



**BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**MINUTES**

September 20, 2019 - 10:00 a.m. Meeting  
*Ben Franklin Transit Board Room*  
*1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland*

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Executive Committee member Bob Koch.
2. Roll Call: Geoff Wagner completed roll call, by jurisdiction.

<b>BFCG Board Members in Attendance</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Ben Franklin Transit	Bob Koch
Benton City	Linda Lehman
Connell	Lee Barrow
Kennewick	Chuck Torelli
Pasco	Ruben Alvarado
Prosser	Randy Taylor (alternate to Mary Ruth Edwards)
Richland	Phil Lemley (alternate to Brad Anderson)
<b>Economic Development District (EDD) Private Sector Members in Attendance</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Prosser EDA	Deb Heintz
TRIDEC	David Chavey-Reynaud (alternate to Carl Adrian)
Visit Tri-Cities	Kim Shugart (alternate to Michael Novakovich)
Community First Bank	Amanda Jones
Baker Giles	Carol Woo
A S Klein Engineering, PLLC	Andrew Klein

**BFCG Staff Present:**

Stephanie Seamans, Executive Director  
 Patrick Pittenger, Transportation Programs Manager  
 Erin Braich, Transportation Programs Planning Specialist II  
 Tanner Martin, Transportation Planning Specialist II  
 Geoff Wagner, Transportation Planning Specialist II

Geoff Wagner indicated a quorum present for BFCG and the EDD.

3. **Guests:**  
 Maria Pena, City of Connell

4. **Public Comment:** None

5. **Approval of Agenda:** A MOTION was made by Phil Lemley to approve the BFCG Board Agenda and SECONDED by Lee Barrow. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Approval of Minutes:** A MOTION was made by Lee Barrow to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held August 16, 2019, and SECONDED by Kim Shugart. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Presentation:** None

8. **Consent Agenda:**

- A. Voucher Summary August 17, 2019 to September 20, 2019 in the amount of \$128,214.30. A MOTION was made by Chuck Torelli to approve Consent Agenda and SECONDED by Andrew Klein. The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Recess BFCG**

10. **Convene Benton-Franklin Economic Development District (EDD)**

11. **Reports and Discussion Items:**

A. BFEDD Loan Trial Balance Report

Stephanie reported the EDD loan report is similar to the last meeting. Lonestar Innovations has not declared bankruptcy, and has indicated there is interest from buyers for their Richland and Kennewick locations. The BFCG attorney will be providing notice to the Pasco location's landlord on the matter to remind them of BFCG's position on the collateral in the building.

The Alley Enterprises loan closed on September 5<sup>th</sup>. It is a \$200,000 loan. There have been recent meetings with potential loan clients.

Stephanie indicated that she recently attended an AWC budget workshop and a statewide MPO meeting in Spokane with Patrick on the 27<sup>th</sup>, both of which were very helpful.

12. **Action Items EDD**

A. Recommendation to approve the 2019 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) update – Resolution 7-19

Stephanie Seamans noted the current CEDS committee annual update project list is not a requirement anymore. The current CEDS document does include a list which helps the committee keep track of the region's submitted projects and also helps with supporting the projects. The CEDS is a requirement of the EDA grant BFCG receives.

A MOTION was made by David Chavey-Reynaud to approve the Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDs) update and SECONDED by Andrew Klein. The motion passed unanimously.

13. **Adjourn EDD**

#### 14. Reconvene BFCG

#### 15. Reports and Discussion Items

##### A. BFCG Executive Director Report

Stephanie reported she attended an MPO financial meeting in Yakima with many other MPO financial staff on how the agencies handle their administration and how they organize their finances. There was also a representative from the Washington State Archives office to present and answer any questions regarding data management.

##### B. Briefing on Connell Rail Interchange Improvement Project

Maria Pena with the City of Connell gave an update on the Connell Rail Interchange project. The interchange location would be a mile south of town to allow train cars to switch and change direction without having to travel to Pasco to head north. It would improve safety and response time of first responders. Currently, the project has received Connecting Washington funding, but the project is still in need of additional construction funding. BNSF is currently studying the project and they hope to have a report in January.

##### C. Update on Congestion Management Process Development

Erin updated the group on the Congestion Management Process (CMP). BFCG is currently utilizing the travel demand model and INRIX traffic data to study congested corridors in the metropolitan area. The next meeting will be in October along with a public open house later this fall.

##### D. 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Obligation Status

Patrick gave an update on the region's obligation status. The BFCG is required to meet its target every year. The funds the area receives must be used to meet the obligation target or the funds have the potential to be sanctioned. This year our target is \$2 million dollars and we are currently \$121,000 within meeting that target with potential projects obligating before the end of the federal fiscal year. Next year the target will be about \$5 million for our region and it's very important that the target is met or slightly over to avoid any possible sanctions.

##### E. 2020-2025 Draft Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Open House

Patrick noted that BFCG is in the process of developing the Draft 2020 TIP which will be approved by the state and USDOT after the final draft has been approved regionally in October. BFCG hosted a 2020-2025 TIP Open House at the Pasco Library and would like to thank the agencies which attended and answered questions about their projects.

##### F. Development of Annual Transportation Legislative Project List

Patrick discussed the need for a regional list of project priorities to be shared with multiple partners. A similar list has been prepared in the past. BFCG staff is seeking proposed transportation projects for the list from member jurisdictions. The list is important for legislature and grant funding opportunities pursued by member jurisdictions. BFCG recently met with Troy Berglund because of his role with the Tri-Cities Legislative Council – one of the entities which receives the BFCG regional list. Patrick noted that it's important that the board members consider what their jurisdiction may wish to include on this list and

to discuss with their TAC representatives as needed. Stephanie indicated Troy will come and talk about the process with the board at a future meeting to discuss how the Tri-Cities Legislative Council uses such a regional list. Todd Trepanier indicated to the group that this is very important for future funding for our region particularly with a Joint Transportation Committee statewide needs study getting underway. WSDOT is looking to MPOs to be the primary voice for transportation needs. BFCG should work with the local Good Roads group as well to ensure that the Good Roads priorities are consistent with those of the MPO. Ruben Alvarado is president of the local Good Roads chapter and stated they will work with BFCG on regional priorities. Bob Koch mentioned it has always been a problem in the past for many entities to agree on a regional list. Linda Lehman asked if the priorities could include any road. Patrick noted it does include any transportation priority with regional consensus and that he would send out a reminder to all the jurisdictions through their TAC members soon.

**G. Discussion Regarding the 2019 Call for Projects**

Patrick discussed the call for projects scheduled for later this year. The TAC has been working with BFCG staff to draft a TIP policies and procedures document for the agency. The policies and procedures are related to the call for projects. A good example being the definition of a regionally significant project. There is a federal definition of "regionally significant", but it can go beyond that definition and is something the region needs to determine. There is significant flexibility for the call for projects. The final allocation of funds will be decided by the board. The call for projects will be a regional prioritization approach - not by city or county. Categories for funding include urban large, rural, and urban small (which only Prosser qualifies for). A fourth category is called Any Area funding which can be used in any or all of the three funding categories. The scoring process will be developed with the TAC to make sure it's regionally competitive.

**16. New Business:**

**A. Resolution 08-19 Appointment of Agent to Receive Claims**

A MOTION was made by Randy Taylor to approve Resolution 08-19 Appointment of Agent to Receive Claims and SECONDED by Ruben Alvarado. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Approve the BFCG Performance and Expenditure Annual Report for the Period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019**

Patrick noted BFCG is required to complete a Performance and Expenditure Annual report every year. This year was an improvement over the previous year with a positive outcome.

A MOTION was made by Lee Barrow to approve the BFCG Performance and Expenditure Annual Report for the period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 and SECONDED by Randy Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Approve the certification of Benton County's Amended Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element

Erin thanked Benton County for working with BFCG staff on the transportation element of their comprehensive plan update. BFCG staff recommends the certification of the amended transportation element.

A MOTION was made by Randy Taylor to approve the certification of Benton County's amended comprehensive plan transportation element, SECONDED by Lee Barrow. The motion passed unanimously.

**17. Comments/Announcements for the good of both the BFCG/EDD**

Phil Lemley mentioned the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) which he and Chuck Torelli are members. The HAB has recently been interested in the congestion on State Route 240 and George Washington Way. They are planning to send a white paper on ideas with Hanford contractors on the traffic issues regarding the commute. If everyone gets involved with the issues it could have an impact. Patrick noted there is currently a State north/south corridor study by the City of Richland, City of West Richland, Benton County, and WSDOT evaluating alternatives which serve Hanford and other employers. Patrick also noted the need in the Tri-Cities to include transportation demand management (TDM) strategies in our planning efforts, as possible solutions to congestion include alternatives like staggered start times during peak hours.

Linda Lehman also mentioned how the Hanford traffic affects Benton City during peak times.

Amanda Jones asked if voter Initiative 976 (which would reduce car tab fees) would have an impact on funding for the area. Patrick noted that both Prosser and Richland have car tab fees associated with their Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD). If I-976 passes they would lose those funds. Ben Franklin Transit would also lose funding as well if I-976 is passed by voters.

Stephanie mentioned she attended an encouraging meeting this morning pertaining to a new person named Moses Ayiku who has been hired to administer the small business development center at WSU. His office is located in TRIDEC and he has a lot of experience with business development.

Chuck Torelli noted his visit to Washington DC and how the Hanford area is changing how they do business with contractors. The outcome should help smaller local contractors in the area.

Ruben Alvarado noted he will be the primary BFCG Board representative and Blanche Barajas will be the alternate.

## 18. Adjournment

**Adjourned** - 11:02 a.m.

**Next Meeting: *Friday, October 18, 2019***  
**Location: *Ben Franklin Transit Board Room***  
**Meeting starts promptly at *10:00 a.m.***

Approved at the October 18, 2019 meeting:

  
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Nicholas (Skip) Novakovich, BFCG President