

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

## **PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the May 7, 2014, Meeting

Southside Conference Room

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chuck Hafner, City of Spokane Valley \*\*  
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative  
E. Susan Meyer, CEO (Ex-officio)

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance and Information Services  
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer Svc.  
Susan Millbank, Community Ombudsman & Accessibility Officer

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mike Allen, City of Spokane \*  
Richard Schoen, City of Millwood

Don Reimer, Manager, Maintenance & Facilities  
Anne Irmer, Manager, Vanpool

\* Chair      \*\* Acting Chair

### **GUESTS**

None

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

Acting Chair Hafner called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. Introductions were made. There was no correspondence requiring the Committee's attention.

#### **2. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

None.

#### **3. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

None.

#### **4. COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

##### **A. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2, 2014, COMMITTEE MEETING**

**In the absence of a quorum, Acting Chair Hafner said this item will be re-submitted to the Committee for approval at their next meeting.**

#### **5. COMMITTEE ACTION**

##### **A. Board Consent Agenda**

###### **1. SPOKANE TRANSIT AUTHORITY TARIFF POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR FIXED ROUTE AND PARATRANSIT SERVICES – RESOLUTION/CONSOLIDATIONS**

Mr. Blaska explained that over the next few months, staff will be conducting a comprehensive update of STA's Tariff Policy and fare structure for presentation to the Board of Directors. In preparation for this update, it is valuable to consolidate all amendments and changes into one document. This consolidation does not make any substantive changes to the existing policy; it simply pulls together all subsequent amendments and actions into one document.

**The Committee could not take action in the absence of a quorum. This item will be forwarded to the Board of Directors' consent agenda for further action. Those members present concurred by consensus to recommend the Board approve, by resolution, the consolidation of all amendments, changes, and resolutions of the Spokane Transit Authority Tariff Policy and Procedures for Fixed Route and Paratransit Services into one document.**

##### **B. Board Discussion Agenda**

*(No items being presented this month.)*

#### **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **A. COMMUNICATIONS RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) REPORT**

*(This item was removed from the May agenda and moved to the June agenda at the request of Committee Chair Mike Allen prior to the meeting.)*

**B. COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION UPDATE**

Ms. Bousley gave an overview of STA's role in supporting communication of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. She explained that Washington State passed the Commute Trip Reduction Law in 1991 to address traffic congestion, air pollution, and fuel consumption. In 2006, the CTR Efficiency Act was passed which requires local governments to develop programs which would reduce drive-alone trips. CTR targets workplaces with 100+ full-time employees in the most congested areas of Washington. Employers develop and manage their own programs based on locally-adopted goals.

STA and the Spokane County CTR office collaborated to purchase ride-matching/trip planning software together. In 2013/2014, STA spent an estimated \$6.5K to support *CommutefinderNW.com*, a free online ride matching service to promote options to vanpool, use public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking. As a result of this new software, four more vanpools have been formed and 595 new records have been added to the database. *CommutefinderNW.com* is still new, and a potential market is being created that has not yet been fully tapped.

Ms. Bousley concluded by saying that next steps include a clearly-defined objective and support strategy in the 2014-2015 STA Communications Plan and measurement of CTR usage and satisfaction through surveys.

Mr. Blaska commented that the vanpool program has tripled over the past five years. There was a slight downturn when the recession hit because construction sites folded and vans were not required, but vanpool ridership is now increasing.

**C. 2013 RIDERSHIP SURVEY RECAP**

Ms. Bousley explained that STA commissioned Robinson Research of Spokane to administer the 2013 "Spokane Transit Bus Passenger Survey." Moore Information of Portland, OR, was commissioned to tabulate data and analyze results. Objectives of the survey included: an exploration of ridership behaviors of bus passengers, determining lead reasons for using the bus, an evaluation of STA's service and performance, an update of the demographic profile of riders, and comparisons of the data to 2010 and 2012 report findings. Ms. Bousley reviewed the methodology and gave an overview of the findings: overall, the majority of riders (82%) said they were satisfied with bus service and many of them (79%) would recommend bus service to a friend. Additionally, a majority of passengers gave STA an "excellent" rating on 10 of the 11 aspects of bus service tested.

**D. ELECTRIC BUS EXPERIMENT - RESULTS**

Mr. Blaska explained that Spokane Transit had an opportunity to test a battery-powered, all-electric bus during the month of March. He said that this is a promising technology which still has some key issues to resolve including high capital cost, duration of charge and battery weight, charging technology and cost, and the battery life cycle.

The objective of the experiment was to gain some experience with this emerging technology. Performance feedback was gathered from several perspectives:

- Customer feedback – Positive: lack of noise, smooth ride, supportive of investment in new technology; Negative: seats were hard, public would prefer purchase from U.S. Manufacturers using U.S. technology.
- Operator Feedback – Positive: quiet engine, good acceleration; Negative: stop announcement system, speaker volume and seating is inferior to current coaches, more testing needed to determine performance on hills and on freeways.
- Maintenance feedback – Positive: technology should decrease maintenance costs; Negative: vehicle weight due to batteries and frame construction causes vehicle life expectancy concerns, battery room consumed more space and increased vehicle height.
- Operations feedback – Positive: technology has made strides over the last few years, all-electric vehicles are becoming economically feasible; Negative: bus could not complete 18-hour duty cycle without needing a recharge, added facility infrastructure investments needed to recharge the bus means it is not yet cost effective.

Mr. Blaska reviewed cost comparisons and other cost considerations including the potential decrease in maintenance costs, the potential for increased bus lifecycle, decreased exposure to diesel cost inflation, and secondary costs associated with emissions. He added that there are also electrical costs to be

considered (charging system, supporting facility infrastructure), as well as unknown factors such as unproven batter life expectancy, vehicle availability differences based on charging technology, and the effects of increased vehicle weight.

E. **ENERGY PRESERVATION PROJECTS – UPDATE**

Mr. Blaska said that in November 2013, STA's Board approved a resolution to execute an Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services for energy/utility conservation project management and monitoring services. Under this agreement, STA was able to utilize the services of McKinstry, an Energy Savings Company, to conduct an Investment Energy Grade Audit. The audit has been completed and it identified a project which would allow STA to achieve significant energy savings. The project encompasses a comprehensive replacement program for the 10 heating and ventilation units, 17 exhaust fan systems, windows, and lighting for the South Boone garage and maintenance areas. All the heating and ventilation units would be controlled by a centralized digital control system. Annual energy savings are guaranteed to be at least \$113,000.

In the upcoming Capital Improvement Program (CIP), staff will recommend using Energy Saving Performance Contracting to move forward with this project. The entire cost to replace aging equipment will be offset with energy savings. Performance Contracting guarantees project costs, energy savings, and equipment performance. All equipment slated for replacement is original to the buildings and has reached its useful life cycle (28-29 years old). The majority of the equipment and preservation projects are already in the CIP.

Mr. Blaska said that the cost for this project is guaranteed not to exceed \$2,261,000, which results in a simple payback of 20 years. STA plans to submit a \$500,000 grant application with the Washington State Department of Commerce later this year. STA also expects to offset the cost of this project with Avista rebates/ incentives in the amount of \$285,000, which would reduce the payback period to 13 years. The new equipment will have an expected life cycle of approximately 25 years.

Mr. Blaska noted that this item is being presented as information prior to the submission of the entire CIP because it represents a significant new project for 2015. It consolidates the multi-year, incremental HVAC replacement strategy in the current CIP. Although the budgeted cost for the current plan was \$440,000, it would not have achieved the energy savings guaranteed by this new project. Additionally, the timing of the grant application process requires staff to submit the grant request prior to the scheduled Board approval of the CIP. Staff wanted the Board to be aware of the context of that grant submission.

7. **CEO REPORT**

- A. Ms. Meyer asked Mr. Blaska to report on Bloomsday results. Mr. Blaska said that ridership for Bloomsday was up 3.1%. He noted that STA not only provides special shuttle service for race participants to and from selected locations throughout the city, but also provides transport for wheelchair athletes to and from the airport, and also assists race "stragglers" who are unable to finish the course due to exhaustion. STA had two corporate cup teams running in Bloomsday, and the "Catch That Bus" team (Anne Irmer, Renee Guerrero, Dave Schultheis, Ed Irving, and Ira McKinsey) finished 4<sup>th</sup> in division and 41<sup>st</sup> overall. The "Pedal to the Metal" team (Beth Bousley, Mark Curtis, Paul Hoffman, Craig Clark, and Mark Costigan) finished 21<sup>st</sup> in their division and 276<sup>th</sup> overall. Additionally, Coach Operator Mike Hogue, who runs as a Perennial, finished 3<sup>rd</sup> of all Perennials; Coach Operator Ed Irvine, who ran the Boston Marathon in 3 hours 15 minutes one week prior, ran Bloomsday in 50:46. Information Services Application Specialist Rene Guerrero was STA's fastest runner, finishing at 49:32, and Vanpool Manager Anne Irmer scored the most points for the team at 839. Ms. Meyer congratulated all of STA's Bloomsday participants, and gave kudos to all of the staff members who were involved in supporting this important community event.
- B. Ms. Meyer explained that in 2012, the Board approved a policy to award retired vans from the Vanpool and Paratransit programs to community service organizations. Twenty applications for those vans were received and the following organizations were selected by the evaluation committee: New Horizon Care Center, Inc., Advent Lutheran Church/Child Center, SL Start & Associates, LLC., Central Lutheran Church, Acres WA, LLC., Sunshine Terrace, Andrews Care, Inc., Spokane Baptist Association/dba Lilac Plaza and Lilac Terrace Retirement Communities, Family of Faith Community Church, and Day out for the Blind of Spokane, Inc.

**Mr. Hafner commented that he knows some individuals involved with one of those organizations, and they were very appreciative of receiving the van.**

- C. Ms. Meyer said she recently returned from the APTA 2014 International Bus Roadeo competition held in Kansas City, and Coach Operator Gabe Fornos took first place in the national competition for driving a 40' coach. She added that STA sent a Maintenance team to the competition for the first time in decades, and they scored higher than five other properties.
- D. Ms. Meyer congratulated Planning Director Karl Otterstrom on his nomination as 2014 Professional Planner of the Year by the Inland Empire Section, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association.

8. **COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

- A. March 2014 Financial Results Summary (*Lynda Warren*) – as presented.
- B. April 2014 Sales Tax Revenue Information (*Lynda Warren*) – as presented.
- C. First Quarter 2014 Safety and Loss Report (*Steve Doolittle/Mike Toole*) – as presented.
- D. First Quarter 2014 Performance Measures (*Steve Blaska*) – as presented.
- E. March 2014 Operating Indicators (*Steve Blaska*) – as presented.
- F. Community Outreach and Involvement (*Beth Bousley*) – as presented.
- G. Grant Vehicle Recipients (*Steve Blaska*) – as presented.

9. **JUNE 2014 COMMITTEE PACKET AGENDA REVIEW**

**Acting Chair Hafner asked if there were any comments about the agenda for the next Committee meeting.** None were forthcoming.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

11. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS**

None.

12. **ADJOURN**

Acting Chair Hafner adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

13. **NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2014, 1:30 P.M., STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jeanette Van Dort  
Executive Assistant