

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

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Minutes of the May 19, 2010, Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Wendy Van Orman, City of Liberty Lake, Chair  
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane  
Jon Snyder, City of Spokane  
Dean Grafos, City of Spokane Valley  
Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley  
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights  
Mark Richard, Spokane County  
Bonnie Mager, Spokane County  
Richard Rush, City of Spokane

### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance & Administration  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Mike Volz, Assistant Director of Finance & Administration  
Steve Doolittle, Human Resources Manager  
Molly Myers, Communications Manager

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Laura McAloon, K & L Gates LLP

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**  
Chair Van Orman called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and conducted roll call.
  2. **APPROVAL OF BOARD AGENDA**  
Ms. Van Orman noted the addition of item 7.A: Route 29 Spokane Community College (SCC) Realignment under Board Action other items.  
**Mr. Rushing moved to approve the Board agenda. Mr. Schimmels seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**
  3. **RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS** – None.
  4. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**  
Mike Rowles said he had a cell phone video recording of an incident involving an STA Security Officer. This matter will be researched by staff.

Mr. Rush and Mr. Snyder arrived at 5:40 p.m.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING:**
  - A. **Proposed September 2010 Service Reduction**  
Ms. Van Orman called upon Mr. Otterstrom to make a presentation.  
Mr. Otterstrom said service reductions are required due to significant reductions in tax revenues. The 2010 budget planned for a 2% reduction in 2010 followed by 7% in 2011 and 2012 for a total of approximately 16% over a three year period. Hundreds of comments have been received from the public and individual letters were sent to impacted paratransit customers.

The recommendation impacts 11 bus routes and approximately 12,180 hours of service would be reduced (2.9%). Seventeen active paratransit customers would be impacted of which seven took 12

trips or less in 2009. Since paratransit service complements fixed route service with a ¾ mile boundary, the elimination of routes #35 (Northwest Terrace) and #47 (Glenrose) will mean paratransit service will also be eliminated. Staff recommends the service reductions go into effect for paratransit customers on March 13, 2011 since it takes a long time to map boundary changes. STA and County staff will be doing this. Paratransit eligibility remains the same and those qualified to use the service can still do so within the ¾ mile boundary. The elimination of the Northwest Terrace route will affect residents of the Windriver House. Mr. Rushing asked is there are other options for them. Ms. Meyer said it is difficult to serve these residents since STA's obligation to provide paratransit service ends at the ¾ mile boundary. She encourages staff at Windriver to work with other agencies to get the residents who need the service inside the boundary. There is also a possibility of a special use van from STA's vanpool program.

Ms. Mager asked who set the ¾ mile boundary. Ms. McAloon explained that approximately 15 years ago, STA was in a class action suit brought by paratransit riders who would have lost their service under the federal mandate of providing paratransit service to those who lived within ¾ mile of the fixed route bus service. Previously, the entire Public Transportation Benefit Area was served by paratransit service. The suit was settled and STA's provision of service within the ¾ mile boundary was accepted. Ms. Mager suggested grandfathering the current riders in.

Ms. McAloon said this would mean treating some customers differently than others and would violate the law.

Ms. Meyer cautioned not to forget that bus riders also are losing their transportation.

Mr. Richard asked about the public comments about the #2 Medical Shuttle.

Mr. Otterstrom said that Route #43 still provides service to the front door of Deaconess Medical Center. The inbound Route 2 will also provide service to within 200 feet of that location.

Ms. Van Orman said there would be no Board action until the June Board meeting.

Ms. Van Orman opened the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. and called for public comment.

The following citizens commented about the effect the service reduction will have on paratransit service: Diane French, Joyce Gamble, Charlotte Carpenter, Marlene McBride, Kim Dennis, and Linda Petrie.

Upon request, a copy of the public hearing recording is available at STA, 1230 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA 99201.

Ms. Van Orman called for public comment three times and hearing none, she closed the hearing at 6:32 p.m.

6. **BOARD ACTION: CONSENT AGENDA**

**Mr. Rushing moved to approve consent agenda items 6. A-E. Mr. Richard seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

- A. Motion to approve minutes of the April 14, 2010 Board Workshop.
- B. Motion to approve minutes of the April 21, 2010 Board Meeting.
- C. Motion to approve Accounts Payable Voucher and Warrant nos. 561661 through 562065, and Worker's Compensation Warrant nos. 204532 through 204688 totaling \$1,259,895.57 for the period April 1 through April 30, 2010.
- D. Motion to approve purchase of ten additional 12-passenger vanpool vans for a total cost of \$258,050, utilizing the State of Washington General Administration Contract.
- E. Motion to review and approve the Scope of Work for Armored Car and Money Processing Services in order for staff to release a Request for Proposals for a five-year contract and request a Board member to assist in the evaluation process (the latter is optional).

7. BOARD ACTION: OTHER ITEMS

A. Route 29 SCC Realignment

In March 2010, the City of Spokane Engineering Services asked STA to help fund the paving of South Crescent Avenue and Regal Street. The City expects to incur \$188,692 within the 10-year Street Bond Program for the reconstruction of the roadway due in part to bus travel with an additional \$42,456 to bring the roadway to a higher thickness than a residential street. This project was not requested in the Cooperative Street and Roads Project. In the September 2010 service reduction proposal, STA staff proposes to realign Route 29 to travel along Mission Avenue between Greene and Napa, in which case the \$42,456 in construction costs could be avoided by the City of Spokane.

**Mr. Richard moved to approve the realignment of Route 29 to travel along Mission Avenue between Napa and Greene streets effective September 19, 2010. Mr. Rushing seconded.**

Ms. Mager asked what the difference in ridership would be.

Mr. Otterstrom said there are 10-15 riders a day from South Crescent. However the service on Mission would be increased in frequency from hourly to half hourly so it would be more convenient even if the riders had to walk further to access the bus. Discussion followed about this route.

Mr. Otterstrom said the decision needs to be made on this particular route now due to the City's construction timeline.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

8. STAFF REPORTS:

A. Three-Position Bike Racks

Mr. Blaska said Mr. Snyder requested that staff investigate the potential for converting to three-position bike racks on the fixed route buses. Staff recommends this project go through the same evaluation process as other capital projects in the 2011 budget cycle which begins in July 2010. The proposed evaluation would include the following: establish existing utilization; estimate demand; compile information from relevant sources; and, cost analysis. Based on these results and Board approval, staff could implement a program in May of 2011.

Mr. Snyder thanked staff for their efforts.

Mr. Blaska said the coach operators are given discretion to accommodate bike riders who otherwise would be left behind due to a full bike rack. For example, if the bus is not full and there is room inside for a bike, they can allow the customer to bring it on board.

B. First Quarter 2010 Performance Measures

Mr. Blaska reported that ridership for the first quarter is flat, however due to the mild weather in January 2010 compared to 2009 the real results are probably 2-3% below 2009. Staff's assessment of the decline is mostly attributed to the general reduction in employment and economic activity. The January fare increase does not appear to be a major factor. Although riders paying cash at the farebox have declined, pass sales are slightly up.

Paratransit's increased ridership is attributed to the increased use of Special Use Vans.

The Vanpool program is slowly recovering from the disbanding of vanpool groups caused by reduced employment. The recovery is not expected to be strong enough to meet the goal of a 21% increase in ridership this year.

Fixed route passengers per revenue hour are now the highest in the state, after King County Metro, at 27.4. Mr. Blaska pointed out that the numbers for the other transit agencies are approximate and will be adjusted following information from the National Transit Database later in the year.

Paratransit ridership of 2.93 passengers per revenue hour is the highest in the state.

Fixed route cost per passenger is the lowest in the state at \$3.81. Paratransit cost per passenger is also the lowest at \$22.40.

The call abandon rate in the Call Center is 13.1% and this is mostly attributable to staff shortages. Mr. Blaska said he briefed the Board last month on the Quality Counts! Program which has shown excellence in customer service from all departments of STA.

C. April 2010 Ridership Highlights

Mr. Blaska reported a 4.5% decrease in fixed route ridership from April, 2009 to April, 2010 for a 1.3% decrease year-to-date. Paratransit ridership for the same period increased by 0.5% for a year-to-date increase of 2.9%.

Mr. Snyder asked if the fare increase factored into these figures.

Mr. Blaska said the fare revenues are slightly above budget. He added that there could be a 5% decrease in ridership and revenue could still increase. He noted that the student pass program has seen an increase, perhaps due to re-training for those who have lost their jobs.

The goal for paratransit is not to increase ridership due to its high cost. The Special Use Vans are very cost effective and will be marketed to retirement and group homes and agencies that have paratransit-eligible populations. The ARC of Spokane has two of these vans.

D. March 2010 Financial Highlights

Mr. Plaster reported that operating revenue year-to-date was \$2.5M with a growth of 15.8% over the same period in 2009. Total revenue year-to-date of \$16.1M shows an increase of 4.17% above last year. Overall, year-to-date favorable budget variances (revenues and expenditures combined) were \$1,708,737. Washington State Department of Transportation advised that STA could take the remainder of the Special Needs Grant in one sum rather than draw it down on a monthly basis. This attributed to the increase in revenue. Sales tax revenue was 1.5% above budget in April, reporting February sales, and 2.8% below budget year-to-date as of April. Compared with other jurisdictions in the region, STA is in the middle at a 3.7% decrease in sales tax cash receipts. Mr. Plaster commented that it is very encouraging to see a positive sales tax revenue.

9. CEO REPORT

Bloomsday 2010 Results

Ms. Meyer said Spokane Transit transported 20% of the Bloomsday participants. There was an overall increase in ridership of 13% over last year with a total of 10,000 roundtrip rides given. STA had a booth at the Bloomsday trade show and sold passes in the form of stickers that could be affixed to the runners' numbers.

Spirit of the Inland Northwest Tourism Award

STA won the Spirit of the Inland Northwest Tourism Award for providing excellence in transportation to the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships and the 2009 National Veterans' Wheelchair Games.

Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

Ms. McAloon met with Commissioner Mielke who is working on the draft TBD interlocal agreement. She indicated the STA Board's desire to be part of the agreement and she will assist with the drafting. There will be an identifiable project list which may be amended only following a public hearing.

Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) Interlocal Agreement Update

On April 8, 2010, SRTC's Legal Counsel presented a memo to the SRTC Board summarizing the following outstanding issues: members who have not previously been required to contribute funds toward SRTC's annual budget would now be required to do so; the interlocal may be amended by a majority vote of the membership; some positions should be ex-officio and include a multi-modal interest in transportation. The SRTC Board had already agreed that SRTC may not acquire or use real property to operate a transportation system.

SRTC's Legal Counsel will take the following issues back to the SRTC Board for action:

- 1) The SRTC Board Chair position must be filled by a Board member who has served for at least a year. It is recommended that this is left to the discretion of the Board and not included in the agreement.
- 2) The acquisition and disposal of real property should be approved by a super majority of the Board.
- 3) Add language to the interlocal agreement to make a special assessment of fees for planning assistance for those jurisdictions which do not already pay dues to SRTC.

It is anticipated that the SRTC Board will take action to approve the amended interlocal agreement at their June Board meeting and distribute the agreement to jurisdictions for approval. The STA Board could consider it in July.

10. NEW BUSINESS – None.

11. BOARD MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS – None.

12. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. Miscellaneous Correspondence
- C. 2010 State Legislative Session Final Report
- D. March 2010 Operating Indicators
- E. First Quarter 2010 Operating Indicators
- F. March 2010 Financial Results Summary
- G. First Quarter 2010 Capital Budget Status Report
- H. First Quarter 2010 Statement of Net Assets and Federal Grants

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:25 p.m., Ms. McAloon announced that the Board would adjourn for an Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining.

The STA Board of Directors will reconvene in open session at approximately 7:40 p.m. If it becomes necessary to extend the executive session, a member of the staff will return to announce the time at which the STA Board will reconvene. If any action is to be taken as a result of discussions in the executive session, that action will occur in open public session.

At 7:40 p.m. Ms. McAloon returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 7:45 p.m.

At 7:45 p.m. Ms. McAloon returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 7:55 p.m.

At 7:55 p.m. Ms. McAloon returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 8:05 p.m.

At 8:05 p.m., the Board of Directors reconvened and Chair Van Orman declared the meeting back in open public session. No action was taken.

13. CABLE 5 BROADCAST DATES AND TIMES OF THE MAY 19, 2010 BOARD MEETING:

Saturday, May 22, 2010	4:00 p.m.
Monday, May 24, 2010	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, May 25, 2010	8:00 p.m.

