

Spokane Transit Authority
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BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Minutes for April 10, 2013
Northside Conference Room
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley, Chair
Al French, Spokane County, Planning &
Development Committee Chair
Mike Allen, City of Spokane, Performance
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio

STAFF PRESENT

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the
Authority

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Hafner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

Mr. Allen moved approval of the Committee agenda and Mr. French seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Hafner said he took a bus ride which encompassed five different routes, some of which were very full. The Sprague route stopped frequently. Mr. Hafner shared the proposed September 2013 service changes at the City of Spokane Valley council meeting and encouraged everyone to attend STA Moving Forward open house on April 10th, 4:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Center. Mr. Hafner invited all Board members to attend the STA annual Employee Awards Banquet on April 21st.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. March 15, 2013 Committee Minutes – Special Meeting

Mr. Allen moved approval of the March minutes and Mr. French seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

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

Mr. French complimented staff on the STA Moving Forward advertising. There was no Planning & Development meeting in April.

b. Mike Allen, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PM&ER):

Mr. Allen said that the Committee approved an additional van in the Van Grant program for 2013 primarily due to the fact that the van received by World Relief in 2012 has experienced mechanical problems. The largest portion of the meeting was a presentation and update on the Plaza which included detailed background information. Mr. Allen suggested that this presentation be shortened and then shared with other groups.

6. CENTRAL CITY LINE (CCL) PROJECT

Ms. Meyer, along with staff, suggested that the next steps be: 1) a professional evaluation of the economic development potential, 2) a professional assessment on the impact to property values and 3) an assessment of the best alignment. STA will verify if a fixed overhead catenary system is still a requirement for business community support. In addition, STA would like to look at extending the line from Gonzaga University to Spokane Community College. This extension would add significant ridership, but cost, engineering and feasibility will need to be studied.

Mr. French asked if Brian Gard had done assessments on previous ballot measures. Ms. Meyer said that the Community Perception Survey results showed less support for a tax increase than in 2011. This survey will be sent to all Board members. Ms. Meyer said that focus groups will be formed, and Mr. Gard will assist in defining the messaging that best communicates our service opportunities to the public. Mr. Hafner suggested an “STA story”, including background, and emphasizing the positive.

Mr. Allen said it would be important to know how the Central City Line will help with economic development; make STA more efficient; how it will interact with the Plaza; and, if the Central City Line will save STA money or be an additional cost to the system. Mr. Hafner said better service is important too. Mr. French asked if the Central City Line were included in a ballot measure, how STA can impact the greatest number of citizens. Mr. French suggested focusing on the core positive issues such as decreasing the number of cars on the road and reducing emissions.

The Committee had a discussion about the timing of other potential bond measures in the City and the County. Mr. French said that the effects of sequestration and health care costs have not been felt yet. Mr. Allen discussed timing of a potential STA ballot measure. Ms. Meyer said that STA will only apply for a federal Small Starts application if the community is supportive. Mr. Allen asked about the mode for the CCL and said he prefers permanent customer service facilities to the catenary system. Mr. French discussed the packaging of our service planning should it be presented for a vote for more funding. Mr. Allen said that messaging will be very important. He suggested funding could be offered to expire on a certain date in the future (sunset clause). Mr. Allen suggested discussing this idea with Mr. Gard. Mr. French asked about tracking the demographics of STA riders and if the percentage of seniors is growing. Mr. Blaska said that the rider survey tracks demographics. The number of seniors is growing on Paratransit, but the largest demand is the middle aged group with jobs. Youth pass ridership has not been growing as fast as adult pass ridership. The reduced fare ridership (subset is over 65 years old) has steadily grown also.

Ms. Meyer said that a specific plan and estimated cost for the next phases of the CCL will be on the Board Operations committee meeting agenda in May. Mr. Blaska said that the conversation with staff is about packaging new services into a long range plan and ways to communicate the value it provides, and not about a ballot measure strategy. Mr. French said there is a balance between individuals who want new service and those impacted by the last service reduction.

7. STREAMLINING BOARD & COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

The talking points summary of recommended changes was handed out to the Committee. Mr. French said that with this change the Board will take more ownership of the budget planning document. Mr. Allen asked about the words “*any amount*” in Capital Purchases for replacement equipment in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and budget. Currently, the Committee approves and the Board awards contracts that are greater than \$200,000. The recommended change is that the “CEO can approve Scopes of Work and Awards of Contract, any amount”. Discussion ensued. Mr. Allen suggested that instead of “any amount”, that it say “not to exceed approved budget parameters”. The Committee agreed by consensus on the change and agreed that the summary should be forwarded to the Board for approval.

8. LIBERTY LAKE PARK & RIDE

The Mayor of Liberty Lake, Steve Peterson, developed a plan for a City Center in Liberty Lake during his first term. Now in his second term, Mayor Peterson would like to begin the project with 40 parking spaces which would include landscaping and a public restroom. These 40 parking spaces would be across the street from STA’s current Park & Ride lot which is at capacity. The second phase of his plan would include a local farmers market and an amphitheater. The Mayor’s proposition is that STA would pay for the 40 parking spaces and STA’s Park & Ride customers would use them. In exchange, in an agreement to be drafted with Legal Counsel, the City would pay for the 40 parking stalls in a Park & Ride lot on the North side of the freeway at a future date. Ms. Meyer said there is an immediate need for this parking. The Park & Ride patrons are parking in nearby business lots and City owned land because the lot is full. The land on the North side of the freeway has not been acquired yet and there is no interchange at this time, which is required. The cost estimate for the project is \$80 - \$100K. Mr. Allen asked about the advantage for STA. Discussion ensued. Ms. Meyer said details need to be worked out, but this decision will need to go through the Planning & Development Committee and then forwarded to the Board for approval because it is not in the budget. Mr. Blaska said that the amount of parking is a deterrent to ridership growth currently. Also, there is a “good neighbor” aspect involved with local businesses. Ms. Meyer said STA will work with Legal Counsel. Mr. French suggested entering into a contract. Ms. Meyer said STA will move forward with this cooperative project and bring it to the Planning & Development committee for discussion. Mr. French suggested talking to adjacent business owners about the plan.

9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA – APRIL 18, 2013

Ms. Meyer said there will be public hearing regarding the September 2013 service revisions and further discussion by the Board later in the agenda. The minutes, vouchers, additional Van Grant vehicle and Special Needs Grant Programs are on the consent agenda. The Central City Line item has been removed from the agenda. The Streamlining Board and Committee Authority item talking points summary will be included on the cover sheet. The Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvements (CMAQ) will need additional discussion time. Spokane Regional Transportation Center administers the CMAQ grant funds. This is a

federal grant and allocates four years of funding. Projects need to be put in this four-year cycle, so that they are ready when funds are available. Mr. Allen suggested a shorter version of the Plaza history for the Board. Ms. Meyer said that the STA Moving Forward open house at the Lincoln Center is tonight. This open house is in conjunction with the City of Spokane and Spokane Regional Transportation Center (SRTC). Mr. French requested an Executive Session be added to the agenda.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Reopening the smoking section on Wall Street:

Ms. Meyer said that STA is designing a plan for possible changes to the Plaza (moving doors and windows) and considering plans to request an exception to the 25 foot smoking ordinance from the Health District. Ms. Meyer said it is hard for STA to focus on the future and long range planning with this current issue. Discussion ensued. Mr. Allen said that when the smoking section was closed a year ago, problems have increased and expects that when/if it is reopened, the fervor will decrease.

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Hafner adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant