

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for June 12, 2013

Northside Conference Room

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley, Chair
Mike Allen, City of Spokane, Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair
Al French, Spokane County, Planning & Development Committee Chair
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio

STAFF PRESENT

Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Services
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Molly Myers, Communications Manager
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the Authority

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Hafner called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Mr. Allen arrived at 12:35 p.m.

A revised agenda was reviewed.

Mr. Allen moved approval of the revised agenda and Mr. Hafner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Hafner hopes that all the Board members will be in attendance at STA's 2014 Planning & Budget workshop on July 11th and said he will emphasize it at the Board meeting. Ms. Watson said that all but two Board members have confirmed their attendance.

Mr. French arrived at 12:37 p.m.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. May 8, 2013 Committee Minutes

Mr. Allen moved approval of the May minutes and Mr. French seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

a. Al French, Planning & Development (P&D):

Mr. Otterstrom said that the committee reviewed the draft Transit Development Plan (TDP) which includes the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the draft Service Implementation Plan (SIP). The public hearing for the TDP is included in the June Board agenda.

The Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Grant Funding was discussed in detail along with a review of the draft 2014 Planning & Budget workshop agenda scheduled for July 11, 2013.

b. Mike Allen, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PM&ER):

Mr. Allen said the major item was the 2012 State Audit report. He commended staff on eight consecutive audits with no findings. Mr. Otterstrom shared the 2012 Route Performance report showing usage and utility of routes including the three step clause used to evaluate routes. This item will be included in information in the Board packet. A Plaza update was also given.

6. REVISION TO SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

Ms. Meyer said that this item will not need to go to the Board. The attorneys for STA and the Spokane Police Department (SPD) have reviewed the agreement. The SPD has agreed to STA's terms which were articulated at the last Board meeting. The terms agreed to included having at least seven officers located in the downtown substation and a provision that the

agreement could be extended by mutual agreement for an additional one year term no later than November 1, 2013. The contract is a revision of terms and does not commit STA to additional dollars, so it does not need Board approval.

Ms. Meyer asked if SPD has signed the sublease with the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP). Mr. Allen said it was close to being signed.

Mr. French said the November 1st deadline is during the City's budget cycle and the sooner this decision can be made the better for budget reasons.

Ms. Meyer said that if STA does not renew this contract it should be communicated prior to November.

Ms. Meyer said that in 2014 no officers would be located in the Plaza, but in the precinct next door. There is no issue of gift of public funds when one government is providing funds to another government. The contract can be extended if STA decides that paying for a police officer is the best use of funds or STA will bring a recommendation to the Board for an alternate use, for example, hiring more security officers.

Mr. Allen said that the effectiveness of the officers at the substation should be known by September. He suggested that Gavin Cooley, CFO, City of Spokane, should be made aware of this possible funding change and that a decision would likely come in September.

Both Mr. Allen and Mr. French said that they would vote in favor of extending the contract.

It was agreed that the decision to extend the contract should come after the relocation of seven officers to the downtown substation which should occur in July.

7. PLAZA UPDATE

Ms. Meyer said that there continues to be a high level of dissatisfaction among some business leaders about the perceived negative impact by bus patrons in the downtown area. A business leader has demanded that STA re-open the smoking area as soon as possible. STA had requested that this situation be looked at after the downtown police substation has opened, to see if a change has occurred and is satisfactory to the business community, but some want this change immediately. Ms. Meyer said that STA would like this Committee's approval to direct engineers to draw up design and cost estimates soon. The three preliminary design options prepared by Coffman Engineers were discussed by the Committee. Options #1 and #2 maintain the current Paratransit stop, but would cause congested transit operations and limit development opportunities for 1st & 2nd floor Plaza tenants with east entry. Option #3 provides for an opportunity to screen the smoking area, maintains street width and provides for a loading zone. The primary disadvantage of Option #3 would be the elimination of the Paratransit stop.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the prior smoking section was actually in the street. Wall Street is now two-way, with a larger sidewalk. Option #3 is the best option as it does not reduce the width of the lanes. In the past, Paratransit vans went into the garage and used the elevator. This may be an option if the current stop is eliminated. There are approximately ten Paratransit stops at the Plaza per day. The proposed smoking area would be screened from the south and the east.

Mr. Hafner asked about length of construction, cost and ramifications.

Ms. Meyer said the estimated cost is under \$40,000 and could take until mid-August to finish.

Mr. Allen asked about STA's change of direction from closing the smoking section to discussions about reopening the smoking section.

Ms. Meyer said that after this project is complete, the hope would be that there would be less negativity towards STA and the Plaza. During the relocation of two bus zones due to recent construction, dozens of people congregated in front of businesses on Post Street. These people were impeding pedestrian traffic and smoking.

Mr. Allen said that the Board had voted on closing the smoking section at the Plaza.

Mr. Hafner, along with Mr. Allen, said that it is apparent that the business community would like STA out of the downtown area.

Mr. Allen said he does support the reopening of the smoking section.

Mr. French said he does support a smoking location, but requests that the engineers look at a fan that could pull smoke up rather than allowing the smoke to gravitate horizontally.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the costs will increase as there is no power readily available, but he will contact the engineers. Diagrams were reviewed by the Committee and discussion ensued.

Mr. Hafner said that cost effectiveness of the plan will need to be reviewed and asked if the problem was smoking or loitering or both.

Ms. Meyer said that the question is, will the smokers use the proposed new smoking section or will they continue to congregate in other parts of downtown.

Mr. Otterstrom said that there is a budget for exterior improvements for the Plaza, although this proposal would change the scope of the current plan. He said that action from the Board would be necessary as they voted to close the smoking section last year.

Mr. Allen suggested contacting Board members in advance of the meeting to explain this in greater detail.

Ms. Meyer complimented Mr. Otterstrom, along with the City and the Contractor, on the reopening of the regular bus zones ahead of schedule after construction, due to a convention of City Planners in downtown. A thank you event for all those involved is planned. It was a great example of cooperation.

Ms. Meyer said that Mr. French had suggested to Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) a project to evaluate what it will take to create and maintain a downtown that is safe, secure and attractive for visitors, employees and the community. Ms. Meyer has a meeting planned with Mark Richard, DSP President, to discuss this idea. A plan to view this holistically is necessary, looking at urban design and street level activity, location of public services, affordable housing, the homeless problem, drug addiction, and service providers. This study could take a year, concluding in 2015, and include the City of Spokane, Downtown Spokane Partnership and STA. If, out of that project, it was determined that STA move out of downtown, alternatives would need to be studied.

Mr. Hafner asked about the Nelson-Nygaard study.

Ms. Meyer said that the study was done in 2006-2007 and the Board approved a motion that STA Operations remain at the Plaza in its current location in 2008. The study concluded that the Plaza would reach operational capacity in 2020.

Mr. Allen said that historically there were more street level retail shops in downtown.

Mr. Hafner asked about other city models of this approximate size.

Mr. French said that Charleston, South Carolina, has received many accolades about their city design. He also said that Spokane's downtown design of seating and atmosphere also attracts a negative clientele. The design elements include intended and unintended results.

Ms. Meyer said that all of these discussions surround the decision to determine the best timing and what is included in a ballot measure.

Mr. Hafner said that community support will be critical.

Discussion of other potential ballot measures ensued.

Ms. Meyer said that she and Mr. Otterstrom participated in the City Council study session on June 6th. Discussion of STA Moving Forward, corridors and ballot timing occurred. Ms. Meyer said that sales tax is up 5% year to date. STA's current sales tax revenue projections through 2020 are significantly too low and the projections determine how much money STA will need in the future.

Mr. Allen asked about the projections.

Ms. Warren said currently sales tax projections are flat in 2013, 1% in 2014 through 2016 and 2% in 2017 and beyond. These projections will most likely be revised at the Budget workshop on July 11th.

Mr. Allen said that if the Downtown study and the Central City Line concept could be packaged together the message would be stronger.

Mr. Otterstrom said that Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) is proposing to evaluate five scenarios which would include transits and roads.

8. CONGESTION MITIGATION & AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) GRANT FUNDING

Mr. Otterstrom said that with approval from the Board of Directors, STA has submitted seven projects to SRTC for federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) on April 30, 2013. Mr. Otterstrom said that the three categories are PM10 (Particulate Matter), Travel Demand Management and Traffic Flow. All seven projects are in the Travel Demand Management category type and one was also included in the PM10 category. SRTC encouraged STA to apply, as STA is able to obligate the funds quickly. Discussion ensued regarding funding & ranking of the seven projects.

Mr. French said that he is on the Freight & Mobility Board for the State. Part of their last presentation was regarding the Interchange at Exit 274 and the West Plains Transit Center. A call for projects from the County will occur this fall. He mentioned that there is a possibility of an additional source of funding for Transit.

Mr. Otterstrom said that STA will be partnering with the State on the Interchange and the West Plains Transit Center as the projects will need to be integrated.

Ms. Meyer said that this is STA's third year to apply for CMAQ funds. The projects are prioritized so that STA receives \$5M of \$6.8M in its category. The categories are new this year.

Mr. Hafner said that the City of Spokane Valley has applied for a CMAQ grant, the Appleway Trail Phase 2 (University to Evergreen), under the Travel Demand Management category. He said that the City of Spokane Valley is requesting that STA delay one of its projects, so that the Appleway Trail could receive funds. The City of Spokane Valley needs \$1.6M for construction.

Mr. Allen asked about the population that is adjacent to the trail.

Mr. Hafner said that population has increased 10,000 overall, but once construction is complete more development will happen along that trail.

Mr. Allen asked when an answer would be needed.

Mr. Hafner asked that the request be considered as soon as possible.

Mr. Otterstrom said that there is an initial SRTC meeting tomorrow which could include Board direction. The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings at the end of June include recommendations to the SRTC Board. Discussions with the STA Board should occur prior to month end.

Mr. Allen said that it is important to know how many people would be served when prioritizing projects.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the SRTC Board decides if there are reductions to the requested amounts for projects.

Discussion ensued regarding the requested funding amounts.

Mr. Allen asked if the City of Spokane Valley asked the State for funding for this project. He said the most important thing to consider is who would get the better benefit.

Mr. Otterstrom said the scoring and ranking would not change.

Ms. Meyer said that SRTC makes the decisions for the CMAQ grants.

Mr. Otterstrom discussed the administrative scoring results and said that three projects are in line and partially funded. These projects are in line if reductions happen in higher ranked projects. No project hits a category 100%.

Mr. Allen asked how many people are adjacent to the property and how many people are expected to use the path.

Mr. Hafner said that projections are that growth will occur.

Mr. Allen asked if a car tab fee has ever been implemented.

Mr. Hafner said it would not yield enough money.

Mr. French said that the County entered into the agreement to give the City of Spokane Valley the land and believes it is a valuable project. It is important to consider which project would yield the most benefit and service the greatest number of constituents. He said that SRTC will most likely have the same issue.

Mr. Allen asked what has been done so far on this project.

Mr. Hafner said that design has been completed and paid for.

Mr. French said that there might be an opportunity to tap into funds for wildlife and recreation projects.

9. 2014 PLANNING & BUDGET WORKSHOP AGENDA

Ms. Warren said that the agenda includes the following four items:

- a. Strategic Plan
- b. Budget
- c. STA Moving Forward
- d. Plaza

Mr. Hafner asked if there would be time to cover all the material.

Ms. Warren said that discussion on the economy could be reduced. Sales tax discussion and assumptions will be important. The majority of the time will be spent on STA Moving Forward and the Plaza.

Mr. French said he will be unable to attend the workshop.

10. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA: JUNE 20, 2013

Mr. Otterstrom said the CMAQ item will be in Board information. The SRTC Board meeting is tomorrow and following that meeting there could be additional information to share related to the CMAQ grant funding.

Ms. Warren said there is a concise summary regarding the 2012 State Audit for Mr. Allen.

Mr. French asked about the Public Hearing under #5 and #10. Mr. Otterstrom said that the public hearing (#5) is separate from any Board discussion on the Transit Development Plan (#10).

Ms. Meyer said that the Board needs to approve spending additional money on the Plaza and this item will be on the agenda.

Mr. Allen moved approval of the Board agenda including an item regarding Wall Street Modifications and Mr. French seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Hafner adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant