

County Connection

2477 Arnold Industrial Way Concord, CA 94520-5326 (925) 676-7500 countyconnection.com

CCCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

November 16, 2023

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/CONFIRM QUORUM

Chair Don Tatzin called the regular meeting of the Board of Directors to order at 9:00 a.m. Board Members present were Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Sos, Storer and Worth. Director Schroder arrived after the meeting convened. Director Wilk was absent.

Staff: Churchill, Sherman, Dixit, Glenn, Hill, Horta, Johnson, Jones, Martinez, Mitchell, Reeb and Sanderson

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: None

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Director Hoffmeister moved approval of the Consent Calendar, consisting of the following item: Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of October 19, 2023. Director Hudson seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Sos, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Directors Schroder and Wilk

REPORT OF CHAIR: None

Director Schroder arrived at 9:02 a.m.

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER:

Introduction of new Director of ADA Services John Sanderson

General Manager Bill Churchill introduced our new Director of ADA Services, John Sanderson, to the Board.

CCCTA Thanksgiving Feast on November 16, 2023

Bill Churchill reminded the Board that our annual Thanksgiving Feast is today following the Board meeting and they all are invited.

Bus Feeder Service

Bill Churchill informed the Board that he and Rashidi Barnes, Christy Wegner, Rob Thompson and Tim Haile met with Andy Fremier, Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Executive Director, to discuss the Bus Feeder Service project. Although County Connection would lose about \$760k if BART did contribute to the

service, the other small operators are losing between 25%-30% of their budgets. After the meeting, Andy Fremier indicated that he is interested in working with them and will continue to look for other viable avenues. Going forward, the general managers' perspective is to encourage the region as a whole to find a long term funding source. He will continue to report back to the Board with any new developments.

Enhancement of Employee Benefits & Ongoing Recruitment Efforts

Bill Churchill informed the Board that with the hiring of a Human Resources consultant, Allison Picard, we would be able to make our benefits for the employees better. We increased our dental plan to \$2k a year up from \$1k previously, added supplemental life and disability insurance, as well as flexible spending accounts. We will hire a new Director of Human Resources and a new HR Analyst by next month. And we look forward to other beneficial changes in the future.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Administrative & Finance Committee

Employee Referral Pilot-Draft Policy

Ruby Horta, Asst. General Manager, gave a brief background stating that County Connection, like most transit agencies around the country, had been experiencing staffing shortages prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These shortages were further exacerbated during the pandemic due to early retirements, safety concerns for essential workers, and other reasons associated with the “Great Resignation”. Currently, we continue to experience staffing shortages, primarily in the operator and mechanic ranks, but also in other administrative roles.

The Administration & Finance (A&F) Committee has been discussing the potential to implement an employee referral pilot program targeting four critical job classifications: operators, mechanics, storekeepers and service workers. The Committee explained that the recruitment department continues to evaluate new methods to fill open positions and prepare the agency for enhanced service levels, as ridership continues to increase. With the support of the A&F Committee, staff has developed a policy to implement an employee referral pilot program.

The proposed policy has been reviewed, revised, and approved by the A&F Committee and our legal team. If approved, it will be implemented on January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 to the administrative staff, with an option for represented employees to be included in the program, upon approval by their respective union representatives. Director Sos asked that some language in the policy be clarified by staff and legal counsel, regarding if two employees make a referral at the same time, who would be entitled to the incentive.

MOTION: Director Noack moved approval of the proposed policy to implement an Employee Referral Program starting January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Pilot extension subject to Board approval. Director Hudson seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye:	Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Sos, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Director Wilk

Marketing, Planning and Legislative Committee

Regional Transportation Planning Studies – Information Only

Melody Reebbs, Director of Planning, explained that there are several planning efforts and projects currently being developed or already underway across the Bay Area region to address these issues, some of which began before the pandemic in an effort to increase coordination among the region’s transit operators. These pre-pandemic efforts included the Fare Coordination and Integration Study (FCIS) and the Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project. The MTC established the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force in May 2020, which ultimately led to the development of the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (Action Plan). The Action Plan identified near-term actions, which included advancing the existing fare integration and wayfinding projects as well as new initiatives around bus transit priority and regional network planning.

In parallel with many of the regional efforts, there are also several countywide transportation plans and projects currently being led by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) in coordination with the local jurisdictions and transit agencies. These plans are meant to establish the vision and priorities for the transportation network within the more specific context of Contra Costa County.

Staff will be undertaking three major planning efforts within the next year. An onboard passenger survey is currently underway and will provide important insight into our riders and what their needs are, which can help inform the decisions made in the ITP and Transit 2050+. In addition, County Connection was awarded a grant earlier this spring to study four major corridors within its service area to identify transit priority improvements that will increase the speed and reliability of buses. TSP will almost certainly be considered as a potential strategy, and the results of the IDEA TSP pilot will be used in that assessment. Finally, staff will be completing a bus stop access study that will consider stop consolidation and improvements. Both studies are intended to provide a list of recommended projects that can be included in the various countywide and regional plans.

Food Drive – Information Only

Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing, informed the Board that County Connection will participate in the food drive in partnership with the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano in November. The Food Bank will deliver donation barrels in the administrative building for canned and non-perishable donations. We will also be asking passengers to donate to the Food Drive virtually by scanning a QR code and donating directly to the Food Bank. For each dollar raised, the Food Bank can provide two meals to food-insecure individuals or families.

Staff will be promoting the food drive on social media as well as through printed flyers displayed on our buses. Donations will be accepted beginning November 26th through December 11th.

Historically, food donations have been collected on County Connection buses. However, staff decided to forgo this option this year because of past operational challenges and issues with safe storage, causing the food to be unusable. Looking forward, staff is working with the Food Bank to plan a “Fill The Bus” event, in which a County Connection bus will park outside a grocery store and volunteers will encourage shoppers to donate money or non-perishable food items and fill the bus.

Operations & Scheduling Committee

Swiftly Software License Renewal

Melody Reebbs, Director of Planning, explained that in the fall of 2022, staff began exploring alternative options that would improve data collection for on-time performance tracking without requiring an entire overhaul of the existing CAD/AVL system. Swiftly is a cloud-based transit data platform that integrates with existing hardware on the buses to provide data analytics and visualizations. Staff purchased an initial one-year license in December 2022 to test out the On-Time Performance and Run Time modules.

Swiftly uses a combination of three data sources to track the real-time location of buses and calculate on-time performance and run times at every stop along each route. In addition to the General Transit Feed Specification

(GTFS) Realtime feed and BusTime Application Programming Interface (API) coming from the existing Clever Devices system, the platform collects vehicle location data from the CradlePoint routers already installed on the buses to help fill in gaps from the other two data sources. If an operator is not logged in correctly, the platform uses the GPS data from the routers to determine which route the vehicle is on. Swiftly's algorithm can also recognize if a bus has gone off-route and resumes tracking when the bus comes back on route, thereby getting more accurate and complete data.

In addition to having more accurate and complete data, Swiftly's On-Time Performance and Run Times modules have provided staff with a powerful set of analytical tools to help improve the reliability of County Connection's services. These tools have reduced the staff time required to analyze and develop schedule changes so staff can respond more quickly to performance issues and/or operator concerns. At the July O&S Committee meeting, staff presented an update on the initial six months of using the platform and the resulting schedule adjustments that were made for the Fall bid based on this newly available data.

Staff is also planning to use data from Swiftly for several current and upcoming projects. The Transit Signal Priority (TSP) project in partnership with the CCTA and the cities of Concord and Walnut Creek will be using the data in its evaluation to measure the effectiveness of TSP technology in reducing delays and improving bus speed and reliability. In addition, County Connection was recently awarded a Transit Performance Initiative (TPI) grant for a Transit Corridor Study to identify bus priority improvements along four major corridors, and the analysis to determine the locations and causes for delays along those corridors will likely rely heavily on data from Swiftly. Finally, bus transit priority is one of the key strategies in the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan, and robust data on speed and reliability will be necessary to identify potential projects and pursue funding opportunities.

MOTION: Director Storer moved Board adoption of Resolution No. 2024-08, approving a one-year contract renewal with Swiftly. Director Hudson seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye:	Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Sos, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Director Wilk

One-Seat Regional Ride Pilot Extension

Rosa Noya, Manager of Accessible Services, informed the Board that in April 2021, the pilot program, which had been operational for six months, was extended. This extension allowed partnering agencies to maintain a service that received immediate customer satisfaction feedback. It also facilitated the ongoing collection of data, streamlining of billing algorithms and data management, and the inclusion of East Bay Paratransit for test trips. The pilot was extended again in November 2022 as staff continued to address National Transit Database (NTD) reporting challenges due to the collaborative nature of the pilot involving multiple transit agencies spanning various urbanized areas (UZAs) as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in collaboration with the FTA, NTD and the MTC. While this was ongoing, the One Seat Ride partners proposed a one-year extension of the program, incorporating travel training to better assist users and exploration of collaborations with the County of Contra Costa and Contra Costa Transportation Authority on how to expand the program into all of Contra Costa.

While staff continues to work through the NTD reporting issues, the One Seat Ride partners are proposing to extend the program's pilot status for one more year by modifying the existing program to include acceptance of paper tickets as a form of payment. This will enhance the accessibility of the program as passengers will have more than one option for form of payment. The second proposed modification is the inclusion of passengers' trip

management capabilities through a mobile app. The FY 2024 budget for Paratransit services incorporates the expenses associated with the pilot program at approximately \$600,000. Once the NTD reporting issues are resolved, the intent is to establish a permanent program.

MOTION: Director Storer moved Board adoption of Resolution No. 2024-09, authorizing the approval of the one-year extension to the One-Seat Regional Ride Pilot program. Director Hudson seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye:	Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hoffmeister, Hudson, Noack, Schroder, Sos, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Director Wilk

BOARD COMMUNICATION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Tatzin adjourned the regular Board meeting at 10:27 am.

Minutes prepared by:

Lathina Hill

Asst to the General Manager/Clerk to the Board of Directors

Date: December 4, 2023