

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

## **OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the December 1, 2010, Meeting  
Northside Conference Room

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane \*  
Mike Brewer, Citizen  
Ann Campeau, Citizen  
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen  
Barbara Richardson, Citizen  
David Driscoll, Citizen  
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015  
Phil Ridenour, AFSCME 3939

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake  
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights  
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley  
Rick Jacks, Citizen  
Nan Kelly, Citizen  
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598

\* Chair

### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, CEO  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications  
Jan Watson, Executive Assistant /Clerk of the Authority

### **GUESTS**

None

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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

#### 2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

#### 4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

Ms. Waldref noted that a quorum was not yet present, and asked Mr. Blaska to present the first informational item while waiting for other Committee member(s) to arrive.

#### 7. **THIRD QUARTER 2010 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – INFORMATION**

Mr. Blaska said he would highlight selected Performance Measures and would answer any questions on others he was not covering [which were distributed with the Committee packets]. Fixed Route ridership has seen a decline of approximately 4.1% compared to 2009, which is believed to be due to economic factors and is validated by a recent Department of Transportation report which indicated that overall vehicle miles traveled per capita was down 2.6% in 2009 in the state of Washington.

Mr. Rolwes arrived at 1:42 p.m.

Paratransit ridership has experienced a 0.1% growth, attributed for the most part to the Special Use Vans program. The Rideshare program continues to recover as fuel prices decline and more vans are placed into service.

Cost Efficiency includes actual data for 2009 taken from the National Transit Database (NTD). STA's goal for cost per revenue hour for both fixed route and paratransit is to constrain costs to no more than 94% of the statewide average for urban systems. STA's cost per revenue hour for fixed route is approximately 78.2% of the urbanized average at \$106.95. Paratransit cost per revenue hour is approximately 78.3% of the urbanized average at \$71.63. Mr. Blaska cautioned that at some point below the 94% goal, cost savings may not necessarily be better because quality of service could be negatively affected.

Cost per Passenger for Fixed Route is approximately 70% of the urbanized average at \$4.17. For Paratransit, Cost per Passenger is 58.3% of the urbanized average at \$23.69. Factors influencing these results include cost containment by STA and consistent ridership figures from 2008 to 2009, unlike other properties where significant

ridership losses have been experienced. Mr. Blaska noted that because figures for 2010 for other transit properties were not available, projections were based on STA's performance in 2009.

Responses to the annual Rider Survey have been received, and in reference to customer security regarding personal safety on a bus, STA scored 4.3 on a scale of 1 to 5. For drivers driving safely, the score was 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 5. Paratransit experienced similar positive results with a 4.9 for personal safety on a van and 4.7 for driver driving safely.

One area requiring attention is the number of "calls abandoned" and "calls answered within 60 seconds" in the Call Center, but there is a staffing shortage and the vacant position will not be filled in the coming year. Staff will continue to monitor this closely and look for ways to improve performance. Staff continues to monitor Operator ADA Stop Announcements and Van Operator introductions when picking up passengers in an effort toward 100% compliance. Mr. Rolwes noted that there is a variety in how stop announcements are made, and some operators don't project clearly or cannot be heard even when using the microphone. Mr. Blaska agreed that this can be a problem, and commented that staff is working with coach operators to help them improve in this area. He added that the goal is to have 100% of the operators meeting the standard because this is an ADA requirement; not meeting the standard could affect federal grant funding.

Mr. Blaska concluded by covering two of the Safety measures: total accidents and preventable accidents. He noted that STA's standard of less than 2 accidents per 100,000 miles for total accidents and less than 0.5 accidents per 100,000 miles for preventable accidents is lower than that for other transit properties across the country, and STA is doing a good overall job of staying lower than the standard it has set.

3. MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 3, 2010, COMMITTEE MEETING – CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL

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

5. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PLAZA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska explained that the current contract for Plaza Property Management will expire on December 31, 2010. A request for proposals was released in October and the scope of work is fundamentally the same as the current contract, with a requirement for more visibility and a "hands on" presence by the selected contractor, and a more aggressive marketing campaign to reduce onsite vendor vacancies. Two proposals from responsible firms were received, and the evaluation committee is recommending an award of contract to NAI BLACK, the current contractor. Mr. Blaska thanked Mr. Brewer for serving on the evaluation committee.

**Mr. Driscoll moved to recommend the Board of Directors approve an award of contract to NAI BLACK, Inc., to provide property management, the commercial and retail leasing expertise, and the administrative supervision to ensure the optimum operation and profitability of The Plaza during all hours and days of operation, including all holidays, for a period of five (5) years, effective January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2015, at a cost of \$33,600 per year, plus leasing commission fees of 6% on new leases and 1.5% on renewals. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

6. RECOMMENDATION FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF TWO CURRENT CITIZEN MEMBERS TO THE OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE - ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska noted that the terms of two current Committee members will expire at the end of December. Under STA's bylaws, an unspecified number of citizens are appointed to the Operations and Customer Service Committee, and terms are one or two years in duration to stagger future appointments. Ann Campeau and Nan Kelly, current Citizen Members of the Committee, have both expressed an interest in serving an additional two-year term.

Mr. Blaska commented that STA did solicit for volunteers from the community to serve on the Committee, and one application was received. The applicant will be interviewed in the near future, and staff will determine whether or not this individual represents a demographic not already represented by other Citizen Members. In addition, staff would prefer to add two Citizen Members rather than just one to increase the likelihood of a quorum for the meetings.

**Mr. Brewer moved to recommend reappointment of Ann Campeau and Nan Kelly, Citizen Members, whose terms will expire on December 31, 2010, for an additional two-year term effective January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2012. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Ms. Waldref thanked Ms. Campeau and Ms. Kelly for volunteering to continue serving on the Committee. She also thanked Ms. Richardson for her service to the Committee, adding that she will be missed by everyone. She wished Ms. Richardson good luck in the future.

8. BROWNE'S ADDITION SERVICE CHANGE: ONE YEAR REVIEW - INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom reported that this is an overview of the West Plains and Browne's Addition ridership impact one year after implementation of a routing revision, as requested by the Board of Directors. Using random trip data, preliminary findings indicate that ridership is down approximately 12% for all routes combined. Some areas (Airport/Northern Quest Casino) have seen significant ridership increases. Ridership loss in Browne's Addition is localized on the segment of Sunset Boulevard abutting the neighborhood where Routes 61 and 64 once traveled. Ridership loss to Geiger is the result of the reduction of the number of trips to that area, and ridership decreases to Medical Lake could be indicative of staffing reductions at the state facilities in that area. Mr. Otterstrom noted that positive impacts of a service change can take between 18 to 36 months to mature while negative effects are more immediate, especially in instances where service is lost entirely.

Next steps include evaluation of route performance as part of an annual report, and measuring the impacts of this service change by monitoring ridership to get a year-to-year comparison. Staff will report again in one year with more comprehensive data.

9. 2011 SERVICE REDUCTION PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL - PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY REPORT NO. 2 - INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom said this is the second of three update reports regarding the comments received from customers regarding the preliminary proposal to reduce fixed route and paratransit service in 2011. He noted that customers are using many different means to communicate concerns and suggestions including letters, note cards, and the STA website. Strong concerns have been voiced over consolidating Routes 72 (Liberty Lake Express) and 74 (Valley Limited), and many written comments have been received from commuters and residents of Medical Lake concerning the proposed elimination of Routes 62 and 67.

Mr. Otterstrom added that there seems to be a general understanding of why service reductions are necessary; however, many people have suggested asking voters to approve a higher sales tax rate, or to increase current fares and/or reduce pay and staffing for administrative functions as a solution to STA's declining financial position.

Staff will continue to present the proposed plan to community groups and collect surveys. A third Public Input Summary report will be prepared for the January Committee meeting. Mr. Otterstrom concluded by reviewing the timeline for the project, noting that a final recommendation will be presented to the Board of Directors in March 2011.

Mr. Rolwes inquired if STA could charge long-range fares for certain routes. Ms. Meyer responded that STA could do that, however, the Citizen Advisory Committee, following an exhaustive analysis of transit fares, recommended to the Board of Directors that premium fares not be established at STA because revenue increases would actually be marginal.

Ms. Campeau asked about possible changes to the Paratransit boundary. Mr. Otterstrom replied that changes to the boundary would occur as fixed route changes are instituted because the Paratransit boundary can only extend three-quarters of a mile around fixed routes. Ms. Waldref asked if the Summary Report contained information specific to the possible changes to the paratransit boundary. Mr. Otterstrom said those comments were not separated out in the Report. Ms. Meyer said that staff is still examining the impact of the service reduction plan on Paratransit riders, and is hoping to find a way to lessen the impact for those individuals who could be residing outside of the new boundaries. More communication on this issue will be forthcoming in the near future.

10. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer invited everyone to stay following the meeting to observe how fixed route coach operators mark up for their work assignments.
- b. Ms. Meyer commented that STA provided a bus to St. Lukes Rehabilitation Institute which will be used to teach individuals with disabilities the skills needed to use public transportation. People were very complimentary to STA for providing the bus for this purpose.
- c. Ms. Meyer said that everyone at STA does an excellent job working under extreme weather conditions such as the recent snow fall. The coordination at all levels is incredible. She said that STA's coach and van operators are "rock stars" when it comes to maneuvering through bad weather while providing service to our

customers. She added that kudos should be given to the entire operation for all they do to keep the buses and vans running.

- d. Ms. Meyer thanked everyone for their participation on the Committee in 2010. She said she appreciated everyone's efforts in being a part of the transit process.

11. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. October 2010 Operating Indicators (Revised) - as presented.
- b. Community Outreach and Involvement - as presented.
- c. Holiday Service Hours - as presented.
- d. Draft 2011-2016 Transit Development Plan Timeline (Revised) - as presented.

12. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

None.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Ms. Waldref thanked Ms. Richardson for her service on the Operations and Customer Service Committee and wished her well in the future.

14. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2011, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

15. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant