

AGENDA ITEM V – A

YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 16, 2021

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (4:07 pm)

Martin called the meeting to order due to the absence of the Board Chair and Vice-Chair. A motion and a second was received to nominate Director Fuhrer as Acting Chair. Prior to a vote being taken, the Vice-Chair, Director Hudson, arrived at 4:08 p.m. at which time he assumed the role of Board Chair.

Present: Bains, Blaser, Fuhrer, Gilchrist (for Buttacavoli), Harris, Hudson (Vice-Chair), and Kirchner (for Shaw)

Absent: Buttacavoli, Micheli, and Shaw (Chair)

II. Public Business from the Floor

None.

III. Consent Calendar

Director Bains made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Director Kirchner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

IV. Reports

A. State Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Grant Application.

Martin introduced the State Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) as a possible funding source for the Next Generation Transit Facility. On November 19, 2021, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) released a call for projects for the 2022 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). These funds are from the State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund provided through SB 862 that also funds the LCTOP program. While this program normally funds projects with rail components, it has also been used for bus projects that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Staff met with CalSTA and Caltrans representatives for an early consultation to determine if the facility project could be eligible for funding under this program.

In 2020, 45 projects were submitted of which 17 were funded. Six of the 17 funded projects included the purchase of zero emission buses, so the need for a zero-emission bus facility would qualify this project for funding. For a rail connection, the Sacramento commuter service utilizes a stop at J and 4th Streets which is one block from the rail station and some Yuba-Sutter Transit passengers have used the service to make that connection. The funding is very flexible, and they are looking for big vision projects. Staff believes that it is possible to pitch a project to the state that will be attractive enough to be funded and the comprehensive operational analysis that will be completed this coming year can help with that recommendation. The case can also be made that CalSTA and Caltrans are part of the Highway 70 expansion project that is a reason for the facility move.

Director Kirchner asked if there was a deadline for the facility to move due to the Caltrans Highway 70 Expansion Project. Martin answered that while there is no solid timeline at this time, the draft project EIR noted that the current facility property would be taken for the project which was expected to begin construction by 2023.

Director Bains made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to sign and submit a 2022 TIRCP grant application as proposed. Director Kirchner seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Legal Services Agreement Amendment.

Martin presented the amendment of the current Legal Services Agreement with Rich, Fuidge, Bordsen & Galyean, Inc. The two purposes of this amendment are to separate Yuba-Sutter Transit from the Regional Waste Management Authority (RWMA) and to adjust the agreement rates with both effective January 1, 2022. Since 1999, legal services for the RWMA have been attached to the Yuba-Sutter Transit agreement since the two agencies share administrative staff. With the RWMA soon to have separate staff, it is necessary to have separate legal agreements. In addition, the rates for services have not been amended since 2007. The request is to increase the rates to \$200 per hour for basic services and \$225 per hour for specific contested matters such as litigation.

Director Bains made a motion to authorize the execution of the legal services agreement as proposed. Director Harris seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

C. Authorization to Fill the Vacant Program Analyst I/II Position.

Martin announced Amy White, who has been the Program Analyst since February 22, 2019, recently announced that she has accepted an Assistant Planner position with the Butte County Association of Governments in Chico and her last day at Yuba-Sutter Transit will be January 14, 2022. To address the vacancy, staff is recommending that the incumbent Administrative Assistant, Janet Frye, be promoted to Step A of the Program Analyst II range effective January 1, 2022. If approved as proposed, this would result in an open Administrative Assistant position and staff anticipates bringing this issue back to the Board at the January meeting for consideration after a review of the job description and salary scale for that open position.

Director Fuhrer made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to fill the vacant Program Analyst I/II position as proposed. Director Bains seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

D. Project & Program Updates

1. COVID-19 Impacts & Response

Martin reported that November continued the year-over-year systemwide monthly ridership growth trend that started in July and took off in August. Average systemwide weekday ridership was up 30% in November over November 2020. On the major services, average weekday ridership was up 29% on the local fixed route service, 75% on the local Dial-A-Ride service, and up 37% on the Sacramento Commuter service over November 2020. While the recovery is still very gradual, November broke the 50% barrier for the first time with average weekday systemwide ridership of 52% of what it was in November 2019. Hopefully this trend will continue. The Sacramento Commuter Service ridership remains at 18% of pre-pandemic levels. With the lack of employees commuting to work for the State and the new COVID-19 variant, it does not appear this will change significantly anytime soon.

Martin noted that since March 2021, Yuba-Sutter Transit has offered free rides on all services for those traveling to or from a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. Originally slated to run through June 2021, the program was extended twice and will now end on December 31, 2021. Use of this program has always been light peaking at 19 trips in April and 11 in May, but no one has used it over the last three months so unless the Board objects, staff intends to let it expire. There were no objections.

Director Blaser asked if the buses were still running at reduced capacities. Martin stated that bus capacity limits ended in July, but drivers still report when they reach a certain capacity or have a standing load on the bus.

2. Regional Waste Management Authority (RWMA) Organizational Transition

At their meeting today, the RWMA Board of Directors will be considering a host of recommendations regarding direct staff for the organization which will change the nearly 34-year joint staffing relationship with Yuba-Sutter Transit. If approved as proposed, recruitment for the new RWMA Executive Director will begin in January with a target start date of April 1, 2022, with a Management Analyst to follow soon after. Yuba-Sutter Transit will continue to provide administrative services for the foreseeable future on a month-to-month basis to provide a phone number, mailing address, basic financial services, and consulting staff support, among other things. Staff will be revisiting the current agreement in the first quarter of the year with any changes to be effective on July 1, 2022.

3. Next Generation Transit Facility Project

The official announcement of awards for the 2021 round of the federal RAISE grant program was released on November 19, 2021, confirming that the Yuba-Sutter Transit's \$20 million grant application was not selected. That same day, staff applied for \$14 million from the federal Buses & Bus Facilities Grant Program. Award announcements for that annual program are expected by the end of March. If unsuccessful this year, an increased level of funding is expected to be available in the next cycle. The new Infrastructure Investments & Job Access Act, however, now requires that we have a Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan to be eligible for future awards from such programs so that is a new challenge to complete by early summer if the current application is unsuccessful and it becomes necessary to apply for funding from this program again.

The award notification for the Regional Housing Authority grant application is expected by late January. This application included \$8.5 million for the transit facility. As noted last month, grant scoring sheets were released which indicate that the local application with a score of 79 out of a possible 85 points will likely be funded.

4. Local & Rural Route Fare Free Service Schedule for the Christmas Holidays (December 20 – 31)

Yuba-Sutter Transit's local and rural routes will operate fare free during the upcoming holiday period of December 20th to 31st. This is part of the ongoing ridership promotion with the lost fares being reimbursed with State Low Carbon Transit Operating Program (LCTOP) funding. Funding for this program, which began during the 2020 Christmas season is expected to be exhausted at the end of June 2022. A full report on the Thanksgiving and Christmas free fare promotions is expected to be presented at the January Board meeting.

V. Correspondence/Information

None.

VI. Other Business

Director Fuhrer requested that a discussion regarding an option for board members to attend meetings via Zoom be added to the next meeting's agenda.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022 AT 4:00 PM
IN THE YUBA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS.**