

Spokane Transit Authority  
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## **BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes for October 10, 2012

Northside Conference Room

### **MINUTES**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Al French, Spokane County, Chair  
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, Planning &  
Development Committee Chair  
Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley, Performance  
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair

#### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the  
Authority

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chairman French called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. and conducted roll call.

### **2. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION**

#### **a. September 12, 2012 Committee Minutes:**

*Ms. Waldref moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Hafner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **3. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**

#### **a. Amber Waldref, Planning & Development (P&D) Committee:**

**Moran Prairie Park & Ride Conceptual Project** – The Committee reviewed another High Performance Transit Project which involves a partnership with the County. Eight sites around the 57<sup>th</sup> & Regal area have been studied. An open house will be held. Mr. Otterstrom said this item will be information only for the Board meeting. Mr. French asked if STA goes through the Essential Public Facility (EPF) process. Mr. Otterstrom said yes and on this particular project John Pederson and Bob Brueggeman assisted STA in obtaining a waiver last fall from the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Otterstrom said that a waiver has not been sought for the West Plains facility, but will be prior to preliminary engineering design. The Committee discussed the EPF process and transit facilities. Mr. French said that according to the County-wide planning policy, if a project provides a regional service (two or more jurisdictions), then the project needs to go through the EPF process. Mr. French said discussions during the Growth Management Act (GMA) steering committee meeting in November 2012 regarding updates to the County-wide planning policy might involve exempting public transportation for certain projects. Mr. Pederson had told Mr. Otterstrom that the current definition of EPF states that a Park and Ride is a regional facility, therefore, it would need to go through the EPF process or STA must obtain a waiver from the County Commissioners.

**Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan** – The final drafts were approved to move forward to the Board.

**2013 Proposed Budget** – Ms. Waldref said that there were no changes to the 2013 Proposed Budget. Ms. Warren said the budget presentation is narrated and can be viewed on the STA website.

**STA's Annual Planning Calendar** – The Committee will be streamlining the process for reviewing planning documents in 2013. The Committee hopes to approve the Capital Improvement Program by mid-year and then focus on the Annual Strategic Plan and Budget the remainder of the year.

**Plaza Interior Renovation Alternatives Development** – The potential uses of the Plaza were reviewed with the Committee.

Mr. Hafner asked about the history and image of the Plaza as he gets questions from constituents. Discussion ensued. Mr. French said at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) meeting there was discussion on naming rights for public transportation facilities to generate revenue. Ms. Meyer initiated discussion on a downtown business that is due to close and the perception that STA's closing the smoking section was at least partly to blame.

**Corridor Advisory Panels (CAPs)** - Ms. Waldref said the first meetings of the Corridor Advisory Panels (CAPs) received good reports. In addition to providing input, the CAPs will be a good educational opportunity and help build transit advocacy in the community.

Mr. French asked about the AV equipment at the last Board meeting as it didn't work properly. Apparently, STA's wireless signal was interfering with the wireless microphones. Ms. Watson will contact Mr. Seyhanli, Spokane Regional Health District, who videos the meetings regarding the microphone issue.

**b. Chuck Hafner, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PM&ER) Committee:**

**Tariff Policy:** Mr. Blaska said the Tariff Policy amendment requires a public hearing in November and a Board decision in December. Mr. Blaska said the shuttle service has always had a different cash fare of \$0.75. At the last Triennial Review the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) said that the shuttle fare was a separate base fare and requires a one-half fare. With this change complicating the fare structure, the proposal states that the \$0.75 shuttle fare will be eliminated and the base fare of \$1.50 will be charged. Additionally, this proposed change makes sense because the Southside Medical shuttle covers more area and is similar to a regular route. Only four percent of the riders pay with cash. Most riders are transferring from another route or using the City Ticket on the Plaza Arena shuttle. The City Ticket price will remain the same. Mr. Blaska said it is not a major fare change.

**Attendance:** Mr. Hafner said that Ms. Bowers has been absent twice for the Committee meeting. Ms. Watson will check with Ms. Van Dort about this.

**2013 Special Community Events Fare Structure:** Mr. Hafner said that the attendance was down at Valleyfest this year. A question arose if STA should be involved in the future. He reminded the Committee that Valleyfest is not a City of Spokane Valley sponsored event. It is sponsored by a separate 501(3) (c) non-profit organization.

**Award of Contract for On-Call Architectural and Engineering Services:** Moved forward to Board Consent Agenda

**Mobility Orientation:** Mr. Hafner said how important this training is, how it produces significant savings and shared the information with the City of Spokane Valley. Mr. French mentioned at the APTA conference that mobility training was discussed as a new innovative idea and commended STA on having a program like this for years. Ms. Meyer made a presentation at the APTA conference on STA's Paratransit service, special use vans and mobility training. The conference moderator commented that all Paratransit service should be operated like STA's service. Mr. French said that the community needs to know what STA is doing. Mr. Hafner agreed. Ms. Waldref said the unique things that STA is doing should be shared with the community in articles in the Spokesman Review, perhaps the Neighborhood section.

**Smart Card Functionality:** At the last Committee meeting, Mr. Blaska said Council Member Allen asked about loading a smart card via a web transaction. Mr. Blaska explained that STA does not have real-time connectivity with the point of sale system so this function is not available yet. At this time, the card can be loaded on the web, but the card transaction still has to occur at the Plaza or a ticket vending machine. A large percentage of the Reduced Fare riders use the Smart Card because it also serves as identification. Mr. French said that a provider called TransitSherpa is able to download an application onto a Smart Phone for fares. Mr. Otterstrom said that this application is suitable for off-board fare collection or proof of payment. Ms. Meyer said that STA will have real-time capability in the first quarter of 2014. Mr. French said when agencies use real-time software that the data collected should be retained and not released to the software manufacturer who would charge if given to other users. One agency was making up to \$300,000 on the sale of data per year. That same agency was selling advertising on all aspects of transit including, but not limited to, on-board and at-stop advertising.

**Department Manager's Report:** Mr. Hafner said these reports are very valuable and the Managers do an excellent job.

**4. REAL ESTATE**

**a. Fairgrounds Property**

Ms. Meyer said that STA owns an 11 acre parcel of property adjacent to the Fairgrounds property that the County owns. STA acquired this property with Federal funding, spearheaded by Glenn Miles, then of Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), for a future park and ride lot near the proposed Fairgrounds station for Light Rail. Ms. Waldref mentioned that discussions around capacity on Havana Street occurred at the same time. Ms. Meyer said that STA staff proposes that this property be declared surplus and sold, as it will not be used for a park and ride lot, even if the light rail is built. During the Triennial Review, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) asked how the property was used for transit purposes. FTA had been told the property would be used for a park and ride when acquired. Ms. Meyer said it has been used for training as many as 150 days per year with a lease agreement with Spokane County allowing intermittent use for fairground functions (e.g. parking). Ms. Meyer said the County wants to buy the property. The lease agreement states that the County has exclusive right of refusal if the property is put up for sale. Ms. Meyer said this may violate FTA's requirement for sale of the

property purchased with FTA funding. FTA states that the sale must be an open competitive bid. Ms. Meyer said that the FTA dollars would not be required to be returned as long as the dollars were used for another capital project. Ms. Meyer said that the attorney will review the language regarding “open competitive bid” and “exclusive first right of refusal”. Mr. Otterstrom said that STA purchased this property from Union Pacific. The lease agreement is tied to the Mirabeau Park and Ride property that the County gave STA. Ms. Meyer said the lease agreement states that the County will pay STA the appraised value or the purchase price, whichever is higher and in no case shall the County pay less than what STA paid. The Committee members agreed to move forward with the appraisal and legal opinion. After the legal opinion is received, the item will be taken to the Board for action to declare the property surplus so it can be sold. Ms. Meyer said STA would need to negotiate use of the property for training until an alternative location could be found. Discussion ensued regarding the history of light rail in that area.

**5. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA**

Ms. Warren asked about the placement of the 2013 Budget discussion due to the public hearing at 5:30 p.m. On the agenda currently is a 2013 budget discussion under the P&D Committee Chair’s report and a short presentation for the public hearing. After Committee discussion, the budget discussion under the Chair’s report was removed as no changes have been made to the draft budget. The budget narrative video will be shown at 5:30 p.m. for the public hearing. The Committee agreed to adjourn for a break if necessary prior to the public hearing.

An Executive session was added prior to the public hearing.

*The Committee members approved the Board agenda by consensus.*

**6. PUBLIC HEARING/PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS PROTOCOL**

Ms. Meyer read the following from STA’s publication: “The Spokane Transit Board of Directors encourages and appreciates public comments at its meetings. Speakers will have three (3) minutes to speak. The Board will not enter into debate or discussion with you and this is not a question-and-answer session. If your testimony requires a response, STA staff will research the matter and send you a written reply”. Ms. Meyer said the Board has frequently entered into question-and-answer sessions with the public. This occurred recently when an individual discussed the smoking area at the Plaza. Discussion ensued among Committee members. Mr. Hafner asked if the public was given ample time to speak. The Committee said yes – three minutes. Ms. Meyer asked the Committee if a reminder for the Board is adequate. The Committee agreed and Mr. French will remind the Board not to engage in question-and-answer with those giving public expressions. Mr. Blaska said an individual felt challenged after sharing thoughts before the Board a couple of years ago. On a typical agenda, the public hearing would be first and later in the agenda the Board would discuss what was said. Any correspondence received regarding the public hearing will be shared with the Board. The publication will be updated and made available to the public.

**7. APPOINTMENT TO SPOKANE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (SRTC) BOARD FOR 2013**

SRTC has redistributed the weighting of the voting structure of their Board. Small Cities requested more representation on the Board. The Washington State Transportation Commission and Transportation Advisory Committee gave up their votes. Spokane International Airport (SIA) was added to the Board with the CEO as a voting member. STA is currently on the Board with the elected official being a voting member and the CEO a non-voting member. This was changed so that STA’s CEO is on the Board as a voting member and the elected official position was removed. The position of CEO from both SIA and STA would automatically be on the Board, no appointment would be necessary. Elected officials from each jurisdiction currently sit on the SRTC Board and are voting members. All of the changes will take place January 1, 2013 after all parties have approved the Interlocal agreement.

**8. SUCCESSION PLANNING**

Ms. Meyer said this is a discussion about Board leadership. In 2013 Mr. Hafner will be Chairman of the STA Board and the Vice Chair would be from either Medical Lake or Millwood. In 2014, Medical Lake will not be on the STA Board, so the Chair position would come from Millwood or Cheney and the City of Spokane would be Vice Chair. Ms. Meyer said that previous discussions had suggested that the City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley or Spokane County might trade places with one of the Small Cities and have the Chair position in 2014. Discussion ensued. Ms. Waldref said it will be a very important year and agreed that switching Small Cities with City of Spokane would be a good idea. Mr. French said the Board Operations Committee would make a recommendation to the Board that the City of Spokane would hold Vice Chair and Chair in 2013 and 2014 and Small Cities would hold Vice Chair and Chair in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Ms. Waldref reminded the Committee that this had been done a few years ago. Ms. Waldref said that she has discussed the STA Board with Council President Stuckart. Council President

Stuckart agreed that the City of Spokane should hold the Vice Chair and Chair positions in 2013 and 2014 and also agreed that Council Member Allen be asked about the Vice Chair/Chair role. Mr. French offered to speak with Council Member Allen regarding the Vice Chair role in 2013 and his positions on STA projects. It was suggested that if Council Member Allen declined that Council Member Salvatori be asked. Council Member Salvatori will not be seeking re-election in 2015. A conversation with Council Member McLaughlin may need to happen as both Council Member's Salvatori and McLaughlin belong to the same district.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Ms. Waldref attended a Health/Equity in Transportation Conference in Tacoma last week and will be attending a RailVolution conference in Los Angeles next week. A brief report will be shared at the upcoming Board meetings when time is available.
- b. Ms. Meyer said that Brian Gard, of Gard Communications, will be here next week to discuss future planning. There will be a meeting with staff, followed by a meeting with Board members. Mr. Gard has assisted STA in the past with media relations and messaging.
- c. Mr. Hafner asked about other bond or levy issues in 2014 besides the County Library. Ms. Waldref said that Council President Stuckart is compiling a list. Ms. Meyer said that Commissioner Richard had put together a list for the Council of Governments. Ms. Meyer requested an updated list of potential ballot dates be available at the meeting with Mr. Gard. Ms. Waldref said the Parks Department mentioned a possible bond issue in 2014 also.

**10. ADJOURN**

With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman French adjourned the meeting at 2:06 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar  
Executive Assistant