

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

OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the February 4, 2009, Meeting
Northside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Munson, City of Spokane Valley*
Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane
Ann Campeau, Citizen
Mike Brewer, Citizen
David Driscoll, Citizen
Steve Pinkerton, AFSCME 3939
Guy Smith, ATU 1598

MEMBERS ABSENT

Nan Kelly, Citizen
Rick Jacks, Citizen
Andrew Rolwes, Citizen
Dennis Antonellis, ATU 1015

* Chair

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance and Administration
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning
Molly Myers, Manager, Communications
George Hanrahan, Manager, Information Systems
Teresa Overhauser, Manager, Technology Projects
Jacque Tjards, Manager, Purchasing
Steve Doolittle, Manager, Human Resources
Mike Toole, Assistant Manager, Safety & Security
Bruce Curran, Foreman, Facility and Grounds

GUESTS

Nick Deshais, The Inlander
Dean Lynch
Tiffany (last name withheld by request)

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Munson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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

3. **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2009, COMMITTEE MEETING – CORRECTIONS OR APPROVAL**

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

4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

- a. Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Chairman David Swalling gave a slide presentation regarding the proposed tariff policy changes. He explained that the CAC has been evaluating Spokane Transit's Tariff Policy for the past year and requested the Board's input at their January meeting prior to taking the proposal for public input. The CAC plans to ask the Board to make a decision on a new Tariff Policy in May 2009.

Mr. Swalling said that the last time fares were increased was in 2002. The CAC proposed that a fare increase be implemented for both Fixed Route and Paratransit due to declining sales tax revenue and increased operational costs. The CAC proposes to increase fares in two phases between now and January 2011 to achieve an appropriate user fee relative to the cost of service. This action also brings STA fares more in line with other comparable transit agencies.

Mr. Swalling reviewed the fare structure proposal for public comment. He said that the Fixed Route base fare would increase from \$1.00 to \$1.25 in Phase 1. Other fare instruments such as the two-hour pass, day pass, monthly pass, etc. would increase in price accordingly. Phase 2 would increase the base fare from \$1.25 to \$1.50. The CAC also proposed that the Paratransit base fare should be equal to the Fixed Route base fare. Additionally, a new fare category was proposed in order to charge a premium fare for express service. Mr. Swalling reiterated that this is the beginning of a lengthy public process and does not represent the CAC's final recommendation to the Board.

The public outreach process will take place between January and March, a recommendation will be made to the Board in March, and a public hearing will take place at the April Board meeting. Board action will be taken in May.

For the third quarter of 2008, the farebox recovery ratio at Spokane Transit is 17.2% for Fixed Route and 1.8% for Paratransit. The fixed route recovery ratio goal is 20%, based on the general industry standards. Phase 1 of the proposed fare increase will increase the farebox recovery to 19.4% and to 22.4% in Phase 2, with total additional revenue from fares of \$2.3 million.

The rationale behind increasing the Paratransit fare to equal the Fixed Route fare is due to cost. An average Paratransit ride costs \$21.49 versus \$3.95 for a fixed route ride and the Paratransit service is more widely used in Spokane than in other areas. Mr. Swalling noted that the proposal complies with state and federal law. The proposed increase in fare would raise the farebox recovery to 4.6% in Phase 1 and to 5.3% in Phase 2, with a total increase in revenue of \$375,000.

Discussion ensued. Ms. McLaughlin recommended that a flyer be produced for distribution which would educate the public about the reasons why the fare increase was being requested. Ms. Meyer said that that idea had merit and asked Ms. Myers to look into it. Ms. Myers noted that staff has had many conversations with Paratransit riders to ensure word is getting out. Other revenue increasing options were discussed including the possibility of advertising on Paratransit vehicles.

Mr. Munson complimented Mr. Swalling and the CAC members for their hard work on this project. He said this is an emotional issue and added that based on feedback he has received, and in light of the current economic recession, he did not feel he could support a fare increase in September because it is too soon. Mr. Pinkerton commented that Paratransit riders don't want the fare raised, but they seem to understand the reasons why the increase is being requested.

5. SECURITY SYSTEM PROCUREMENT – DISCUSSION

Ms. Overhauser said that STA's organization-wide priorities include a strong emphasis on customer/employee safety, security, and risk management. Staff is asking for approval to replace the video surveillance system currently in use. Outcomes of replacement include improved sense of safety, improved accident/incident documentation and investigation, improved ability to apply and enforce rules of conduct, improved ability to investigate and resolve customer complaints, and the ability for staff to view access doors for safe building ingress and egress. The new system would replace and expand the systems that were installed in the mid-1980's and 1990's. Additionally, new equipment would be installed at Park & Rides and the Valley maintenance center. Work would be conducted in two phases in order to spread costs over a two-year period. The new system would allow staff to share video feeds with law enforcement officials (should need arise), and can be expanded and upgraded in the future as new software technology becomes available. Staff is pursuing federal funding to assist with costs associated with Phase 2 of the project.

Mr. Brewer moved to recommend the Board approve a contract with Aronson Security Group for an amount not to exceed \$1,578,538.57 (including tax) plus a contingency of \$121,721.54 (7.7%) to be used at CEO discretion. The contract will be structured (including tax) with Phase 1 at \$855,892.22 and a Phase 2 option at STA's discretion at \$722,646.35. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. APPROVAL OF SCOPE OF WORK FOR SECURITY SERVICES – DISCUSSION

Mr. Toole said that the current contract with Securitas Security Services will expire on June 30th. Staff would like to move forward with the RFP process and is asking the Committee to approve the Scope of Work which will provide for security services seven days a week, 24 hours a day over the next five years. Security services include foot and vehicle patrol at all STA facilities, visual inspections of STA property and equipment, detection and reporting of code of conduct violations, and providing customer assistance as needed. Mr. Toole added that the annual cost for this service has been approximately \$501K, and assuming an annual inflation factor of three percent, the total cost of the new contract is anticipated to be approximately \$2,659,300.

Mr. Driscoll moved to approve the Summary Scope of Work for Security Services and authorize staff to release a Request for Proposals for a five-year contract. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Ms. Tjards asked if a Committee member would volunteer to assist with review of the proposals received. **Mr. Brewer volunteered to assist.**

7. APPROVAL OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR BUS STOP BENCHES – DISCUSSION

Mr. Blaska explained that STA currently operates with over 2,600 bus stops for Fixed Route services. Benches are located near many bus stops by an advertising agency under agreements with local jurisdictions. The City of Spokane has given notice to the advertising agency to remove the benches. Staff feels that benches are an important passenger amenity and should be available at selected bus stops. STA will assume responsibility for procurement, installation, and maintenance of the benches that it installs. Mr. Blaska said that staff has identified 100 locations for bench installation at this time, and may return to the Committee at a later date to request more benches as new sites are identified. Staff is asking the Committee to approve the specifications and authorize the release of an Invitation for Bids for the bus benches.

Ms. McLaughlin moved to approve the specifications for bus stop benches and authorize staff to release an Invitation for Bids for bus benches. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

8. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR OFFICE CONSTRUCTION – DISCUSSION

Mr. Blaska explained that maximum capacity at the Boone Avenue facility has been reached. As result, a space needs analysis was conducted and reconstruction advice was provided. The existing HVAC system in the Sunroom area needs to be repaired and replaced, and with the remodeling of that area, the HVAC replacement will be included with the remodeling. The current conference room will be reconfigured to include two offices and a smaller conference room, and the 2009 capital budget includes \$100,000 for both projects. Due to time constraints an Invitation for Bids was released to obtain competitive pricing for the projects. Staff is asking the Committee to recommend an award of contract to the lowest responsible bidder within the budgeted amount.

Mr. Driscoll moved to recommend the Board award a contract to the lowest responsive bid received from a responsible bidder for the Sunroom construction project to provide for additional office space, within the budgeted amount. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Ms. McLaughlin and Ms. Campeau left the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

9. FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM RIDERSHIP ASSESSMENT - 2008 – INFORMATION

Mr. Blaska gave a brief summary of ridership trends for 2008. He said that Fixed Route service is meeting and exceeding its goal of 22 passengers per revenue hour. Items of particular note included:

- South Hill service: Routes 43 and 45 have been high performing routes (direct service/high frequency) with increases of approximately 17-18%.
- West Plains & Cheney service: Routes 65 and 66 continue their steady growth (approximately 17%); Route 61 has seen ridership growth of 25.8%. Route 64 to the Airport continues to produce low ridership, but has seen some growth (18.7%) since separating service to the Airport from service to the correctional facility.
- North service: The Division/Monroe corridor is the strongest in the system and the three routes on this corridor account for over 17% of the total system-wide ridership growth. The North Express had 89,689 trips in its first year of service. Service to northeast Spokane also experienced significant ridership growth (18-19%).
- East service: Service to Millwood and the Valley has seen significant and consistent growth for the past three years (29.2%), and in 2008 there was a trend toward ridership increase on commuter routes serving the Valley Mall (17.9%), Spokane Industrial Park (36.3%), and Liberty Lake (32.3%). Route 90 remains the highest ridership route in the system and experienced a 12.1% growth in ridership.

10. CEO REPORT – INFORMATION

- a. Ms. Meyer reviewed a list of transportation projects which were submitted for potential federal stimulus funding. They include: hybrid vehicle replacement (\$5.1M), security and surveillance system (\$1.7M), operations and maintenance (\$3.9M) for a total of \$10.7M. She said that the total amount submitted for potential federal stimulus for transportation projects in the region was \$288.3M, which included bridge work, public transportation, new road construction, reconstruction, non-motorized projects, and rehabilitation and resurfacing.
- b. Ms. Meyer said she was very pleased that Karl Otterstrom accepted the position of Director of Planning with STA. Mr. Otterstrom interned at STA in 2002 and wrote his Master's thesis about STA. He comes to STA from his former position with King County Metro.

11. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a. December 2008 Operating Indicators - as presented.
- b. Community Outreach and Involvement - as presented.

12. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

- a. Update on Committee Member Solicitation

Mr. Blaska said that four requests for applications were received, and two responses were returned to STA. Staff is hoping for a recommendation which will bring the Committee membership from eleven to thirteen to help ensure a quorum.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

None.

15. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009, 1:30 P.M., SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

16. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Munson adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Van Dort, Executive Assistant