



# BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## MINUTES

May 17, 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 Board Secretary Vicky Gordon.
2. Roll Call: Stephanie Seamans completed roll call, by jurisdiction.

<b>BFCG Board Members in Attendance</b>		
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Alternate</b>
Port of Kennewick		
Franklin County	Brad Peck - Vice President	
Ben Franklin Transit	Bob Koch	
Benton City	Linda Lehman	
Benton County		
Benton PUD		
Connell		
Kahlotus		
Kennewick	Chuck Torelli	
Mesa		
Pasco		Ruben Alvarado
Port of Benton		
Port of Pasco	Vicky Gordon - Secretary	
Prosser		
Richland		Phil Lemley
West Richland	Ken Stoker	
WSDOT		Troy Suing
<b>Economic Development District (EDD) Private Sector Members</b>		
<b>Representing</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Alternate</b>
A.S. Klein Engineering		
Baker Giles		
Community First Bank	Amanda Jones	
Community First Bank		
Elite Construction & Dev.		
Prosser EDA		
TRIDEC		David Chavey-Reynaud
Visit Tri-Cities		Kim Shugart
Worksource Tri-Cities		

**BFCG Staff:**

Stephanie Seamans, Executive Director  
Patrick Pittenger, Transportation Programs Manager  
Erin Braich, Transportation Planning Specialist II  
Tony Kalmbach, Transportation Planning Specialist II

Stephanie indicated a quorum present for BFCG.

3. **Guests:** None

4. **Public Comment:** None

5. **Approval of Agenda:**

A MOTION was made by Bob Koch to approve the *BFCG Board Agenda* and SECONDED by Phil Lemley. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes were approved as presented.

7. **Presentation:** Planning tools presentation given to the House State Government & Tribal Relations Committee on April 23, 2019 was shared with the Board. Amanda Jones pointed out that the new method of displaying traffic count data could be useful to lenders in the area.

8. **Consent Agenda:**

A. Voucher Summary April 19 to May 17, 2019. A MOTION was made by Phil Lemley to approve *Consent Agenda* and SECONDED by Ruben Alvarado. The motion passed unanimously.

9. **Reports and Discussion Items:**

A. BFCG Executive Director Report

Lux Management Company has a \$250,000 loan for the update of her building to put in an elevator and other improvements. Stephanie will notify members if they plan on having a ribbon cutting in case anyone would like to attend.

Dickey's BBQ had a loan modification that was approved by the board in February. The borrower is current on his reduced (interest-only) payments. The reason for the loan modification was to allow the borrower to catch up on other payments. Staff is expecting that he will use the time to get "caught-up" before the loan goes back into full repayment. Staff has been informed that the borrower has received a legal notice concerning back rent in Kennewick – the fourth within the past two years. Staff is monitoring that activity. Amanda Jones asked if there was any plan with Rick Peenstra to request a formal plan from Dickey's BBQ. Stephanie stated that she would follow-up with Rick to request something in writing regarding a formal plan. Amanda stated that this can be helpful to get the client back on track. Brad Peck asked that staff review the loan agreement to ensure that we are not asking for things that the borrower is not required to provide.

The federal and state regulators for Transportation were here last Wednesday for a meeting to review the draft work program for next fiscal year. The review is conducted to prepare BFCG for certification review and to check in on how the agency is doing. Both federal and state agencies gave input on areas BFCG is doing well and where the agency can improve. There are a lot of regulations and there is confidence in staff's ability to meet the requirements and maintain BFCG's certification.

Stephanie and Patrick went to the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) to meet with their agency leadership. SRTC differs from BFCG in that it is a transportation planning agency – not a COG with other functions. SRTC has experienced some of the same issues that BFCG is currently working on and it is nice to have a good connection to gain insight from. Their organization is made up of an Executive Director working in transportation, an administrative person who acts as the human resources and finance person, and several other support staff. SRTC was generous to share their policies and procedures to help BFCG.

Audit information is due May 30 for the three agencies BFCG submits and Stephanie is working with the bookkeeper to complete it.

Stephanie said that Patrick has been doing a great job attending MPO statewide meetings to learn about issues other MPO's are dealing with and to gain insight on state policies and procedures.

Stephanie discussed the need for human resources services for BFCG and has met with three firms which could potentially provide those services.

Stephanie discussed the 2020 budget. The 2019 budget is identical to the previous year's budget. The new budget will be laid-out so that everyone understands the budget of the agency.

Stephanie discussed work with the public facilities districts (PFDs). The Benton County PFD is up to date. The Tri-Cities Regional PFD did not have a quorum for their scheduled meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>, so it will be rescheduled when it is convenient for them.

Stephanie discussed agency discussions with EDA and catching up with obligations under the current grant.

BFCG's lease on the building it occupies is up at the end of April of next year. Once the ongoing other work is complete, staff will make finding a building that meets the agency needs a higher priority. The current building is not suitable to conduct agency business for multiple reasons including a small meeting room which prevents BFCG from holding meetings onsite. There have

been additional issues with phone service as well. When projects begin to get caught up, Stephanie would like to begin talking with the Executive Committee about options for a future location.

Phil Lemley asked about the monthly rent of over \$5,000 paid to the landlord being appropriate. Stephane responded yes, that is the rent, and added that the landlord is aware of our intent to leave. The landlord may be willing to hold us over a month or two to ensure all records and equipment are cleaned up. A staff member was assigned to work with the State Archives to ensure compliance, but she resigned. Staff is exploring new means to get this project completed. Phil Lemley asked if the records were all paper or if there some digital. Stephanie said that the agency has been digitizing documents over the past few years, but the agency has been in operation for 50 years, so there are more recent and many old documents that need to be archived.

Stephanie passed around a document requesting members of the Board to list their social media representative so that BFCG can help make announcements on behalf of our partner agencies. This topic recently came up when staff reached out to another agency. Stephanie asked that if partner agencies would like BFCG to help promote anything to please contact Magdelyn Monroy of BFCG staff.

Stephanie noted that the agency will look at future staff needs and will come back to the Board with additional information. The agency will need support with public records retention and perhaps additional administrative functions

**B. Travel Demand Model Authorization Agreement**

Included with the packet is an updated Travel Demand Model Authorization form. BFCG did have one in place, but this is an updated version that provides a bit more information. Local jurisdictions will often work with consultants to do studies. With this agreement, BFCG will be aware of uses of the model and ensure coordination.

**C. Informational Updates on Various Topics**

BFCG is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and moved into the category of being a Transportation Management Area (TMA) after the last census because there are over 200,000 in the urbanized area. There is a review coming in the spring of 2020 that is done every four years for TMA's. The last meeting was in 2016 and there were some items that were identified that have yet to be addressed, so we have six months to get all the information together for submission in advance of the review in spring of 2020.

Staff completed an update of the Freight and Goods Transportation system data that WSDOT requested. The agency was in a good place to do this due to the regional traffic count program.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is in a public comment period right now. The board approved a draft at the last meeting and we expect to bring it back in June for approval. There were some comments from WSDOT and USDOT. They said they would like to see one task separated from other tasks. We are making a few adjustments, but no changes are expected to the funding sources or overall budget amount.

Staff made some administrative modifications for the Transportation Improvement Program for the City of Pasco. The modifications made did not require Board approval. One of the modifications was a change to Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funding. The modification allowed for the remainder of the allocated money to be programmed. The second modification was Pasco requesting a project be moved from 2019 to 2020. Patrick stated the region would receive HIP funding again for this year and is waiting to find out how much would be available.

The agency will be doing a call for projects in the fall for STBG and TAP funds which was last done in 2017. The recently approved HIP funding will be added to the process this fall as well.

Patrick talked about the yearly TIP Managers Users Group (TMUG) meeting. This is attended by key WSDOT staff and state MPO's. Geoff also attended the meeting. One important topic discussed was performance measures. WSDOT needs to see how performance measures are going to be applied in project prioritization. BFCG typically receives about five million dollars a year to allocate to different projects and is involved in performance measure setting. Another topic discussed was obligation of programmed funding by local agencies in each region. The state is currently at 33% obligated, but our agency is only at about 5% obligated at this time. Patrick sent out notifications to all jurisdictions requesting a report on where projects are and how things are going. Missing obligation requirements over time could endanger funding.

Patrick mentioned the RTPO funding distribution was completed. BFCG's share will increase only slightly as expected. An additional increase of \$11,000 over the biennium due to a statewide budget increase is expected depending on final approval of the budget and distribution of funds by WSDOT. There are no expected changes to BFCG's work program due to the change in funding.

The federal BUILD grant is a nationwide competitive funding program and is currently available. One jurisdiction mentioned interest in applying for the grant so far.

Patrick discussed that there would be a call for projects in the fall. Currently staff is working to determine the final amount of funding available for the call for projects. There will be a significant amount of money available for projects to be programmed in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Patrick talked about the recent Air Quality Outreach and Education Campaign that kicked off May 1. This is a partnership between Ecology, Benton County Clean Air and BFCG. This will be an effort to notify the community about the air quality in our region and alert our community when there might be poor air quality days. This is important to our region and could encompass Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties.

**10. New Business:**

- A. Recommendation to Approve 2019-2024 TIP Amendments  
A MOTION was made by Chuck Torelli to *Approve 2019-2024 TIP Amendments* and SECONDED by Phil Lemley. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- B. Recommendation to Adopt the Public Participation Plan  
A MOTION was made by Ruben Alvarado to *Adopt the Public Participation Plan* and SECONDED by Chuck Torelli. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- C. Recommendation to Adopt BFCG's Updated Title VI Plan  
A MOTION was made by Brad Peck to *Adopt BFCG's Updated Title VI Plan* and SECONDED by Linda Lehman. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- D. Recommendation to authorize the Board President and Interim Executive Director to sign and submit 2019 Certifications and Assurances  
A MOTION was made by Linda Lehman to authorize the Board President, Skip Novakovich and the Exertive Director, Stephanie Seamans to sign and submit the 2019 Certifications and Assurances and was SECONDED by Chuck Torelli. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- E. Resolution 05-19 Resolution of the Board of the Benton Franklin Council of Governments Ratifying Executive Committee Action

Brad Peck stated that after extensive discussion and review of Stephanie Seamans by the Executive Committee, Stephanie was offered the position of Executive Director on a permanent basis with the approval of the resolution proposed in this agenda item.

A MOTION was made by Brad Peck to approve Resolution 05-19 as read and SECONDED by Bob Koch. The motion passed unanimously.

Board members congratulated Stephanie.

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

Kim Shugart provided an update on the Lime information she discussed at last month's board meeting. Lime is a rental company for bikes and electric scooters. There was a presentation at the Prosser Economic Development meeting. They have been working with Lime about the idea of bringing

dockless electric scooters to the area. Next week they will be coming into town to facilitate the conversation and they will be presenting to her Board of Directors. Kim said that there are pros and cons to bringing something like this to our community. She said that if anyone wanted more information about Lime they could contact her or Gretchen at Visit TRI-CITIES. Gretchen will be handling the RSVP's for the meeting if anyone would like to attend.

**Adjourned - 10:50 a.m.**

**Next Meeting: *Friday, June 21, 2019***  
***Location: Ben Franklin Transit Board Room***  
***Meeting starts promptly at 10:00 a.m.***

Approved at the June 21, 2019 meeting:

  
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Nicholas (Skip) Novakovich, BFCG President