

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for November 13, 2013

Northside Conference Room

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mike Allen, City of Spokane, Performance
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair

STAFF PRESENT

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

GUESTS

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, Council Member

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Hafner called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

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

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Hafner said the retirement party for Molly Myers, Communications Manager, went well.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

- a. July 15, 2013 Special Committee Minutes
- b. September 11, 2013 Special Committee Minutes
- c. October 16, 2013, Committee Minutes

Mr. French moved approval of the July 15, September 11 and October 16 minutes and Mr. Hafner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

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

Mr. Otterstrom said that without a quorum the committee was not able to make a recommendation on the budget, but moved it forward by consensus to the Board for action. The Committee reviewed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and that will also be reviewed at the Board meeting. Two additional STA Moving Forward preliminary implementation scenarios were reviewed.

Mr. Otterstrom said that a discussion will be held with the entire Board regarding requesting, with other authorities, changes to the State law to allow the high capacity transit tax to be used for projects such as the Central City Line and other corridor projects in the future. Sales tax and the high capacity transit tax could then be coupled together in a ballot initiative in the future. Funding sources would be kept separate. Although there was no action on the item, the consensus of the committee was that staff should proceed with this legislative agenda.

Mr. French agreed to add this to the legislative agenda and said that there may be other high capacity transit alternatives that do not include light rail.

Mr. Otterstrom said that the Central City Line project or other corridor projects could potentially use either funding source.

Ms. Waldref asked if the Washington State Transit Association (WSTA) is supportive of the proposed changes to the State law.

Ms. Meyer has asked Geri Beardsley, Executive Director of WSTA, to advise STA on the possible effects of this proposed change.

Ms. Meyer said that the legislative agenda will be brought to the Board in December plus any updates on the proposed change to the State law regarding high capacity transit tax.

Mr. French said that there are 8 different funding options being considered at this time.

The committee briefly discussed the funding options and corridor alternatives.

Mr. French said that a budget update was provided by Ms. Warren at the meeting. The highlights were shared.

Ms. Warren said that it is the same presentation as was shown at the budget public hearing; highlighting the savings in medical insurance, the updated sales tax numbers and the decrease in the Federal Maintenance Grant of \$160,000.

The committee requested just the updates be shared verbally at the Board meeting. The entire presentation will be in the Board packet. Ms. Warren said the budget is scheduled for adoption by the Board in November.

The Committee discussed a complete budget presentation versus just the highlights at the Board meeting.

Ms. Meyer and Ms. Warren will finalize the presentation.

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

Mr. Allen and Mr. Blaska were absent. No report was given.

6. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ms. Meyer said the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was established in 2004 and reports directly to the Board. The mission of the CAC is to:

- Increase public participation in the functions of Spokane Transit
- Ensure accountability of the organization's actions
- Act as an educational arm of the organization to reach out to the public
- Act as a focused, educated forum for public input and feedback to the organization
- Represent a wide range of stakeholder and transit service employees

Ms. Meyer said that several years ago, the group had taken a project based approach. It was staff's recommendation, with approval of the Board to participate in the Fare evaluation in 2009 and in the Sustainability chapter of the Comprehensive Plan in 2011 & 2012. At the conclusion of that project, some citizen members elected to join Corridor Advisory Panels during the STA Moving Forward study. This part of the STA Moving Forward project is complete. Staff is proposing a six month evaluation period for staff and the Board to consider the future structure of the CAC. During this evaluation time, the CAC will reconvene to discuss relevant topics from both the Planning & Development and Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee meetings. Ms. Meyer said that STA does need a citizen group. Since the CAC first began, the composition has changed. When the new committee structure went into effect in 2012 with Board members only, the existing citizen members of the Operations & Customer Service committee were asked to join the existing CAC.

Mr. French said the evolution and mission of the group has changed since it first formed.

Mr. Hafner said that the CAC needs a purpose.

Ms. Meyer said that Ms. Bousley has done research on other transit and government citizen groups. Some groups are very staff intensive and also require an educated committed committee member. Some groups are project oriented around capital projects and others do long range planning. Many groups had their own Community Relations Coordinators. King County Metro used a big task force to develop long range service planning guidelines and the former Secretary of Transportation sat on this committee. The input of the members was compelling and strategic to the development of the service plan.

Ms. Bousley said that for a geographic project, groups would be formed by segments (or per mile) for example. Some groups had outreach coordinators who would be out in the field talking to committee members and constituents. Groups had to have a lot of education and training to prepare them on the subject.

Ms. Meyer said that the CAC has not reconvened since the end of the Corridor Advisory Panels in July 2013.

Mr. French asked if the CAC might do public outreach to expand or enhance STA's ridership. Seattle and Portland have done a good job of attracting their ridership of choice.

Ms. Waldref said this is an important time to gather information from a citizen panel. The mission of the CAC could be reexamined to fit the current need. An idea could be to create separate task forces focused on specific topics.

Mr. Hafner agreed that the key is more public education.

Ms. Meyer said that a group of citizens would need to provide STA with extra value, not currently provided by staff, in order to justify an investment of staff time.

Mr. French asked if STA should focus on an educational program that would communicate the benefits of STA.

Ms. Waldref said that the City has many advisory groups and it is important for transparency.

Mr. Otterstrom said that STA has had at least six groups that focused on a defined objective; the sounding board for the Central City Line, four Corridor Advisory Panels and a Core Stakeholder group. These groups were engaged because the topic was important to them.

Mr. French said the original mission of the CAC was oversight and advisory to the Board of Directors and that has since changed.

Ms. Bousley said that in 2014 STA will be conducting research regarding the best way to message to Millennials, for example. A small task force could be recruited for this. Smaller specific projects with a beginning and an end are effective. There could be an overarching citizen advisory committee with sub-committees. After identifying the mission, rigorous recruiting is crucial for successful committees.

Mr. French suggested compiling a list of projects within STA's strategic plan and letting the committee choose a topic. Ms. Waldref agreed.

Mr. Otterstrom said that an effective task force has term limits. Recruitment for specific projects is important.

Mr. Hafner said a specific objective should be identified first and then select committee members.

Mr. French suggested going to specific groups and ask for representation on a task force.

Ms. Bousley suggested the current CAC members review items from the Planning & Development and Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee meetings, plus another agenda item from a list of suggested topics for a six month evaluation period.

Ms. Meyer suggested citizen focus groups combined with education.

Mr. French said the current STA advertising by local business persons is very compelling. In addition to these, educational advertising could be used.

Mr. French suggested the Committee could remain, but add additional smaller task groups. It is easier to recruit for a task force than a committee. If applications are not received for a particular task force, then the county will recruit members.

Ms. Waldref said the City has identified specific groups with strong leaders from which to choose members for various task forces. Time spent up front restructuring the CAC will yield more results in the future.

Mr. French said that the CAC was created out of a response to Spokane Alliance, and members of that group could be asked to populate a new citizen committee.

The Committee agreed by consensus to a six month evaluation period by staff of the current Citizen Advisory Committee and staff will return with a recommendation.

7. PROPOSED 2014 BOARD & COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Ms. Watson said that the proposed 2014 calendar includes three (3) Board meetings on the 4th Thursday of the month (May, July and October). The rest are on the normal 3rd Thursday.

Ms. Watson said that although there had been absences when the Board meeting was moved to the 4th Thursday, there was always a quorum.

Committee members discussed their calendars and possible conflicts along with different Board meeting times.

Ms. Meyer said four new members will be joining the Board in 2014.

Ms. Warren said that the October Board meeting begins at 4 p.m. due to the budget public hearing.

Ms. Watson suggested revisiting the calendar at the December Board Operations meeting with a recommendation for action at the Board meeting.

The Committee approved by consensus to revisit the calendar at the December Board Operations meeting with a recommendation for action at the Board meeting.

8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA: NOVEMBER 21, 2013

Ms. Watson said item 7B Proposed 2014 Committee & Board meeting calendar will be removed.

Ms. Waldref asked if the executive session will be an update on labor negotiations.

Ms. Watson said yes.

The Committee approved by consensus the Board agenda with removal of Item 7B Proposed 2014 Committee & Board meeting calendar.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

10. **ADJOURN**

Mr. French moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Hafner seconded. With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Hafner adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant