



## Regular Board Meeting Minutes November 26<sup>th</sup>, 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.*

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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  
Mrs. Maleah Kuzminsky, Community Services Supervisor  
Makenzie Wilson, HR Manager  
Allen Unzelman, Twin Transit Attorney  
Joel Hansen from Ameresco  
Megan Writz, CWCOG

### A. Discussion Only Items

1. Call to the Public – *Public discussion on any item not listed on the agenda.*
2. Board Member Reports
  - a. December Board Meeting – A virtual board meeting will be held in early December to request approval of the PNWHA subrecipient agreement and cost share letter.
3. Staff Reports – Discussion
  - a. Construction Update
    - i. Exit #88 – Park-and-Ride Project- Mr. Westley and Mr. Clark met with the Chehalis Tribe on November 20th to discuss plans for a park-and-ride facility. The Tribe expressed strong interest in collaborating on the project. Discussions with a local hotel revealed significant growth in the area, suggesting the facility would be more effective if moved closer to this growth zone. Quarterly meetings with the Tribe will be scheduled to plan and monitor progress.
  - b. External Transit Engagement
    - i. Pacific NW Hydrogen Hub- A sub-recipient agreement and cost-sharing agreement were discussed, with \$6.8 million requested from the state. This funding will support the expansion of Lewis County Transit’s hydrogen

facility, enabling the sale of excess hydrogen produced. While Lewis County Transit aims not to compete with other facilities as they come online, the facility's proximity to the market makes this a logical move.

1. Discussion- Mr. Westley inquired whether taxes would apply to hydrogen fuel sales and, if so, whether the tax revenue would return to the agency. Mr. Clark responded that, while no taxes currently apply, it is expected that something may develop over time. For now, no costs related to sales tax are anticipated to affect operational expenses.
- ii. WSTA in Spokane-Attendees expressed excitement about WSTA's strategy. The consensus is to maintain focus on the current trajectory.

c. Fleet Update

- i. Cutaway Bus Update- Mr. Palmateer explained that the most recent cutaway bus was received at the end of September and officially launched during the Trick-or-Treat Transit event. The bus has since been incorporated into the active routes.
- ii. Hy-Spenser Unit Delivery- Mr. Palmateer stated that the Hy-Spenser unit is scheduled to ship on December 2nd, with delivery expected on either December 4th or 5th.

d. Communications Update

- i. H2 Transit Network- Mrs. Kuzminsky explained that plans are underway to organize a call with hydrogen partners to discuss updates on the network.
  1. Guest Presenters – Representatives from the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Association (PNWHA) provided insights on the timing and financial aspects of building a hydrogen facility. Gary Ivory from DCPUD shared issues with their facility and provided additional information on hydrogen developments.
  2. Transportation Committee Partnerships- The team is collaborating with the Hydrogen Alliance to form a committee focused on hydrogen. This committee will help prepare documents for the federal government to support smaller agencies in the region working with hydrogen technologies.
  3. Transition to RHA-The responsibility for managing the Hydrogen Transit Network is being transitioned to the Renewable Hydrogen Alliance (RHA) because it is no longer sustainable for Lewis County Transit staff; this transition will start in early 2025.
- ii. Consolidated Proposals Ranking Interviews December 12<sup>th</sup>- Mrs. Kuzminsky stated that two proposals were reviewed, focusing on operating costs and the equipment request. The proposals include a request for four cutaway buses and a lift to work on cameras. It was noted that renting a lift has become increasingly cost-prohibitive, making the purchase of a lift a more cost-effective option.
- iii. Community Events
  1. Trick-or-Treat Transit-The event provided a great opportunity for the community to come together, with approximately 400 people, including families and children, attending. The event featured an improved layout that allowed families to engage and learn more about transit services.

2. H2 Con-Fab at Intercity – November 12th (9:30 – 11:30 AM)-The event offered a chance for participants to discuss collective hydrogen efforts and ask questions about the Toyota Mirai vehicles.
  3. Discussion with PSE- Mr. Clark was invited by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to speak with their power planners and engineers. The focus of the discussion was how hydrogen-powered buses could discharge power to run facilities. The conversation was highly intellectual, exploring the potential impacts on the grid and related systems.
  4. December Events Schedule
    - i. Chehalis Santa Parade (December 7th)-The Chehalis Santa Parade will take place as part of the holiday festivities.
    - ii. Centralia Lighted Tractor Parade (December 14th)- The Centralia Lighted Tractor Parade will be held on December 14th, offering a festive display.
    - iii. The Borst Lights Tour-Lewis County Transit will be running a shuttle to transport attendees through the Borst Lights Tour, allowing visitors to enjoy the holiday lights.
      1. Mr. Westley - what are the hours that people can go to Mellen Street?
        - a. Mrs. Kuzminsky stated that 4:50 PM and 5:50 PM is when they can board the bus.
      2. Mr. Westley - Will the hydrogen buses will be used for the parade?
        - a. Mr. Palmateer stated that one cutaway will be used for the Santa Parade and then the lighted tractor will use the hydrogen bus.
- e. HR Update
- i. New Staff- Mrs. Wilson explained that we will have one new operator named Chase Walker starting Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>. He currently doesn't have a CDL but Lewis County Transit will provide the training.
  - ii. Performance Evaluations/Goal-Setting- Mrs. Wilson stated that we are almost done with all of the performance evaluations for 2024 and that the admin team was able to get some great insight on goals for 2025. Mrs. Wilson will meet with everyone to set SMART goals for 2025 based on those evaluations.
  - iii. Admin Retreat-Sara and Rafael with Copper Strategies- Mrs. Wilson explained that the facility occurred the Saturday before this meeting and there were all 13 admin members in attendance. Everyone enjoyed themselves and learned a lot, there were a lot of good questions and a lot of teamwork. Mr. Clark stated that this retreat was part of the transition plan that he had previously spoken to the board about.
- f. Finance
- i. Updated Revenue/Cash Flow Presentation- Miss Towner explained that Insurance costs are slightly over budget but remain below the pool average

in terms of percentage increase. Recent PTO cashouts and ongoing fuel expenses continue to strain the budget, though grant funding helps cover these additional costs. Excluding REVIT-related expenses, Lewis County Transit is just over 1% above budget; with REVIT included, Lewis County Transit is 3% over, though these expenses are fully grant-funded. Mr. Clark also highlighted the implementation of an exploratory and preparatory course this year to support operational improvements.

- ii. Miss Towner stated that on the capital side, a detailed budget vs. actual report will be given in January for the Morton e-Transit Station. Mr. Clark explained that the project was slightly over budget due to the need to source WSDOT-certified dirt externally, as on-site dirt could not be used.
- iii. Mr. Palmateer already provided an update on the cutaway bus, which was funded through a grant with a zero-match requirement.
- iv. 16<sup>th</sup> and Market Project- Mr. Clark explained that the project experienced a cost adjustment, increasing from \$50,000 to approximately \$70,000. The change was due to the removal and replacement of a storm drain. Reverting the project would have incurred higher costs, so the necessary updates were made to move forward.
- v. Miss Towner explained that Lewis County Transit might need to transfer \$100,000 from operations to capital to bring it to a positive balance at year-end; however, Lewis County Transit is still in negotiations with Washington State Commerce for the Community Decarbonization grant that includes the trailer and solar array. Once the contract is executed, approximately \$130,000 will be available to claim against the grant immediately.
- vi. Union Negotiations- Miss. Towner explained that the union negotiations resulted in the adoption of a 5%/4%/4% model with wage increases. An opener has been established to allow future negotiations on wage adjustments, with the agency emphasizing its willingness to base discussions on growth rates and financial indicators. Mr. Clark highlighted that the bargaining approach focused on improving the employees' work environment, ensuring they have a positive workplace culture, adequate uniforms, and other resources to support their well-being and job satisfaction.

**B. Consent Agenda**

1. Approval of Financial Warrants

- a. Request to approve financial warrants #32147-32238, including Capital and Operating expenditures for October 1-31, 2024.

i. Capital Warrants	\$	196,704.82
ii. Operating Warrants	\$	388,863.57
iii. Operating ACH	\$	156,975.24
iv. <u>Payroll ACH</u>	\$	<u>189,184.19</u>
Total	\$	931,727.82

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

## D. Action Items

1. Approval of Board Minutes Action
  - a. Adoption of minutes from October 29th, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

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

2. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding between Lewis County Transit and the Economic Alliance of Lewis County expressing mutual support of the Mineral Mobility Hub project and affirmation of their intent to use and administer the funding awarded through their respective grants toward this project.
  - a. Mr. Brummer asked if there would be any conflict of interest that I am on the Economic Alliance Board?
    - i. Mr. Unzelman stated that he didn't see any conflict.

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

3. Discussion and possible action to ratify the 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement between Lewis County Transit and Teamsters Local #252.

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

4. Mr. Hansen discussed the Ameresco contract, noting that the company is the largest energy provider working to improve energy efficiency for other companies. They are also involved in building large-scale wind and solar projects in response to the growing realization that hydropower alone is insufficient to meet future energy needs.
  - a. Mr. Brummer inquired if Ameresco has a broad base of solar and hydrogen projects. Mr. Clark confirmed that Ameresco has natural gas facilities in New Mexico and dams in Alaska, in addition to their solar and hydrogen initiatives.
  - b. Mr. Brummer asked if the 160-day contract timeline was feasible. Mr. Clark responded that the work is flat, meaning it should progress quickly and within the expected timeframe.

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

## E. New Business

### 1. Approve second reading and adoption of POL-314.

- a. POL-314: Conditions for Change of an Operator Job Assignment
  - New policy as a result of Union negotiations; to be referenced in 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement.
  - Acknowledges Lewis County Transit's right to assign Operators to different routes or job assignments based on the following criteria: OTP performance, policy/procedure violation, creation of an unsafe situation, and physical demands of the job.
  - Creation of new procedures for the analysis of OTP performance and the decision-making process and documentation of change in an operator job assignment based on the above criteria.

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

**Adjournment**

The Board recessed the regular meeting at 4:17 p.m. No action to follow.

The Chair announced that the Board would enter the Executive Session, 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 session is expected to last no more than 30 minutes.

The Executive Session adjourned at 4:32 p.m. No action to follow.

APPROVAL

LEWIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT  
AREA AUTHORITY

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Mark Westley, Chairperson

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Scott Brummer, Vice Chairperson

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Tony Ketchum, Secretary

Respectfully prepared by:

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Makenzie Wilson