

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

FRIDAY

9:00 A.M.

July 16, 2021

PRESENT:

**Neoma Jardon, Reno City Council Member, Chair
Ed Lawson, Mayor of Sparks, Vice Chair
Vaughn Hartung, Washoe County Commissioner
Oscar Delgado, Reno City Council Member**

**Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director
Adam Spear, Legal Counsel
Kristina Swallow, Director of NDOT**

NOT PRESENT:

Bob Lucey, Washoe County Commissioner

The regular monthly meeting, held in the Chambers of the Washoe County Commission, 1001 E. 9th Street, Reno, Nevada, was called to order by Chair Jardon. Following the roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our country, the Board conducted the following business:

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Representatives from the Abby Agency gave presentation was given on the “**Locked Eyes Save Lives**” Pedestrian and Driver Safety Awareness Campaign.

Following the presentation, Commissioner Hartung asked if LiDAR might eventually integrate with cell phones so that the phone stops working when approaching an intersection (as an example). Discussion then took place on the potential safety options for pedestrians and drivers, bicyclists, etc.

Item 2 PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Jardon opened the meeting to public input and called on anyone wishing to speak on topics relevant to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) that are not included in the current agenda.

Mr. Chip Evans, representing Indivisible Northern Nevada, is concerned that the RTC is not providing safe, affordable and reliable transportation and believes the contract with Keolis should be abandoned.

Ms. Jenny Brekhus, a Councilmember for the City of Reno, Ward 1, spoke in support of the drivers’ union strike.

Mr. Earl Brynelsen, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers’ union strike.

Ms. Debbie Cackins, representing Teamsters Local 533, spoke in support of the drivers’ union strike.

Ms. Amanda Nelson, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Ms. Chastity Lockridge, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Ms. Andrea Gray, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Ms. Lisa Hickman, representing Teamsters Local 533, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Mr. Carlos Elizondo, local resident, asked for someone to negotiate and end the strike.

Mr. Edward Ogg, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Ms. Susan Ogg, local resident, spoke in support of the drivers' union strike.

Mr. John Hester, representing TRPA, spoke in favor of Item 4.10 TRPA Contribution Request Letter.

Written comments were submitted as follow (verbatim):

Mr. John Locke, local resident - Dear Governor, Senators, RTC Board, and Board Members I am writing you with a concern about the RTC (Regional Transportation Commission) of Washoe County and their contract with Keolis Trans America. I have read a few news articles that RTC Commission Board is forgiving "Millions" of TAX PAYER Dollars in fines that Keolis has accrued for parked Buses and non-filled requirements (as not having a permanent General Manager for this Property). This is something that has me thinking what else is the RTC Washoe Board hiding or not charging the Keolis Company per their contract that the TAX PAYERS have to pay for. I know that the Union and Keolis are in negotiations for a new contract (negotiations Beginning this Month of July, and Keolis was hired to but the Union) for the Drivers. Why should the TAX PAYERS of Nevada have to pay fir a company to park buses and make the Citizens of Reno/Sparks and Washoe County stand in 104+ Degrees Temperatures while Keolis, a for profit company, makes money and not be fined per there contract between the RTC Washoe County Board and Keolis!! That to me is just bad business and we, as Citizens, Should not have to offset the coast. In July of 2019 Keolis took over the operations of the Washoe County bus Transportation system and from day one the system has been progressively failing the Residents of its Cities of Reno Sparks as well as the County of Washoe in Providing a Clean, Safe, and Reliable form of transportation!! In 202 when the Coronavirus hit the Nevada area, Keolis did as little as they could financially to protect its drivers or customers (with few to no PPE's which should have been provided from the onset of the pandemic) as well as spend as little money as they could in disinfection or cleaning the buses. There where drivers that ended up in the Hospital and all Keolis did was the Bare Minimum for them. That is another sad responsibly from Keolis. The drivers of RTC Ride are and always will be "Essential Workers" of the Cities of Reno Sparks and the County of Washoe!!! Keolis thinks that all we are is disposable employees behind the wheel of them and to be taken advantage of, then disregarded and pushed to the curb thanklessly. As a TAX PAYER and worker of RTC Ride I find what the RTC Washoe County Board is doing is Wrong and Disrespectful in mor then one way. I, as well as many of my fellow co-workers would like to see that the RTC Washoe Board start to show more compassion for the people that have provided a critical function on the front lines, before, during, and continuing from the Pandemic of the World.

Mr. Gary Watson, representing Teamsters Local 533 –

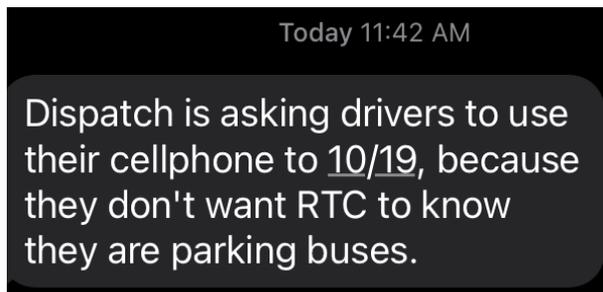
1. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Jardon,

Below is a text message I received today. This is the second time this week I have received this message. Dispatch doesn't have authority to direct these decisions this is being directed by Keolis Management to be deceitful, so the RTC does not hold Keolis accountable to Liquidated Damages.

I find it alarming that Keolis wishes to waste Washoe County tax payers dollars and not be held accountable to the Agreement between RTC and Keolis. I would appreciate a full investigation into this matter, I am sure the public would too.

Thank you for you time,

Gary Watson



2. The Union and more than likely the tax paying public would like to know the findings and if any liquidated damages have been applied and actually charged to Keolis. We would appreciate a report on that matter at the next RTC meeting.

3. Mr. Thomas,

You have 17 to 19 parked busses today. Section 302 B. of the RTC Washoe and Keolis Transit Agreement calls for Liquidated Damages to be imposed at \$1000.00 per occurrence of a “missed trip”. Also in this same Section it identifies Key Personnel (detailed in Section 201 B.) A General Manager is part of the Key Personnel, Keolis Transit has been without a General Manager since Abul Hassan was terminated for alleged embezzlement in February 2021, according to Texas Mike Ake, VP for Keolis. In Section 302 B. and Section 201 B. of the Agreement between RTC Washoe and Keolis Transit it calls for Liquidated Damages of \$1000.00 per day after 30 days of Keolis not having a General Manager (key personnel) in place. By my simple math calculations Keolis owes the RTC (Washoe County Tax Payers) roughly \$90,000.00 or more for failing to have a General Manager on site to manage, for the months of April, May and June so far.

The Union and more than likely the tax payers of Washoe County demand accountability and transparency of RTC Washoe and its hired contractor Keolis Transit. We would appreciate a full detailed report on the above and all liquidated damages applied including the reasons for the liquidated damages and the amounts assessed or not assessed and reasons why each liquidated damage may have been “forgiven” since July 1, 2019. This falls under FOIA, and should be easily accessible as RTC Washoe keeps detailed documents and spreadsheets on liquidated damages.

4. Bill,

I appreciate the reply and look forward to all the requested information I have sent to Ms. Thompson.

I am fully aware of the FTA and TSA safety measures on public transit and public transit property. I just wish for the health and safety of the Keolis employees and the riding public, RTC Washoe would actually enforced the masks on property and busses and help in stopping the spread of COVID19. Even today (7-9-2021) while I was on property at 4SS you and your staff were more motivated about being anti-union then enforcing masks.

Mr. Peter Starren, local resident:

There is a homeless village in the large culvert under veterans parkway, just south of clean water way. They are cooking. They are using steamboat creek as a toilet. They are in danger in the event of thunderstorms. I reported this to Reno a month ago.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the Chair closed public input.

Item 3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Executive Director (E.D.) Bill Thomas requested that Item 6.1 be pulled as there were no updates to provide; and Item 6.2 and 6.3 will be brought in September when there is a likelihood of all commissioners being in attendance. Mayor Lawson asked to also postpone Item 6.4 as it may be intertwined with Item 6.3.

On motion of Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Mayor Lawson, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Jardon ordered that the agenda for this meeting be approved with the aforementioned modifications.

Items 4.1 thru 4.10 CONSENT ITEMS

Minutes

4.1 Approve Minutes of the June 18, 2021 meeting (*For Possible Action*)

Reports

4.2 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Planning Activity Report (*For Possible Action*)

4.3 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Engineering Activity Report (*For Possible Action*)

4.4 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Public Transportation/Operations Activity Report (*For Possible Action*)

4.5 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Procurement Activity Report (*For Possible Action*)

4.6 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Summary Report for the Technical, Citizens Multimodal, and Regional Road Impact Fee Advisory Committees (*For Possible Action*)

Engineering Department

4.7 Approve a Regional Road Impact Fee (RRIF) Offset Agreement between the RTC, Sparks Family Hospital, Inc. and the City of Reno for the dedication of offset-eligible improvements for the modification of the Longley Lane / Barron Way intersection (*For Possible Action*)

Public Transportation/Operations Department

- 4.8 Approve an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement (ICA) with the Nevada Department of Transportation to provide funding to the RTC for the ED PASS Program in the amount of \$200,000 (*For Possible Action*)**
- 4.9 Approve an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement with the Nevada Department of Transportation to receive and use Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) federal funds in the amount of \$1,250,000 for the RTC Trip Reduction Program (*For Possible Action*)**

Executive, Administrative and Finance Departments

- 4.10 Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate a funding agreement to contribute \$160,000 towards the Tahoe Transportation District's purchase of the former elementary school in Incline Village as a potential site for a future mobility hub (*For Possible Action*)**

On motion of Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Mayor Lawson, which motion carried unanimously, Chair Jardon ordered that Consent Items 4.1 through 4.10 be approved.

Item 5.1 PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

- 5.1 Conduct a public hearing on proposed service changes to RTC RIDE, including expansion of late night service on the RAPID – Virginia Line beginning on or after August 1, 2021, and a September 11, 2021, change to bus bay locations at RTC 4th STREET STATION and RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA STATION; approve the service changes.**
- a. Staff presentation
 - b. Public hearing
 - c. Action

Mr. Jim Gee, RTC Service Planning and Innovation Manager, gave a presentation to show the addition of service between UNR, downtown Reno, Midtown, and Meadowood Mall. He said there is also a plan to extend the running time on the RTC RAPID Virginia Line and to install electric bus chargers at Centennial Plaza.

Chair Jardon likes the addition of service but has a concern that there won't be enough drivers to cover the service.

Mr. Gee said the additional service is during off-peak hours so only adds approximately 65 hours.

This item being a public hearing, Chair Jardon opened the meeting to public input and called on anyone wishing to speak.

There being no one wishing to speak, public input was closed.

On motion of Commissioner Hartung, seconded by Mayor Delgado, which motion carried unanimously, Chair Jardon ordered that the service changes as presented be approved.

Item 6 .1 thru 6.4 DISCUSSION ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **Update, discussion and potential direction to staff regarding legislative measures and issues being considered during the 81st (2021) Session of the Nevada Legislature (For Possible Action) – *Pulled from the agenda per Item 3***
- 6.2 **Review Executive Director Bill Thomas’ performance as it pertains to the proper duties of the position and accomplishments of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Goals and adjust compensation accordingly (For Possible Action) – *Pulled from the agenda per Item 3***
- 6.3 **Set Executive Director’s Goals for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) (For Possible Action) – *Pulled from the agenda per Item 3***
- 6.4 **Approve the RTC Agency Goals for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) (For Possible Action) – *Pulled from the agenda per Item 3***

Item 7.1 thru 7.3 REPORTS

Item 7.1 RTC Executive Director Report

E.D. Thomas spoke on the following topics:

- 1. RTC initiated a partnership with the City of Reno for the Downtown Cycle Track project. City officials and regional partners are seeking to create a vibrant and inviting downtown core in which people will make as their destination to socialize, recreate, dine and shop. The RTC is proposing to help fund a Downtown Virginia Street Study, in the amount of \$75K to \$150K, to be led by the City of Reno to conduct an analysis of the Virginia Street corridor and work with stakeholders to identify a unified vision; while addressing such elements as land use, economic development, urban form, accessibility, safety, and livability. The need for this study arose as a means to create a vision for the corridor that will support continued vitality of the downtown area.
- 2. Earlier this week, staff submitted the RAISE grant application for the Arlington Bridges Project to the Federal Highway Administration. The grant amount request is \$10 million and we should hear if the grant is approved in the fall or early winter.

Additionally, U.S. Senators Cortez Masto and Rosen each submitted the project to the Senate Appropriations Committee with an appropriations request of \$2 million dollars for the project.

- 3. We have announced a Call for Projects for the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program for the RTC metropolitan planning area. Applications for the TA Set-Aside program will be accepted until October 1, 2021, by 4:00 p.m. The estimated amount of TA Set-Aside funding available for Federal Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022 is approximately \$805,000.
- 4. Agencies eligible to receive TA Set-Aside funds include local governments, natural resources or public land agencies, school districts, and Tribal governments. Eligible sponsors may submit one application per funding year. Program information and the application is available on the RTC website.

5. He then introduced the new Keolis General Manager, Phil Pumphrey. Over the past three decades Phil has work for First Transit in many positions as Executive Director, General Manager and Assistant General Manager positions around the nation. Phil brings excellent managerial skills and transit experience to his new role as the RIDE General Manager. As he makes his way to the podium, please join me in welcoming Phil to the team.

The new Keolis GM, Phil Pumphrey, addressed the Board to introduce himself and looks forward to the opportunity to improve customer service. He thanked everyone for the opportunity.

6. “Don’t Drive Arrive!” There will be free transit service to Hot August Nights, August 3rd through the 8th. RTC in partnership with the Hot August Nights organization is offering free rides on the RAPID Virginia Line, RAPID Lincoln Line, and routes 1 and 11, all day long during the week of Hot August Nights.

These routes serve RTC 4TH STREET STATION and RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA.

This is a great opportunity to try transit with your friends and family to one of the region’s favorite event. With limited parking, everyone can ride these routes FREE and avoid parking hassles to all the venues in downtown Sparks, downtown Reno and venues on the Virginia Street corridor.

Plan your trip and view route and schedule information at rtcwashoe.com. For Hot August Nights event schedule go to Hot August Nights dot Net.

7. Recently, there have been statements made in the media that leave the public with the impression that RTC is considering whether to continue to contract with private companies that specialize in operating transit systems. These statements erroneously represent that RTC is in a position to take over the operation of the transit system. He stated that he would like to publicly correct these misstatements.

First, RTC has contracted with private companies to operate the transit system for over thirty (30) years. Second, RTC is in the early years of a 10 year contract with Keolis to provide our RIDE transit service up to 2029. Third, it is important for all to understand the operating model and how RTC works.

RTC is a relatively small organization, consisting of 66 employees, that has consistently performed in an efficient and effective way that is mindful of the fact that public funds are used.

RTC provides regional transportation planning, regional road projects and transit services, in large part, by contracting with private companies. Those companies provide specialized services that RTC could not replicate without major service and cost impacts.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of RTC revenues are spent on contracts for those specialized services which, he pointed out, also supports local jobs and our economy. Only five percent (5%) of RTC revenues are used for internal operations and administrative costs. There are no plans, now or in the foreseeable future, for RTC to change that operating model.

Item 7.2 RTC Federal Report

E.D. Thomas said that a written report was included in the agenda packet for this meeting adding that there seems to be a lot of interest in congress in providing money for infrastructure and transportation.

Item 7.3 NDOT Director Report

NDOT Director Kristina Swallow addressed the Board to provide a monthly update presentation.

She began with safety numbers and said that they are not looking good at all. Statewide, fatalities are up 32% from this time last year. She stressed that it's our role as drivers to be aware of surroundings and other drivers, and mindful of the road.

Dir. Swallow then discussed some of the legislative actions that impact NDOT; her pride in the NDOT crews responding to emergencies in both Nevada and California; a Sustainable Funding Study; an update on the Spaghetti Bowl Express (SBX) project; and various planning and prioritizations for her agency going forward.

Lastly, Dir. Swallow said that Sajid Sulahria had been hired as the Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering.

Upon conclusion, she offered to answer any questions.

Commissioner Hartung requested a timeline for a road audit on Pyramid Highway. He added that he does not understand why speed limits are raised according to the percentage of drivers going at a specific speed, and it is now almost impossible to get out of Spanish Springs because of the traffic levels now.

Commissioner Hartung added that the signal timing is great and has actually helped the situation to a degree.

Item 8 *COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES*

Chair Jardon agreed that the items pulled from today's agenda should be brought back to the September 17th meeting.

Commissioner Delgado requested an item for a Plumb Lane/Wooster H.S. safety discussion.

Item 9 *PUBLIC INPUT*

Chair Jardon opened the meeting to public input and called on anyone wishing to speak on topics relevant to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) that are not included in the current agenda.

There being no one wishing to speak, the Chair closed public input.

Item 11 ***ADJOURNMENT***

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.



NEOMA JARDON, Chair
Regional Transportation Commission

(Copies of all presentations may be obtained by contacting Denise Thompson at dthompson@rtcwashoe.com.)