

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

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the February 1, 2012, Meeting
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane*
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley
Rick Jacks, Citizen
Mike Brewer, Citizen
David Driscoll, Citizen
Ann Campeau, Citizen
Nan Kelly, Citizen
Judy Cassell, AFSCME 3939

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance and Administration
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
Don Reimer, Manager, Facilities & Maintenance
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant & Clerk of the Board
Merilee Robar, Executive Assistant, Finance & Admin.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015
* Chair

GUESTS

None

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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

3. **MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2011, COMMITTEE MEETING - CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL**

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

4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

5. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR TWELVE (12) PARATRANSIT VANS – ACTION REQUESTED**

Mr. Blaska explained that in accordance with STA's Transit Development Plan, Vehicle Replacement Plan, and the 2012 Capital Budget, twelve Paratransit vehicles are scheduled for replacement in 2012. The vehicles scheduled for replacement exceed the FTA minimum service guidelines of four years or 100K miles. Staff has identified vehicles from the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative contract that satisfy STA's requirements. Staff is recommending the purchase of 22' vans with an Aerotech body built on a Chevrolet chassis by Eldorado Manufacturing.

Discussion ensued regarding diesel versus gasoline powered engines. Mr. Blaska noted that a cost/benefit analysis supports the decision to purchase diesel-fueled engines based on the evaluation of five criteria: capital cost, customer and employee feedback, fuel cost, environmental considerations, and maintenance costs. He explained how the fuel cost and environmental advantages far outweigh the marginal increase in capital cost and maintenance costs.

Mr. Jacks moved to recommend the Board approve the purchase of twelve (12) Eldorado cutaway vans from Schetky Northwest Sales, Inc., Portland, Oregon, through the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative contract and authorize the disposal or transfer of the surplus Paratransit vehicles. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR EIGHT (8) REPLACEMENT 7-PASSENGER VANPOOL VEHICLES AND TWN (10) ADDITIONAL 12-PASSENGER VANS – ACTION REQUESTED**

Mr. Blaska said that in accordance with out Transit Development Plan and Capital Plan, eighteen (18) Vanpool vehicles are scheduled to be purchased in 2012. Eight of the new vans will replace vehicles currently in the fleet which are scheduled for retirement. Ten 12-passenger vans are designated to expand STA's Vanpool program. A State of Washington grant program will reimburse STA 80% of the purchase price for expansion vans and 60% for replacement vans. This will be a phased purchase with eight vans ordered early in the year for delivery as soon as possible. The ten expansion vans will be ordered later in the year to allow time to fully deploy the vans we have

before adding to the program. Vehicles meeting STA's specifications for 7- and 12-passenger vans are available for purchase through Washington State's General Administration contract.

Mr. Schimmels moved to recommend the Board approve the purchase of eight (8) replacement 7-passenger vans and ten (10) additional 12-passenger vans for a total cost not to exceed \$482,040 and authorize the disposal or transfer of the surplus Vanpool vehicles. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR FACILITY PROJECTS – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska explained that renovations to the facility are required to support maintenance operations. The first project calls for replacement of the air curtains between the parking garage and the maintenance shop with lightweight fabric doors. The current air curtains are over 25 years old and have reached their normal life cycle. The replacement will save on heat loss, improve air quality, and reduce noise in the maintenance garage.

The second project will replace the Maintenance resource room by reconfiguring current mezzanine storage space. STA's previous resource room was consumed by the requirement for storage and maintenance of smart bus technologies (fareboxes, radio/cell communications equipment, security cameras, digital video recorders, and mobile data computers). The proposed remodel of the resource room would include storage of equipment manuals, service bulletins, training aids, computers, and diagnostic tools, as well as space for research, training, and testing.

Mr. Brewer moved to approve the Scope of Work for the air doors and resource room replacements as presented and authorize staff to release an Invitation for Bids. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

8. AMENDMENT TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - FLEET REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska said that Fixed Route ridership growth requires the replacement of 13 to 14 buses that were previously slated for retirement. Replacement is not currently funded in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Two significant developments necessitate a change to the CIP: the 7% service reduction in 2013 is no longer anticipated, and ridership demand has increased, rather than decreased, after reducing service by 10%.

To accommodate this impact, staff is proposing modifications to the fleet replacement process between 2013 and 2018: extend the service life of eight 40' buses from 15 to 17 years; purchase three 60' buses immediately; and operate with less than a 20% spare ratio for the 40' bus sub-fleet. Actions available to accommodate the financial impact of the proposed change to the CIP include application for FTA grant funding, identifying savings to offset the cost in other CIP projects, and explore the potential of selling six or seven 29' coaches no longer required.

Mr. Brewer moved to recommend the Board approve the recommended change to the Capital Improvement Plan as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

9. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR SMALL STARTS APPLICATION PREPARATION SERVICES – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Otterstrom explained that approval is needed for a scope of work for preparing grant applications and furthering the planning and design of the Central City Transit Project. In December 2011, STA's Board of Directors adopted the 2012 Annual Strategic Plan which calls for submission of the Small Starts Application by fall. Estimated cost of the application preparation is \$200K. Mr. Otterstrom explained in detail the phases of the scope of work, major elements, and the tentative timeline, noting that the Board would be asked to award a contract at their May 2012 meeting. Ms. Meyer added that the future of the project depends on local funding; STA's existing capital and operating budgets do not cover this. STA will pursue federal funding and note on the application that moving forward on this project would require a ballot measure. However, this will not happen until the economy improves. Representatives of Greater Spokane Incorporated and Gonzaga University support this project.

Mr. Brewer moved to approve the release of the scope of work for request for qualifications for Small Starts Application Preparation Services Planning, Design, Engineering and related services for the Central City Transit Project. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

10. FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS - YEAR END 2011 ASSESSMENT – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska explained that the service reductions in 2010 and 2011 were required in order to bring STA's level of service in alignment with the severe revenue shortfall caused by the economic recession. It was expected that ridership would decline as a result of the cuts, but STA is experiencing a positive ridership trend at the current time, increasing 1.1% in 2011 compared to 2010. Because virtually all routes were affected by the September 2011 service change, analysis of ridership is based on very broad geographic regions. The general conclusion is that the

philosophy of surgically cutting non-performing routes and route segments while sustaining and reinforcing productive routes has achieved the goal to minimize the service reduction's adverse impact on our community.

11. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

Ms. Meyer explained that the Board of Directors will vote in February whether or not to disband the Operations and Customer Service Committee. If this Committee is eliminated, there would be an opportunity for current Citizen Members to apply for membership on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and continue to advise the Board on various topics such as budget, planning, and service changes, and focus on projects such as fare increases and sustainability. Additionally, two new committees will be formed: Planning and Development and Performance Monitoring and External Relations. These new committees will be populated by Board members only, and they, rather than staff, will make presentations to the Board. There will also be a new Board Operations Committee through which the other committees will funnel items for consideration/approval prior to presentation to the Board. This new committee structure will allow Board members to become more fully immersed in transit activities. Discussion ensued. Ms. Meyer noted that citizen involvement is as important to STA as it always has been. Ms. Watson commented that she was very appreciative of all the work Mr. Brewer has done for the Agency since 1990. Mr. Blaska added that those members who had previously volunteered to serve on certain selection/evaluation committees will be asked to continue in that capacity.

12. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. December 2011 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- b. Community Outreach and Involvement - as presented.

OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

None.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

- a. Ms. Campeau commented on the difficulty transit vehicles have navigating around the snow berms on downtown streets. Mr. Blaska responded that the Downtown Spokane Partnership negotiated with the City of Spokane to use the same snow plow operators to ensure they are properly trained, and if the plowing cycle becomes so out of sync that the downtown core becomes impassable, further actions are in place and will be taken as necessary.
- b. Ms. McLaughlin said she appreciated all the work the Committee members have done for STA, and she encouraged everyone to continue to be engaged with the organization in whatever capacity they could.

14. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant