

sale of the old facility is scheduled to close tomorrow; this will be reflected in the next update to the draft budget (including the interest on proceeds from the sale). Discussion about the capital projects plan (FY 2027–2031). This plan was presented last year and has been updated. A system-wide study is planned for next year; part of this evaluation is to determine what a north and south transfer center would look like (the transfer centers need to be done – it is more of a question of how to do it). The dollar amount for the transfer centers is soft – it could go way up or down. Additionally, the results of this study will inform future service expansion and vehicle procurement. Some capital projects are funded in part with federal dollars, which subjects them to Buy America and Davis-Bacon wage requirements. These requirements, along with additional federal reporting, contribute to higher overall project costs (reflected in the amount estimated to build the training course). We don't want to low-ball these numbers. For reference, the drainage work at the current facility cost approximately \$500,000. All these figures remain preliminary and will continue to be refined. Discussion about vehicle procurement. Vehicle prices have risen significantly since the pandemic. Most vehicle contracts will include escalation clauses to allow for cost adjustments (some are known, fixed-price increases and others are tied to the Consumer Price Index). Discussion about the new type of bus that was purchased for paratransit service. The new buses are ADA-accessible, low-floor buses, which make boarding faster and safer for both riders and operators. Low-floor buses reduce passenger boarding time from roughly 10 minutes to about 3 minutes, improve accessibility, and reduce the maintenance costs associated with lifts. Though the upfront cost for a bus is higher, these savings are expected to offset the additional cost over the life of the vehicle. Two of these buses have been purchased to evaluate performance and cost benefits.

B. Consideration of FY2026 employee benefit package – Curtis Roberts, Administration Director: Management is looking for approval on the FY2026 employee benefit package in order to sign the insurance contract (this has to be done annually). Management is proposing to keep the benefit package the same as it currently is. There was about an 8.1 percent increase in the insurance cost, but there is sufficient money within the budget to cover this increase. Discussion about the increased insurance cost. The cost usually goes up every year, and an 8 percent increase is within the typical range. Flor Estrada motioned to approve the FY2026 employee benefit package. Mike Arnold seconded. Vote unanimous.

C. Consideration of FY2026 additional full-time positions – Todd Beutler, CEO/General Manager: This was talked about in the previous meeting. A brief summary is that management is seeking to create 2 new positions to handle additional organizational needs, particularly those created by the larger facility. The two positions are a facilities supervisor position and a maintenance manager

position (with Jody Kimball to fill this position). Discussion about the new positions. Staff have looked at all of the ways to cover the organization's additional needs before coming to this conclusion. Additionally, since 2020, there's been a 47 percent increase in service. Lieren asked for a motion to approve the addition of these two full-time positions. Glen Schmidt moved. Flor Estrada seconded. Vote unanimous.

- D. Consideration of Resolution 2025-03 authorization for disposal of property – Todd Beutler, CEO/General Manager: Connect's old facility is set to be sold; after working with a real estate agent, the property is scheduled to close the day after board meeting. The property was appraised at 2.5 million dollars and is selling for 3.4 million (so above the appraised price); the net after commissions is 3.24 million dollars. Management already has a concurrence letter giving the organization permission to keep the proceeds from the sale; the current plan is to use these funds to build the new training course (the sale money needs to be used on capital projects). Lieren Hansen asked for a motion to pass Resolution 2025-03 giving authorization to staff to sell the property. Shaun Bushman moved. Mike Arnold seconded. Vote unanimous.

6. Management Report:

- A. DC report – Tim Stewart, Bennett-Capitol Group: Washington, D.C. has been unusually chaotic over the past 10 months. The new administration issued more than 200 executive orders in its first month, largely aimed at rolling back regulations. The reconciliation process has been extremely difficult and the federal government is in an extended shutdown. A potential shutdown resolution may come by Thanksgiving. Back pay for federal workers is expected, but may be delayed. The region has had trouble getting their funding; Curtis (Connect Administration Director) avoided reimbursement issues by strategically pulling funding early. In D.C., they're trying to pass a short, three-page continuing resolution to end the shutdown. Tariffs are affecting everything, but to different degrees; energy costs are down, food costs are up, and there will be creep in costs everywhere. Connect has been affected, particularly by the rising costs to the vehicle industry (vehicles and vehicle parts). Some companies are trying to reshore manufacturing in the U.S., but tariffs on robotics and other needed equipment are making it difficult. Some businesses have chosen to move what manufacturing they have offshore, so they only have to pay tariffs (instead of having to pay costs both ways).
- B. Update procurement process – Mindy Spackman, Procurement Officer: The procurement process ensures compliance and responsible use of funds, emphasizing open and fair competition and adherence to both internal policy and federal regulations. The goal is obtaining the best overall value, not simply

127 selecting the lowest cost. Purchases fall into three procurement categories: micro-
128 purchases are under \$10,000 (no quotes are required but costs must be
129 reasonable), small purchases between \$10,000 and \$250,000 (requires 2–3
130 quotes), and formal procurements over \$250,000 (requires a full RFP process).
131 This year has been unusually busy due to multiple expiring 3- and 5-year
132 contracts, as well as procurements for the new facility. When federal funds are
133 used, additional rules such as Davis-Bacon apply to projects over \$150,000,
134 including certified payrolls. Additional requirements include vendors having to
135 use eligible certifications and not being debarred. Buy America is another federal
136 requirement (applies to rolling stock, steel, and construction materials). There are
137 30 other possible federal clauses to comply with depending on the project. The
138 steps and depth to a procurement are determined by what is being purchased and
139 the overall cost. The steps to procurement are to define the need/develop the
140 scope, solicit bids or proposals, evaluate & select vendor, award contract, and
141 monitor & administer the contract. Effective contract administration is essential to
142 ensure that pricing, products, and services match what was agreed upon. Failure
143 to follow FTA procurement rules can result in a loss of funding, audit findings,
144 and reputational harm. Discussion on compliance and oversight. Connect has had
145 strong results in federal triennial reviews, including one cycle where there was
146 zero procurement findings—which is rare. This strengthened Connect’s
147 credibility with regional oversight and has contributed to Connect’s strong track
148 record. Staff noted that sometimes the lowest bid is not selected, so justification is
149 required, and occasionally bids are withdrawn and reissued if competition isn’t
150 sufficient. Procurement is complex, evolving, and critical in reducing
151 organizational risk.

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153 **7. Board Chair Report:**

154 A. Recognition of employee anniversaries – Lieren Hansen, Board Chair: Employee
155 anniversaries include 7 years for Trevor Silva (dispatcher), 6 years for Jared Hall
156 (technician), and 6 years for Brad Nelson (IT).

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158 B. Board Social: The Board is going to have a social on December 17.

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160 **8. Public comments:** No questions or comments.

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162 **9. Adjourn:** Board Chair Lieren Hansen adjourned the meeting.