

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for February 9, 2011

Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Fyrne Bemiller
Susanne Croft
Will Flanigan
Resa Hayes
Ted Horobiowski
Margaret Jones
Larry Luton
Fran Papenleur
Philip Rudy
Brenda Smits, Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Charlie Phillips, Maintenance Analyst

GUESTS PRESENT

None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Victor Frazier
Charles Hansen
Dean Lynch

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Ms. Smits called the meeting to order at 5:08 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 December 8, 2010.

The Committee approved the minutes as written by consensus.

3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

There were no public expressions at this time.

4. SEPTEMBER 2011 SERVICE REDUCTION

Mr. Blaska said 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.

Mr. Flannigan asked for clarification of STA is expected to be fully sustainable by 2016.

Mr. Blaska said if the proposed cuts take place, STA's cash in the capital program will be lowered to the reserve level by 2016, and if the cash balance does not improve, STA may need to use a portion of the reserves.

Ms. Hayes inquired about feedback received from the public regarding the service reductions.

Mr. Blaska said the feedback has been very consistent with what the Citizen Advisory Committee observed when they discussed the proposal. Those that are directly affected with their route being moved or removed altogether are not happy. He added that staff is working very hard to affect as few people as possible. The general ridership that

are seeing some changes, are in general not overly vocal, they are accepting of the change. The general population seems to be thankful that STA is not asking for more revenue is is looking at service in a realistic manner.

Mr. Blaska showed a summary table that cross references the reduction aspect, reduction target, preliminary proposal, and the draft recommendation with the estimated annual savings, annual Fixed Route platform hours reduced, Fixed Route coaches requirement reduction, Fixed Route ridership impacts, Paratransit customers directly impacted, routes eliminated/consolidated, and routes created. The draft recommendation has an estimated annual savings of \$3.0 - \$3.4M, and an annual Fixed Route reduction in platform hours of 30,000 – 34,000. There would be a reduction of nine to eleven coaches in Fixed Route, and a 5% - 6% loss of system ridership, including eight routes eliminated/consolidated and two created. Eight Paratransit customers would also lose service under the draft recommendation as opposed to the initial figure of 101 in the preliminary proposal. Individual letters have been sent to those affected.

Dr. Rudy asked if the reduction of coaches is through attrition of worn out vehicles.

Mr. Blaska said it is not due to attrition. Rather, the reduction of coaches is due to a lesser amount required during peak service time, which results in a capital savings as these coaches will not have to be replaced.

Mrs. Jones asked if there is a market for the used buses.

Mr. Blaska replied not for an STA bus as there is not much life left by the time it is retired. He added that the coaches that will not be in use will go into a contingency fleet for use when the economy improves and service is added. There are also six coaches that will be replaced in 2012. It does not save to delay capital replacement, it only costs more in the long run. The only way to save capital money is to reduce the capital requirement to have 120 coaches. There is an earmark to pay the difference to upgrade the six new coaches to hybrid.

Dr. Rudy asked if there is any merit in extending Route 94 so it ends at the Library.

Mr. Blaska said it is a timing challenge and when altering a route for a short time or distance, there is not enough time as each bus has a cycle time to meet.

Dr. Rudy said he views the library as a destination point.

Mr. Blaska said he would pass this suggestion on to Mr. Otterstrom.

Mr. Blaska covered the highlights of the proposal which included: revised service to Liberty Lake; preservation of limited service to Medical Lake; preservation of service to high demand destinations on Fairchild Air Force Base; preservation of service on segments of Argonne to Millwood; improved peak-period service on Route 45 Southeast Blvd.; provide new Sunday and night service on 23 Maple/Ash; simplified Paratransit boundary implementation. This meets the Geographic Extent policy of the Comprehensive Plan of providing basic bus service within ½ mile of at least 85% of the PTBA urban population. Mr. Blaska reviewed each of the maps in detail for the recommended 2011 service reductions. He added that this presentation was given by Mr. Otterstrom to the Board in January and will be presented again in February at the public hearing. For ease of reference, please refer to the attached presentation.

5. SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

a.) Federal, State, City Agencies Requirements; APTA, The Climate Registry, ISO Discussion

Initial background information was provided in the packet to support the development of STA Sustainability Plan. Mr. Blaska reviewed the Federal, State, City Agencies Requirements for Washington State and Spokane Transit. Also reviewed were the APTA Sustainability Commitment; The Climate Registry, Performance Metric for Transit Agencies; ISO 14001:2004 Environmental management systems – requirements with guidance for use; and ISO 14004:2004 Environmental management systems – general guidelines on principles, systems, and support technique.

b.) STA Comprehensive Plan Format

Mr. Blaska discussed the Comprehensive Plan and its format. He said much of what has been reviewed could be captured in the same format as the Comprehensive Plan and would be useful at future meetings as the Committee can use this format as a framework for discussion and structure for the written product. The final program should be integrated into Connect Spokane – A Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation. This is the core document that expresses principals and policies that guide the agency.

Mr. Blaska presented the major elements for the format as principles, policies, and strategies. He said that the principles are not intended to be policies. They provide necessary concepts, background information, and the philosophical foundation for decision makers, customers, and others interested in transit. The principles should be broad in scope, shape policies, connect strategies and unchanging. The policies are derived from the principles associated in an element and define more specifically the guidelines decision makers should follow to guide the agency toward continued improvement. The policies should be more specific, shaped by principles, and adaptable over time. The strategies are developed from principles and policies, and are specific ways in which STA can go beyond current practice. Whether it calls for a policy review, strategic system plan, or a list of technological tools to pursue, each strategy aims to continue connecting people with place throughout the Spokane region. Strategies are specific and implementable, shaped by principles and policies, and are able to change to reflect needs and opportunities.

c.) Develop Project Calendar

The Committee determined to have their draft recommendation completed by July for a presentation to the Board at their September 21, 2011 meeting. Staff will lead the Committee through a brainstorming session for principles, policies, and strategies in development of the sustainability program at their next meeting on March 9, 2011.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

As previously discussed at an earlier meeting, several Committee members mentioned that they are always impressed with the coach operators on their own specific routes. If the operator sees that they are running to the bus, they will wait for them. Ms. Croft said the coach operator for her route is Dave Goodwin. She spoke very highly of him and said that he referred to the people on his route as “his customers”. Mr. Blaska said that Dave’s philosophy is that he is an independent business man and the bus is his business.

Ms. Smits said that she is currently reading a report issued by the EPA regarding greenhouse gases and the best available control technology. Once she has completed reading it, Ms. Smits said she would report back to the Committee any information pertinent to the Sustainability Project.

7. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 9, 2011 – 5:00 p.m. (Regular Meeting) – Spokane Transit, Southside Conference Room.

8. ADJOURN

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

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Zantello
Executive Assistant