

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

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2011
Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Fyrne Bemiller
Will Flanigan
Victor Frazier
Resa Hayes
Charles Hansen
Ted Horobiowski
Larry Luton
Dean Lynch
Fran Papenleur
Philip Rudy
Brenda Smits, Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations

GUESTS PRESENT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Susanne Croft
Margaret Jones

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Ms. Smits called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. MINUTES OF THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Corrections or Approval

a.) Ms. Smits asked the Committee to address the meeting minutes of November 9, 2011.

Mr. Lynch made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Frazier seconded. Ms. Smits asked the Committee who was in favor of approving the minutes as written and all said "Aye". There were no "Nay's". The minutes were approved.

3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

There were no public expressions.

4. SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

Ms. Smits mentioned that when the Sustainability document was presented to the Board at the last meeting, Commissioner Mark Richards felt the term "urban sprawl" was not appropriate. Ms. Smits thanked Mr. Luton for his presentation at the Board meeting.

Mr. Blaska read the current policy 2.2.

"Serve as regional connection to neighborhoods/jurisdictions, places of employment, and community events and public services in a way that does not promote urban sprawl".

Mr. Frazier suggested instead of urban sprawl, "beyond the logistical capabilities of what is practical or functional for Spokane Transit Authority". Mr. Lynch agreed with the concept. Mr. Horobiowski suggested "in a way that meets the needs of the community". Ms. Bemiller and Mr. Frazier agreed with

this last suggestion as it keeps it positive. Mr. Luton commented that the term “urban sprawl” is used throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The last suggestion, “needs of the community”, leaves open for interpretation what the needs of the community are. Ms. Smits mentioned that “two communities” in the sentence doesn’t read well. Mr. Lynch suggested inserting PTBA (Public Transportation Benefit Area) boundaries instead of service area. Mr. Blaska mentioned that vanpool is operated outside of the PTBA and if service is expanded to Coeur d’Alene to “meet the needs of the service area” it would be outside of the PTBA. Mr. Horobiowski suggested “meets the needs of the citizens it serves”. It makes it more personal rather than geographical.

Ms. Smits suggested thumbs up, thumbs down vote on the proposed revised 2.2 policy:

“Serve as regional connection to neighborhoods/jurisdictions, places of employment, and community events and public services in a way that meets the needs of the service area”.

Mr. Luton voted “no”, all the rest of the committee voted “yes”. By majority, the proposed revision stands. Ms. Hayes mentioned that this wording would be easier for her to explain to her constituents.

Mr. Blaska mentioned that the updated version of this document will be in the folders at the Board meeting.

Mr. Blaska discussed the agenda for the Board meeting. Generally there is an introduction, the public hearing item. Either someone from the committee or Mr. Blaska would do this. They would reintroduce the subject and highlight the one change. The chair will open it up for public hearing. There will be a discussion by the Board on the item. As part of dialogue, the staff assessment will be presented. The Board will ask the staff their comments. The staff is fully on board, except for one item. The last Connect Strategy in the document regarding implementing sustainability into job descriptions crosses over into CEO’s authority. The Board sets policy and CEO has authority to implement that. This one intrudes somewhat on CEO’s prerogative.

Mr. Blaska mentioned that one Board member, Nancy McLaughlin, had a question about cost from the Operations & Customer Service committee meeting.

Mr. Frazier asked about the outgoing Board Chair, Amber Waldref and who would fill that role next. Mr. Blaska mentioned that Al French will be the Board Chair. What we won’t know is about the other jurisdictions and how they will assign Board members until after the first of the year. Mr. Blaska mentioned that there won’t be a lot of Board turnover this next year.

There was normal posting for the public hearing. It was decided that Mr. Blaska would do the introduction & presentation of staff assessment at the Board meeting. Mr. Luton and Mr. Hansen will be at the Board meeting.

5. 2012 PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET

Mr. Blaska went through the presentation. Under Budget Guidance, prepare for phase 3 service reduction has been grayed out. STA has been very successful in bridging the funding gap, and we are no longer having part of our view to plan a time & size for the service reduction. The 2012 Proposed Final Budget is slightly lower than the 2011 adopted budget was. Fuel prices continue to go up. We reduced our medical expenses, but the lower level of medical expenses went up by 10%. The 7% reduction was only fixed route, no impact on Paratransit. Vanpool is expanding. South Valley Right of way corridor cash was moved from a capital expense into a reserve. We are predicting a 4.6% reduction in operating revenues (fares) based on the assumption we will lose 5% of ridership. EWU service is up 26% with fewer

resources. Mr. Luton said he has heard some people are unable to get back into town. Mr. Blaska said they have maxed out their trippers.

Ms. Smits asked about the “other federal grants” line item. Mr. Blaska said it was the State of Good Repair grant, and helped us fund our Paratransit van purchase. It is a non-recurring federal grant. Karl & his crew have been awarded 17M grants over and above what they expected in the last three years. Sales tax is still 68.5% of total operating revenue (fares + advertising). The 2012 proposed final budget is \$60.8M. Under Operating Expenses, Mr. Blaska mentioned that “labor” includes wages for work time only.

Mr. Horobiowski asked how the cost per mile has changed with the service cuts.

Mr. Lynch said that the 17.2% operating revenue was good to see and reinforced the work the committee had done on fares. Mr. Blaska said that it has helped bridge the gap.

Mr. Frazier asked if Planning has done a demographic study on the aging population here. Mr. Blaska said that the primary reason for the rise in Paratransit services is not the aging population, but is more medically based because we are a center for medical and social services.

Mr. Lynch asked about a bus barn in Liberty Lake. Mr. Blaska mentioned we do have a bus barn in the Valley which houses 8 busses and 12 vans.

Dr. Rudy asked about the Plaza Renovation. It is \$1.3M state funding plus \$988K local funding to convert the outside for more capacity plus some inside work. Wall Street will become two ways and a more functional zone. Construction will start next year. The functional transit activities will move to the first floor of the Plaza. Mobility training will have a permanent spot on the 2nd floor as well as in-person assessments. Public hearings will be held next year regarding the space on the 2nd floor.

Mr. Blaska mentioned that Cash in the beginning of 2012 would be \$44M and at the end of 2012 would be \$36M. The capital program is funded by the cash.

Dr. Rudy asked about the South Valley Corridor. Mr. Horobiowski asked about the sales tax and the impact of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax over the past few years.

Mr. Blaska discussed the Forecast models. It is not inevitable that STA has to take the 3rd service reduction in 2013 now. Mr. Luton commented on the difficulty of “forecasting”. Ms. Hayes commented on the need to be careful.

Ms. Hayes asked about batteries and reliability & efficiency of hybrids. Due to the use of Hybrids, there is a 17% increase in fuel efficiency now. The upcoming bill is the replacement of battery packs in 2015.

6. HIGH-IMPACT GOVERNING: NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

There will be 3 sub-committees of the Board under this new structure. Board members will sit on the Committees. The committees are:

1. Board Operations (meeting preparation, policies, coordination of Operations, delegation to other committees)
2. Performance Monitoring & External Relations (performance reports, evaluating financial performance, reviewing & recommendation board action)
3. Planning & Development (planning, budget & financial)

It is unclear where the Operations & Customer Service and Citizen Advisory Committee fit into this new structure yet. We don't want to lose the citizen input into the process at the committee level.

Ms. Meyer joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Ms. Smits said she would like to remain on the committee, but step down from the Chair position and asked members to think about their roles. Mr. Luton mentioned that in January he had planned on telling the committee that he will resign from the committee after Sustainability has finished. Mr. Horobiowski asked about member's terms on the committee. Mr. Blaska mentioned that there are no legislative "terms" for committee members.
2. Mr. Horobiowski mentioned he continues to hear from his Logan neighborhood bus riders that have to walk much further to catch a bus.
3. Ms. Papeleur mentioned that coach operators have a much quicker rotation, lots of changes. Mr. Blaska mentioned that mark up is 3 times a year; the last one was in September. Due to the service changes in September, the senior coach operators haven't figured out where the really good runs are, so there is some migration.
4. Ms. Papeleur said that there is a morning Arena shuttle driver that is very nice and pleasant. In the morning, the 10 minute intervals work well.
5. Ms. Bemiller said that the Paratransit drivers are very nice. Ms. Meyer said that in the last survey, the Paratransit drivers were rated a 98%.
6. The three position bike rack was brought up that had been initiated by a former Board member. Ms. Meyer mentioned that a lot of research went into this decision and it was determined that the investment was not worth the perceived benefit especially since it was done in isolation and not a bike-bus strategy.

8. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

At this point, the January meeting is cancelled as there are no agenda items.

9. ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Smits adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant