked to bring buses out there. It was late in the evening to bring those people back. That is just an example of how to apply that policy. It outlines that Twin Transit can assist Lewis County Response with anything they need as far as vehicles or personnel, and as a public agency there is a responsibility to assist in those times. The goal is to continue transit service, but the policy does outline that it depends on what the available resources are and what the situation is.
- iv. Rebecca Staebler asked if the illegal substances highlighted in the first policy

are just substances or if there is a place for illegal weaponry.

- v. Tony Ketchum stated from the policy that it reads illegal substances or weapons will be remitted to law enforcement authorities immediately per PRO-305B.
- vi. Ms. Lytle stated that there are no policies accessible in the building anymore. They left the building when the remodel started. Ms. Lytle asked if there is a way to get a copy of those or if there is going to be training. There have been quite a few policy changes that the drivers are not aware of.
- vii. Mr. Clark shared those policies are going to be located on the intranet which will be found on the tablets or laptops so they may be accessed from any location. There will be training on how to use the intranet and access these documents.

B. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Financial Warrants

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #29496-29560 including Capital and Operating expenditures for August 1-September 2 of 2021

i. Capital Warrants	\$ 325,208.73
ii. Operating Warrants	\$ 145,345.03
iii. Operating ACH	\$ 44,566.33
iv. Payroll ACH	\$ 148,809.36
Total	\$ 663,929.45

Secretary Ketchum moved, Chair Staebler, seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

C. Action Items

Action

1. Approval of Board Minutes

- a. Adoption of minutes from August 31, 2021, Regular Board Meeting.

Secretary Ketchum moved, Chair Staebler, seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

2. Approval of MDK Construction Phase 4 Change Order 01 for shop restroom of \$23,012.

- a. Tony Ketchum asked what is being done that wasn't included in the first bid.
- b. Mr. Clark replied that Twin Transit is adding a shop restroom. It was not included in the first bid because Twin Transit wasn't certain what the excavation and sewer connection components would entail. Once the stormwater drainage went in, Twin Transit was able to open the sewer line and get the city to approve an additional connection. The cost was significantly less than if it had to be done later.

Secretary Ketchum moved, Chair Staebler seconded. Motion passed 2-0

3. Approval of first reading of POL 305, POL 307, and POL 311.

- a. First reading of POL 305 – Passenger Rules, POL 307 – Adherence to Schedule, and POL 311 – Emergency Response Plan.

Secretary Ketchum moved, Chair Staebler, seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Adjournment

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 9:09 a.m.

The Board will adjourn into Executive Session, Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 to discuss the Director of Transit Service's annual performance review. The session is expected to last no more than 30 minutes.

The executive session adjourned at 9:39 a.m. No action to follow.

The next regular meeting is on October 27th, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL

LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
BENEFIT AREA AUTHORITY

Rebecca Staebler, Chairperson

Tony Ketchum, Secretary

Respectfully prepared by:

Rebecca Towner
Clerk of the Board