

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for July 18, 2012

Northside Conference Room

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Al French, Spokane County, Chair
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, Planning &
Development Committee Chair
Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley, Performance
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the
Authority

MEMBERS ABSENT

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman French called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and conducted roll call.

2. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. June 13, 2012 Committee Minutes:

Mr. Hafner moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Waldref seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

a. Amber Waldref, Planning & Development (P&D):

Ms. Waldref said the main topic was STA Moving Forward, Phase II. The Committee reviewed staff recommendations on which corridors and projects should be moved forward for further consideration and analysis in Phase II of the strategic planning process. The committee concurred with staff and agreed to move the recommendation forward to the Board agenda. There are 6 total corridors. The Central City Lines is one of the top corridors and most of the analysis has already been done on that one. The other five corridors are the Division Street Corridor, 5 Mile to Moran Prairie through the City of Spokane, Cheney to Spokane and the West Plains, two routes for study together along with stakeholder input, are the South Valley Corridor along Sprague and the Liberty Lake route and lastly, Coeur d'Alene to the Airport. Public and Employee input was reviewed along with staff analysis of grant opportunities and ridership. The Plaza Space Programming timeline, goals and objectives were also discussed. Ms. Meyer and Mr. Blaska have outlined a timeline process which will be analyzed and information brought forward to the Board regarding the Plaza second floor space. Ms. Meyer directed the Committee to the page which shows the steps. The steps in the process are 1) Develop a list of feasible options, 2) Conduct stakeholder outreach, 3) Analysis, 4) Decision and 5) Board engagement. Ms. Waldref said that commitments were made, but they want to analyze the options available so that a good decision can be made in a timely manner. This process will be on the Board agenda.

The Transit Development Plan and Service Implementation plans were reviewed and will be voted on for final approval. Ms. Waldref said that nothing new was added from the last Board meeting and hearing, just minor changes.

b. Chuck Hafner, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PM&ER):

Mr. Hafner said that there was no quorum and this has occurred twice at the PM&ER meetings. Mr. Hafner said this situation puts a handicap on what the Board is trying to accomplish with the reorganization. Mr. Hafner has spoken to both members and hopefully it will not happen again. Mr. Hafner suggested that he and Ms. Waldref could be alternates in each other's meeting if a quorum would not be available. Mr. French pointed to the attendance report card in the packet. A couple Board members are challenged to attend and said perhaps it was timing. Mr. Hafner said that timing was not the problem after talking to the Committee members. Mr. Hafner stressed to the members about commitment to attend. Ms. Meyer commented that not having a quorum in this Committee in particular where a labor representative participates, validates her concerns that Board members are too busy to attend committee meetings and that we should have kept citizen and labor representatives on the Committees. No action could be taken on a number of items; Minutes, Smart Bus, the Award of Contract for the Fixed Route coaches, and Phase II Facility Surveillance System due to lack of a quorum. All of the items except the minutes will be on the Board agenda for approval. Mr. French said that the Board meetings are more efficient because of the new Committee structure. Mr. Hafner said there is enough support between the two groups that they trust the work of the other. Mr. Hafner commended Mr. Blaska on his report of the Plaza Operational Improvements/Wall Street project. The Committee received good reports from both Ms. Myers regarding the Moving Forward outreach and Ms. Marchioro on Paratransit Services. Mr. Hafner said the department reports are very helpful and informative. In September, the committee will look at the Operations Reports.

4. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA; JULY 25, 2012

Mr. French complimented staff on the Budget Workshop. He thought it was very concise, lots of information and good conversation working through some issues. Mr. French asked if staff received the direction needed. Ms. Warren said yes. Mr. French asked if the new Transportation Supervisor, Fred Nelson, was introduced at the June meeting. Staff affirmed.

Ms. Meyer said that three items have come from the PM&ER Committee and are placed on the Consent Agenda. Those being, Phase II of Facility Surveillance System, Award of Contract for Eight 40-foot Fixed Route Coaches and Smart Bus Support – Remodel Scope of Work. Ms. Meyer said that Item 4 was previously a Public Hearing for the Draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but that is being moved forward to September with action in October.

Mr. Hafner commented on the immense size and amount of work involved in the Moving Forward program. There will be a PowerPoint presentation given by Ms. Waldref at the Board meeting.

Mr. French said that for his report he will praise staff for the Budget Workshop on July 11th. Mr. French asked if the new financial formats were addressed at the June meeting. Ms. Warren said that the formats were addressed and have been changed and a new PowerPoint to show the financial highlights will be shown at the Board meeting.

Mr. French asked if there were any additional changes to the agenda and there were none.

The Committee members approved the Board agenda by consensus.

5. BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Ms. Meyer said that one of the responsibilities of the Board Operations Committee is to review attendance and communicate with members who are showing a pattern of absences. Mr. French asked about the process for excused and unexcused absences. Mr. French said if a member was at a conference that that absence could be excused. Ms. Meyer thought there was a limit to the number of excused absences. Ms. Watson said that wording was added to the Committee functions as an expectation of attendance. Ms. Meyer wondered if the Committee wanted to contemplate moving Councilmember Allen or Commissioner Richard to the other Committee. Mr. Hafner would like to see if the conversation with both members has an influence on future attendance. Ms. Meyer said that in July, Councilmember McLaughlin will not be attending, and that will total four consecutive absences. Ms. Meyer said that an alternate has not been identified and perhaps that is something to talk to about. Mr. French asked if the City of Spokane had alternates, because not all of the jurisdictions had alternates. Ms. Waldref said they haven't, but certainly could. The small city representatives have alternates and Mr. Rushing has attended in Mr. Kulibert's stead on two occasions this year. Ms. Waldref mentioned that several years ago there were challenges with the attendance of Board members from the small cities and at that time, no alternates were appointed. Ms. Waldref said she will talk to the Council President to see if alternates could be arranged for the City of Spokane Board members. Mr. Hafner will discuss attendance in more detail with both Councilmember Allen and Commissioner Richard. Councilmember Schimmels will miss the July Board meeting, although he has attended all the Committee meetings.

6. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Mr. Blaska said that the CAC has reviewed the financial reports along with the PM&ER committee. Recently, the CAC has participated in an exercise with Mr. Otterstrom with the STA Moving Forward Program and High Performance Transit (HPT) Network. The CAC will start reviewing the Operations reports and providing input and feedback this month.

Mr. Blaska said a good role for the CAC would be to distribute the members across the Corridor Advisory Panels (CAPs) that will be forming in September. Due to the involvement with these CAPs, the regular CAC monthly meetings would be suspended. The CAC could be brought together for scheduled meetings for such things as budget. Mr. Hafner asked how many CAC members there are. Ms. Robar said there are 13 members; one doesn't attend regularly. Ms. Meyer said for those CAC members that want to be involved, it would be a lot of involvement in a specific corridor and the panels would begin in September, continue through May and end formally in July. Ms. Meyer asked members for reaction to staff's proposal. Mr. French mentioned that some of the members would be invested in a particular corridor and would welcome the opportunity to participate. Mr. Blaska said that this is the biggest project STA is soliciting citizen input on now. If the CAC continued monthly meetings, staff would be repeating outreach information and it would not be an efficient use of time for all. Ms. Meyer said that when there was talk about disbanding the CAC, there was strong interest to continue. It has been a seamless transition with the addition of the three citizens from the prior Operations & Customer Service Committee. Mr. Blaska and

Ms. Robar support the CAC with the Executive Team attending as needed. Mr. Blaska mentioned there may be some CAC members that are not invested in a particular corridor. Ms. Waldref supports the role described and agreed that citizen input is desired on those panels. Ms. Waldref suggested the CAC meet once in the fall and once in the spring to share information and feedback on the different corridors. Mr. Blaska said that the CAC may want to schedule some sessions to continue to receive information about STA; such as a meeting about the budget or another special interest item.

The Committee members approved the proposed CAC role in the CAPs by consensus.

6. BOARD MEMBER CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Ms. Meyer said that the handout has been reviewed previously. The focus at this meeting is on planning in the 2013 budget for Board member travel. Ms. Meyer said that the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington DC in March 2013 could be the Board Chair traveling with the CEO. The APTA annual meeting in Seattle on September 30th – October 3rd could be the Vice Chair as a prelude to next years' service, plus an additional Board member conference that any member could attend. Ms. Meyer suggests sending two people to the Annual meeting this year due to its close proximity. Mr. French suggested sending two people to the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington, DC also, as there are numerous seminars and lots of information for just one person to absorb. Ms. Meyer asked the committee members to check their calendars for their availability to attend these conferences. Mr. Hafner asked who the Vice Chair would be next year. Ms. Meyer said that the 2013 Vice Chair would be a Small Cities representative. Ms. Waldref said she would be interested in attending. Ms. Meyer asked which small city reps will be on the Board in 2013. Ms. Watson said Medical Lake and Millwood will serve in 2013. Ms. Meyer mentioned that 2013 is going to be the year that the Board prepares for a ballot measure potentially in 2014. In the interest of continuity of leadership and senior members on the Board, the Board may want to contemplate switching who has the Vice Chair position in 2013. Mr. French said if you adjust who is Vice Chair in 2013, then that would line up the City of Spokane for the Chair position in 2014. Ms. Waldref said that strong leadership will be important for the ballot in 2014 and the make-up of the PBTA and at least one corridor in the city will be funded through that process. Ms. Meyer said there may be some changes for Cheney, Medical Lake and Airway Heights in a smaller way in the package, but the topic was brought up to stimulate some thinking about queuing up a chair for 2014 and that could influence Board member travel in 2013. Mr. Hafner said it is very important for the bond issue, and those involved need at least two years' experience. Ms. Waldref said that at the end of 2013 there will be two new people for small cities. Ms. Watson said Millwood would remain in 2014, along with Cheney. Mr. French asked if there should be a conversation at the Board meeting or a Committee recommendation. Ms. Waldref suggested waiting till later in the year for a leadership discussion. Mr. French said that committees in the City are laid out in November & December for the following year. Mr. Hafner said it takes a whole year to prepare for a bond issue and is not sure of the status of school or bond levies. Mr. French said if the public safety levy did not make it to the ballot; it would be eligible for a conversation in 2013 and driven by the City of Spokane. Ms. Waldref said it would depend on the budget conversations this fall. Mr. French said that before the County moved forward with the levy it would need the City of Spokane or the City of Spokane Valley on board. Ms. Waldref said the City is looking at the street bond for next fall (2013). Mr. French said the Public Safety Levy is a sales tax levy and would impact our levy for public transportation. Ms. Waldref said it does not use up capacity, but raises the amount of sales tax individuals will pay. Ms. Meyer said that it would be STA that pushed sales tax over 9%, if the public safety levy passed. The City is aware that STA is looking at a levy.

As it relates to Board member rotation, Ms. Meyer said in the past there was a discussion with Millwood when they were in line for the Chair position and Brian Sayrs from Liberty Lake was asked to stand in for Millwood as Chair in 2006. Ms. Meyer asked if this was a conversation that should happen with Millwood (Richard Schoen) and then bring it to the Board. Mr. French agreed. Ms. Meyer said it would just be switching a year with the City of Spokane. Ms. Waldref said the committee discussions are towards the end of the year. Discussion ensued around succession planning and members' terms. Ms. Meyer said there are a couple of other alternatives; the Valley could retain the seat for a year or the County could take its seat out of rotation. Mr. French discussed the County positions. Ms. Waldref mentioned that next year is critical to have committed leadership from the City of Spokane. Mr. Hafner said that bricks have to be laid in 2013 and it takes time and participation. Ms. Waldref said that next year is critical in getting coalitions started. Ms. Meyer said that Ms. Waldref's assistant, Melissa Carpenter, is a volunteer with Spokane Alliance and has requested a meeting to get STA and the Alliance collaborating again. Mr. French met with Spokane Alliance about four months ago and discussed STA and the restructuring and said it is important to get the Alliance re-engaged. Ms. Meyer said that is part of the rationale behind the CAPs. Mr. Otterstrom said that each of the four CAPs would have 15-20 people involved.

Mr. French asked staff to compile a list of current members in each jurisdiction with their term dates so that a plan of action for succession of leadership could begin that would get us through the election. Mr. Hafner said that four members in the Valley are up for re-election in 2013. Ms. Waldref discussed succession for the City of Spokane.

Ms. Meyer suggested that for the 2013 Budget, two slots will be budgeted for the Legislative Conference in DC in March 2013 and two slots for the Annual Meeting in Chicago in 2013 for a total of four spots for Board travel next year. Ms. Waldref asked how many slots were budgeted for the Annual Meeting in Seattle this year. Ms. Meyer said one was budgeted. Ms. Waldref said her interest is transit and development. Ms. Meyer suggested the Rail Planning Conference (Rail-Volution) and Mr. Otterstrom suggested the National Planning Conference. Mr. Hafner asked if the conferences were worthwhile. Mr. French said yes. Ms. Watson said that two could attend the Annual meeting this year, as one of the earlier budgeted items did not occur. Both Mr. French and Mr. Hafner indicated that they would like to attend the annual meeting in Seattle.

The Committee members approved the proposed 2013 Board member travel by consensus.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Meyer said a new business item would be the public discussion of ballot timing. Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI) sent out a notice asking jurisdictions if they were planning a ballot measure in future years. At that time, Ms. Meyer answered “no”, because the discussion had not happened at the Board level yet. Ms. Meyer asked the committee if it was time to have a discussion about a potential ballot measure in 2014. Mr. Hafner said it was time to start a conversation. Ms. Waldref agreed and mentioned that STA wouldn’t want to be in competition with another jurisdiction or school board. Mr. Hafner mentioned that if STA was in competition, it would be important to know in advance. Mr. French brought up a spring versus fall ballot and the merits of each. Mr. French asked if STA can hire a consultant, such as Brian Gard of Gard Communications, to help strategize about a ballot measure and timing. Ms. Meyer said that Mr. Gard is on contract with STA and that STA can use his services for any project. Mr. Otterstrom said there have been six or seven ballot measures for transit over the past forty years and ballots in the spring have passed and those in the fall have failed. Mr. Hafner said that concurrent ballots or combining ballots could be reviewed. Mr. French said that fall ballots tend to bring everyone out, but spring ballots tend to bring out those individuals invested in the issue. Ms. Meyer said there is a ballot box at the Plaza. Mr. French said ballots will be available on Facebook in the near future. Mr. Hafner said the most important piece is getting the information out soon enough as some bonds have failed due to lack of time. Ms. Meyer said that STA has engaged Mr. Gard to comment on STA’s communication strategy this year because of the potential ballot measure in 2014. Ms. Meyer said that Mr. Gard could meet with the Board Operations Committee members and staff if desired. Mr. French said it would be helpful. Ms. Waldref asked if that would be scheduled in the fall. Ms. Waldref said it would be a valuable to enlist Mr. Gard’s assistance and thought that notifying GSI regarding a potential ballot measure in spring 2014 would not be a problem and in fact would be a good idea if STA has their strategic plan in order. Mr. Hafner agreed that the seed needs to be planted now. Ms. Meyer said that all of the staff planning and big projects assume a ballot measure in the spring of 2014. There was discussion of February or April 2014 for the measure. April was preferred as long as not during Spring Break. Ballot times have been reduced to February, April, August or November.

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman French adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant