

AGENDA ITEM III – A

YUBA-SUTTER TRANSIT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES MARCH 18, 2021

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (4:00 pm)

Present: Bains, Blaser, Buttacavoli, Fuhrer, Harris (4:04), Micheli, and Shaw (Chair)

Absent: Hudson

II. Public Business from the Floor

None.

III. Consent Calendar

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

IV. Reports

A. Next Generation Transit Facility Project.

Prior to the presentation of the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations, Director Bains recused himself from the discussion. Chairman Shaw asked Director Micheli to replace Director Bains on the ad hoc committee for any other meetings or discussions. Director Micheli accepted the appointment.

Martin presented the recommendations from the March 1, 2021 meeting of the Ad Hoc Facility Committee. The top three sites were presented to the committee and after careful consideration of site size and configuration; land price; and development and construction costs; Site 3 located at 6035 Avondale Avenue in Linda is the committee's recommendation as the preferred site for the replacement transit facility. This site is currently available for purchase and at the listed price could be purchased without federal funds which will expedite the process since the Caltrans Highway 70 expansion project will require the relocation of the current facility by 2024 or 2025.

Ad Hoc Committee member Buttacovoli stated that the biggest factors for him to recommend Site 3 were the lower price of the site compared to the others considered and the fact that it could be purchased with current funds to avoid any delay in moving forward with the project.

Ad Hoc Committee member Harris concurred with those statements and the overall recommendation.

Director Blaser asked about the elevation of the property in relation to any possible flooding issues. Director Harris stated that it is a higher elevation than the Walmart property. Blaser asked if the building will be one or two stories in size. Martin responded that the conceptual plans assumed a single-story building for space planning purposes, but that part of the facility plan was to look at flood protection and that issue will be considered further during the design and engineering of the facility.

Director Fuhrer asked why Director Bains had recused himself. Martin responded that Director Bains and/or his family has an interest in another site that was being considered. Although it was not one of the three top-ranked sites, until a property is acquired all sites remain in consideration. Director Fuhrer also asked if there would be any issues with the nine homes that abut Site 3. Martin responded that county staff has not expressed any significant concerns and the noise or visual impact of the facility on these single-story homes would certainly be addressed in the design to include a high masonry sound wall.

Director Buttacavoli made a motion to select the property at 6035 Avondale Avenue, Marysville, CA as the preferred site for a replacement maintenance, operations, and administration facility; to authorize staff to draft and submit a Letter of Intent to purchase the subject site pending appraisal and environmental review; and authorize staff to solicit quotes and select a qualified appraiser to ascertain the current fair market value of the property and qualified Registered Environmental Assessor to conduct a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and the appropriate environmental document for the project. Director Harris seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Martin reviewed the next steps for the project including producing a letter of intent to purchase the property and securing a consultant for the Phase 1 environmental study. Assuming the appraisal and environmental review support proceeding with this site, the Board would be asked to authorize the start of negotiations and the final contract would require Board approval.

B. Preliminary Draft Yuba-Sutter Transit Operating and Capital Budgets for FY 2021-22.

Martin introduced the preliminary draft of the Yuba-Sutter Transit Operating and Capital Budget for FY 2021-22. The agency JPA requires a preliminary draft to be submitted to the Board by March each fiscal year with the final budget to be adopted by the end of May. Martin noted that the projected year-end operating expenses for FY 2021 are now expected to be 5.3 percent less than what had been budgeted due to a decrease in COVID related expenses as well as a decrease in projected fuel expenses with lower than anticipated fuel prices.

Recent changes that will be incorporated into the final draft budget include the American Rescue Plan funds which will add \$1.57 million in urban funds and nearly \$500,000 in rural funds to the revenue stream. On the service side, the recently announced reopening of schools for students in 6th through 12th grades may require the operation of additional service hours in both the projected budget for FY 2021 as well as the final draft budget for FY 2022. He also noted that the facility project will now be the singular priority focus for the agency and will dominate the budget for the next few years.

Director Shaw recommended once the budget is adopted in May that it be revisited in August or sooner if necessary due to the changing circumstances due to the American Rescue Plan and the facility project. There were no further questions and Martin stated that a budget update may be on the agenda for the April meeting and a special budget workshop could still be scheduled for late-April or early-May if necessary.

C. Authorizing Resolution for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grant Documents.

Director Bains made a motion to adopt Resolution 2-21 authorizing the Transit Manager, or their designee, to execute all federal grant and contract documents under Sections 5307, 5309, 5310, 5311, 5317, 5339 and BUILD as submitted. Director Buttacavoli seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

D. Annual Authorization for the Transit Manager to Certify as Counsel for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grants.

Director Bains made a motion to adopt Resolution 3-21 authoring the Transit Manager to certify as counsel for FTA grants as proposed. Director Micheli seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

E. Project & Program Updates

1. COVID-19 Impacts & Response

Martin discussed the impacts of COVID-19 one year into the pandemic noting that Yuba City schools are preparing to open for 6th through 12th grades on March 23rd and that Marysville will be reopening in early April. Because neither district will be providing general school bus transport, Yuba-Sutter Transit could become the default bus service for students needing transportation. The expected increase in ridership could result in passengers being left behind due to the current 12 passenger limit. While the passenger limit is not a regulation, it is a best practice to encourage social distancing.

In anticipation of regularly exceeding the current on-board passenger limit as schools reopen, staff is proposing to informally waive the limit to determine the actual impact before any changes are made in the amount of service being provided. This is important because our contractor's ability to suddenly increase service is hampered by staffing availability after a year of reduced service. Staff has been in discussion with both school districts about the possibility of seeking funding from them if additional service is needed. If buses are at capacity during peak periods, one option is to add trailer buses following the regular route to carry the extra passengers. Another option is to return Route 2 to the half-hour weekday service frequency that was operated pre-COVID. In addition, without a strict passenger limit, the Route 1 Express service may no longer be needed, and those two buses could be re-allocated elsewhere.

There were no questions from the Board, but Director Buttacavoli stated that the options were covered very well and that he would be in favor of moving forward with those suggestions.

Martin discussed an issue regarding Marysville Joint Unified School District's foothill students noting that before the pandemic the district was transporting 160 students per day to Marysville High School from the foothills to Marysville. The absence of school bus service may add demand on Yuba-Sutter Transit's Foothill Route which is operated with just one 16 passenger bus. In addition, MJUSD will be in session Tuesday through Friday and the Foothill Route only runs Tuesday through Thursday. Options include use one or more larger buses and adding Friday service if necessary, but funding has been requested from the district if additional service is added.

Finally, Martin proposed offering free rides for those travelling to and from COVID vaccination appointments. This service is now being offered by several transit services elsewhere and the Bi-County Public Health Department is very supportive. As proposed, the service would be offered through the end of June and then be reevaluated to determine if it needs to continue. While it would be available on all services, it is not expected to result in a big increase in demand, but it would be a high-profile service that would take away one barrier for people to receive their vaccination. Riders would simply need to provide proof of appointment to the driver. With Board concurrence, the service would be effective starting Monday, March 22nd. Director Bains and Harris stated they thought it was a good idea and the board concurred with moving forward with the service. Martin thanked the Board for their support stating that a press release would be sent on Monday announcing the new service.

2. First annual Zero Emission Bus Report (Due March 31, 2021)

Martin stated that the first report is due at the end of March. This annual report provides a baseline for how many zero emission buses are in the fleet which will be zero. A compliance plan is due July 1, 2023 and any bus orders made beginning January 2026 must include at least 25 percent zero emission buses. Beginning January 2029, all buses ordered must be zero emission buses.

Though not on the agenda, staff briefed the Board on a proposed grant application by the Regional Housing Authority for a major low-income housing project in Yuba City. This grant requires significant expenditures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with transit playing a significant role in that process. Details on the project are expected to be presented to the Board in April, but as currently proposed it would include funding for the purchase three battery electric commuter buses and related charging equipment; two battery electric Dial-a-Ride buses and related charging equipment; and improvements and enhancements for up to eight bus stops in the Garden Highway area of Yuba City. It could also ultimately include additional solar capacity at the new facility to provide direct charging for the buses. Applications are due June 8th with award announcements expected in October 2021. This package of transit projects would provide an obvious financial benefit to the Yuba-Sutter Transit, improve the Housing Authority application, and make us more competitive for some facility fund sources.

V. Correspondence/Information

A. Martin shared the article from Transit California's February 2021 publication featuring Yuba-Sutter Transit among other agencies recognizing the 2020 Transit Professional of the Year award that was given to frontline transit workers.

B. Martin shared the California Transit Association op-ed that was published in Capital Weekly regarding prioritizing transit workers for COVID-19 vaccinations. The association has been working for some time to elevate transit workers to the list of essential workers who are automatically eligible for vaccinations. Since the posting of the agenda, transit workers were added to the list on March 11th. Renick House, Storer Transit Systems General Manager, stated that it has been over two months since the last reported positive COVID test among employees and that approximately 18 to 20 employees have or are now in the process of being vaccinated.

Director Shaw expressed the Board's gratitude to all of the Yuba-Sutter Transit and Storer Transit Systems employees for all of the hard work that has been done over this past year.

VI. Other Business

None.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021 AT 4:00 PM IN THE YUBA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTICED.