

**Summary Minutes
Advisory Committee
County Connection
Zoom Meeting
Tuesday September 28, 2021**

Members: Marjorie McWee, Wayne Mortensen

Staff: Rashida Kamara, Bill Churchill, Ruby Horta, Melody Reeb

Public: Roger Acuna (Independent Living), Johanna Duran (Transdev General Manager)

1. Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 1:01 PM

2. Roll Call

(See Attendance Sheet No Quorum established)

3. Approval of Agenda:

Passed on approval due to no quorum.

4. Approval of minutes of May 11, 2021:

The minutes were approved as presented by Marji McWee.

5. Public Comment:

None

6. Consent Calendar:

None

7. Member Update

New Member – Richard Campagna-Danville (Absent)

Reappointed Member – Marjorie McWee: Ms. McWee reminded everyone that she has renewed her term of two years.

Ms. Kamara gave an update on the Membership roster. Andrew Fontan is the alternate for Pleasant Hill. Adrian Byram for the City of Walnut Creek has resigned. Spoke to City of Walnut Creek and the city confirmed would have a nomination possibly for November Meeting. Ms. McWee said she had ideas as she reviewed by-laws on being more tactical on our selections.

8. Chair and Vice Chair Selection (If Quorum is met)-Review of By-laws*:

No Quorum.

9. Clipper Mobile App:

Ms. Reeb updated on the app. Since our last meeting the clipper app has been launched on both google and apple pay, which allows users to pay their fare using their smart phone, instead of needing a plastic clipper card. The app also provides some trip planning tools. MTC has also started a regional marketing campaign, with locally focused outreach as riders return to transit. One of the key benefits, allow riders to add value which is immediately available for them to use on their phone. Especially useful for low-income riders who cannot afford to put a lot of money on their card or use auto-load. The three key markets identified in using the apps are, youth riders with discounted youth fare, commuters that return to offices, and low-income riders. Ms. McWee commented that a few times she has gone across multiple transit agencies. Even though she had a value on her card it didn't get refreshed right away, even if you put \$50.00 on it and were in Marin, not having fare easily refreshed can be frustrating. So, this is a benefit.

10. San Ramon Valley Unified School District Transition Program-Midday Free Request:

Ms. Horta gave an update. The September board meeting approved this item. This allowed the program at San Ramon Valley high school to take advantage of this program for youths as they transition to adulthood. Board approved discounted fare till end of school year, while staff puts together a policy in which this program can be used for other school districts and in the region. Ms. McWee asked if this was for specific type of students. Mr. Horta said yes, a program for students with disabilities so they can transition when they leave high school. Ms. McWee asked if they receive travel training and Ms. Horta confirmed that they did.

11. Clipper START & Youth Fare Pilot Extension:

Ms. Reeb gave an update on both pilot programs. This January we launched two discount fare programs. Low-income adults and youths. Both discounts only available on clipper provides a 20% discount off adult clipper fare for single rides. Both set to expire January of next year but given the overall impact of COVID on ridership demand, the board approved an 18-month extension of both programs through June 2023. This will allow more time for ridership to recover and providing a more accurate and complete picture of clipper usage and allow staff to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the two programs. Staff does not anticipate the extension will result in loss of revenue beyond our original estimate of \$300,000 which we planned to cover with stimulus funds.

12. Return to Transit Outreach Efforts:

Ms. Horta gave an update on the Return to Transit outreach efforts. Since the start of pandemic, County Connection's lobby has been closed. We decided to pilot mobile lobby where customer service staff served the public in the community. It started in July of this year. We went to BART stations, senior centers, VA Clinic, and farmers markets. We were able to serve 100 more residents than we did in July 2019, when lobby was last open, so we intend to continue this service in the foreseeable future. Additionally, since

schools have now opened to in-person learning, we went out to schools to promote youth clipper and answer questions for parents especially on the 600 series. We also partnered with MTC to promote return transit this fall. BART offered 50% off clipper fares, and we offered free rides along with other transit agencies including Tri-Delta, LAVTA and WestCat. Once promotion ends, we will continue efforts to promote clipper for low-income and clipper youth. Ms. McWee had a couple of ideas. She noticed a few people trying to get to medical centers like Shadelands, like Route 1. She loves the pop-up idea; we need to go out more. She suggested one at Safeway at Rossmore, the medical centers at Shadelands and at DVC. Mr. Mortensen said he was at the VA twice a month, he doesn't see people getting on or off the bus. Vets need to ride the bus, especially after they have received anesthesia. He said the buses come and leave but he doesn't see many getting on and off, so it doesn't seem to be serving a purpose. Ms. McWee added that a few years ago, at Kaiser Martinez, to get on bus and go that way took whole day for hour long appointment. If coming from Concord BART it took less time but from central county it truly was absurd. She is guessing people are taking ride share. She would love to see better service at that location.

13. Fixed Route Ridership and Clipper Report: April, May and June 2021

Ms. Reeb gave an update on the Monthly Ridership and Clipper Usage report for April, May and June. Ridership has grown significantly as riders return to activities. There is a high percentage of clipper usage, $\frac{3}{4}$ paying fare using the clipper, especially youth discount and free ride program. Ms. Mcwee wanted to know what July and August look like and September. Ms. Reeb said yes, increase especially since September free ride. Weekend ridership growing faster on weekend. Youth ridership, especially 600 series has returned faster than rest of ridership which is a good sign. Ms. McWee also said there was an increase in metrics of missed trips. What does that mean? Ms. Reeb said that has to do with increase in operator of operator shortage. Mr. Churchill confirmed nationwide driver shortage. Not as bad as neighboring agencies, like AC Transit 120 operator short. We are all competing in same pool for drivers. Missed trips are routes we are unable to meet. Usually when bus breaks down or driver doesn't show up, but now it's a direct result of labor shortage. Ms. McWee asked if drivers were unionized. Mr. Churchill confirmed they are with both fixed route and paratransit. She also asked about vaccination challenges. Mr. Churchill said our rate of adoption is relatively high compared to other agencies. We are about 70%, some agencies are around 50%. We are not sure what will result from Biden's mandate but we are waiting for Federal OSHA to release guidelines.

14. Paratransit Monthly Report:

Ms. Kamara gave an update on Paratransit Service. April represents a full year since the covid pandemic started. Last April, we saw a full month of our paratransit decrease due to the pandemic. Service is on an upward trend. Revenue hours line 12 shows an increase. June will be first month of shared service. April over April still shows one passenger in the vehicle at a time. Line 22 shares On-time performance is high. Standard is 90%, during covid is high. Complaints went up by two probably due to timeliness. Ms.

Mcwee wanted an update on service programs. Ms. Kamara stated we are still doing EOC trips, no COVID positive trips, but still doing meals on wheels. We are also still doing the One Seat Pilot and the LAVTA/CCCTA collaboration program. Ms. McWee wanted to know what kind of feedback we are getting from riders. Ms. Kamara stated positive feedback. One Seat is part of ATS plan. LAVTA passengers and board members from LAVTA side has been positive.

15. Committee Member Communications

Mr. Mortensen asked about funding to add back routes that have been cut? Ms. Horta, said we do have funds, but shortage of operators is cresting the current issue. We do have stimulus funds, there is a third stimulus, that MTC is yet to distribute. We also need to ensure we have a living wage for operators. There have been a discussion about tax measure to support transit, but stimulus will run out in year or two. Ms. McWee wanted to know how community can participate on a planning level to identify routes that might be added back and if publicized would bring rider back. Ms. Horta said we can have this discussion at this community. Demand is still not there; we are at 40% below service levels pre-covid. Ms. McWee said there is still public perception of unsafe public transit. This is affecting demand. There might be new travel patterns after covid. Mr. Churchill said we do analyze where people come from and where they go to. Like the route 14 to Walnut Creek instead of stopping at Pleasant Hill. There is an important role for a committee like this to bring information like this for us to respond to. It has happened in the past where route changes have been made based on recommendations from this committee. He also expressed his appreciation for Ms. McWee and Mr. Mortensen for sticking it out and participating in the committee. Ms. McWee presented a slide presentation stating as she reviewed bylaws, she realized cities unrepresented like Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga and Orinda, do not get good service anyway. Anytime she has travelled to those areas she has found it difficult to get around. It seems school bus service has replaced community bus. So how do we get out to jurisdiction and ask how they can help us rebuild the service? Mr. Churchill, said we have reached out to the cities, multiple times, reminding them that the slot is vacant or the member is not attending. Ms. McWee stated the bylaws do allow for board members to be conjoined with committee members. Who is her board member? Maybe somebody from board can join our meetings. Maybe a meet and greet for board members to meet people in their jurisdiction. When she sits on BART accessible task force, Robert is at every meeting and is in touch with member that brings up a problem. She would like to see our board engaged with us, by taking trips to see how long trips actually take. Ms. Kamara reminded the members that they can give and is expected to give a report to the board, so the board of directors would not be surprised to see the advisory members speak to board unlike staff. Mr. Churchill stated by attending the board meeting board member began to recognize the face of the advisory committee. Mr. Mortensen agreed and said a committee member from this meeting should attend and report. Mr. Mortensen asked for each member's email addresses. Mr. Churchill said he is happy to do what he can to support the endeavors to make this better.

16. Adjournment: Meeting Adjourned at 2:10 PM

Minutes prepared by Rashida Kamara November 1, 2021