



Regular Board Meeting Minutes
August 26th, 2025
of the
LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT AREA
(LPTBA dba LEWIS COUNTY TRANSIT)

Held at the Port of Chehalis Board Room located at 321 Maurin Rd. in 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, Fleet Manager
Joey Zurfluh, Operations Manager
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager
Allen Unzelman, Lewis County Transit Attorney
Megan Wirtz CWCOC

A. Discussion Only Items

- Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.* Include adding a area about personnel
 - a. Carla Osterbe expressed concern about the removal of the Colonial Drive stop. Mr. Zurfluh explained it was relocated to Scammon Creek due to low ridership (about four riders per month). Mr. Clark noted DARTT service is available for riders needing door-to-door service and added that while the current stop lacks ADA access and shelter, the agency is working with the City on improvements, though funding is limited to annual allocations.
- Board Member Reports
- Staff Reports – Discussion
 - a. Construction Update
 - i. POC H2 Project– The groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. at the project site. A Notice to Proceed has been issued for \$2.9 million. Certain elements have been deferred until additional funding becomes available next spring. By January, we anticipate being able to fuel buses at the site. Mr. Clark

clarified that the current action relates to finalizing agreements rather than completing all financing.

1. Fastech Contract

- ii. Exit 77 – Contracts and funding are in the process of being re-appropriated. Limited work will proceed this year, with the majority of the project scheduled for next spring.
- iii. Mineral- EV Electric vehicle charging installation and related work are expected to be completed within the next month.
- iv. Exit 88 – Discussions with the Tribe are ongoing. They are currently in the process of procuring land and are not ready to utilize it at this time. Staff continue to seek suitable alternatives. The existing DOT park-and-ride is too small to accommodate buses, and amenities are located across I-5.

b. Fleet

- i. Hydrogen Bus Update- Mr. Palmateer held an update call with New Flyer. Progress is as follows: the first bus has the body installed and is being painted, the second bus is receiving flooring, and the third bus frame has been built and is currently receiving corrosion coating. An on-site visit is tentatively scheduled for October 6, when all three buses are expected to be complete. The project is proceeding as planned.
- ii. Electric Bus Update- The buses were inspected in early July and delivered in early August. A repair is needed on the wave plate, but completion has been delayed due to the assigned technician being on sick leave. Staff continue to coordinate for this repair. Charging equipment at Mellen Street has been tested and is operating as expected. Training for new hires on electric bus operations will be scheduled soon.
- iii. 4 New Cutaways- Four new cutaway vehicles have been delivered to the Portland warehouse. Preparations are underway to bring them on-site for fleet expansion.

c. Operations

- i. Operational Data Analysis- Mr. Zurfluh reported steady boardings and solid ridership on town routes. Ridership on the Brown route increased following the addition of two loops. The Green route has shown significant growth, with a 152% increase, largely due to connections to Olympia.
- ii. Fall Route Changes- Changes will take effect September 8, following public survey feedback. Key updates include:
 - 1. Restoration of full service to the Purple route and Brown East.
 - 2. Adjustment to the Yellow route (Amtrak/Chehalis) by removing the hospital loop. This change improves direct service to Amtrak without requiring a transfer to Red.
 - 3. The hospital loop has been reassigned to the Blue route.
 - 4. One stop was removed from the Orange route to maintain schedule reliability.
 - Mr. Westley asked whether employees at UNFI were using the Orange route stop that was removed.
 - Mr. Zurfluh responded that UNFI employees do not typically use the bus, and noted that another stop is located three blocks away.
 - Mr. Clark added that UNFI shifts begin 30 minutes before route service starts, which prevents alignment.
 - Mr. Zurfluh stated that if the agency receives feedback indicating the removed stop is needed, it could be reinstated.

d. HR Update

- i. Recruiting Update- Mrs. Wilson reported that several strong candidates have advanced to reference checks; however, overall recruitment has slowed. The agency continues to aim for a total of 35 Operators. She also announced that Joseph Zurfluh has accepted the Operations Manager position, leaving the Assistant Operations Manager role vacant. Recruitment for that position will begin soon.
- ii. Training/Professional Development- Mrs. Wilson noted that Sexual Harassment Training is scheduled for September 23–24. A trainer will be conducting the sessions in-house.

e. Finance

- i. Updated Revenue/Cash Flow Presentation- Miss Towner explained the most recent cash flow statement was included in the board packet. All departments are currently operating under budget. The Administration department remains under budget despite lease expenses in that section. For capital, the agency is projected to end the year with approximately \$500,000, compared to \$300,000 at the end of last year, showing steady growth in reserves.
- ii. Financing Update- The agency is continuing discussions with Holman Capital, though progress has been slow. Their bank is not yet registered as a qualified bank in Washington, and efforts are underway to complete registration. The paperwork for the proposed revolving line of credit is somewhat complex, as it must meet specific criteria. A special board meeting may be needed next month to formally approve the line of credit. Mr. Clark noted that sales tax revenue continues to increase, and the agency is aiming to build reserves sufficient to cover three months of operations.
- iii. SAO Audit- The audit is nearing completion. The exit conference is scheduled for September 9, and Mr. Westley will attend on behalf of the board. No items of concern have been raised to date.
- iv. Transit Development Plan- Mr. Clark explained that the review covers 2024 and includes a five-year forecast for sustainability and other initiatives, noting that in some cases it functions as a rolling five-year plan. He highlighted the agency's hydrogen efforts and indicated plans to expand, citing high ridership on the Brown route. Mr. Clark expressed confidence that the new Executive Director, Josh Nylander, will maintain the overall direction, and he thanked the team for completing the plan with quality and attention to detail.
 - a. Miss. Towner explained that for the coming year, the Fleet department is planning to add a new mechanic apprentice. The projected increase in personnel costs over the five-year forecast reflects the planned hiring of 28 new positions, primarily Operators, with additional hires in HR and Finance. There are also regional mobility grants supporting connections. Mr. Brummer inquired about funding sources, and Mr. Clark explained that the grants are funded through a combination of regional and rural transportation funds.
 - b. The agency has been conservatively budgeting for anticipated increases in sales tax revenue. While not relying on these increases for operational planning, any additional revenue will be supplemented with grant funding, advertising, and DARTT fares.
 - c. Total expenses in the current budget are \$7.6 million, driven primarily by personnel increases and higher fuel costs. By the end of 2030, expenses are projected to reach \$11.7 million

- d. Fleet and Capital Planning – The fleet replacement budget continues to drive the agency’s capital balance. The agency maintains funding for zero-emission initiatives and other major projects. Approximately \$300,000 per year is budgeted for bus pull-outs and ADA improvements. E-transit station projects are included in the capital plan: Exit 77 is scheduled for completion next year, and Exit 88 is projected as the final project in 2028. The agency plans to procure two hydrogen tube trailers next year. Additionally, in 2027, a Fleet and Operations Center is being considered. Federal tax credits are anticipated to support these initiatives. Mr. Clark noted that cost estimates are based on current and projected figures, and additional work is ongoing to refine these projections.

B. Review of Claims

- a. Review financial warrants #32829 -32883 including Capital and Operating expenditures for July 1-31, 2025.

i. Capital Warrants	\$	54,607.64
ii. Operating Warrants	\$	315,274.74
iii. Operating ACH	\$	181,323.22
iv. <u>Payroll ACH</u>	\$	<u>191,989.89</u>
Total	\$	743,195.49

C. Action Items

1. Approval of Board Minutes
 - a. Adoption of minutes from July 29, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.

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

2. Approval to purchase four (4) Eldorado 14-passenger cutaway buses from Schetky Northwest Sales for a total of \$727,450.95, as quoted per DES Contract #06719.

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

3. Approval of 2024 Annual Report and 2025-2037 Transit Development Plan.

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

4. Approval of Resolution No. 2025-02 declaring Lewis County Transit’s official intent to reimburse capital expenditures from proceeds of a future borrowing with a maximum principal of \$2,500,000. Mr. Brummer asked if Allen says we are good for this? Mr. Clark explained that both Allan and Foster looked at this Allen also agreed.

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

D. Old Business

1. Approval of second reading and adoption of POL 208, 210, 212, 302, and 501.
 - a. POL-208: Progressive Discipline
 - Simplified list of admissible evidence by not distinguishing between employee testimony or personal observations from “witness” testimony.
 - Added language from current CBA as it pertains to Oral Warnings: this type of discipline should be used for infractions of relatively minor degree.
 - Added language that an executive team member must be present to accelerate the disciplinary process based on the determined severity of the offense.
 - Revised language to state that progressive discipline will be used based on each and every offense, not the aggregate total of offenses.
 - b. POL-210: Employee Conduct
 - Added language to emphasize that behavior that could create a harassing or hostile work environment will not be tolerated.
 - Added new section explaining expectations for public-facing speech while on duty.
 - Revised language so that employees may only smoke in designated areas as determined by LCT.
 - Broadened language in Section 6 to include all employees authorized to operate LCT vehicles (not just CDL holders) and that employees must notify their supervisor immediately if their license status changes. Added new Section 7 for provisions specific to employees who hold a CDL license.
 - c. POL-212: Use of Employer Resources
 - Added examples related to prohibited cell phone usage under Section B which also prohibits employees from using devices while operating an agency-owned vehicle.
 - Added language stating that LPTBA has the right to inspect any and all agency-owned cell phones or equipment used by employees including voicemails, emails, test messages, etc.
 - d. POL-302: Mobilization and Daily Trip Inspections
 - Added language to include daily cleaning of the interior of the vehicle in the driver’s area and passenger cabin as part of mid-day procedures.
 - Added language that vehicle rinsing/washing will be completed according to the posted schedule and as time allows per supervisor approval.
 - e. POL-501: Purchasing
 - Added language requiring that vendors be checked with SAM.gov to ensure they are not suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participating in federal programs.
 - Updated small purchase threshold requiring a formal bid process to \$250,000 to align with FTA standards.
 - Raised the threshold for procuring personal or purchased services without a competitive bid process for projects costing less than \$250,000. This change is proposed due to an inflationary rise in professional services costs.

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

E. Adjournment

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 4:20 p.m. No action to follow.

The next regular meeting is on September 30th, 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