

MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2025

(1) **CONVENE:**

There was a motion and a second to name Gary Bridges as Chairman for this meeting due to the absence of LTSA's Chairman and Vice Chairman.

LTSA's Regular Meeting convened at 1:18 p.m. by Interim Chairman Bridges, at City of Susanville Council Chambers, 66 North Lassen Street, Susanville, CA.

Commissioners Present: Bridges, Miller, Scanlan, and Schuster.

Commissioners Absent: Albaugh, Brown, Ingram

Others Present: John Clerici, LCTC, Caleb Schortz, Pete Heimbigner, and Cynthia Raschein
LTSA.

1.1 **Pledge of Allegiance.**

1.2 **Agenda Approval:** On a first by Commissioner Schuster, and second by Commissioner Miller, it was unanimously passed to approve the agenda.

1.3 **Minutes Approval:** On a first by Commissioner Schuster, and second by Commissioner Miller, it was unanimously passed to approve the March 10, 2025 minutes.

(2) **CORRESPONDENCE / PUBLIC COMMENT**

2.1 **Correspondence:** None.

2.2 **Public Comment:** None.

(3) **NEW BUSINESS**

3.1 **Third Amendment to Agreement between LTSA and ETA Transit Systems, Inc.:**

Pete Heimbigner presented the Third Amendment to the existing agreement with ETA Transit Systems, Inc. This agreement provides tracking for all the bus movements on their routes. We were hoping to find an alternative to save funds by possibly using GIS system through the county but it is currently not developed so we need to amend this contract. The tracking data is needed for mandatory state and federal reporting.

Commissioner Scanlan motioned to approve the contract with ETA Transit Systems, Inc. for the LTSA Transit Software Solution, subject to approval by LTSA Counsel and authorize Executive Director to sign agreement upon approval from LTSA Counsel. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3.2 2025/2026 Preliminary Budget:

Heimbigner presented the preliminary budget to the Board and explained he will try to keep the presentation as simple as possible because the department has a lot of budget units to accommodate all the different funding streams. This funding includes both Federal and State. Heimbigner referred the Board to Page 9 of the packet which shows a chart outlining the different funding sources and how they feed into each budget unit. The LTSA funding comes through the Lassen County Transportation Commission. This preliminary budget will be different from past years so we can easily track the funding and separate it out. Heimbigner continued his presentation and noted the shortfalls for different budget units but also stated they have options to cover those short falls. Commissioner Scanlan asked about the expense variance for 302300, Professional and Specialized Services. Heimbigner reported the \$800K increase came mostly from Paratransit Services (LRBS Operation and Management Contract) and their increase in monthly insurance costs. Commissioner Scanlan also asked about the expense decrease in 301800, Maintenance Building and Improvements. Heimbigner stated we had more projects to complete the previous year. He directed the Board to page 13 which gives a breakdown of the expense line items. Commissioner Schuster asked about 302300 item number 5 on page 13. She asked who we use for web maintenance. Cynthia Raschein replied with Matson and Isom out of Reno. Heimbigner also referenced item number 7 on page 13 under 302300. Item 7 show LTSA Administration for County Staffing which is actually paid through budget unit 128. Heimbigner referenced the different revenue charts in the packet as well as the expenditure charts and explained them in detail.

Regarding the shortfalls, Heimbigner referred the Board to page 31 of the packet outlining the SB125 funding from the State of California. Heimbigner stated the State came out with SB125 a couple years ago to cover deficits for various transportation agencies. He noted that the Revenue page is not showing an amount, however, referred the discussion to John Clerici of LCTC. Clerici describes the state funding as coming in two packets, the first packet came in around \$2.1MM and we are waiting on the second. The total allocation to the county should be around \$4MM. Clerici explained SB125 funding in detail for the various transportation authorities in the state and it will last for 4 (four) years. Clerici stated we have \$2.1 currently in the bank and we could use it pretty much for all operations. Heimbigner reported that we will be using the SB125 funding to make up the shortfalls if that is the direction of the Board. Commissioner Bridges asked when this budget will be settled. Heimbigner responded this is a preliminary budget however we can come back at the next meeting. He reported we can add the bus operation budget at the next meeting as well. Commissioner Schuster thanked Cynthia Raschein for putting the budget together, especially the flow chart that she described as very helpful. Commissioner Bridges also wanted to thank everyone that has worked on this budget.

Commissioner Schuster motioned to approve the 2025/2026 Preliminary Budget. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3.3 Evaluation of Community Events criteria for compliance with Federal Transit Administration and Transportation Development Act regulations:

Heimbigner opened the discussion regarding Community Events stating that FTA Funding is used to offset the costs of these events. He explained that regulations state we have a limited list of events that are allowed for this specific funding. We are at the point that we cannot give this type of service away for free. Raschein reported to the Board the need to evaluate the list of community events see if they meet the criteria of Federal Transit Administration and Transportation Development Act (TDA) regulations.

Lassen Transit Service Agency (LTSA) has provided transit services for events that were deemed a public need that cannot otherwise be met. These services include charters for charitable or public service organizations that are permissible under PUC Section 99250 (d) of the TDA. In June of 2022, the LTSA discontinued offering charter services but continued to provide transit services for Community Events as described above.

LTSA also provides transit services to events that are deemed "...public or community events that would be supported by the transit system as a normal course of business, but only run at certain times during the year." These events are run as a seasonal or limited transit route, and riders are charged the appropriate fare as if it were one of our regularly scheduled routes, and are not considered a charter.

Lassen Rural Bus (LRB) also participates in several events and parades that are not a charter nor a seasonal or limited route, and LTSA receives no compensation in the form of charter fees or fares for these events; however, LRB staff are paid for their time.

When the LTSA discontinued charters in 2022, some of the events identified as charters in the Community Events determination may be considered as a "fare for service," while others may be considered as a charter for "direct cost." These two services are permissible under the TDA, if they meet the definitions of PUC Section 99250 (d).

Also in 2022, some or all of these events were granted free status, and the LTSA has not collected fares or charter fees for any events since then. According to the TDA, charters considered as Community Events should be provided at direct cost, with a limit of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or a total of 40 chartered events, whichever comes first. Seasonal or limited transit routes should be collecting the appropriate fare from each individual that rides the bus.

EVALUATION OF LASSEN COUNTY COMMUNITY EVENTS LIST

Events that are identified as Community Events on the 24/25 adopted list include:

- Senior Light Tour
- Special Olympics
- Veteran's Day Parade**
- Lassen County Fair Parade**
- Holiday with a Hero

Events that are identified as seasonal or limited routes on the 24/25 adopted list include:

- Magical Country Christmas Parade
- Bizz Johnson Marathon
- New Year's Eve Safe Ride Home

- Fair Parades**
- Lassen Crime Stoppers' fundraising event
- Blues and Brews Festival
- Lassen Land & Trails Trust Nature Camp
- Soroptimist International's Margarita Fest Safe Ride Home***

**Doesn't meet the definition of a Community Event or seasonal or limited route

***Qualifies as a Community Event

As stated above, LTSA discontinued charters in 2022. Due to the fact that LTSA can still provide charters to charitable and service organizations under PUC Section 99250 (d), staff recommends keeping the same format of reviewing the events annually, reviewing any new requests as they come in, and still discontinuing charters that do not meet the TDP requirements for a community event.

As part of the annual review, staff should prepare annual charter rates to be able to provide each event organizer with cost estimates of their event and to meet the TDA requirement to provide the charter at direct cost. Raschein referred the Board to page 37 of the Board packet which is a calculation tool that will be used to charge for hourly service to those community events deemed eligible as a charter.

Heimbigner asked Caleb Shortz to report on a community event for insight. Shortz explained the process for their largest event, Holiday with a Hero. He stated 5 (five) buses and 2 (two) service vehicles are used. Also 4 (four) employees working approximately 60 (sixty) hours for decorations are needed prior to the event. During the event there are 10 (ten) employees needed.

Raschein asked the Board for direction on how to re-structure the events. For example, the Veterans Parade is a cost that cannot be recouped. The VA or VA organizations could possibly sponsor the vets with fares to help with the cost. Commissioner Bridges commented that this is a small town and the entire community should contribute especially for our Veterans. Raschein stated that the Veterans Day Parade is not a route, we are just in the parade and we are eating the cost of that. The TDA regulations state this is not allowable for their funding. Heimbigner stated we could possibly use the SB125 funding for the parades.

Heimbigner referred the Board to page 34 in the last paragraph. The eligibility requirements outlined in the TDA limits us to 10,000.00 or 40 chartered events per year. The LTSA Board directs staff to use the rate calculation tool as presented in this meeting. Raschein stated as part of the annual review, staff will prepare annual charter rates to be able to provide each event organizer with cost estimates of their event and to meet the TDA requirement to provide the charter at direct cost.

(4) OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Reports by Executive Director and Staff:

- 5311 (f) Report - Heimbigner reported that Albaugh is not here and he asked for this report and discussion regarding north county transit information.

Commissioner Bridges asked for the Board to table this discussion for the next meeting.

- Hwy 139 - Heimbigner reported this discussion can be held with the next meeting scheduled with LCTC, following this meeting.

4.2 Report by Lassen Rural Bus Manager/Staff:

Shortz presented the LRB Staff report to the Board. He reported they just hired a new driver. The Paratransit Services Team currently has 5 full time drivers and 2 regular part-time and 3 casual drivers. They have 1 full time dispatcher & 1 part time dispatcher, 1 full time mechanics, 1 part-time mechanic, 1 operations supervisor and 1 General Manager for a total of 16 employees.

The Lassen Rural Bus Emergency Response Team has 15 members willing and ready to respond for any emergencies that may arise.

The Children's Fair was great as well as the Safe Drive Home for the Soroptimist's Annual Margarita Fest. Their on-time Performance was at 86% average for the county routes with all the road construction. Shortz reported on the special College Shuttle that is going through and around the construction zones. It is working well, as good as it can, given their circumstances. The ridership has suffered considerably due to the construction, but for now they have made the best of it and are doing what they can to support riders. Shortz also reported they have put numbers on each of the bus stop signs that correlate with the stop number on our rider's guide.

The current inventory of vehicles include:

- 1 Service truck
- 1 Passenger Van
- Large Cutaway's
- 6 ARBOCS (Bus 20 & 21 are out of service but still in our inventory for parts)
- 1 Front Runner
- 3 40' Gillig Commuter buses (Bus 101 is out of service but still in our inventory for parts)

Shortz reported that all the air units have been serviced and they are ready for summer.

Commissioner Schuster asked about the Reno route. Shortz stated they were looking about adding that route in July however the new van they were supposed to get in July had mechanical issues so they are looking at getting that delivery in January or February. He also reported that their plan, especially for insurance costs, need to plan far in advance. He is hoping to add the Reno route next year.

Commissioner Schuster also asked about the back road to the hospital. That property is owned by Hat Creek and that is a project that is desperately needed for emergency services.

4.3 Matters brought forth by the Agency:

Set date for the next Regular Agency Meeting: June 23, 2025

4.4 **Adjourn:** 2:17 p.m.