

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

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the February 2, 2011, Meeting
Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane **
Rick Jacks, Citizen
Mike Brewer, Citizen
Ann Campeau, Citizen
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598
Phil Ridenour, AFSCME 3939

MEMBERS ABSENT

Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley
Nan Kelly, Citizen
David Driscoll, Citizen

* Chair ** Acting Chair

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, CEO
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
Butch Slaughter, Manager, Capital Projects
Jan Watson, Exec. Assistant & Clerk of the Authority
Patty Talbott, Quality Performance Specialist
Karla Gibbons, Eligibility Specialist

GUESTS

Sean Powers, Mobility Training Program Manager,
Paratransit, Inc.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Introductions were made. There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

3. **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 5, 2011, COMMITTEE MEETING - CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL**

Mr. Brewer moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

5. **APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR MOBILITY TRAINING AND OPTION FOR PARATRANSIT IN-PERSON ASSESSMENTS – ACTION REQUESTED**

Mr. Blaska explained that the current contract for mobility training will expire in July. Staff is requesting approval of a scope of work to solicit proposals for a new contractor. The mobility training program began five years ago. The annual cost of the program is approximately \$235K, but the estimated savings from the program over the last four years is over \$2.1M. A new option for in-person assessments for eligibility determinations has been included in the scope of work. Staff is also requesting a Committee member to assist in evaluation of proposals submitted.

Mr. Brewer moved to approve the Scope of Work for contracted mobility training services and option for Paratransit ADA eligibility in-person assessments and program elements. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Ms. Campeau volunteered to assist with evaluation of proposals submitted.

6. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR NINE REPLACEMENT VANPOOL VANS – ACTION REQUESTED**

Mr. Blaska said that the vanpool replacement program calls for the replacement of nine vanpool vehicles in 2011. There are currently 117 vans in the program, and all 7-passenger vans are in service. Replacement strategy for this program includes having high-quality equipment to market the program, extending the replacement cycle of the 15-passenger vans used for larger vanpool groups, and using some old 7-passenger vans to replace older administrative vehicles. A Washington State Grant funding opportunity is available to fund 80% of the cost of three of the new vans.

Mr. Jacks moved to recommend the Board approve the purchase of nine (9) replacement 7-passenger vans for a total cost of \$234,000 utilizing the State of Washington General Administration Contract. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR BOONE AVENUE FACILITY ROOF REPLACEMENT – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Otterstrom distributed a revised version of the document originally sent out with the packets. He explained that there was a change to the language in the recommendation.

The main goal of the project is to prevent major leakage from the roofing membrane failure by replacing the Boone Avenue facilities roof in the 2011 construction season. Staff is requesting approval to proceed with the completion of design and advertising of the roof replacement project for bid in early March. Mr. Otterstrom added that the project is complex because of its size. Bids will be structured in three pieces: the base bid for the replacement of the 220K square foot roofing membrane; an alternate bid for replacement of the skylight; and an additional alternate bid for the replacement of the 32K square foot roofing membrane of the north building. \$2.8M has been budgeted for this project. Alternate bids would be pursued as the budget allows.

Ms. Waldref requested that the recommendation specifically refer to the Boone Avenue facility roof replacement project. Mr. Otterstrom agreed to make that change.

Mr. Brewer moved to authorize staff to prepare and release an Invitation for Bids for the Boone Avenue facility roof replacement project upon receipt of completed design documents by the consultant. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

8. DRAFT 2011 - 2015 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom presented a draft of the Transit Development Plan (TDP), which is a Washington State requirement as defined in RCW 35.58.272 and states that the legislative authority of each municipality and each regional transit authority shall prepare a six-year transit development plan. The TDP includes the current calendar year and the ensuing five years, and is due by April 1st of each year.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the hierarchy of STA plans, noting that the TDP is one of a series of plans that is built upon the goals, principles, and policies contained within *Connect Spokane: A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation*. The TDP includes:

- Washington State Goals and Accomplishments - a description of activities and strategies that address how STA meets the goals as set forth by the State Transportation Commission;
- Capital Improvement Program - the current year capital budget and five-year planned capital improvement plan;
- Operating Data - operating data from the previous years, as well as current year budget and projections for a minimum of five years;
- Annual Revenue and Expenditures - proposed annual sources and amounts for revenues and expenditures.

Mr. Otterstrom concluded with a review of the timeline, and mentioned that the final draft of the document would come to the Operations and Customer Service Committee at their March 2nd meeting for further comment. There will be a public hearing on the TDP at the March 16th Board meeting, and final submission of the TDP to the Spokane Regional Transportation Commission and the Washington State Department of Transportation is scheduled for March 31, 2011.

9. SEPTEMBER 2011 SERVICE REDUCTIONS - DRAFT RECOMMENDATION – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom explained that this is the draft recommendation for phase two of the three phase service reduction plan and, if adopted by the Board in March following a public hearing at the February Board meeting, it will result in a service reduction of 7% or 30,500 hours.

In September 2010, the Board was presented with a Preliminary Proposal including nine routes for consolidation or elimination, numerous routing adjustments and trip reductions. Following this proposal, staff implemented the Communications Plan which included presentations to every jurisdiction member of the PTBA, meetings with community, advocacy, and business groups, over 400 public surveys and countless interactions with customers over the phone, on the bus, at the Plaza, and on the website.

The Draft Recommendation meets the target service reduction with a decrease in the estimated loss of boardings from the preliminary proposal and there are eight people who will lose paratransit service versus over 100 from the preliminary proposal. Implementation of the Paratransit boundary will take place on September 18, 2011.

The Draft Recommendation also meets the Comprehensive Plan standards in that 85% of the PTBA's urban population will be within ½ mile of bus service.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed maps of the proposed route changes and noted that service to Medical Lake will be preserved, but will not meet maximum policy headways and is not expected to meet performance standards. He

concluded with a review of the timeline associated with presentation of the draft recommendations to the Committee, the public, and the Board of Directors. Board action will be requested at the March Board meeting.

Next steps include notifying affected Paratransit customers; customer information updates at The Plaza, on buses, and online; targeted outreach efforts; and a public hearing on February 16th. Brief discussion ensued regarding the anticipation of service reductions for 2012 as a result of continued reduced sales tax revenue, and actions being taken by other transit properties in the state to toward service reductions.

10. SYSTEM RIDERSHIP ASSESSMENT - YEAR END 2010 – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska reported that Fixed Route ridership was down 4.0% in 2010 due to economic factors, unemployment, and generally reduced mobility. Parallels are being seen nationwide, and traffic trends are down 2 - 3%, based on a study by the Department of Transportation. It's too early to determine the effects of the 3% service reduction implemented in September 2010. Overall, adult ridership has seen a decrease in cash riders. This is offset slightly by an increase in adult riders using Student Passes. Youth ridership is down, most likely as a reduction in discretionary household income and fare increases. Reduced fare ridership increased, but this only represents about 12% of ridership. It is anticipated that the new 31-day (rolling) pass will have a positive effect on cash riders because the pass is good for an entire 31-day period beginning from its first use, and not just for a portion of a month (as when purchased mid-month).

Mr. Blaska noted that there was an 18% reduction in City Ticket ridership, half of which was due to the relocation of a computer school from an area near the Arena to the downtown area. Routes showing improvement included the community college routes, the Garland route (probably due to summer detours from Wellesley), and Valley commuter routes.

Mr. Blaska reviewed a graph showing annual weekday boarding per revenue hour, comparing 2009 and 2010, which validated why service changes were necessary on several poorly performing routes.

11. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer recognized Mr. Blaska's 7-year anniversary with STA. In addition, she noted that Mr. Otterstrom has a 2-year anniversary coming up, and Ms. Myers has been with STA for almost 10 years.
- b. Ms. Meyer commented that 88 members of Greater Spokane, Inc., the merged organization of the Chamber and the Economic Development Council, took an annual trip to visit the State Legislature. One session was with Chairs of the Transportation Committee from the Senate and the House, and Ms. Meyer was invited to introduce the group and facilitate discussions. Discussions included a Transportation Revenue Package, which looks for revenue options for funding transportation related projects. There is a strong sense of urgency for this year or next year for a transportation package, and Representative Clifford, Chair of the House Transportation Committee, said that any package will include roads and transit. Ms. Meyer noted that this is a difficult time to be asking for money for projects, but most communities in the State are coming forward with their requests, with an expectation for future years.
- c. Ms. Meyer said that The Joint Transportation Committee convened a panel last year on public transportation to identify the state's role. The state currently provides approximately 2% of transit budgets within the state, but STA receives 1%. Ms. Meyer offered to forward a copy of the Committee's report to anyone who is interested. It includes information on service on state routes, special needs transportation, and the Regional Mobility Grant program which funds capital projects to improve connectivity. Two bills resulted from their work - one to require state facilities to site their facilities near existing transit service. This was previously an executive order from the Governor, but it is even more important now to make this a legislative requirement. There's a building off the Sullivan exit that wanted to appeal to government offices. It has 11,000 parking spaces, and after it was built, they demanded transit service because the State requires them to be near transit, and the expectation was that STA should bring transit to that location. There is a lot of demand for new service, but what the Governor intended was for State offices to be near existing service. The second bill was the coordination of basic plans. We have to report to the Federal Transit Administration/National Transit Database for the State of Washington, and it would be good to get that on similar cycles. Ms. Meyer and Ms. Waldref, along with lobbyist Kathleen Collins, took the following messages to the legislators with whom they met: the status on the update of STA's financial environment and an overview of the service reductions, the voluntary separation incentive offered to senior coach operators, STA's request for \$920K for an annunciator (a component of the Smart Bus project) to announce stops as well as visually display what the next stop is for those who are hearing impaired, a briefing on the Central City Transit Alternatives Analysis. They also provided a copy of the STA performance brochure.

- d. The presentation that followed was by King County Metro. They spoke about a Public Transportation Task Force that has been meeting for approximately one year. They are charged with developing a recommendation on how to grow the system, shrink the system, how it can be more efficient, and whatever they came up with to develop state and federal advocacy positions to enable them to reach their objective. They have a current service allocation system that is convoluted and speaks more to each city getting a share than focusing service on productivity and farebox recovery. They have a \$1.2B shortfall. (STA's gap is about \$100M in the same time period.) They have not made any service reductions yet. Key factors to use to determine how and to what extent the following should shape decisions about transit services include: land use, social equity and environmental justice, financial sustainability, economic development, productivity and efficiency, and environmental sustainability. They recommended adopting new performance measures and have an objective to control all agency operating costs. Service reduction and growth decisions should be based on policy priorities, not a formula, create clear and transparent guidelines for service allocation decisions, and create a long-term sustainable funding base. King County Metro used STA's Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation and our route-by-route assessment as a pattern for their proposed changes. They felt that what Spokane Transit was doing was very forward thinking. Changes will be reviewed by the Regional Transit Committee and then adopted by the County Council and incorporated into the next budget cycle.
- e. Ms. Meyer said that the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) created an on-line game where people could indicate how much they would pay in taxes for which local transit services. Six-hundred people completed the game, and the revenue generated from the taxes they chose to impose on themselves was \$1.5B over a 20-year period. It is understood that those individuals who chose to play the game were most likely transportation advocates, so staff is not suggesting this is a scientific survey or representative of our voters. The surprising result was that the game players dedicated 50% of all revenue generated to transit projects, including \$447M to the high performance transit network. The SRTC will now take that information as input and decide what the future looks like.

12. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. December 2010 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- b. Community Outreach and Involvement - as presented.

13. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

- a. None.

14. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

- a. Ms. Waldref commented that she was elected Chair of the STA Board of Directors, so she would not be selected to Chair this Committee. Ms. McLaughlin will Chair the Committee, and Mr. Schimmels will continue as a Small Cities Representative on the Committee.

15. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

16. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Acting Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant