

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

BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes for May 13, 2015
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Trulove, City of Cheney, Board Operations
Committee Chair
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane, Performance
Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair
Al French, Spokane County, Planning &
Development Committee Chair & Vice Chair
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, Ex-officio

STAFF PRESENT

Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer
Service
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Clerk of the
Authority

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

GUESTS

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Trulove called the meeting to order at 12:47 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Committee members reviewed the agenda. No changes were brought forth.

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

None.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. April 8, 2015 Committee Minutes

Ms. Waldref moved approval of the April 8, 2015 minutes and Mr. Trulove seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

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

Discussion postponed until Mr. French arrives.

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

Ms. Waldref said there was a presentation on Horizon 2040 from the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) regarding performance measures. SRTC is meeting with all jurisdictions regarding transportation. Performance measures are important because they drive projects. SRTC has a goal to complete these measures by year end.

Ms. Waldref said the Committee moved forward the following three items to the Board consent agenda.

1. Award of Contract for Armored Car and Money Processing Services
2. Acceptance of Project and Approval to Pay Retainage for the Bus Stop Replacement Project
3. Approval of the Valley Transit Center/Appleway Trail Parking Agreement

The Committee did not move forward the Approval of Public Outreach Plan for Proposed Fare Increases item.

Mr. Trulove asked if it would be a controversial item.

Ms. Waldref said that rate changes affect groups differently. The goal is to keep the fares at about 20% of the cost of a fixed route bus ride. The Committee agreed with the preliminary draft of the fare structure and the first steps of the outreach, but had concerns with the timing. The Committee postponed discussion until the June Board workshop that will be scheduled.

At the Committee meeting, Ms. Bousley reviewed the marketing costs and the impact of marketing on ridership.

Ms. Waldref said there is a correlation between marketing and ridership and suggested this information be included in the May Board packet under *Board Information*.

Ms. Meyer said that marketing costs have been between 1% and 1.9% of STA's total budget. During STA's "I am Driven" campaign, the dollars spent on marketing in the last four months of 2014 and the first four months of 2015, was approximately the same, \$130,000.00. STA's annual marketing budget is \$500,000.00.
Mr. Trulove said marketing is important when running a business.

6. CONFIRMATION OF TWO BOARD MEMBERS FROM THE CITY OF SPOKANE AND ONE SMALL CITIES REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE

Ms. Waldref said the City of Spokane appointed Council Member Mumm and herself to the STA Board.
Ms. Watson said she has not heard from Mayor Peterson regarding the appointment from Liberty Lake. The written appointment would need to be received by STA by Thursday, May 21st.
Mr. Trulove will follow up with Mayor Peterson.

The Committee recommended for approval the confirmation of two Board members from the City of Spokane and one Small Cities representative from the City of Liberty Lake to the STA Board. The City of Liberty Lake representative will fill the open spot on the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee that was vacated by Council Member Stratton as a result of the Public Transportation Improvement Conference (PTIC) decision on February 19, 2015.

The Post Ballot Measure discussion (Item #7) postponed until Mr. French arrives.

8. PROPOSED PLAZA LEASING GUIDELINES - DISCUSSION

Ms. Meyer said that Critical Data, Inc. did a study from February to August of 2013 to consider all potential uses of Plaza space. The conclusion was that the first floor, including the rotunda space, should consist of retail and all transit related activities. The study indicated that the rotunda space on the first floor is an important space which could have an exterior entrance and outside seating and house a well-known national or regional brand. STA has been working with its property manager, NAI Black. Evaluation criteria for the first and second floor space were developed. First floor criteria would include, but not be limited to; name recognition, financial viability, filling a transit customer need, complementing already established, or to be established, businesses in the immediate area and prior experience. Second floor criteria include providing a community benefit, financial viability, attracting transit and non-transit patrons to the Plaza and a stable presence. There will not be any meeting rooms on the second floor. The second floor rotunda space should focus on community enhancement such as a museum, exhibit space and events. An event hosted by Eastern Washington University (EWU) went well.

Ms. Waldref asked that "providing a community benefit" be clarified. She is supportive of private firms occupying space on the second floor, but suggests that preference be given to those organizations that provide a community benefit as long as all of the other criteria are met.

Mr. Trulove said that generating income in that space is important.

Ms. Bousley reviewed the events that have been held on the first and second floor rotunda spaces.

Ms. Meyer suggested adding more clarification to the second floor criteria and stated that preference may be given to organizations that provide a community benefit, but meet all of the other criteria.

The Committee agreed by consensus with the second floor criteria revisions.

1:32 p.m. Mr. French arrived.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS - continued

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

Mr. French said that STA Staff presented Moore Information's PTBA Post-Election Survey results to the Committee. The number one reason the ballot was voted down was an anti-tax sentiment. The reasons for voting "no" were not part of the campaign. The majority of the voters had made their decision more than 30 days prior to the election which the survey clearly showed. The campaign advertising effort came out after the majority of the voters had made their decision. Usually 30-40% of voters do not make their ballot decisions until the weekend prior to an election. In terms of the voter profile, well educated, middle class voters said "yes". Airway Heights, Cheney & Medical Lake supported the ballot measure.

The Committee continued discussion under the Post Ballot Measure (Item #7) below.

7. POST BALLOT MEASURE DISCUSSION

Mr. Trulove said the voter turnout in Cheney was very low. The Cheney School District Bond did not do as well the second time out. Some may have split their votes.

Ms. Waldref said that phone calls to voters during the campaign showed that many voters were undecided, but obviously those individuals did not vote. She mentioned some areas in the City are more anti-tax and have lower voter turnout. She asked about the timing of the Spring Ballot election. She suggested that many voters forgot to vote.

Ms. Meyer said a “yes” vote at the April 28 election was needed for STA in order to purchase new buses that would be received in September.

Mr. French suggested that an election to increase taxes was more difficult at the end of the month before pay day and after the April 15 tax day. Increased voter turnout draws votes on both sides.

Discussion ensued regarding ballot timing.

Mr. Trulove suggested reviewing, validating and clarifying the STA Moving Forward Plan.

Ms. Waldref said STA is a financially responsible agency. She said that she has suggestions on how STA could present information differently and better to the public; the capital vs. operating budget for example. Ongoing positive press is important such as stating that STA has had a perfect audit for nine years.

Mr. French suggested metrics on performance measures and pictures of full buses in advertising.

Mr. Blaska said that well over 45% of the people said that the source of their information was the television news. The outreach and education was heroic. The voters reached door-to-door and on the phone were in favor of the ballot.

Mr. French said that the P & D Committee agreed that a workshop would be the best forum to share ideas.

Ms. Meyer said that staff is preparing a draft agenda for the June workshop and suggested a small working group of Board members could assist with that.

Mr. Trulove hopes that all Board members will be able to attend the workshop.

Mr. French asked about inviting a facilitator or someone with political expertise to the workshop.

Ms. Waldref said that workshop goals are important. A facilitator can assist with keeping discussions on track.

Ms. Meyer said that a majority of the two hour workshop will be spent on the STA Moving Forward Plan and updated financial forecasts.

Mr. Trulove agreed with a facilitator at the workshop.

Discussion ensued regarding the working group.

The Committee agreed to invite one additional Board member along with the Board Operations Committee members, for a total of four members to assist with the workshop agenda.

9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA: MAY 21, 2015

Ms. Watson said that the proposed Bylaw changes are individual items on the Board agenda that can be discussed and voted on separately. No new Bylaw Amendments have been submitted since the last draft was circulated.

Discussion ensued regarding the STA Bylaws Amendments.

Ms. Meyer suggested adding a Staff report on the Election Results and Post-Election Survey, the Workshop – Post Ballot Discussion, and the Ridership and Marketing report to the Board agenda.

The Committee agreed by consensus to the revisions to the Board agenda.

10. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer said that there is \$1.7M in capital funding available for the local share of the Central City Line (CCL) in the Washington State Transportation Revenue Package. The State needs to approve the package before Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will let STA into project development. STA also needs fully funded preliminary engineering of the CCL before FTA admits STA into project development. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) has told the FTA within the past week that there will be no obligation of any grants until there is a renewed authorization. MAP-21 ends this month (May 2015). The grant that STA had been awarded will not be awarded until there is a renewed authorization.

Ms. Meyer said that the City of Spokane will ask STA to develop a plan for two tenths of one percent sales tax increase that they would take out for a vote in a Transportation Benefit District (TBD). (TBD is an option for local governments to fund transportation improvements). The City of Spokane is looking at alternate plans because they have an interest in the system. The City of Spokane will look at how much service it can buy and will include only the routes where 80% of the miles are in the City. The CCL would be a part of that. This type of plan is exactly what King County and the City of Seattle has done. The City of Spokane had the highest concentration of “yes” votes on the April 28 ballot, followed by Cheney, Airway Heights and Medical Lake. If the City of Spokane moves forward with its plan, discussions will need to be held regarding STA’s long term sustainability.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Blaska said the conversation with the Board should focus on fundamental assumptions. For example, is the Board committed to STA's Comprehensive and Moving Forward Plan?

Mr. Trulove suggested that sequential steps in the Moving Forward Plan be reviewed. He hopes that everyone can focus on the goals and the system.

Mr. French said that if the City of Spokane passed their sales tax increase it would be more difficult for STA to pass even one tenth of one percent sales tax inside the City limits. It would be devastating for the system.

Ms. Meyer said there were 77,000 voters on Proposition 1 and STA lost its ballot measure by 572 votes.

Mr. Trulove said the unknown is how to get people to vote.

Mr. French inquired about the voter turnout for municipal cycles on election dates. He suggested political expertise on voter profile would be helpful.

Ms. Meyer asked if it would be helpful if Bob Moore, Moore Information, share his analysis.

Committee members agreed.

Ms. Meyer said she has recurring regular meetings scheduled with Board members.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Trulove moved to adjourn the meeting and all agreed by consensus. With there being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Trulove adjourned the meeting at 2:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Merilee Robar
Executive Assistant to the Director of Finance & Information Services