

**MINUTES FOR THE HUMBOLDT TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

October 4, 2023

**PRESENT**

Board Members

Tami Trent, City of Fortuna  
Alex Stillman, City of Arcata  
Leslie Castellano, City of Eureka  
Steve Ladwig, City of Trinidad  
Debra L. Garnes, City of Rio Dell (Alt)  
Natalie Arroyo, County of Humboldt  
Mike Wilson, County of Humboldt  
Debra Garnes, City of Rio Dell

**ABSENT**

Julie Woodall, City of Rio Dell

Staff

Greg Pratt, General Manager  
Consuelo Espinosa, Human Resources Manager  
Katie Collender, Finance Manager  
Carolann Aggeler, Administration and Finance Assistant  
Andi Evans, Bookkeeper  
Brian Connors, Operations Manager  
Jerome Qiriaz, Transit Planner  
Sherry Dunlap, Safety & ADA Coordinator  
Jim Wilson, Director of Maintenance

Also in attendance was Nancy Diamond, HTA's Legal Counsel; Oona Smith, HCAOG; Colin Fiske, Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities; Stevie Luther, HCAOG; Catherine Sundquist, CAE; and Members of the Public; Joann McGarry, Sean Powers, and Carly Tambling.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Arroyo called the meeting to order at 9:08 am.

**ROLL CALL & Introductions**

Introductions were made.

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS COMMUNICATION**

Natalie Arroyo announced an opening meeting to introduce Joann McGarry, a member of the public who lives in Arcata. Joann was introduced as having written a letter to the editor of the North Coast Journal about car free existence at the time when bus rides were free in Arcata. Joann explained that inflation has changed everything and that she would like HTA to consider offering free rides again. She also expressed the need for earlier and late-night service, as well as mentioned that current bus fares were not affordable, and the idea of simplifying boarding and navigating the different bus fare types. She also added that service needs to be increased on Saturday as well as adding Sunday service and suggested that HTA look for a new location to move the bus stop out of the Arcata Transit Center, including ways to promote ridership.

## SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

## CONSENT CALENDAR

By motion, recommend the approval of the following items considered to be routine and enacted in one motion. Items may be removed from the consent calendar upon request and will be heard separately.

*Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Councilmember Ladwig to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously.*

Minutes from October 4, 2023, Regular Board Meeting

### Items Removed from Consent Calendar

None

### Reports

1. Draft July 2023 statistics and financial statements for all systems operated by HTA

Finance Manger Katie Collender announced that the Financial Statements now include the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) stats. She also added that there was an 8% increase in total ridership, and an increase in Month and Jack Pass purchases.

#### Public Comment:

Colin Fiske suggested that HTA consider including targets as listed in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Joann McGarry recommended that HTA seek a new location for the Arcata Transit Center bus stop.

### New Business

1. Unmet Transportation Needs Public Hearing FY 2024/25

As a requirement of the Transportation Development Act, every year HCAOG partners with transit agencies and the public to complete the Unmet Transportation needs process. Stevie Luther with HCAOG opened a public hearing to allow citizens to comment on transit needs in Humboldt.

*Three members of the public were present and expressed the following unmet needs:*

- *More frequent service Monday-Saturday, add Sunday Service*
- *Late night service on Friday & Saturday*
- *Earlier weekday service for RTS & ETS, bring back pre-covid schedule*
- *Service to Glendale/Murphy's Market now that Blue Lake Transit is not operating*

*The public hearing closed at 9:45 am.*

2. Letters of Support

General Manager Greg Pratt announced that HTA Staff often receives requests for letters of support from agencies applying for grants. Most of the requests benefit HTA and its passengers such as for road

improvements and improved facilities for passengers. He also added that all letters of support submitted to HTA must be authorized by the Board. Because of submission timelines and Board meeting dates, sometimes HTA is not able to accommodate agency requests. He added that staff is requesting that the Board authorize the Ad Hoc Committee to approve letters of support that are time sensitive to agencies applying for grant funds and that the General Manager be authorized to sign such letters.

***Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Councilmember Arroyo to Authorize the Ad Hoc Committee to approve Letters of Support for signature by the General Manager and requesting staff come back to the Board with a Legislation Platform for review. Motion carried unanimously.***

3. Blue Lake Transportation

Greg Pratt announced that HTA was contacted by the Blue Lake Rancheria and the City of Blue Lake to see about transportation options that HTA could provide since the service operated by Blue Lake Rancheria in the area had ended. He added that HTA performed a test run through Blue Lake with the Willow Creek Intercity bus to chart the best route and timing using a 40' bus. And, that the proposed routes and bus stops were accepted by both the city and the Rancheria. Additionally, staff estimates servicing two bus stops in Blue Lake with three westbound trips to Arcata and two return trips would cost approximately \$32,000/year. Finally, with approval staff could have the system up and running in one week, while collecting more data around the possibility of servicing the Blue Lake Murphy's Market in the future.

***Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Councilmember Stillman to Approve Transportation for the City of Blue Lake and the Blue Lake Rancheria by Utilizing the Willow Creek Intercity System. Motion carried unanimously.***

4. HTA Projects Update

HTA's Transit Planner Jerome Qiriazzi gave the board an update on the following projects:

1. The Hydrogen Fueling Stations Request for Qualifications response was due on 09/29, and that staff would be reviewing submissions and taking recommendations for Qualified Bidders to release to the Adhoc Committee on October 11.
2. The RFP is tentatively planned for release on October 16. Staff is working with consultants CTE and Schatz Center to craft the design and performance specifications.
3. A report on Tap & Pay was reviewed with data provided for the last three months. The Tap & Pay is currently not advertised as it is in the soft roll out stages with apple or google pay options which seems to be working great.
4. Zero Emissions Fleet update with two additional charging stations and New Flyer buses. Additionally, HTA is working on a grant team to partner with Culver City transit to develop a prototype hydrogen cutaway.

5. Microtransit Pilot Program with Service to Samoa

Katie Collender informed the board that over the last seven months, staff has been working with Dial-a-Ride (DAR) provided by CAE Transport and RideCo to implement new dispatching software that will allow the microtransit pilot program to be open to the regular public. The proposed microtransit fares will be \$4.00 per zone without a cap, using the DAR zones. Katie also announced that staff would like to open the DAR vacancies, bus stop to bus stop to the general public and add a microtransit vehicle to the Eureka and Samoa zones with a soft opening on or around October 23,2023. Finally, after a testing period, microtransit will be marketed as a part of the Ride Humboldt brand structure.

**Feedback & Public Comment:**

Councilmember Wilson requested that in the future when HTA implements pilot programs, a report be added to the board packet providing a status on how those programs are doing to date.

Joann McGarry, a member of the public, suggested that making it easier for people to get on the bus and around the community should be primary. Also added that some riders may still have flip phones and that too many choices can be frustrating for some.

Councilmember Wilson suggested assisting the public on how to download the Transit App. General Manager Greg Pratt stated that this was a pilot program giving Samoa, Old Arcata Road, and Blue Lake more service leaving the RTS system open for the possibility of providing a more express service. Colin Fiske suggested that HTA publish clear and straight forward information to everyone not just existing riders so that the general public understands how the system works. Additionally he added the importance of marketing services with the goal of increasing ridership. Finally, Councilmember Natalie Arroyo suggested the possibility of running a test run while inviting volunteer participants.

### **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**

Councilmember Arroyo shared that she was participating in the week without driving supporting public transit. Suggested later night weekday service.

Councilmember Stillman announced that she dedicated all day on Monday to riding transit during the week without driving.

Councilmember Wilson would like to promote riding transit every day, and recommended that riders use a flashlight during the dark hours, as well as how to get the word out for downloading the Transit App.

Mayor Debra Garnes would like to explore ideas to promote ridership. She also added that for those transit riders who live in Rio Dell, she made mention that it was difficult to judge the time frames when they utilize transit to and from work. She stated maybe 9:00 am.

### **STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

NONE

### **CLOSED SESSION**

NONE

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.