

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
COLUMBIA COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
April 14, 2022**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**

Columbia County Public Transportation regular board Meeting Minutes April 14, 2022

Chairman Amerein opened the meeting at 4:00 PM. Those present were Board Members, Rundell, Weatherford Deadloff and Hall.

Staff present: Finance Manager Steve Mertens, General Manager David Ocampo (Via Zoom), Lead Dispatcher Megan Schmidt, Kellie Skeeter Customer Service Rep.,

Others – None

Absent: None

**B. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

Amerein asked if there were changes to the agenda, there were none, Hall moved to approve the agenda as presented, Weatherford second, all in favor.

**C. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

1) December 16<sup>th</sup> 2021 and February 10, 2022– Hall moved to approve the minutes, Rundell seconded, all in favor.

**D. FINANCE REPORT**

1. *Treasurer Report* – Steve presented the March 2022 treasurer report as well as a financial summary. He noted the agency's current fund balance of \$1,271,981 at year end and some basic financial activity and estimates.

2. Steve reviewed a budget to actual of revenues and expenses. He discussed some items that appeared somewhat off from budget such as grant funding received that was previously expected to be received in the prior year and expenses that appear a bit higher than budgeted. In all financial activity looks close to on track as expected.

**E. General Manager Report**

1. *Bonus discussion for employee recruitment and retention* – David discussed the search for new operators. He would like them to spend a day in a ride along to make sure the job is something they would like to do before going thru the training process. In an effort to entice, retain, and recruit employees via a bonus program similar to what other agencies have implemented. The program could require individuals to complete the CDL. Chuck asked for board input. Hall asked the question where

the money for it is but noted it is hard to get employee, Weatherford indicated he is all for looking into it, the other commissioners agreed. Steve noted that in the short term we have additional available grant funding in this biennium to pay for such a program. Management was given direction to come up with and present a program.

*2. Eligible Grants and Supplemental funds* – David explained that as part of move ahead Washington WSDOT has awarded additional grant funding to transits, including an award to purchase a facility and expansion. There is still details such as match requirements to be determined. Another grant is a supplement to our rural mobility grants totaling about \$190,000 thru June 2025. But part of that comes with a string attached of requiring a fare free policy for 18 and younger by October 1, 2022. A good portion of our ridership is students. David is of the opinion we should implement it to receive the funds. Chuck asked what the catch is, David said his review of the legal documents he did not see anything beyond the fare free under 18 requirement. Chuck noted that in the political landscape there is a push to make combustion free only engines in Washington State and wondered if that was something that may included or a future requirement. As of now that does not seem to be a requirement of the funding. David also suggested a reduction to or if the board would rather a complete elimination of fares for all to provide some relief to those individuals as well. Rundell and Weatherford indicated they thought management should go for it. Hall asked what roughly the fares loss would be and Steve indicated about \$50,000 annually if all fares were eliminated so less than that if only 18 and under were eliminated. The board directed Management to draft a policy.

*3. Safety Star Awards (5<sup>th</sup> in a row)* – David explained the 5<sup>th</sup> safety star award is first time among all agencies. It comes with a \$1,500 award to be used on employees as a gift or ceremony. David asked the board if they are ok with again allowing the employees to pick an activity to do.

*4. Employee application reviews* - Discussed with bonus discussions

*5. Gravel repair on Chandler Rd.* – Property owned by Greg Fullerton has been utilized as a turn around for buses per a previous verbal agreement with Mr. Fullerton. He has requested financial help to repair this spot. After reviewing this management agreed that such financial help would be fair. Going forward we would probably use Valley View driveway as it has since been improved. David asked for the board's opinion on this. Chuck indicated that a use agreement vs. an easement might be a better option as the easement may cede the property. Steve noted concern of the appearance of gifting of public funds when paying of this, and it was explained that we would make the repair instead of giving him money. The board directed management to enter into a use agreement for this spot and repair this spot as needed.

## **F. Committee Report**

*None*

## **G. Unfinished Business**

1. *Hazard Pay COVID time (possible action item)* – David explained masks have been extended to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. David suggested the board extend COVID pay until the next board meeting. Marty asked if it is in the budget. Steve noted in the current biennium it is. Weatherford moved to extend Hazard pay until the next meeting, Rundell seconded, all in favor.

**H. New Business**

1. *Credit Card Updated policy (possible action item)* – Megan presented the agency's updated credit card policy pointing out the policy was reworded and included a step by step process and use procedure. Hall moved to approve the revised policy, Weatherford seconded, all in favor.

**J. OPEN FORUM**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Amerein asked for motion to adjourn the meeting Hall moved, Rundell second at 4:56 all in favor.

Submitted By:



**Steve Mertens**

**Accountant**

**Transportation Authority Board**

Approved:



**Charles Amerein**

**Transportation Authority Board-**

