

**MINUTES  
LINK TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**August 15, 2023**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Columbia Station 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 300 South Columbia Street, Wenatchee, WA**

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**ATTENDANCE**

**Board members attending in person:** Chair Marc Straub, Randy Agnew, Rob Tidd, Joyce Huber, Paul Parmley, Jim Fletcher, Bob Goedde, Clay Bradenburg, Tiffany Gering, Kevin Overbay, Mark Kulaas, Kyle Steinburg.

**Board members attending through ZOOM on-line internet program:** Anne Hessburg

**Link Transit Staff:** Nick Covey, Lynn Bourton, Ed Archer, Eric West, Justin Brockwell, Ron Hatton, Samantha Miller, Selina Danko, Gabby Walker, Paden Osterlund, Gary Robledo, Roger Van Houten, Humberto Espinoza, John Therien, Jake Austin, Tina Thorpe.

**Link Transit Staff attending through Zoom:** Ed Archer, Cristina Barone

**Legal Counsel:** Erin McCool

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Marc Straub called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. A quorum was established with 9 board members present at that time.

**Board Action:**

**Jim Fletcher moved to approve the agenda as presented. Randy Agnew seconded**

**VOTE:** All in favor with 9 voting members and 1 non-voting member present for this vote.  
**Motion Carried unanimously**

**2. BOARD MEMBER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No board members reported conflicts with any items on the agenda.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Melissa Reuter of the Peshastin Community Council reported that the council is working to create a proposal to replace or widen the Peshastin bridge over the Wenatchee River. She is hoping Link Transit's Board of Directors will support this effort.

Juanita Ruhnke, who says she represents the homeless, the elderly, Link Plus clients and Chelan and Douglas County, offered a set of hourglass sand timers to assist with keeping public comment to three minutes per person.

**Public Comment submitted to Link Transit Board Clerk via email was read into the record:**

**From: Susan Kane, Douglas County**

"I understand that the Board is considering not collecting all the tax money that we taxpayers voted on. I do not agree with this proposal. We voters put our trust in you and

I, for one, am VERY pleased with what Link is doing in our community. While it might be considerate of you to not collect the money, we need our board members to look to the future. As we work to deal with the Climate Crisis, gas prices will be going up and more and more people will need public transit. We need our Board to plan for the impacts of the Climate Crisis. Please continue to collect the money that we voted on and use it to prepare for our community's future. P.S.: I ride Link occasionally, only because I am fortunate to have an electric car. I have seen the number of people that use the Link service to get to and from work. Keep up the good work."

#### 4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

The following Consent Agenda items were submitted for approval:

**4.1 Minutes** of the July 18 board meeting

**4.2 Accounts Payable Vouchers** from July 1-31 totaling \$7,737,027.95

**4.3 Payroll Vouchers** from July 1-31, totaling \$731,614.63

#### **Board Action:**

There were no requests for corrections or changes to any of the Consent Agenda items.

**Joyce Huber moved to approve all Consent Agenda business items as presented.**

**Randy Agnew seconded the motion.**

VOTE: All in favor with 10 voting board members present for this vote.

***Motion Carried unanimously***

#### 5. **PUBLIC HEARING Link Transit's 2023-2028 Transit Development Plan (TDP) and 2022 Annual Report. Hearing was opened by Board Chair Marc Straub at 3:20 pm.**

The six-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) and annual report are required by Washington State law to be submitted to the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) by September of each year to maintain eligibility for state-allocated funding. The Program of Projects (POP) is required each federal fiscal year under federal regulations to maintain eligibility for federal funds. The annual TDP document outlines the major projects and services, and associated facility and equipment needs for the coming six years. The TDP reflects recommendations from the adopted Transit Study and projects identified as part of Vision 2020, including several capital projects.

The POP identifies planned grant applications that will be submitted for federally funded transportation grant programs in federal fiscal year 2024. The 2022 Annual Reports is a review of projects, major equipment and facility improvements and final expenditures that the agency has made over the past year.

**Melissa Reuter of Peshastin** indicated her support for the TDP and the community specific bus stops in the plan. She said the bus stops could be an Eagle Scout project.

**Dean O'Daffer of Wenatchee** indicated his support for Link's TDP and the service Link provides. He said that the new six-year plan positions Link Transit for the increase in demand created by the planned construction of apartment complexes. The flexibility in this new plan will help Link provide services for these new apartment dwellers. Link services can also make it convenient for one member of a family to go to work on the bus, reducing the need and cost for privately owned vehicles.

**Juanita Ruhnke, representing both Chelan and Douglas counties,** asked Link to consider investing money in maintaining and improving existing shelters versus creating new shelters. She would like a bus shelter at the library and more access to public restrooms. She also suggested the planting of more shade trees. She complimented the class of new Link drivers for their cool, calm, and collected demeanor.

**Public Comment submitted via email to Link Transit's Board Clerk:**

**From: Andrew Mills**

"I am Andrew Mills, a frequent Link user and resident at Wenatchee Rescue Mission. I have examined the draft plan and urge that it be adopted. While it contains many provisions, rather than telling Link what to do, concerning one provision or another, I want to state my confidence in their decision making to date. I use the transit system frequently and find it to be extremely dependable. I also find that it serves many unique people in individual situations and is a great kindness to the people of our region. It could easily not be this way. Thankfully, it is well run. It also helps reduce inequality as many riders have few other choices.

Therefore, I urge that the draft plan be finalized and the 2024 Program of Projects be approved, with due consideration of other citizen's comments. This system as earned my trust."

**From: Jeanne Poirier (Cashmere)**

"WOW – Y'all are so impressive!!"

Figure it isn't fair to comment if you've not read the draft plan – so I did.

I absolutely support the development plans presented and am continually impressed and proud of LINK. The visioning of bus system operations in a huge area continues to be effective and an absolute role model for anyplace else in the world! Thank you for free fares! Thank you for the transition to electric vehicles and keeping diesel/gas-powered where it makes sense. You do a great job of modeling how we (as a society) need to appreciate fossil fuels when they make sense – and to move forward to clean energy wherever possible. Very glad the propane idea did not pan out! Thank you for your thoughtful, thorough, and expansive vision for our communities. Keep up the good work. I am looking forward to the park & Ride at Hay Canyon, already busier and beautiful bus stops under the new Goodwin Bridge."

**The public hearing was closed at 3:33 p.m.**

***7.1 Resolution 2023-21, Approving Link's 2023-2028 TDP and 2022 Annual Report (Action Item occurred right after public comment)***

**Board Action:**

**Mark Kulaas moved to approve Resolution 2023-21, adopting Link Transit's six-year Transit Development Plan for 2023-2028 and the Link Transit 2022 Annual Report.**

**Jim Fletcher seconded the motion.**

**VOTE:** All in favor with 9 voting board members present for this vote.

Tiffany Gering, Kyle Steinberg and Kevin Overbay arrived.

## **6. BOARD ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **6.1 Employee Recognition: Roger Van Houten Retirement**

Board Chair Marc Straub recognized Roger for 11 years of service as a coach operator for the agency.

### **6.2 Employee Recognition: Star Performer Awards**

Star Performers are nominated by their peers at Link Transit twice a year. Dispatcher Tina Thorpe and Human Resources Assistant Cami Ostrom were nominated for their exemplary work in the first six months of 2023 and recognized by the board.

### **6.3 Employee Recognition: High Five Award**

Operations Assistant Manager Jake Austin was recognized for his recent completion of the Transit Safety and Security Program Certification Course offered through the Transportation Safety Institute sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration. Jake is the third person at the agency to earn this certification.

### **6.4 General Board Member Jurisdictional Updates and Reports**

*No board members had items to share.*

### **6.5 Board Chair Marc Straub reviewed the Finance Committee Report:**

#### **Link Transit Vision 2020 Performance Plan Update and Evaluation**

Staff provided a recap of the Vision 2020 service improvement plan presented to voters prior to the successful 2019 ballot measure to incrementally increase Link Transit's sales tax collection authority from 4 tenths to 6 tenths of a cent. The second tenth is due to begin collection in January of 2024. Staff presented report card information to committee members highlighting implemented service improvements and future improvements dependent on the collection of the second tenth. Key points included:

- A 60-percent implementation of Vision 2020 commitments
- A successful staff recruitment program enabling the roll-out of additional service in future bid cycles
- Cash flow scenarios related to the delivery of Vision 2020 commitments with and without the collection of the second tenth sales tax

Finance committee members directed staff to develop a set of measurable benchmarks to evaluate Link's progress toward meeting its Vision 2020 commitments. These benchmarks will be used by the board to evaluate Link's progress toward meeting its Vision 2020 commitments and to determine if the second tenth sales tax collection is needed.

### **RFP 2023-01 for 40-foot electric vehicles**

Staff recommended the postponement of the replacement of 40-foot diesel (Gillig) vehicles with electric vehicles and to reallocate the funds toward costs associated with the ongoing facility redesign process. Committee members were in favor of the staff recommendation due to the uncertainties related to the acquisition of a new class of electric vehicle that has not been vetted in North Central Washington and the need to build a facility that can accommodate the charging demands of an increasing electric fleet.

### **East Wenatchee sidewalk and bus stop improvements**

CEO Nick Covey reported to the committee that Link had been approached by the City of East Wenatchee to contribute to sidewalk and bus stop improvements. Committee members asked Covey to report back with more specific information about how the projects are funded and how much Link is expected to contribute.

### **New Cameras for Columbia Station**

Staff have identified the need to replace the aging camera system at Columbia Station. At its July meeting, the Board authorized an interlocal agreement with the City of Seattle enabling Link to purchase new cameras at a cost of \$105,000. The cameras have facial recognition capabilities which staff anticipate will help identify trespassed individuals when they enter Link property at Columbia Station. Committee members were in favor of Link staff purchasing the cameras without further board action.

### **Glacier Parking Lot Restroom**

Staff are seeking approval for an interlocal agreement with the City of Leavenworth to build a private coach-operator restroom in conjunction with public restroom facilities at the Glacier Parking Lot in Leavenworth. Link's contribution would be capped at \$150,000. Having a restroom at the Glacier Parking Lot location would enable buses to layover in a more convenient spot for guests. The committee was in favor of bringing the interlocal before the board at its August meeting for consideration.

### **Momentum/Induct EV Charger (East Wenatchee)**

Link is waiting for final pricing information for the installation of charging infrastructure at the East Wenatchee Park & Ride location. Staff will seek board approval at either its August or October meeting. The cost to install the charging infrastructure is estimated to be \$500,000.

### **Microgrid update**

Staff toured microgrid projects at Martha's Vineyard and Snohomish Public Utility District to determine if a microgrid would make sense for Link Transit operations. Staff will work with the Chelan PUD to determine if a Link Transit microgrid would result in significant electrical cost savings and charging reliability before making a recommendation to the board.

### **Ride-Share Grant**

Link's Washington Station Green Transportation Grant application for \$211,000 toward the purchase of additional rideshare vehicles was successful. A request for bids is in development and staff anticipate presenting a vendor recommendation to the board at its October meeting.

## 6.6 CEO Report

- CEO Nick Covey asked for the board's consent to cancel the September finance committee and board meeting. The board was supportive of the meeting cancellation.
- A recent site visit to Mill Bay Casino's Sprung Structure Facility was reviewed. A Facility Redesign Committee meeting is needed to determine next steps.
- Link staff are exploring whether a Microgrid system makes sense for the facility upgrade and have approached the Chelan County PUD about a potential partnership.
- The Link Transit Maintenance Roadeo Team of John Therien, Gary Robledo and Humberto Espinoza were recognized for achieving second place at the recent state Roadeo competition.
- Operations Manager Gabby Walker reported that the Link competitors in the driving portion of the state Roadeo did not place, but that the event was highly competitive. Drivers Bobby Beason, Roberto Torres and Abel Moreno represented Link.
- Link has met all four of its gain-sharing standards and checks will be handed out representing that achievement at the next set of employee meetings.

## 7. DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

### 7.1 Motion and board vote occurred directly after the public hearing

### 7.2 Interlocal with the City of Leavenworth for a Glacier Parking Lot Restroom Facility (Resolution 2023-22)

The City of Leavenworth is rebuilding the Glacier Parking Lot in downtown Leavenworth and adding restroom facilities to the lot. Staff is requesting the board authorize Link Transit to partner with the City in this project to provide design and construction work for one private restroom to be used by Link Transit Coach Operators. The City of Leavenworth is currently redesigning the Glacier Parking Lot and bus pullout area for the shelter at this location to accommodate two 40-foot buses and a public restroom building.

Board members expressed support for providing restroom facilities at the location but raised concerns about the potential expense related to Leavenworth's Bavarian-themed ordinance requirements as well as the ongoing maintenance and cleaning of the facility.

#### Board Action:

**Joyce Huber moved to authorize staff to enter into an interlocal agreement with the City of Leavenworth for the purpose of providing a private bathroom addition for Link Transit coach operators.**

**Rob Tidd seconded the motion.**

VOTE: All in favor with 12 voting board members present for this vote.

***Motion failed 4-7***

***This portion purposely left blank***

<i>In favor</i>	<i>Opposed</i>
Rob Tidd	Kevin Overbay
Joyce Huber	Bob Goedde
Mark Kulaas	Kyle Steinburg
Anne Hessburg	Tiffany Gering
	Clay Bradenburg
	Randy Agnew
	Jim Fletcher

**7.3 RFP 2023-01 for 40-foot electric buses (Staff analysis and recommendation)**

In February of 2023, the Board of Directors indicated a desire to demonstrate an advanced-design, battery electric transit bus on Link's route to Chelan (Route 21). Staff brought the award of this item before the Board at the June meeting with the direction to discuss this item at the August meeting. Staff are recommending the postponement of the replacement of the 40-foot Gillig vehicles with electric vehicles and to reallocate the funds toward costs associated with the ongoing facility redesign process. Link Transit could pursue grant funding to replace the Gilligs when the infrastructure is in place to support the new electric vehicles. The Gilligs still have 5-6 years of useful life.

Anne Hessburg left the meeting.

**Board Action:**

**Kyle Steinburg moved to let the RFP for 40-foot electric vehicles lapse, and that when the time is right, Link can develop a new RFP.**

**Randy Agnew seconded the motion.**

VOTE: All in favor with 11 voting board members present for this vote.

*Motion Carried unanimously*

**7.4 Link Transit Vision 2020 Performance Plan Update and Evaluation**

Link staff presented a comprehensive update of service improvements promised to voters in the successful 2019 two-tenths sales tax increase ballot initiative. The board has expressed interest in regular reporting on Link's progress toward meeting the Vision 2020 benchmarks promised to voters in 2019 along with a cash-flow analysis to determine if the second-tenth voter-approved sales tax is necessary to achieve the benchmarks. The board has established an agenda item at its March 2024 meeting to discuss whether to ask voters to repeal the second tenth.

The board was generally comfortable with the current measurable benchmarks presented in Vision 2020.

Chair Straub indicated he would reach out to a few board members to discuss additional benchmarks and bring those measurements back to the full board and staff to consider.

**8. STAFF REPORTS**

**8.1 Monthly Financial Report**

The Board was provided an overview of the Agency's financial activity for July of 2023.

### **8.2 HR Report**

Link staff complete this report monthly to inform the Board of Directors on hiring status, open positions and hiring and retention strategies employed by the Administrative Services Department.

### **8.3 Scorecards/System Performance Report**

This report provides an overview of how the system performed during the past month, which is reflective of how the agency is meeting the annual performance goals that were developed through the budgeting process and formally adopted by the board.

### **8.4 Complaints/Commendations**

This summary of complaints and commendations received from Link guests each month provides a tool for Link management and members of the board to gauge how Link services are viewed by those depending on the system for their transportation needs.

## **9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Juanita Ruhnke of Chelan and Douglas counties** expressed the importance of buses running on time and requested phone-charging capability on buses and better access to public restrooms. She thinks facilities should be open longer hours, especially when it is hot outside.

## **10. MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

All business listed on the Agenda had been addressed and with no further business to conduct, Chair Straub adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by   
Selina Danko, Clerk of the Board