

County Connection

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CCCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

June 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/CONFIRM QUORUM

Vice Chair Robert Storer called the regular meeting of the Board of Directors to order at 9:05 a.m. Board Members present were Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Tatzin, and Worth. Director Wilk was absent.

Staff: Horta, Sherman, Boehm, Dixit, Glenn, Hill, Horta, Jones, Martinez, Mitchell, Sanderson and Smith

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: None

PUBLIC HEARING: Clipper Discounts Title VI Equity Analysis

At 9:05 a.m. Vice Chair Robert Storer opened the public hearing to receive public comment on proposed continuation of a 50% discount off single-ride Clipper fares for Clipper START and Youth Clipper. Pranjali Dixit, Manager of Planning stated that staff reports were posted on the County Connection website, Legal Notices were published in the East Bay Times, the Notice of Public Hearing was posted on the County Connection website and on all fixed route vehicles, Announcements were posted on social media and all printed materials and handouts were translated in Spanish, per the County Connection's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

The Vice Chair asked legal representation if County Connection's public outreach as described, meet the legal requirements for calling this Public Hearing and the response from legal counsel was yes. Mr. Dixit went on to say since January 1, 2024, County Connection has offered a 50% discount on single-ride Clipper fares for low-income adults through the Clipper START pilot program. We also extended this same 50% discount to youth riders (ages 6-18) using a Youth Clipper card.

With the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) making the Clipper START program permanent starting July 1, 2025, County Connection proposes to continue these 50% discounts for both Clipper START participants and Youth Clipper cardholders.

As of June 11th, one (1) comment was received related to the proposed continuation of Clipper discount for Clipper START who expressed appreciation for the program and the benefits it provides.

Robert Storer asked for any public comments, seeing none the public hearing closed at 9:04 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING: Assembly Bill 2561: Status of Job Vacancies and CCCTA FY 2026 Operating and Capital Budget

At 9:05 a.m. Vice Chair Robert Storer opened the public hearing regarding the following two purposes. First, to consider the status of agency vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts. Second, to invite public comment on the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets for County Connection. Vice

Kristina Martinez, HR Director stated that as of May 31, 2025 with regard to the Amalgamated Transit Union, local 1605, representing the transit operators, there are 151 budgeted positions in which 13 are vacant, representing a 8.6% vacancy rate. And with regard to the Teamsters, local 856, representing transit supervisors, there are 11 budgeted positions in which one is vacant, representing a 9.1% vacancy rate. And, with regard to the Machinist Automotive Trades District, Lodge Number 1173 representing mechanics, service workers and storekeepers, within the maintenance department there are 31 budgeted positions in which 3 are vacant, representing 9.7% vacancy rate. No public comments or labor union presentations were received or provided during the hearing.

The public hearing then moved to the Budgets item. Amber Johnson, CFO said that the total fiscal year 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets is \$70,264,169. The Operating Budget of \$56,672,768 is funded 85% with local and state funds, 7% from farebox and special fare revenues, 3% federal funds, and 5% with other revenue.

The Operating Budget will support approximately 191,000 revenue hours of fixed-route service and 75,700 revenue hours of County Connection LINK dial-a-ride services.

Vice Chair Storer asked for any public comments, seeing none the public hearing closed at 9:10 a.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Director Noack moved approval of the Consent Calendar, consisting of the following items: (a) Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 15, 2025; (b) Receive Investment Report as of March 31, 2025; (c) Adoption of Gann Appropriations Spending Limitation for FY 2025-2026*and Resolution No. 2025-27. Director Hoffmeister seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Director Wilk

REPORT OF VICE CHAIR: None

REPORT OF ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER ADMINISTRATION:

Report on the APTA Legislative Conference

Assistant General Manager Administration Ruby Horta stated that she, Bill Churchill, Kevin Wilk, Robert Storer, Kerry Hillis, Sue Noack, (representing MTC), TriDelta and LAVTA representatives attended meetings with legislative staff over the course of the conference. Our group felt that the meetings went well and we felt heard and understood. We met and showed our alliance to each other and our willingness to work together to achieve our common goals.

Joint Legislative Audit Committee Request

Assistant General Manager Administration Ruby Horta informed the Board that County Connection received a letter to attend a Join Legislative Audit Committee Meeting, which we attended yesterday. The meeting was about SB63 and not consolidation. The audit is scheduled to take two years to complete with a price of approximately

between \$500 thousand and \$750 thousand. The focus is to look at comparing coordination versus consolidation with the east bay transit agencies. After some discussion, the Board thanked staff for working with the committee and looks forward to future updates regarding this matter.

State Legislative Update

Assistant General Manager Administration Ruby Horta stated that there are quite a few Bills that County Connection are keeping an eye on as follows:

AB394-Re: Transit Worker Protections
SB63-Re: Funding for Bay Area Transit
SB71-Re: CEQA Exemptions
AB1250: Re: Paratransit Eligibility
AB1340-Re: TNC Labor Relations Act
SB79-Re: Transit Oriented Development
SB752-Re: Tax Exemption
SB239-Re: Open Meetings
AB810-Re: Local Government, websites & email addresses
AB1070-Re: Transit Governing Boards
AB1421-Re: Vehicle VMT road charge

Legal Counsel Julie Sherman provided an update on SB 707, which pertains to Brown Act amendments.

CCCTA/LAVTA Paratransit Ad Hoc Committee Assignment

Assistant General Manager Administration Ruby Horta stated that in 2022 County Connection partnered with LAVTA to start a Paratransit Ad Hoc Committee. Candace Andersen and Dave Hudson were scheduled to serve until June 2026, but since then Dave Hudson has retired we need another person to serve out the rest of the term with Director Andersen. Kerry Hillis expressed interest and Vice Chair Storer directed staff that Director Hills will now serve with Director Andersen. No motion was needed.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Administration & Finance Committee

Actuarial analysis of changes contemplated to the Authority's other post-retirement benefits (OPEB) (Gov. Code Section 7507)*

Amber Johnson, CFO explained that under the proposed structure, the Authority will contribute to CalPERS (for both active employees and retirees) up to: (a) \$310 for self-only coverage, (b) \$620 for coverage of the individual + one dependent, and (c) \$800 for coverage of the individual + more than one dependent, regardless of which PEMHCA plan is elected. For individuals who would otherwise incur a reduction in the current Authority contribution amount for retirees, the Authority will make a one-time lump sum contribution to a retiree health savings plan equal to the present value of the reduction.

The Authority has engaged an actuarial firm to provide assistance in determining the short and long-term projected costs associated with the OPEB changes under consideration. Under California Government Code section 7507 ("Section 7507"), the Authority is required to obtain a statement of the actuarial effect upon future annual costs of OPEB associated with these proposed changes and make the actuary's determination public at a public meeting at least two weeks prior to the adoption of the change. Section 7507 provides that, if the actuary determines that the future costs of proposed changes will exceed one-half of 1% of the "future annual costs" (including, but not

limited to, annual dollar changes, or the total dollar changes involved, as well as normal cost and any change in accrued liability), then the actuary must be present in person or available by telephone or other means at the public meeting at which the proposed changes will be considered to respond to any questions about the cost impact. The attached actuarial analysis is intended to meet the requirements of Section 7507, and the actuary who prepared the analysis will be present at the July??? Board meeting and available to answer questions, given the projected effects of the proposed OPEB changes. This was an information item only.

Clipper Discounts Title VI Fare Equity Analysis
Resolution No. 2025-26

Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning, stated that during the 12 months since the regional 50% discount for Clipper START went into effect, Clipper START usage increased by 169%, and the number of unique cards used grew by 161%, indicating a substantial influx of new users, as shown in Figure 1. The actual usage by Clipper START cardholders is likely even higher, as many County Connection routes are free. Meanwhile, Clipper Youth has also experienced steady growth, with a 14% increase in Clipper Youth usage since the discount was increased.

Given Clipper START's positive impact on low-income riders and continued MTC subsidies, staff recommends continuing the 50% discount for Clipper START. We also propose continuing the parallel 50% discount to Clipper Youth to match Clipper START, which would further reduce transit costs and improve youth access to transit.

As a federal grant recipient, County Connection is required to maintain and provide to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) information on its compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. The FTA further requires that recipients of FTA financial assistance conduct an analysis on all non-exempt fare changes to assess the impacts of those changes on low-income and minority populations. Since the proposal constitutes a fare change, its implementation requires an equity analysis under the FTA's Title VI regulations.

Staff estimate the continuation of 50% discount for both Clipper START and Youth Clipper will result in an annual net revenue loss of \$132,000 as shown in Table 1. This includes partial reimbursement by MTC to offset fare loss faced by transit agencies. MTC will continue annual upfront payment to transit operators based on anticipated fare revenue losses

MOTION: Director Noack moved adoption of Resolution No. 2025-26, approving the continuation of Clipper Discounts for Clipper START and Youth Clipper. Director Hoffmeister seconded the motion, and received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Storer, Tatzin and Worth
No: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Director Wilk

Adjustment to Non-Represented Administrative Employees Compensation*
Resolution No. 2025-29

Kristina Martinez, Director of Human Resources, gave a brief history stating that County Connection employees consist of the following groups: Transit Operators, Transit Supervisors, Maintenance, and Administrative staff. The Administrative employee group is the only non-represented group. The other three employee groups are all represented by a separate union with distinct Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). Ms. Martinez explained that for FY26, the Authority can afford an increase for the non-represented employees.

The General Manager requests a 3% cost of living adjustment for all satisfactorily performing administrative employees effective July 1, 2025. This is the same percentage increase included in all three of the recently negotiated MOUs for the represented employees.

The General Manager also requests a Merit Pool not to exceed \$50,000, to be allocated at the General Manager's discretion, to employees in Grade 10 and above who are not part of the step increase system and are meeting performance standards as assessed by their supervisors.

MOTION: Director Noack moved adoption of Resolution No. 2025-29, approving adjustments to the salary ranges for administrative staff and establishing a merit pool for management employees, a 3% COLA and \$50,000 merit pool allocation, for a not to exceed total cost of \$230,000, effective July 1, 2025. Director Hillis seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Storer, Tatzin and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Director Wilk

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and Forecast
Resolution No. 2025-28

Amber Johnson, CFO, explained that County Connection's draft Operating Budget for July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025 (FY 2025) proposes \$56.7 million in operational expenses for fixed route and paratransit services with revenues to offset these costs. An additional \$13.6 million is proposed in capital expenditures and associated revenue in the budget year. The Budget includes the incorporation of a new discretionary reserve account that will help to strengthen the Authority's financial position.

The fixed route operating expense budget of \$43.5 million is a 0.5 percent increase over the FY 2025 budget and allows for sustained levels of fixed route service, with assumptions that recruitment efforts will continue to successfully fill vacant operator and mechanic positions. A smaller vacancy rate has been utilized in the FY 2026 budget, resulting in budgetary savings. Fuel prices are also down as compared to last year. Savings in these areas are partially offset by rising utility costs and increases in insurance premiums.

The paratransit operating expense budget of \$13.2 million is a 15.7 percent increase over the FY 2025 budget. The main cause for this large increase is due to paratransit ridership demand. County Connection's LINK service experienced faster growth in the paratransit program in FY 2025 than anticipated. In FY 2026, an additional growth factor of 5% over FY 2024 actuals has been applied, along with a 4% contractual rate increase.

The FY 2026 Capital Budget is \$13.6 million and includes scheduled replacements of seven fixed route buses and forty-five paratransit vehicles that have reached the end of their useful life. In addition, several necessary facility maintenance and modernization projects are included in the budget. Major project additions include the first phase of a grant-funded solar array project, above-ground fuel tank replacements, concrete pad repairs, and necessary elevator improvements in both buildings. The revenue vehicles will receive 80% federal funding with a 20% match of TDA capital funds.

MOTION: Director Hoffmeister moved adoption of Resolution No. 2025-29, approving the proposed FY 2026 Operating and Capital Budget as presented, which will result in total expenditure authority of \$70,264,169. Director Rubio seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Andersen, Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Storer, Tatzin and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Director Wilk

Marketing, Planning & Legislative Committee

Marketing Update of Youth Ride Free Pilot

Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications and Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning, gave a brief background stating that the online Youth Ride Free marketing effort starting on April 23, 2025 has been following engagement of ads across social media platforms. Early returns indicate strong engagement with the program ads that include not only impressions (people seeing the ads) but clicks (people clicking links to visit the YRF webpage). TikTok has shown the most engagement, more than double the impressions of the next highest performing ad shown across Meta platforms.

Staff also is tracking web traffic through Google Analytics to see how the Youth Ride Free webpage is trending. Since launch, the webpage has been the third-most viewed page on the County Connection website, outperforming any other program or promotion in the last 3 years.

When WestCAT and Tri Delta Transit recently approved their Youth Ride Free programs, both agencies were on tight timelines to launch. County Connection's marketing team stepped in to support their efforts by coordinating messaging and providing a complete marketing toolkit, including copy for webpages, press releases, and other public-facing materials. This collaboration not only helped our partner agencies successfully roll out their programs but also ensured consistency in branding and messaging across all three agencies. By aligning the look, tone, and details of the promotions, we've created a unified rider experience that makes it easier for youth and families to navigate transit across our shared service areas. While there is one difference (WestCAT requires youth riders to show ID), the programs are otherwise consistent. County Connection staff also coordinated with Wheels, now in their second year of Summer Youth Ride Free, to extend our outreach efforts and messaging across Contra Costa and the Tri-Valley region. This was an information item only.

Operations & Scheduling Committee

Summer Bid Update – Information Only

Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning, explained that the Spring Bid, which began on January 12, 2025, included several service adjustments to improve on-time performance and address feedback from our operators. These changes primarily affected Routes 7, 11, 15, 301, 311, 315 and 99X. Compared to last year's Fall Bid, these routes have seen a 7.2% increase in on-time performance.

The Summer Bid, effective June 8, 2025, will introduce several service adjustments on the weekend routes. These changes are a result of the Bay Area TRANSFER Plan, a regional schedule coordination effort aimed at improving transfer timings for customers at key hubs. This was an information item only.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus Update – Information Only

Scott Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer, gave a brief background stating that Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) applied on March 3, 2022, as part of I-680 Express Bus Program for a TIRCP Cycle 5 (Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program). It was awarded in July of 2022. CalSta provided Federal Money (FHWA to FTA Transfer) for \$13,182,500 to LAVTA and County Connection, split equally, for Hydrogen Fueling Infrastructure.

County Connection's portion of funds is \$6,591,250. Staff planned to procure and install a temporary hydrogen fueling station at the Concord yard to support three hydrogen fuel cell buses to provide express bus service between the Martinez Amtrak station and the Dublin BART station. However, for the reasons stated below, staff intends to seek delays to the project procurement process.

Scott Mitchell named quite a few issues that are coming up in this project. Because of the small number of buses County Connection will be fueling, the station could be venting between 30 to 50 percent of the fuel that is purchased, increasing the fuel cost per mile by that percentage. The fuel station will require more space than staff had anticipated. The new location will add to the cost of the project. Fuel cell buses require meticulous maintenance because of the high pressure that hydrogen needs to be stored at. There are no adequate training resources available, at this time, for the maintenance staff to be able to maintain these buses. The Maintenance Facility will require upgrades to be able to safely maintain buses that use high pressure lighter than air fuel. Although County Connection received Grants to build the fuel station and buy buses. There are no additional funds identified to cover the increased costs to operate these buses. This was an information item only.

REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Appointment of Ivan Fedorenko to the Advisory Committee Representing the City of San Ramon
Director Andersen left at 12:05 p.m.

MOTION: Director Rubio moved appointment of Ivan Fedorenko to the Advisory Committee Representing the City of San Ramon. Director Hoffmeister seconded the motion, and it received the following vote of approval:

Aye: Directors Diaz, Hillis, Hoffmeister, Noack, Rubio, Storer, Tatzin and Worth

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Directors Andersen and Wilk

CLOSED SESSION:

The Board of Directors went into closed session at 12:13 p.m. to discuss the following:

Conference with Labor Negotiator (pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6)

Agency designated representatives: Amber Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Kristina Martinez, Director of Human Resources

Employee Organization: Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1605, AFL-CIO, Bus Operators Teamsters Union, Local 856, AFL-CIO, Transit Supervisors

OPEN SESSION: Closed Session Report

The Board of Directors entered back into open session at 12:23 p.m. There was no reportable action.

BOARD COMMUNICATION:

ADJOURNMENT: Vice Chair Storer adjourned the regular Board meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Lathina Hill

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

Date: July 7, 2025