

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

**OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the January 5, 2011, Meeting  
Southside Conference Room

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane \*  
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights  
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley  
Rick Jacks, Citizen  
Nan Kelly, Citizen  
Mike Brewer, Citizen  
Ann Campeau, Citizen  
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015  
Phil Ridenour, AFSCME 3939

**STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, CEO  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications

**GUESTS**

None

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake  
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen  
David Driscoll, Citizen  
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598

\* Chair

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Introductions were made. There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

Mr. Ridenour arrived at 1:33 p.m.

3. **MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2010, COMMITTEE MEETING - CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL**

**Mr. Rushing moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Mr. Jacks arrived at 1:34 p.m.

4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

5. **2011 SERVICE REDUCTION PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL - PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY REPORT NO. 3 - INFORMATION**

Mr. Otterstrom said this is the third of three update reports on the comments received from customers regarding the preliminary proposal to reduce fixed route and paratransit service in 2011. He noted that customers are using many different means to communicate concerns and suggestions including letters, petitions, note cards, and the STA website. Strong concerns were spread across several routes during this period, and often revolved around loss of service.

Mr. Otterstrom added that there seems to be a general understanding of why service reductions are necessary; however, many people have suggested asking voters to approve a higher sales tax rate, increase current fares, and/or reduce pay and staffing for administrative functions as a solution to STA's declining financial position.

Staff will continue to present the proposed plan to community groups and collect input. A draft recommendation will be released in January, with a public hearing to be held in February. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the timeline for the project, noting that a final recommendation will be presented to the Board of Directors in March.

Ms. Waldref asked if there was an Excel spreadsheet available with all comments received over this review period for each particular route. Mr. Otterstrom said he could produce that if necessary.

Mr. Rushing asked for clarification regarding when the paratransit boundary would be adjusted following the September fixed route changes. Ms. Meyer responded that staff is proposing to make all changes to Fixed Route and Paratransit Service in September, rather than implementing the 2010 Paratransit changes in March. She added that letters had been sent out to those Paratransit riders who will be affected by the boundary change. Mr. Rushing

asked if the Committee could see a copy of one of the letters that was sent out. Ms. Meyer said yes. She also mentioned that in trying to mitigate the impact of these service changes, staff was able to find a way to reduce the number of paratransit riders who would have been affected by the boundary change from 100 to about 10 individuals.

#### 6. DRAFT 2011 PERFORMANCE MEASURES - INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska explained that each performance measure is related to a specific STA priority, is a quantifiable benchmark which demonstrate the agency's commitment to accountability, and is reviewed and updated annually. He reviewed STA's revised Mission Statement and Organizational Priorities. Updates for 2011 include:

- The goal for Fixed Route ridership is to maintain 85% of the record level of ridership achieved in 2009. General economic conditions have led to an overall reduction in transit ridership nationwide for the last two years, and this trend is expected to continue in 2011. It is anticipated that the proposed service reductions will also affect ridership in the coming year.
- Paratransit ridership is set at 0% growth in an effort to manage demand for the program. The service reductions will have only a slight impact on Paratransit van service. The goal for the Vanpool program is set at 19% growth, which is a continuation of the goals set for the past two years. Reduced staffing at many employment sites plus the decline in fuel prices has hindered the growth of this program. After some positive momentum at the end of 2010, staff has a goal of putting one new vanpool group together each month this year.
- The customer survey measurement scale regarding Customer Security has changed to 1 - 5 instead of 1 - 4, and the standard changed to reflect this.
- The goal for vanpool cost recovery is to recover 109% of operational and administrative costs for the program. This figure was set to allow STA to recover 100% of the operational and administrative costs of the program, plus 20% of the capital replacement costs of the vehicles through the fare structure, and 20% of the capital recovery through van value when the vans are auctioned off.
- Maintenance cost per mile went up \$0.01 per mile. This reflects an aggressive goal to hold cost increases down when the cost of parts is increasing and equipment is aging.
- The previous scale for Driver Announcements/Introductions was based on an average score on a scale of 1 - 5. The new measurement records the percentage of customer service observations that confirm we are making audible announcements at required times for Fixed Route and van operators are introducing themselves when picking up customers. The goal is 100%, and the standard is 95%.
- The way Complaint Rate was measured was changed. Instead of 1 per 20,000 boardings, it is now 5 per 100,000 boardings.

Staff will continue comparing STA's performance against to other transit properties to see where improvements can be made to the benchmarks that have been set.

#### 7. 2011 ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLAN - INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska explained that STA uses a family of planning documents to articulate a long-term vision for the region's public transportation system and identify mid- and short-term resource and service implementation strategies to achieve that vision. The hierarchy of STA plans includes: Annual Strategic Plan/Budget, Service Implementation Plan, Capital Improvement Program, Transit Development Plan, and Connect Spokane (Comprehensive Plan).

The annual Strategic Plan is a concise statement of the major objectives for each of STA's modes. It also communicates the major projects to be accomplished in the coming year and identifies significant resource constraints. The annual Budget is a companion plan designed to provide adequate resources to accomplish the guidance in the annual Strategic Plan. Highlights of the 2011 Strategic Plan include:

- Service:
  - reduce Fixed Route service by approximately 7%; retain 85% of 2009 ridership levels
  - modify Paratransit service with fixed route changes; add 5 vans to the Special Use Vanpool program
  - deploy ten new vanpool vans
- Major projects:
  - publish Central City Transit Alternatives Analysis
  - continue Smart Bus Program (Phase 1: cameras)
  - initiate Business System Upgrade project

- continue Plaza improvement program
- initiate FCC required radio system project
- complete facility master plan
- implement Trapeze Operations and Customer Service software modules
- award of contract for Vanpool software
- execute temporary extended vehicle replacement schedule

- Constraints:
- no new positions in 2011
  - reduce the scope of Phase 2 of facility camera project
  - reduce all travel not associated with training by 20% from 2009 levels
  - constrain training to 2009 levels

8. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer said everyone at STA was shocked and saddened by the news that Richard Munson recently passed away. Mr. Munson served as Chairman of STA’s Operations and Customer Service Committee for several years and was a former Mayor of The City of Spokane Valley. He will be missed by all who knew him.
- b. Ms. Meyer commented that Mike Volz, STA’s Assistant Director of Finance and Administration, has accepted a position with the County as their new Deputy Treasurer. Everyone at STA will miss Mr. Volz and wishes him the best of luck in the future.
- c. Ms. Meyer said First Night ridership was down about 40% (approx. 2,700 riders) compared to last year. This was probably due to the extreme cold weather experienced that night. Mr. Rushing commented that many people might not have realized that most First Night events are held indoors.
- d. Ms. Meyer noted that the deck signs on the fixed route buses will read “Go Eagles” for one week in honor of the Eastern Washington University football team’s involvement in the National Championship playoffs. She added that if they win, the deck signs may need to reflect a similar message for an additional week.
- e. STA has partnered with Google and on New Year’s Eve, Google Transit was launched. This allows STA’s customers to connect to the STA website and plan their trips using Google maps.

9. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. November 2010 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- b. Community Outreach and Involvement - as presented.

10. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

- a. Update on Committee Membership Solicitation - Mr. Blaska explained that STA solicited for citizen members for the Operations and Customer Service Committee and one application was received. Staff met with the applicant, but would prefer to add at least two members to the Committee to assist with quorum requirements, so that application is on hold for now. Staff will solicit membership again later this month in other local publications and online in hopes the advertisement will reach a wider audience.
- b. Ms. Meyer noted that STA’s Board of Directors meetings will again be broadcast live on the third Wednesday of the month.

11. COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ EXPRESSIONS

- a. None.

12. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2011, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

13. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant