



Regular Board Meeting Minutes September 24th, 2024

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
Debbie Lytle, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented operator staff
Kevin Crowley, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented operator staff
Kurt Eckerson, Lewis County Transit, on behalf of the represented maintenance staff

Staff Present: Joseph Clark, Executive Director
Rebecca Towner, Director of Finance and Human Relations
Tim Palmateer, Director of Fleet & Facilities
Maleah Kuzminsky, Community Services Supervisor
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager
Sonya Byrd, Operations Supervisor
Allen Unzelman, Lewis County Transit Attorney

A. Discussion Only Items

1. Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.*
2. Board Member Reports
 - a. No board member reports at this time.
3. Staff Reports – Discussion
 - a. Construction Update
 - i. Morton e-Transit Station- Mr. Clark explained that the Morton e-Transit station is open; the only thing left to do is finish the light pole, which is scheduled to be done on 09/27/24. The transit station will be used in the Morton-Randle-Packwood (MRP) pilot starting October 1st. On October 2nd, Mr. Clark will be at the Lions Club in Mineral, speaking with Steve Mayer and his group about installing EV charging for them. Miss Towner and Mrs. Kuzminsky had already included chargers in the Charging & Fueling Infrastructure grant, which may be pivoted to fund the chargers at Mineral and help them more quickly.

- ii. Exit #77- Mr. Clark stated that LCT received the three-phase drawing of the project and that the team will be working with Experience Chehalis, other community organizations, and the County to inform them about the project's progress.
 - iii. Exit #74- Mr. Clark explained that this project is going well and that LCT has submitted grants for the construction of a bus stop/pullout at this location.
 - iv. Exit #88- Mr. Clark stated that on November 20th there will be a meeting with the Tribe in Chehalis to discuss this project in more detail.
 - v. POC H2 Facility- Mr. Clark explained that JSA Civil has pushed the final concept drawing to the City for permit; LCT will receive the comments and adjust accordingly.
 - vi. LCT Fleet and Operations Center Renderings- Mr. Clark reminded the group that in August the capital facilities team from WSDOT approached him and asked him when LCT would be submitting a grant for a new facility. With all the new Hydrogen buses, there are a lot of accommodations that need to take place, like sensors and cameras. Opposed to spending a lot of money to update the old facility, LCT will request funds to build something new in the Port of Chehalis, adjacent to the Hydrogen Fueling & Production Site. An announcement of award of the funds will not be announced until December and will likely not be available until September 2025 when contracts are signed.
 - vii. Bus Stops / Pull Outs – Harrison Ave/Reynolds Rd- Mr. Clark explained that LCT is working with the Centralia City Council on these two pull-outs; LCT is focused on Harrison because the projects on Reynolds are not far enough along.
- b. External Transit Engagement
- i. Skagit County Transit Meeting- Mr. Clark stated that part of the PNWH2 hub effort is to put in a fueling corridor along the I-5 between Vancouver and Vancouver. Skagit County Transit has expressed interest to be one of those partners. Mrs. Kuzminsky and LCT consultant Matt Potter met with them on Friday.
 - 1. Mrs. Kuzminsky further explained that two years ago, the H2 Transit Network was launched as a monthly meeting for regional transportation providers, primarily from Washington, with some participation from Oregon and Montana. The goal is to discuss challenges, equipment, and share knowledge to avoid duplicating efforts in project design and management. A recent meeting with Skagit exemplified this collaboration. With new leadership in key roles at Skagit, the meeting allowed their team to catch up on the H2 Transit project and understand what involvement in future hub efforts would require. This meeting highlighted the spirit of collaboration among transit agencies, sharing resources, and working together rather than competing.
 - ii. Grays Harbor Transit Board Presentation- Mrs. Kuzminsky explained that Grays Harbor Transit reached out to ask if LCT could present to their board, and Mr. Clark gave a presentation that has been shared with other transit agencies. The presentation covered key aspects of project design and management, and the board was very appreciative of the insights provided. They were especially grateful to hear about LCT's efforts from both a workforce and an education curriculum development perspective.

- iii. H2 in Focus Symposium- Mrs. Kuzminsky thanked Mark Westley for attending the symposium and then stated that the symposium was a great opportunity to connect with other transit partners, even though the turnout was smaller than expected. She and Mr. Clark felt that the right people were there, including representatives from FTA, WSDOT, Ecology, PNNL, the Center for Hydrogen Safety, Grays Harbor Transit, Skagit Transit, and WSDOT's regional facilities and fleet director. The panelists discussed challenges, funding opportunities, permitting, and other important topics.
- iv. Pacific NW Hydrogen Hub- Mr. Clark described that at the last HUB meeting, Fortescue had left the node and the \$175 million dollars that was earmarked for that project needed to be redistributed. April Sims, President of the WA State Labor Council, suggested that because the Hydrogen projects started in Centralia, the HUB should find someone else to go back to Centralia and do a similar project that could scale up over time. The HUB agreed to keep that as the first strategy.
 - 1. Micheal Furze from Commerce asked for a feasibility study for this project that could lay out a wider set of options for a company that wants to fill this empty space. LCT will request grant funding to complete this study.

c. Operations Update

- i. Route Change Implementation-Ms. Byrd gave an overview of the upcoming route updates, explaining that LCT is implementing the Morton to Packwood stops effective October 1st. LCT will be running to Packwood twice a day and then back, meaning that Brown line will now be going to Packwood at 7 o'clock in the morning and then returning to Packwood again at the 4 o'clock loop. LCT is also implementing the three new stops to the Green line effective the 1st of October. LCT will have two additional stops in the Grand Mound area and then one up near Flying J's off Exit 99. Finally, LCT will also be adding one additional loop to all bus routes. Instead of the last loop now starting at 6 p.m., it will start at 7 p.m. giving people one additional hour.
- ii. Mr. Clark added that the Packwood route is a pilot, and LCT will need to increase the frequency, but wants to see where the ridership comes from so the route may adjust accordingly. LCT may add an operations center in Morton to help with the increase in demand for transit in East County.

d. Fleet Update

- i. Hydrogen Bus Procurement – Mr. Palmateer explained that he was in Oklahoma working with H2 compressors and GTL Leasing, looking at the new Hyspenser compression unit. It is a new product that incorporates a compressor with infrared reading to get data from the vehicle that it is fueling to help efficacy. He attended multiple training sessions on how to fuel different vehicles using this device.
 - 1. This unit will connect to an Airgas container and will compress it and dispense it in the bus. The gas can also be taken from a tube trailer and then dispensed into an in-ground storage unit. This will help with fueling times to be as low as 12 minutes per bus.
 - 2. Mark Westley asked if LCT was going to get Hydrogen out of Clark County or Douglas County. Mr. Clark answered that the building in

Douglas County wasn't coming along as fast as they thought it would and that if LCT gets Hydrogen in Kalama, they can only fill it at 185 BARG. Mark then asked if the distance was the same, and Mr. Clark said no, Kalama is only 30 miles away, and Douglas is 160.

- ii. Mr. Palmateer stated that we have submitted all of our contract documents for approval from WSDOT and are requesting approval for the last three hydrogen buses by the Board.
- e. Communications Update
- i. Community Events- Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that LCT was part of several events, including the Packwood Senior Center Luncheon, several travel trainings, and the Hydrogen in Focus event. Upcoming events include the Onalaska Apple Festival and Trick-or-Treat Transit.
 - 1. The travel training program has really kicked off for the fall; Onalaska, Winlock, and Toledo are scheduled for next week to do travel training with their school districts.
 - ii. Grants
 - 1. Governor's Budget- Mr. Clark explained that the Governor's budget includes an OFM grant submission for approximately \$8.6 million to expand and complete the hydrogen facility. This expansion is in response to growing demand from various transit agencies for more hydrogen, sooner than initially anticipated. The plan is to increase the facility's capacity to 3 megawatts, which can potentially be achieved during the current construction cycle if vendors are able to meet the timeline.
 - 2. One of the key drivers of this expansion is the interest from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Ernie Sims, WSDOT's Facilities and Fleet Director, manages 10,000 rolling assets, including vehicles like snowplows and PUD trucks, which are essential for immediate use and cannot rely on electric charging. They are eager to utilize hydrogen for these heavy-duty vehicles, fueling excitement and increased interest in the project.
 - 3. Green Transportation- Mrs. Kuzminsky stated that two applications were submitted under the Green Transportation Program. Those were due on the 12th of this month. LCT asked for funding for two new transit stations, one for the Port of Chehalis and one for Exit 88. LCT also asked for seven bus pullouts to be used in transit operations. These will be located in the Centralia region to really serve the expansion that is being seen in North Centralia, which is a region that LCT hasn't fully served for the past two years.
 - 4. Consolidated – Mrs. Kuzminsky shared that LCT submitted two grants under WSDOT's Consolidated program. An operating request was submitted for the TOWN route as a pilot to see where the needs are in those communities. LCT also asked for capital funding for four cutaway buses and associated maintenance equipment.
 - 5. Bus and Bus Facilities- Mrs. Kuzminsky explained how LCT will be going after these funds for a new facility to accommodate hydrogen fueling as the agency grows. It is typical to ask two or

three times before this funding is awarded for a transit facility. However, LCT will also present the project as a research and development facility that supports internships that utilize microgrids with solar integration.

6. Mark Westley asked if there is a way to integrate the two with this new facility and the building of the REVIT program. Mr. Clark answered that this new facility has integrated the support of internships for the vehicle maintenance side and the hydrogen facility side well. LCT will work with local colleges and high schools for summer internships for two weeks, during which they can focus on their interests. Mr. Clark also stated that with the solar at the facility, there will be large megapacks of power that can be relocated to help in case of a natural disaster.

f. HR Update

- i. New Staff- Mrs. Wilson shared that there had been one new hire this past month. Martin Hendrickson joined the team as an operator, and he has over 20 years of transit experience.
 1. Mark asked if he was assigned to a new route and Mrs. Wilson explained that Martin is still in training at the moment.
 2. Mr. Ketchum asked if we had partnered with Fort Lewis to hire veterans. Mr. Clark answered that we haven't played that much of an active role, but now that Mrs. Wilson is here, we are looking into it.

g. Finance

- i. Updated Revenue/Cash Flow Presentation- Miss. Towner explained that, including the REVIT expense, LCT is still 3% over budget for being this far in the year; disregarding the REVIT expenses because they are fully funded by grants, LCT is only 1.5% over budget. The two departments with watch categories are Fleet and Admin, specifically fuel, and insurance costs, which are driving the overages. This is primarily due to the fact that LCT has added a few assets, like vehicles and rental properties. Capital activities for the month include the million-dollar payment for hydrogen fueling station equipment; LCT received a \$752,000 reimbursement from Commerce to cover a partial amount of that payment. There will be another million-dollar payment due by the end of the year.
- ii. Financing Research Update—Miss Towner explained that to help cover the second million-dollar payment, she and Mr. Clark met with the Lewis County Treasurer's office to pursue financing. LCT only collects sales tax, so was not eligible through the State Treasurer's office because they only accept property tax as the repayment of their loans. A \$3 million loan is still preferred. Mr. Clark reminded the room that on the capital side, LCT has been awarded \$19 million for this biennium. This financing is a line of credit to level cash flow while grant reimbursements are processed.
 1. Miss. Towner stated that LCT still has the option of issuing a general obligation bond as was done in 2019 for \$1.5 million.

- iii. 2023 SAO Audit Update- Miss Towner shared that LCT had the cleanest audit since she has been with the agency, and the audit only took one and a half months. There were no major comments or suggestions from the audit.

B. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Financial Warrants

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #32055-32111, including Capital and Operating expenditures for August 1-31, 2024.

i. Capital Warrants	\$	484,938.69
ii. Operating Warrants	\$	246,620.90
iii. Operating ACH	\$	124,575.03
iv. Payroll ACH	\$	190,636.97
Total	\$	1,046,771.59

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

D. Action Items

- 1. Approval of Board Minutes Action
 - a. Adoption of minutes from August 27th, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chairperson Westley seconded, motion passed 3-0

- 2. Approval of New Flyer of America Inc. purchase order in the amount of \$4,391,916.00 for the procurement of three hydrogen fuel-cell transit buses.

Mr. Clark stated that the delivery date of the buses was October 2025. Miss Towner explained that payment will be 80% due when New Flyer ships the bus and then 20% after acceptance.

Vice Chair Brummer moved, Chairperson Westley seconded, motion passed 3-0

E. Executive Session

The Chair announced that the Board, Mr. Clark, Miss Towner, and Mrs. Wilson will adjourn into Executive Session, Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), for the purpose of discussing the Director of Transit Service’s annual performance review. The session is expected to last no more than 45 minutes.

Adjournment

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 4:20 p.m.
The Executive Session adjourned at 5:00 p.m. No action to follow.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 29, 2024 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