

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the June 7, 2017, Meeting
Spokane Transit Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley, *Board Operations Committee Chair*
Al French, Spokane County, *Planning & Development Committee Chair*
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, *Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair*
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, *Ex-officio*

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Higgins, Small Cities Representative (Medical Lake), *Chair Pro Tempore*

STAFF PRESENT

Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer Service
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Nancy Williams, Director of Human Resources
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning & Development
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Services
Jan Watson, Clerk of the Board

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Laura McAloon, Witherspoon Brajcich McPhee PLLC

GUESTS

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Haley called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. Roll call was conducted.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Ms. Waldref moved approval of the June 7, 2017 agenda, Mr. French seconded and the motion passed.

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

No comments.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. April 12, 2017 Committee Minutes

Ms. Waldref moved approval of the April 12, 2017 committee minutes and Mr. French seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

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

The committee meeting was cancelled. No report.

b. Amber Waldref, Chair, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PM&ER)

Ms. Waldref reported that the Award of Contract - West Plains Transit Center was moved forward to the Board Consent Agenda. The Committee received a report on the Alternative Fuel Study / Procurement Mechanism for bus replacement. STA is looking at the potential of purchasing electric fuel buses. Purchase is tied to the construction of the new garage and the capacity for charging stations. STA staff and Avista are discussing a potential partnership for electric fueling stations. A request for authorization to submit an application for a competitive Low or No (Lo No) Emission grant will be on the Board agenda.

The Committee received a demonstration and discussed the launch of the Real Time Bus application that is now available via a direct link on a smart phone. Ms. Bousley presented information regarding this year's communications campaign including information on the Real Time application, fare increase, and new services that began in May. The communications update will be on the Board agenda.

Mr. French asked Mr. Blaska for a brief update on the conclusions of the Alternate Fuel Study. Mr. Blaska reported the first study was conducted 10 years ago and the conclusion was to skip CNG and stay with diesel as we can integrate biodiesel if that becomes economically feasible. The next jump would be all battery, all electric buses.

With technology advances, electric battery buses are becoming viable. With overnight charging they would be cost effective. In the interim, in corridors where we could have in route charging stations we may be able to adopt early. The Monroe/Regal corridor is a good candidate and STA received some state funding for the corridor which may cause us to do that adoption as early as 2019; hence, the request for authorization to apply for the Lo No grant so STA would not miss that opportunity should it decide to move forward. STA has six electric fuel buses written into the plan for 2019. Mr. French inquired about the Proterra product and whether or not they are achieving the distances they predicted with their batteries. Mr. Blaska responded yes, they are getting better. They changed their business model to look for single charging and batteries that go more miles rather than in route charging. Proterra appears to be a leading candidate for 40' buses. The other encouraging thing about Proterra is they are coming off having a proprietary charging system.

6. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA JUNE 15, 2017

Committee members reviewed the agenda. There were no changes or corrections.

Ms. Meyer noted item number 4, Recognitions & Presentations of the 2016 State Audit Report, which was another clean audit with no findings or management letter. Kudos to Lynda Warren and her team and everyone else involved.

Ms. Waldref inquired about Item 8a, the City Ticket Agreement contract, and whether STA had discussed with the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) how it would promote the passes to downtown businesses. Ms. Meyer responded that the conversation has not yet happened; the agreement is the same as the previous agreement, which does not outline specific promotional responsibilities. Ms. McAloon pointed out that the agreement is written broadly enough that DSP is simply required to engage in a marketing campaign, but there is no monetary amount tied to their participation. Ms. Bousley and her team plan to meet with DSP to discuss their future marketing plan to promote the program. Mr. Blaska is on the DSP Parking Advisory Committee (PAC) that plans to do a strategic downtown parking study to understand what rates are charged where and the boundaries. He will reinforce the value of the City Ticket program at the PAC. Mr. Blaska noted that the City Ticket Program is up 24% this year due to downtown construction and the loss of the Bosch Lot. Mr. French mentioned a tangential conversation at the City related to building heights on the south side of Spokane Falls Boulevard and the possibility of building on the parking lots near Stevens and Spokane Falls Boulevard. The City Ticket Program was mentioned as one option to the meet the demand of the lost parking slots should those lots be converted to buildings. Ms. Meyer will remind STA Board members who attend DSP Board meetings to mention the City Ticket Program and its benefits as appropriate.

Mr. French moved approval of the agenda and Ms. Waldref seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

9. CEO REPORT

The Department of Transportation Regional Mobility Grant did not initially fund the Upriver Transit Center (UTC) at Spokane Community College. Due to a change at another transit agency, money from the grant has freed up. Since the UTC project is ready, STA will receive \$1.3 million toward the project. There will also be savings from the West Plains Transit Center (WPTC) that STA can move to the UTC allowing the center to be fully funded. Ms. Waldref added that the low bid for the WPTC was approximately 20% under the engineer's estimate.

July 19 is the tentative date for the West Plains Transit Center groundbreaking. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 10 office asked the date of the ribbon cutting for the WPTC. Members of the FTA Region 10 office will be here July 19.

The Central City Line Application for early rating was submitted. Staff are in the process of answering FTA questions so the assumption is the clock has not started to run on how long it will be for FTA to respond. The most notable question was about ridership in the corridor that was down in October 2016 over October 2015. That was the ridership that FTA based their answer on that STA met warrants. Because of that, STA did not have to go through a complicated methodology of forecasting ridership since it met that many rides already in the corridor. Ms. Meyer believes Mr. Otterstrom provided the information needed including how ridership has begun to increase. Ms. Waldref asked how the FTA knew of the decline in ridership from October 2015 to October 2016. Mr. Otterstrom responded that FTA receives ridership reports through STA's monthly reporting which are provisional until STA finalizes the National Transit Database (NTD) reports each year. The sense is there is more scrutiny right now about projects that are on the bubble. Staff believe that the explanations about the decline will address FTA's concerns.

Mr. French and Ms. Haley are confirmed for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Conference in Atlanta and Mr. Kerns is interested. Mr. French believes that Mr. Kerns will attend. STA normally sends three Board members; however, if there is another person who wants to attend the Board will need to consider the request.

The two plumbing problems at the Plaza affecting the first and second floor bathrooms were not related to the Plaza renovation work. There was damage to first floor tenant space and some of STA's space (the call center on the second floor). The biggest impact was damage to the Subway restaurant space. Insurance adjusters for STA and Subway are reviewing and discussing the claims. Mr. French inquired as to the nature of the damage. Mr. Otterstrom replied that the sump pumps were damaged on the first floor and drains backed up on the second floor causing black water flooding through the drain covers onto the floors. The problem was in the old pipes and unrelated to the renovations. Mr. Blaska commented that the assumption is something was put into the system that caused the blockage.

Brandon Rapez-Betty has been named to the Mass Transit's 40 under 40 list, which is a national list of Transit Emerging Leaders under 40 years old. STA is very proud of Brandon for his recognition. The list will be published in the fall issue of the magazine. Karl Otterstrom was named to the list eight years ago.

Ms. Meyer's article, "Going to the Ballot," was published in the March 2017 Mass Transit magazine's Best Practices section. The article outlined STA's successful strategies to gain support for the 2016 ballot proposition after losing in 2015.

Kathleen Weinand has been accepted into the APTA Emerging Leaders Program. There were 100 applicants and 26 were accepted. Kathleen was recently promoted to Principal Transit Planner in the Planning and Development Division.

Ms. Meyer spoke at the APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference in Reno, Nevada. She recently participated on a conference panel in Seattle titled, "Losing a Ballot and Winning." The panel was made up of members who had lost ballots and then won. The panel received good feedback.

Susan Millbank has retired and Emily Arneson has been hired as STA's Ombudsman and Accessibility Officer. She is currently an attorney with Witherspoon Kelly. Her first day with STA will be Monday, June 12. Ms. Millbank will spend time working with Ms. Arneson to assist with the transition. Ms. Arneson will also spend time with Mr. Blaska in the Paratransit Operation, Ms. Williams in the Security, and Ms. Bousley in Customer Service, with the Board, and advocates and representatives in the communities STA serves.

8. NEW BUSINESS

None

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 2:27 p.m., Ms. Haley announced that the Board would adjourn for an Executive Session for the following purpose:

Discussion with legal counsel representing STA in litigation or potential litigation to which STA, the STA Board of Directors, or STA employees are, or are likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to STA.

The Board will reconvene in open session at approximately 2:40 p.m. If it becomes necessary to extend the Executive Session, Legal Counsel or a member of staff will return to announce the time at which the Board will reconvene.

At 2:40 p.m., Ms. Warren, Director of Finance and Information Services, announced the Board will reconvene at 2:45 p.m.

At 2:45 p.m. the Board reconvened and Chair Haley declared the meeting back in public session. No action was taken.

11. ADJOURN

Chair Haley moved to adjourn the meeting and all agreed by consensus. With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Haley adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Roberson
Executive Assistant to the Director of Finance & Information Services