



ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

MINUTES

Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

VIRTUAL MEETING

The members of the Board will participate from remote locations.

Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at 9:00 AM

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JOE WALLACE, PRESIDENT (WARD 1)

ELSA ORTIZ, VICE PRESIDENT (WARD 3)

GREG HARPER (WARD 2)

MARK WILLIAMS (WARD 4)

DIANE SHAW (WARD 5)

H. E. CHRISTIAN PEEPLES (AT-LARGE)

JOEL YOUNG (AT-LARGE)

BOARD OFFICERS

MICHAEL A. HURSH, GENERAL MANAGER

JILL A. SPRAGUE, GENERAL COUNSEL

LINDA A. NEMEROFF, DISTRICT SECRETARY

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District Board of Directors held a special virtual meeting on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.

Members of the Board participated via video conference from off-site locations in accordance with the statewide shelter in place order issued on March 16, 2020, and extended through June 30, 2020.

President Wallace called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Wallace, Ortiz, Harper, Williams, Shaw, Young, Peeples

3. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Verbal Report.

General Manager Michael Hursh reported on the state of the District in light of protests and COVID-19. An update was given on the damage to buses and BRT stations during recent protests and numerous staff were thanked for their round the clock response to all of the ongoing protest activities. With regard to COVID-19, there have been no more reported cases at the District and staff is looking to open office spaces soon. Mr. Hursh also reported on the first meeting of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Blue Ribbon Task Force.

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM(S)

A. Financial Update

[20-229](#)

B. Workforce

C. 12-month service recovery framework, and consideration of the following policy directives:

- 1) Service recovery levels
- 2) Social Distancing and other health and safety requirements
- 3) Operation of Supplemental service
- 4) Return of Transbay service
- 5) Reinstatement of fare collection

D. Communication strategy and marketing campaign

- **Financial Outlook**

Director of Management and Budget Chris Andrichak gave an overview of the District's financial status, including measures to control expenses, revenues, CARES Act funding, FEMA funding, and future considerations concerning

reserves, revenues, headcount, and budget adoption.

Director Harper was pleased that staff was scrutinizing new contracts for necessity and requested that justification be provided for any new contracts that come before the Board. General Manager Michael Hursh agreed saying that anything AC Transit is paying for will be heavily scrutinized while projects involving outside money would moving forward.

Director Harper commented on fare collection and the need to synch it with social distancing restrictions. Mr. Hursh advised that this was an issue he would like the Board to provide policy direction on as there are many agencies that are considering reduced social distancing requirements.

Regarding the Dumbarton Service, Director Harper asked if the service could be funded with other District revenues if bridge toll revenue fall short. Mr. Andrichak advised that AC Transit provides the service at the behest of the Dumbarton Regional Operations Consortium. Mr. Hursh added that staff should investigate to ensure consortium partners are continuing to pay their share to provide the service. Director Shaw commented on the importance of the Dumbarton corridor and requested more information.

Director Shaw was concerned about the amount of overtime built into the budget to provide service. Mr. Andrichak advised that the design of the runs made it necessary to have a certain level of built in overtime; however, staff was looking to reduce the amount in designing future service.

Vice President Ortiz asked if the Blue-Ribbon Task Force would decide how to distribute the CARES money. Mr. Hursh advised that the task force would be making recommendations to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission who would then decide how the money should be allocated.

Vice President Ortiz further asked about the District's financial position and how the CARES Act funding would impact the budget. Mr. Andrichak believed that with the funding the District should achieve a balanced budget in FY 2020-21.

Vice President Ortiz asked what guidelines had been developed to define which positions were essential. Mr. Hursh advised that he was evaluating every request to fill a position on a case by case basis.

- **Workforce Availability**

Director of Project Controls & Systems Analysis Bill Tonis provided an overview of workforce availability, trends, and life cycles.

Director Shaw commented on the number of operators available versus the amount of service and asked if operators would be given an opportunity to

transition into other positions. Mr. Hursh advised that he is looking to promote from within for vacant positions, but also recognized that some positions are very specialized and require external recruitment. Chief Operating Officer Salvador Llamas added that there were several extra qualified positions that are often backfilled by operators to provide a career ladder. Vice President Ortiz suggested that the District continue to work with local colleges to help operators acquire additional skills.

Director Harper asked if the August sign-up was still going to be based on 80% of pre-pandemic service levels noting that he wanted to make sure the District did not get into a heavy overtime situation if the ridership demand is not there. Mr. del Rosario advised that it was going to be slightly less than 80%.

- **12-month Service Plan/Social Distancing/Fare Collection**

Director of Service Development and Planning Robert del Rosario gave an overview of the 12-month service recovery framework.

Director of Maintenance Cecil Blandon gave an overview of the District's sanitization and disinfecting protocols and the installation of polycarbonate operator shields. Mr. Hursh added that the shield is a temporary solution and not a replacement for the previously approved operator barrier that will be installed later.

With respect to social distancing, Safety Manager Tabby Davenport commented that the District is in the process of seeking guidance/approval from the County of Alameda to implement the CDC's social distancing guidelines which is reduced to every other seat on public transit and would require face coverings to be worn.

Vice President Ortiz inquired about supplemental service and capacity issues considering social distancing and fluid school schedules. Mr. Davenport advised that the District is limited to 10 passengers per bus with six-foot social distancing. Mr. del Rosario reported that the District would have a limited capacity to provide standby buses to address capacity issues. He added that since school districts have not provided their schedules to the District, staff plans to maintain the schedules in effect the prior year, noting that most parents will likely make other arrangements to get their children to school.

Regarding Transbay service, Mr. del Rosario advised that staff was looking to focus more service on the trunk lines and ramp up Transbay service at a much slower pace.

On the issue of fare collection, Director Harper suggested that fare collection resume on Transbay, noting that many local riders were hurting financially and

resuming fares in August would place an additional financial burden on them.

Director Harper also raised the issue of air circulation on buses, noting that opening the windows on the bus was a cheap and easy way to address the issue. He also felt the District needed to be clear with riders on the seriousness of wearing the mask. Mr. Hursh advised of improved air filtration and vent and window configuration on buses to improve air flow.

On the issue of fare collection, Director Shaw suggested that fare collection resume in conjunction with the start of fares on Bus Rapid Transit.

Director Shaw also supported the relaxation of social distancing requirements but felt masks should be required and should be available for people who do not have one. President Wallace was concerned that riders would become dependent on the District to provide a mask and was also concerned about the additional burden placed on operators.

Director Peeples agreed with Director Harper that staff needs to take a closer look at ventilation. In addition, what we do in terms of social distancing needs to be determined by science, not on what the Board thinks. He also thought it was a good idea to provide a mask dispenser on the bus.

Vice President Ortiz requested a visual aid to better understand social distancing on buses.

Director Young asked staff to prepare both a relaxed social distancing plan and a standard social distance plan for the Board to consider at a future meeting, especially since the future is difficult to predict. Mr. del Rosario advised that if we have the current social distancing standards in place for August, we will need to operate more stand-bys. Vice President Ortiz requested that an item be added to the agenda for next meeting that will allow the Board to have more options available to consider. Director Young suggested that staff be given more time to develop plans.

Director Young asked if there was any flexibility with the August sign-up. Staff will see what is possible.

Director Young suggested that the District provide a level of service commiserate with the demand for the service.

- **Blue Ribbon Taskforce Overview**

Mr. del Rosario gave a brief update on the activities of the task force. Mr. Hursh advised that each agency is required to develop a recovery plan and would follow the Board's direction.

- **Communications Strategy & Marketing Campaign**

Marketing Manager Nichele Laynes reflected on the economic impact of the pandemic on the Bay Area and laid out the development of a three phase approach to bring people back to transit, which would include a survey to gauge rider sentiment throughout the phases of re-opening.

Director Shaw asked if there would be a separate survey geared toward major businesses and chambers of commerce in terms of what their needs are, whether employees will continue to work from home, EasyPass, etc. She also wanted to know how people felt about cash (contactless payment). Ms. Laynes advised that the Bay Area Council had solicited input from AC Transit in a survey they are targeting for business and will reach out to other business organizations to see how AC Transit might participate in their surveys. She added that staff will include questions about fare payment apps and cashless/contactless payment in AC Transit's survey.

Director Harper suggested that the District also survey bus operators. Mr. Hursh advised that this was a great idea and would be done. Director Harper concluded by saying that the District has yet to address how it will handle a recurrence of the COVID-19 virus this fall.

Director Shaw asked if there was an opportunity to pilot some new types of service such as express bus to San Jose. She also wanted to know how paratransit has been affected by the pandemic. Mr. del Rosario advised that staff could look at new service for March 2021, but it would be dependent on the availability of outside funding. Regarding paratransit, Mr. Hursh advised that a report would be scheduled for a future meeting.

- **Conclusion/Policy Directives**

- 1) Service recovery levels

Mr. del Rosario confirmed the Board's direction of 70% to 80% pre-pandemic service levels with flexibility to reduce service if there is a second wave of the pandemic.

- 2) Social Distancing and other health and safety requirements

Mr. del Rosario confirmed that the availability of masks and ventilation were important considerations and staff would come back to the Board on June 24th with alternatives for the Board to consider regarding social distancing.

3) Operation of Supplemental service

Mr. del Rosario confirmed that staff would move forward with providing supplemental service as planned in August.

4) Return of Transbay service

Mr. del Rosario confirmed that staff would move forward with turning on additional Transbay service in August (six routes with limited frequency).

5) Reinstatement of fare collection

Mr. del Rosario advised that staff was seeking guidance from the Board on fare collection, noting that the District stopped the collection of fares to limit the interaction between operators and the public during the pandemic. He added that staff needed to assess the loss of fare revenue if the District continued to suspend fare collection. Mr. Hursh cautioned that the collection of fares on only part of the system could create a Title VI issue.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: June 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Linda A. Nemeroff
District Secretary