



Minutes

Agenda

Cowlitz Transit Authority

*Dennis Weber (Chair), Chet Makinster (Vice Chair),
Lisa Alexander, Jeffrey McAllister,
Anthony Harris (Nonvoting), Nancy Malone (Alternate)
Arne Mortensen (Alternate), Mike Wallin,
MaryAlice Wallis (Alternate)*

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

4:00 PM

Longview Council Chambers
1525 Broadway St, Longview

The City Hall is accessible for persons with disabilities. Special equipment to assist the hearing impaired is also available. Please contact the City Executive Offices at 360.442.5004 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting.

1. EMERGENCY MEETING - CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Weber called the emergency meeting to order, in accordance with RCW 42.30.070, at 4:00 p.m. He stated the emergency was created by the COVID-19 virus and its impact on services, riders, and staff.

2. ROLL CALL

Present in person: Member Dennis Weber

Present by phone/voting: Member Chet Makinster, Member Jeffrey McAllister, Member Mike Wallin, Member Lisa Alexander

Present by phone/non-voting: Member (Alternate) MaryAlice Wallace, Member (Alternate) Nancy Malone

Absent: Member (Non-voting) Anthony Harris

Staff Present in person: Amy Asher, Transit Manager; Frank Randolph, General Counsel; Elizabeth Halili, Clerk of the Board

Staff Present by phone: Ken Hash, Public Works Director; Betsy Despain, Paratransit

3. DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION ON RESOLUTION NO 2020-01 DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Dennis Weber and Amy Asher presented Resolution No. 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency to the Board:

- COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on ridership. Fixed Route ridership is down approximately 50% and paratransit ridership is down approximately 70%.
- Transit is an essential service. The need for transit services remains, especially for people needing to get to work;
- Staff has adjusted schedules to meet remaining demand in a fair and economical matter;
- Resolution 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency has been reviewed and approved by Legal Counsel;
- The future impact of the virus and the response remains uncertain. Staff recommends that the Board approve Resolution No. 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency authorizing the Transit Manager to take action to ensure the health and safety of employees and the public.

Board Discussion of proposed Resolution No. 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency:

Member McAllister requested weekly updates by email to the Board members regarding service changes. These updates will also assist the Board with determining whether the emergency powers granted to the Transit Manager are still necessary. The Transit Manager agreed to this request.

A discussion followed that the public must be kept informed as services change to reflect changing demand and resources. Weber advised that Emergency Management Service has a public affairs officer who could assist. The Transit Manager reported that notices were being posted in shelters and on buses. In addition, front seating areas have been chained off on Fixed Route buses in an effort to distance operators from passengers and other efforts are being made to maintain proper social distancing within the buses. All Transit Center lobby seating has been removed. Changes in service notices will be made to allow the public as much notice as possible, so that they may plan accordingly.

On a motion from Wallin, seconded by Makinster, the Cowlitz Transit Authority approved Resolution 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency granting the Transit Manager, effective immediately, authorization to:

- Modify existing transit and paratransit service as deemed necessary to ridership demands and the needs of the public with the direction to give as much notice to the public as practicable;
- Amend and modify fare collections in the interest of preserving public and employee health and safety;
- Suspend any other policies or standard practices to the extent necessary to preserve the safety of our staff, riders, and the community at large;
- Waive the competitive bidding requirements of RiverCities Transit purchase of essential materials, supplies, and public works required to operate the transit system, and the Transit Manager is directed and authorized to take all necessary and appropriate steps to ensure uninterrupted operation of the Public Transportation Benefit Area ("PTBA") systems.;
- The foregoing authority extends for the duration of the emergency, or until the Board withdraws such authority; and the Board directs the Transit Manager to provide regular updates regarding the state of the emergency and an accounting of emergency expenditures and responses, no less frequently than monthly.

The motion carried with the following votes:

Ayes: Members Weber, Makinster, Wallin, and McAllister

Nays: Member Alexander

20-000180 Summary Statement - Resolution 2020 Declaration of Emergency

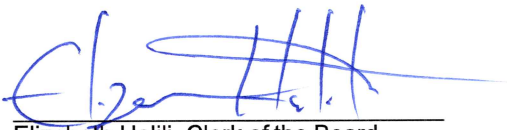
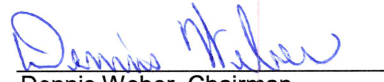
20-000181 Resolution 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency

20-000182 March 2020 Fixed Route Ridership Report

20-000183 March 2020 Paratransit Ridership Report

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:21 p.m.


Elizabeth Halili, Clerk of the Board
Dennis Weber, Chairman

Cowlitz Transit Authority



Agenda Summary

RESOLUTION 2020 – 01 Declaration of Emergency

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Cowlitz Transit Authority bylaws state that the CTA shall be responsible for establishing and monitoring the policies, budgeting, and service levels of RiverCities Transit. The COVID-19 situation is significantly impacting ridership with 50% reductions on Fixed Route and 70% reductions on Paratransit ridership. It is imperative that the Transit Manager be empowered to manage both regular and paratransit service levels to protect the safety and welfare of its employees and the general public. Staff recommend that the Cowlitz Transit Authority Board immediately grant the Transit Manager authorization to:

- Modify existing transit and paratransit service as deemed necessary;
- Amend and modify fare collections;
- Suspend any other policies or standard practices to the extent necessary to preserve the safety of staff, riders, and the community at large;
- Waive the competitive bidding requirements for RiverCities Transit procurement practices;
- Maintain this authorization for the duration of the emergency or until the Board withdraws such authority.

BUDGET:

Loss of fare revenue is estimated at \$6,800 after accounting for ridership loss. There will be some revenue savings as a result of the significantly reduced LIFT trips provided by our contractor, Paratransit Services, Inc. Additional revenue will be saved as a result of eliminating the use of some vehicles.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Motion to approve Resolution 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency

Attachments:

Resolution 2020-01 Declaration of Emergency

March 2020 Fixed Route Ridership.pdf

March 2020 Paratransit Ridership.pdf

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-01

A RESOLUTION of the Board of Directors of the Cowlitz Transit Authority authorizing the Transit Manager to take action to ensure the health and safety of employees and the public.

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020 the United States Department of Public Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public emergency for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) commencing January 27, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020 Governor Jay Inslee signed a Proclamation declaring a State of Emergency exists in all counties in the State of Washington due to the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and directed that the plans and procedures of the Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan be implemented; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020 the Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners declared a countywide state of emergency related to the significant health threat caused by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020 Washington state Governor Jay Inslee issued an executive order, pursuant to his emergency powers as governor, for all non-essential workers to stay at home with the following exceptions:

- Workers who support food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, such as those residing in shelters.
- Mass transit workers;
- Employees who repair and maintain vehicles, aircraft, rail equipment, marine vessels, and the equipment and infrastructure that enables operations that encompass movement of cargo and passengers;
- Workers at operations centers necessary to maintain other essential functions; and

WHEREAS, RiverCities Transit provides an essential public service that is critical to public health, safety, and the local economy; and

WHEREAS, RiverCities Transit's employees are its most important asset and RiverCities Transit is not able to perform its essential public service without employees who are ready and available to perform their job duties; and

WHEREAS, RiverCities Transit has experienced significant decreases in ridership and recognizes that the COVID-19 situation is rapidly changing and it is imperative that the Transit Manager be empowered to manage both regular and paratransit service levels to protect the safety and welfare of its employees and the general public;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, effective immediately, the Transit Manager is hereby authorized to, within applicable emergency powers of the State of Washington

- Modify existing transit and paratransit service as deemed necessary to ridership demands and the needs of the public with the direction to give as much notice to the public as practicable.
- Amend and modify fare collections in the interest of preserving public and employee health

and safety.

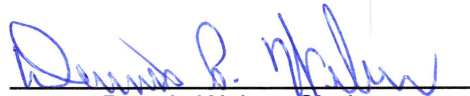
- Suspend any other policies or standard practices to the extent necessary to preserve the safety of our staff, riders and the community at large.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, pursuant to, and as authorized by RCW 36.57A.110, RCW 38.52.070(2), and the laws of the United States; the Transit Manager is hereby authorized to waive the competitive bidding requirements for RiverCities Transit's purchase of essential materials, supplies, and public works required to operate the transit system, and the Transit Manager is directed and authorized to take all necessary and appropriate steps to ensure uninterrupted operation of the Public Transportation Benefit Area ("PTBA") systems.

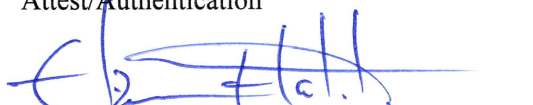
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the foregoing authority extends for the duration of the emergency, or until the Board withdraws such authority; and the Board directs the Transit Manager to provide regular updates regarding the state of the emergency and an accounting of emergency expenditures and responses, no less frequently than monthly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution is not intended to establish a precedent for how similar emergency situations will be addressed in the future.

ADOPTED at an open public meeting of the Board of Directors of the Cowlitz Transit Authority on March 24, 2020.


Dennis Weber, Chair

Attest/Authentication


Elizabeth Halili, Administrative Secretary

Approved as to form:

Frank F. Randolph, General Counsel