

Spokane Transit Authority  
1230 West Boone Avenue  
Spokane, Washington 99201-2686  
(509) 325-6000

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Draft Minutes of the September 17, 2009, Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dick Denenny, City of Spokane Valley, Chairman  
Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane  
Richard Munson, City of Spokane Valley  
Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake  
Al French, City of Spokane  
Richard Rush, City of Spokane  
Bonnie Mager, Spokane County  
Matthew Pederson, City of Airway Heights

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mark Richard, Spokane County

### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance & Administration  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Steve Doolittle, Human Resources Manager

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Laura McAloon, K & L Gates LLP

### **GUESTS**

Sharon Helman

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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman Denenny called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and conducted roll call.

#### 2. **RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

##### A. **Patrick Grow, Paratransit Van Operator – Retirement**

Mr. Blaska said Mr. Grow has worked as a paratransit van operator for Spokane Transit since 1987. He is an excellent driver with outstanding customer service skills. A plaque was presented to Mr. Grow in recognition of his retirement.

Mr. Denenny said he was advised of the passing of a Spokane Transit employee, R.C. Chapman. Ms. Meyer explained that Robert Chapman, known as R.C., was able to pull his van to the side of the road, ensuring the safety of his two passengers, and then died of an apparent heart attack. R.C. was the most senior paratransit van operator, having begun his career in 1986. He will be greatly missed by his customers and co-workers. A moment of silence followed in memory of Mr. Chapman.

##### B. **Veterans' Administration National Wheelchair Games**

Mr. Blaska reported that the National Wheelchair Games event was very successful; Spokane Transit provided all the transportation and modified buses to accommodate all the wheelchairs. At least 177 coach operators drove during the week-long event and they were commended by attendees for their courtesy and professionalism. Many employees worked their days off, re-arranged vacations, and worked shifts of up to 18 hours to ensure all participants were transported efficiently and on time. This was particularly true when flights were delayed late into the night. Mr. Blaska commended all staff who were involved in this effort and mentioned Molly Myers, Communications Manager; Monte DeChenne, Fixed Route Supervisor; Bob Lands, Fixed Route Supervisor; and Ron Scouton and Rick Bessette, Vehicle Maintenance for special recognition. Mr. DeChenne and Mr. Lands were present to

receive this commendation. Sharon Helman, spokesperson for the National Wheelchair Games, thanked the staff of Spokane Transit for their outstanding efforts.

C. Washington Finance Officers' Association Professional Finance Officer Award to Jim Plaster  
Ms. Meyer asked the Board to recognize and congratulate Jim Plaster for receiving the "Professional Finance Officer Award" from the Washington State Finance Officers' Association. Mr. Plaster has received this award every year since 1984.

3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

Mike Rowles commended the work of Security Officer, Chris Stein, at the Plaza.

4. PUBLIC HEARING:

A. 2009 Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 Program of Projects and Budget

Mr. Denenny opened the public hearing at 5:53 p.m., called upon Mr. Otterstrom for a presentation and asked three times for comments from the public. There were no public comments. Mr. Denenny closed the hearing at 5:56 p.m. A power point presentation of Mr. Otterstrom's comments is attached.

B. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Plan

Mr. Denenny opened the public hearing at 5:57 p.m., called upon Mr. Doolittle for a presentation and asked three times for comments from the public. There were no public comments. Mr. Denenny closed the hearing at 6:06 p.m. A power point presentation of Mr. Doolittle's comments is attached.

5. BOARD ACTION: CONSENT AGENDA

**Mr. Munson moved to accept consent agenda items 5.A through D. Mr. French seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

A. Minutes of the July 16, 2009 Board Meeting.

B. Motion to approve Accounts Payable Voucher and Warrant nos. 557672 through 558192, and Worker's Compensation Warrant nos. 203175 through 203309 totaling \$3,387,743.91 for the period July 1 through July 31, 2009. Motion to approve Accounts Payable Voucher and Warrant nos. 558193 through 558557, and Worker's Compensation Warrant nos. 203310 through 203520 totaling \$1,919,717.35 for the period August 1 through August 31, 2009.

C. Motion to adopt a resolution approving STA's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Plan.

D. Motion to adopt a resolution approving changes to the current STA Awards Policy.

6. BOARD ACTION: OTHER ITEMS

A. 2009 Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 Program of Projects and Budget

**Mr. French moved to authorize the filing of the FY 2009 FTA Section 5307 Program of Projects with the Department of Transportation, United States of America, under Section 5307 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Mr. Munson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

B. Revision to Board Meeting Calendar

This item was deferred from the July 16, 2009 Board meeting. Ms. Meyer said three Board members had expressed concern about conflicts with the third Thursday meeting date. Ms. Mager said she had resolved her conflict with the third Wednesday of the month and can now attend at that time. Ms. Meyer said the only impact of the third Wednesday is that the Board meeting will not be televised live.

It will, however, be broadcast on the following Saturday, Monday and Tuesday. **Mr. French moved to change the STA Board meeting to the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm effective October 21, 2009. Ms. McLaughlin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.** Mr. French said he would not be on the Board in 2010 but his successor would have the same Thursday evening conflict as he had. Ms. Mager thanked the Board for the time to discuss changing the date with her other Board commitment. Mr. Denenny said his last Board meeting will probably be November.

7. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. Miscellaneous Correspondence (*E. Susan Meyer*)
- C. June and July 2009 Financial Results Summary (*Jim Plaster*)
- D. Second Quarter 2009 Capital Budget Status Report (*Jim Plaster*)
- E. Second Quarter 2009 Statement of Net Assets and Federal Grants (*Jim Plaster*)
- F. June and July 2009 Operating Indicators (*Steve Blaska*)
- G. Second Quarter 2009 Operating Indicators (*Steve Blaska*)
- H. Second Quarter 2009 Performance Measures (*Steve Blaska*)
- I. Second Quarter 2009 Safety and Loss Summary (*Steve Doolittle*)
- J. Mobility Orientation (Travel Training) Program Third Year Review (*Steve Blaska*)
- K. Downtown Spokane Transit Streetcar Alternatives Analysis (*Karl Otterstrom*)

Mr. Denenny said he was impressed with the complimentary letters about the National Veterans' Wheelchair Games in item 7.B.

8. STAFF REPORTS:

A. Proposed Revisions to Rules of Conduct

Ms. McAloon said the Rules of Conduct were first developed in 1995 to maintain orderly, safe, secure, comfortable, and convenient public transportation. Over the years, they have been revised five times in order to remain current. In 2009, the Washington State Legislature added some prohibited behaviors to the Unlawful Transit Law (RCW 9.91.025). The proposed revisions to the Rules of Conduct include these legislative changes as well as procedural changes regarding exclusions from transit service recommended by Legal Counsel. Procedural changes include eliminating the notice, administrative review and appeal for exclusions less than 30 days; and, increasing the possible length of exclusion to more than 365 days. The latter is recommended since there have been incidents of criminal and violent behavior towards coach and van operators. The revision also deletes article VI which referred to the policy on enforcement of court orders. This provision has now been included in STA's personnel policies and operator handbook.

These revisions are for review only by the Board at this time; staff will recommend approval at the October 21, 2009 Board meeting.

Mr. Pederson arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Mr. Denenny asked Mr. Blaska for a presentation on Mobility Orientation (Travel Training) Program - Third Year Review (information item 7.J). Mr. Blaska said the travel training program is funded through a state special needs grant with the objective of allowing customers greater independence through learning to use the fixed route bus service. The program is run by Paratransit Inc. which provides one full-time and two part-time staff to Spokane Transit. In addition to the independence factor, there is a financial benefit since a paratransit ride costs \$23 versus \$4 for a fixed route ride. The cost of the program is \$187,000, however the savings add up to approximately \$550,000 in reduced

paratransit rides. Ms. Mager, Mr. Denenny and Ms. McLaughlin said they were very impressed with the program.

**B. Draft Service Design Principles, Policies and Performance Standards**

Mr. Otterstrom said the current Service Planning Guidelines were last updated in 2000 and many of them were derived from 1982 standards. These guidelines establish policies concerning the performance, modifications, classification, and allocation of fixed route bus service. Proposed updates include: future High Performance Transit Network corridors; major service types; service allocation; bus stop placement; public outreach; operating hours and frequency of service; and route numbering. In order to provide a balanced service, social, environment, and financial factors need to be taken into consideration. The draft document will be distributed to Board and Committee members prior to the October 7, 2009 Operations and Customer Service Committee meeting. The Board will be asked to approve the guidelines at their November 18, 2009 Board meeting. The document will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation for Board discussion in January.

**C. System Ridership Analysis: Six-Month Assessment**

Mr. Blaska reported that ridership has hit a plateau and double digit increases can no longer be anticipated. Across the nation, fixed route ridership is down 1.2%, however Spokane Transit is up 5.4% for the first quarter. Traffic counts are inconclusive, for example, traffic is down on North Division but bus ridership is up. Activities are being curtailed due to the poor economy and vanpools are being disbanded due to members losing their jobs. In 2008, ridership was 48% higher than five years ago and at 17.7% it outstripped the national trend. There is usually a seasonal dip in the summer and in 2008 it was a shallower dip possibly due to gas prices at \$4 per gallon. In 2009 there will be more of a seasonal cycle – lower than 2008, but still much higher than two years ago.

High frequency direct service is still doing well; however, the shortest and longest routes may be losing ridership which may be a result of the decrease in gas prices. The biggest decline is in cash fares while pass holders remain steady. Mr. French added that part of the reason for the ridership decline could be unemployment. He asked if STA could provide a means of service to those seeking employment. Mr. Blaska said the state's Work First program offers reduced fares and he would look into it. Mr. Pederson agreed that the lack of transportation is the greatest obstacle for the unemployed. Ms. Mager also agreed. Ms. McLaughlin said the change in service at the Northern Quest Casino was mentioned at the last Operations and Customer Service Committee meeting. Since the frequency is now every half an hour, can STA partner with the casino to purchase passes that could be distributed to the needy. Mr. Pederson said he would not target a single business. Mr. Denenny said further discussion on this matter should take place at the next Operations and Customer Service Committee meeting.

**D. July 2009 Financial Highlights**

Total revenue year-to-date is \$34.4 million which represents a decline of \$3.1 million from 2008. Total operating expenses are \$31.8 million - a decline of \$1.1 million from 2008. Fuel expense shows a \$1.8 million favorable budget variance, and is \$1.6 million less than 2008. The combined year-to-date summary shows a \$1.9 million favorable total revenue and expenditure budget variance. Actual September sales tax revenues (for July sales) were down -8.9% and -8.6% percent year-to-date. Mr. Plaster announced the Board will have a Planning and Financial Workshop on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at 3 p.m. at STA's offices, 1230 West Boone Avenue.

Mr. French said the "Cash for Clunkers" program should produce an increase in sales tax revenues in October. However it is not likely to be sustainable.

9. **NEW BUSINESS** – None.

10. CEO REPORT

A. Employee Survey Report

Ms. Meyer reported that STA employees received questionnaires in May, 2009. Out of 548 employees, 157 replied. Ninety percent of the responses were good in that employees think Spokane Transit is fiscally responsible, listens to the public, and is a good place to work. The latter was 77% in 2006.

B. SRTC Board Update

The composition of the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) Board will be reviewed at their October 8, 2009 Board retreat. A vote was taken at their August Board meeting which has to be ratified by all jurisdictions involved. The proposed structure is as follows (numbers of members in parentheses): City of Spokane (2); Spokane Transit (1); Spokane County (2); City of Spokane Valley (1); Washington State Department of Transportation (1); Small Cities (2); Private Sector (1); Transportation Advisory Committee (1) and Washington State Transportation Commission (1). Additional ex-officio members include: Spokane Transit (1); Rail (1); Air (1); and, Chairman of the Transportation Technical Committee of SRTC (1). Ms. McLaughlin commented that initially the STA Board wanted two voting members on the SRTC Board but this is a good compromise. Mr. Rush asked how the private sector member is selected. Ms. Van Orman said the Board solicits applications from interested parties and appoints a candidate with an interest in regional transportation issues.

C. Streetcar Alternatives Analysis

Ms. Meyer said she had hoped to bring an agreement to the Board but will do so next month. She has met several times with the Mayor and City staff. A new staff person has been assigned to this project and the City is also having the agreement reviewed by Legal Counsel. The federal earmark match for this project will be paid by the City with a state grant for which Spokane Transit will be the grantee. Mr. Rush asked who the new staff person is. Ms. Meyer said it is Teresa Sanders.

Ms. Meyer drew Board members' attention to a copy of Second Substitute House Bill 1481 regarding electric vehicles which was included in the grey folders. This bill added to, and amended legislation passed in 2007 that stated electric vehicles are good for their environment and create jobs. SSHB 1481 will require all government agencies to satisfy 100% of their fuel usage from electricity by 2015. The intent was to begin rulemaking but it was withdrawn due to a lack of funding. However, if passed, this bill would require Spokane Transit to operate all vehicles on electricity or bio-diesel fuel by 2015. This would be very difficult to accomplish. Spokane City, Spokane County and Avista are pooling funds to assess the cost of electric passenger vehicles. Spokane Transit will contribute \$5,000 to this effort. Ms. Mager and Mr. Rush asked if Spokane Transit has used bio-diesel fuel. Mr. Blaska said a study was done several years ago using Valley routes as a test with a 20% bio-diesel mix of fuel. It was found to be more costly and some pollutants actually increased. The fuel can also be corrosive which would incur higher maintenance costs; additionally, higher levels than a 20% mix can coagulate and cause mechanical problems. Small quantities of bio-diesel have been produced locally but it has not yet been a viable program. A plant in Grays Harbor provided this fuel to Seattle Metro but it has since been withdrawn from the market. Bio-diesel can be purchased from suppliers overseas, however there are humanitarian concerns about the source. With regard to electric vehicles, UPS is experimenting with all electric trucks. Ms. McLaughlin asked if the rulemaking agency will amend this bill. Ms. Meyer said the rulemaking had not begun through lack of funding. Ms. McLaughlin asked if, as a result, the mandates of the bill would be legally enforceable. Ms. McAloon said there is no method of enforcement unless it is passed by the Department of Commerce.

11. BOARD MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Munson said there is a highly qualified candidate to fill a position on the Operations and Customer Service Committee. However he does not reside in the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) but he does work within it. Normally this would not be allowed but Mr. Munson wanted to get feedback from the Board. Ms. McLaughlin said the candidate would bring a lot of expertise to the committee. Ms. McAloon said the current bylaws would have to be changed to allow this. The bylaws specify committee members be qualified electors who reside within the PTBA boundaries. Mr. Munson said he would not recommend changing the bylaws. Mr. Pederson asked what authority this committee has. Mr. Munson said the committee discusses items of business and recommends approval via the Board consent agenda. Mr. Pederson said he does not want the bylaws changed and this was also the consensus of the Board.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

13. CABLE 5 BROADCAST DATES AND TIMES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 BOARD MEETING:

Saturday, September 19, 2009	4:00 p.m.
Monday, September 21, 2009	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, September 22, 2009	8:00 p.m.

14. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETINGS (1230 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington):

Operations & Customer Service	October 7, 2009, 1:30 p.m. (Southside Conference Room)
Citizen Advisory Committee	October 14, 2009, 5:00 p.m. (Northside Conference Room)

15. NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 5:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 808 West Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, Washington.

***Note: Change of date to third Wednesday of the month***

16. ADJOURNED

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Denenny adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Watson  
Executive Assistant to the CEO  
& Clerk of the Authority