

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

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes of the February 3, 2010, Meeting
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Waldref, City of Spokane *
Patrick Rushing
Mike Brewer, Citizen
Ann Campeau, Citizen
Rick Jacks, Citizen
Barbara Richardson, Citizen
Dan Murphy, Citizen
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen
Nancy Kelly, Citizen
Tim Dompier, ATU 1015
Dennis Tonhofer, ATU 1598
Mike Kunder, AFSCME 3939

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

GUESTS

None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Wendy Van Orman
David Driscoll, Citizen

* Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Waldref called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

Mr. Rolwes arrived at 1:35 p.m.

3. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 6, 2009, COMMITTEE MEETING – CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL

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

4. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

None.

5. REVIEW OF STA STAFF PROCESSES – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska gave an overview of the procurement process. He explained that there are three paths toward a decision process:

- a. purchases greater than \$10K which are sole source procurements or contracts under \$100K go to the Operations and Customer Service Committee and Board of Directors as informational items;
- b. purchases utilizing a Cooperative Purchasing contract (i.e., piggy-back purchase with another transit agency) or a single source contract which is greater than \$200K will come to the Committee with a request to recommend the Board award a contract;
- c. purchases greater than \$200K will come to the Committee as a request to release an Invitation for Bids (IFB), a Scope of Work (SOW), or a Request for Proposals (RFP), and, following Committee approval and a review of all responses to the IFB, SOW, or RFP, will return to the Committee with a request to recommend the Board approve the contract.

Mr. Blaska also explained STA's general decision-making process:

- a. Proposal - Once an objective is defined, staff puts forth a proposal. Ideas and options are shared to generate and guide discussion. Public and employee input is aggressively sought and reviewed. No decisions are made at this time.

- b. Draft Recommendation - Options are analyzed, evaluated, and crafted into a draft recommendation. Public outreach continues and comments are submitted to staff for consideration.
- c. Public Hearing - A public hearing is conducted to enable the community to respond directly to the Board of Directors regarding the draft recommendation.
- d. Final Recommendation - Staff evaluates and adjusts the draft recommendation based on comments received and Board guidance, resulting in a final recommendation to the Board of Directors.

6. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR RADIO SYSTEM MAINTENANCE SERVICE – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska said that the current service agreement with Motorola will expire on March 31, 2010. The system was purchased and installed in 2003/2004, and Motorola is the only vendor capable of maintaining their 800 MHz trunked simulcast SmartNet system. He noted that this would be a sole-source procurement due to the proprietary design and functions of the system.

Mr. Rushing moved to recommend the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a five-year radio system maintenance agreement for STA's 800 MHz trunked, simulcast communications system with Motorola Communications for a price not to exceed \$274,260. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

7. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR PARATRANSIT CONTRACT SERVICES – TWO YEAR EXTENSION – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Blaska explained that the current contract with First Transit will expire December 31, 2010. Extending the current contract would delay the depreciation of capital costs associated with a new purchased transportation contract. The original contract terms would remain the same with cost of living adjustments as negotiated in labor agreements: \$40.85 per revenue hour in 2011, and \$41.59 per revenue hour in 2012. Revenue hours are expected to increase 15% in 2011(from the 2009 baseline) and 20% in 2012 (from the 2009 baseline). For both years combined, STA will realize a capital cost savings of approximately \$1.09M. Mr. Blaska added that the contractor will assume any service growth as well as cover weekends, holidays, and early morning/late night service to meet demand and performance measures.

Mr. Rushing left the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

Mr. Brewer moved to recommend the Board enter into two one-year contract extensions with First Transit with year 2011 at a price of \$40.85 per revenue hour and year 2012 at a price of \$41.59 per revenue hour. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

8. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING SERVICES – ACTION REQUESTED

Ms. Myers said the current contract with BHW1 will end on July 31, 2010. The initial contract for communications and marketing services was awarded to BHW1 in 2005 for one year with two one-year extensions. Two additional one-year extensions were approved, resulting in a full five-year work period. Ms. Myers noted that these services include developing and implementing communications and marketing strategies and techniques in coordination with STA staff. The intent is to increase public awareness and understanding of public transportation and the services STA provides. This is accomplished by producing photography, creative design, art direction, web design, social media and media buys. Cost for this service varies depending on level of effort, and the average annual cost for service under the current contract is approximately \$130K per year. Staff is requesting an Operations and Customer Service Committee member to assist with the proposal evaluation process.

Mr. Brewer moved to approve the Scope of Work for communications and marketing services for the release of a Request for Proposals. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Mr. Brewer volunteered to assist with the proposal evaluation process.

9. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CONDUCTING A DOWNTOWN TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Otterstrom said that the process for selection of a consultant for the Downtown Transit Alternatives Analysis has been completed. Based on evaluation scores, staff is recommending the CEO be authorized to execute a contract with CH2M Hill to provide the Alternatives Analysis, providing negotiations are successful. If negotiations are not successful, staff is requesting that the CEO negotiate and execute a contract with the second-ranked firm, based on the final evaluation ranking.

Ms. Meyer commented that this is loosely referred to as the Streetcar Alternatives Analysis and it has discreet steps intended to identify the street or alignment and modes of transportation which are appropriate for those streets. This project includes connecting a number of destinations together including Browne's Addition, downtown, the University District, the South Hill Medical Center, the county campus to the north, Kendall Yards, Gonzaga, and the Convention Center. She noted that the project is co-sponsored by STA and the City of Spokane, and all the funding is being provided by grants: \$294K from the federal government, and the City of Spokane received a state grant for the remainder for a maximum cost of \$367.5K. Options to be analyzed include bus, trolleys, bus rapid transit, and light rail.

Ms. Meyer said that the Alternatives Analysis is the first major step in any major capital project for which you receive federal funding. Once the alignment and mode are determined through an analytical, objective process, the Board of STA and the City of Spokane will decide what the locally preferred alternative is. At that point, there would be a project with an estimated cost and it would be necessary to ask the voters for capital and operating revenue. Staff does not view this as a near term project because of the current economic picture, but it is important to complete the work because planning funding is available and planning needs to occur to be eligible for future funding. Mr. Blaska noted that this is a piece of the High Performance Transit Network which is nested in the Comprehensive Transit Plan and they should not be viewed as disjointed actions.

Mr. Brewer recommended the Board authorize staff to continue negotiations with the highest-ranked firm (CH2M Hill) and authorize the CEO to execute a contract to provide consulting services to conduct a Downtown Transit Alternatives Analysis to be completed by February 2011 with a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$367.5K. If negotiations are unsuccessful with the top-ranked firm, recommend that staff negotiate and execute a contract with the second-ranked firm based on the final oral evaluation ranking. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

10. DRAFT 2010-2015 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. Otterstrom said that the staffing and public outreach process for the Transit Development Plan (TDP) has been completed. He reviewed a summary of proposed changes to the current draft and the timeline for completion of the TDP.

Mr. Murphy asked if anyone from the community attended the public hearing. Mr. Otterstrom said yes, but there were no comments regarding the TDP.

Ms. Waldref asked if the service reductions would be a surprise to people if they have not been involved up to this point. Ms. Meyer responded that staff has been talking about the TDP since the first Board workshop in October 2009, and it was discussed at three of the Board meetings.

Ms. Waldref asked if the TDP could be changed in the future, should it be decided that further reductions are not needed. Ms. Meyer said yes. Mr. Blaska interjected that the TDP is primarily a resource document because the Washington State Department of Transportation wants to know if agencies are performing in accordance with state priorities and if the agency is resourced and able to provide what they say they will provide. The TDP is a five-year vision; the Budget is next year's implementation of that vision. The TDP is nested in the Comprehensive Transit Plan, and it shows what can be resourced each year of the five-year planning horizon. They all fit together.

Mr. Dompier asked if reductions in vehicle revenue hours would result in job losses. Ms. Meyer said that the intention of the three-year phased service reduction would be accomplished through attrition. She added that if economic circumstances change dramatically, it might not be necessary to have service reductions in 2012. The Board has supported this strategy.

Mr. Jacks moved to recommend the Board approve the 2010-2015 Transit Development Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

11. DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: PARATRANSIT AND VANPOOL ELEMENTS – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom introduced the Paratransit and Rideshare elements of the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation and noted that Plan approval will be requested at the April Committee meeting. He said that the Comprehensive Plan has three major sections: Vision and Background, Services, and Activities and Programs. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the Paratransit Policies including the service area, service and eligibilities standards, and the service structure. He also reviewed the Rideshare Policies including service standards and service coordination.

Ms. Waldref asked if there would be any workshop sessions. Mr. Otterstrom replied that once staff is further into the planning stages, there will most likely be a discussion period, possibly in April, to introduce concepts of strategies for moving forward with these elements.

12. PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR SEPTEMBER SERVICE CHANGES – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom said that STA's current budget calls for a 2% reduction in the operations budget in September 2010. The primary means available for reducing operating costs to this extent is by reducing the amount of hours of fixed route and paratransit service STA provides. A preliminary list includes:

- a. routes that have been evaluated using fixed route service design guidelines;
- b. possible route eliminations for routes which do not meet design policies and principles;
- c. possible trip and frequency reductions that could affect low-performing service where frequencies exceed policy requirements; and
- d. possible route restructures to improve operational efficiency and service attractiveness more in line with service design guidelines.

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the timeline for public input on the preliminary proposal and draft recommendation for comment. A final recommendation is anticipated for the June Board cycle, and, if approved by the Board, implementation would begin in September.

13. BROWNE'S ADDITION UPDATE – INFORMATION

Mr. Otterstrom said two open houses were held in January to discuss three options for future fixed route service through Browne's Addition. Over eighty public comments were received. Staff is currently analyzing feedback and options for a recommendation to the Board.

14. TARIFF POLICY UPDATE – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska said that the fare increase implemented in January 2010 has gone relatively smoothly. STA's workforce has responded to the need to handle coins. Mr. Blaska noted that historically Paratransit fares were tied to fixed route fares, but that is no longer the case. As a result, the introduction of the new Paratransit fare media has been the bigger issue. However, in all respects, the public has responded well. Operators have been given guidance to exercise flexibility as customers become educated about the new fares. There are two more phases of fare increases to come, and staff needs to be just as diligent in educating the public before the next increase in January 2011. Mr. Blaska added that Spokane Transit still offers one of the lowest fares in the region. Staff is investigating the possibility of using a "rolling" monthly pass when the pass fare increases from \$40 to \$45 by encoding the pass for any consecutive 30-day period starting from the date the pass is first used.

Mr. Jacks said the rolling pass is a good idea because they could be used the same way gift cards are used. He asked if it would be possible to sell the passes at kiosks at various locations around the city. Mr. Blaska said that was a possibility, as well as having them sold at grocery outlets and other area stores in the future. However, there is a lot of background work to be done by STA's Finance Department before this could be implemented. Staff is also investigating how this could benefit people who get their passes through social service agencies.

15. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer said the U.S. Figure Skating Championships were a raging success for Spokane. Ticket sales exceeded those sold in 2007, which was also a record. STA provided additional service for the event, and Ms. Meyer commented that coach operators, van operators, and the supervisors who organized transportation for the event did a spectacular job. In addition, Maintenance employees did a wonderful job keeping the buses running and clean. She added that the Communications Department also did an amazing job of informing the public about STA's coverage so the community could easily take advantage of public transportation. Overall, this was a well-orchestrated event and STA received many, many complements from event participants and organizers, as well as the public, for providing excellent service to the community for the event.

16. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. December 2009 Operating Indicators – as presented.
- b. Fourth Quarter 2009 Safety and Loss Summary Report - as presented.
- c. Community Outreach and Involvement – as presented.

17. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

None.

18. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

None.

16. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2010, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM,
1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

17. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Waldref adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant