

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

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Draft Minutes of the July 17, 2008, Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mark Richard, Spokane County, Chairman  
Richard Munson, City of Spokane Valley  
Al French, City of Spokane  
Richard Rush, City of Spokane  
Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane  
Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights  
Allan Gainer, City of Cheney

### **STAFF PRESENT**

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

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Bonnie Mager, Spokane County  
Dick Denenny, City of Spokane Valley

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Laura McAloon, K & L Gates LLP

### **GUESTS**

None

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**  
Chairman Richard called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and conducted roll call. Ms. Meyer wished Mr. Richard a happy birthday.
  2. **RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**
    - A. **Pro-Transit Campaign – Recognition for STA Employee Volunteers**  
Ms. Meyer recognized the efforts of Dennis Antonellis (Coach Operator and President ATU #1015) for his tireless organization, staffing the phone bank every night and canvassing neighborhoods. Also recognized for their efforts were Jim and Mary Beth Fitzgerald, coach operators. ATU #1015 gave approximately \$25,000 and \$6,000 was donated from ATU from around the state. Ms. Meyer also acknowledged the efforts of Guy Smith (Supervisor and President ATU #1598).
  3. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**  
Larry Priano of 2209 West Providence, Spokane said he appreciated public expressions at the beginning of the meeting. He said he observed an STA bus or van idling with the engine running at Albi stadium on several occasions with the same driver. He visited the STA office on Boone Avenue and received a Report to the Community and noted that STA receives most of its funding from sales tax revenue. He expressed his displeasure with this and the recent sales tax vote. He said STA is giving service away and there is not much demand for it. He added that there are too many reduced fares and STA is losing money as a result. He saw that the westbound Wellesley route was empty and the #22 Maple had three riders during the day. He suggested that fares be raised and daytime service be cut between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Mr. Gainer arrived at 5:35 p.m.

Mr. Richard said a fare study is underway to make sure STA's fares are compatible with other agencies across the state. He added that public transit is funded by the public and STA receives less local sales tax funding than other transit agencies in Washington. STA has also been recognized as being one of the most efficient transit agencies in the state and nationwide.

Mr. Rushing said he rides the bus and talks to passengers. Some routes are empty at first but fill up later; others he has experienced standing room only. He commended the professionalism of the drivers and their attentiveness to customers' needs. He sees a lot of improvement since he was previously a Board member.

4. BOARD ACTION: CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion to Approve Minutes of the June 12, 2008 Board Meeting.
- B. Motion to Approve Accounts Payable Voucher and Warrant nos. 551775 through 552240, and Worker's Compensation Warrant nos. 200569 through 200692 totaling \$2,366,319.73 for the period June 1 through June 30, 2008.
- C. Motion to authorize the CEO to enter into a contract with Eastern Washington University for the Spokane Transit Eagle Pass Program from September 24, 2008 through June 14, 2009, with the option of two (2) one-year extensions.
- D. Motion to approve the inter-governmental purchase of four (4) 60-foot fixed route coaches, spare components, training and travel from New Flyer of America for a sum not to exceed \$2,600,000 and approve the disposal of up to four coaches.
- E. Motion to approve the Plaza lease assignment for Joe's Mini Market as presented.

**Mr. French moved to approve consent agenda items 4. A – E. Mr. Rushing seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

5. BOARD ACTION: OTHER ITEMS

A. Approval for Travel Expenses for Director of Planning

The Director of Planning position that was approved in the 2008 budget will shortly be advertized nationally. Ms. Meyer requested the Board authorize travel expenses up to \$3,000 to bring qualified candidates to Spokane for final interviews. **Mr. Munson moved 1) to approve necessary travel and related expenses in accordance with STA's travel policy for employees for selected candidates invited to Spokane for Director of Planning interviews and 2) to authorize the CEO to approve relocation expenses for the successful candidate, if necessary.** Ms. Meyer said that part 2 would be brought back to the Board at the appropriate time. **Mr. French seconded the motion with part 2 stricken and the motion passed unanimously.**

B. Approval for Citizen Advisory Committee Member Travel

Mr. Blaska asked for the Board's approval to send up to two CAC members to the statewide Citizen Advisory Conference to be held in Lacey, WA in September. **Mr. Rushing moved to approve the request and Mr. French seconded.** Ms. McLaughlin asked if approval should be given for the STA staff member to attend. Ms. Meyer said this is not necessary since staff travel is included in the 2008 budget. **The motion passed unanimously.**

C. Cooperative Street and Road Projects Budget Revision – Approval of Re-allocation of Funding for City of Spokane and Spokane County Road Projects

Mr. Howell requested approval from the Board for the re-allocation of funding from two road projects; one in the City, the other in the County. City staff has requested a re-allocation of funds of \$635,200 from the paving project on Garland and Market to a project on 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grand. The County's road project on Wall Street has been completed under budget by \$180,000. County staff has therefore requested that STA re-allocate these funds to the paving of Hastings Road near the High School. Neither project constitutes an increase in funding from STA. **Ms. McLaughlin moved approval as presented and Mr. Munson seconded.** Mr. Rush asked where the funds go if they are not approved. Mr. Howell answered that they remain in STA's budget. Mr. French said he was not aware that the project at Garland and Market in Hillyard had been changed. Mr. Howell said it was taken to the SRTC's Transportation Technical Committee and he spoke with City staff on July 16, 2008. Ms. Meyer said STA cannot judge if the fund recipients make the right decisions. Mr. French asked when the funds would be dispersed. Ms. Meyer said the funds would be dispersed upon completion of the project. The Garland project is slated for disbursement in 2009 and the 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue project funding will be split between 2009 and 2010. The funding for Wall Street will be disbursed this year. Mr. Rush said he thought STA funds should be used for transit, not road paving projects. He said he would like to see the projects in the future and discuss them. Mr. Munson said buses create havoc on the roads and STA is being a good citizen in recognizing this especially at intersections. Mr. Rush said last year's harsh winter rendered bus stops inaccessible and it would be prudent to use this funding for snow removal. Ms. Meyer said funding could indeed be used for such a purpose, however the Board approved the cooperative street and road projects through 2011. In 2010 the use of funding for streets and roads will be considered again. **The motion passed unanimously.**

D. Adoption of Preferred Corridor for High Capacity Transit in the PTBA Encouraging Preservation of High Capacity Transit Right-of-Way by Local Jurisdictions - Resolution

Ms. Meyer said this item has been brought back from last month's meeting. At that meeting discussion ensued about planning agreements with jurisdictions and the CEO was authorized to meet with City of Spokane Valley staff. This being accomplished and with a planning agreement in draft form, the resolution is now back before the Board. Ms. Meyer thanked the City of the Spokane Valley elected officials and staff for the work they have done to preserve the corridor. **Mr. Munson moved to adopt a resolution adopting a preferred corridor for high-capacity transit in the PTBA and authorizing the development of mutual planning agreements with the Cities of Spokane, Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake, and the County of Spokane to provide for notification of land use development applications and the preservation of the preferred corridor for high-capacity transit right-of-way.** Ms. McLaughlin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. Miscellaneous Correspondence
- C. May 2008 Operating Indicators
- D. May 2008 Financial Results Summary
- E. Second Quarter 2008 Travel Report
- F. Professional Finance Officer Award to Jim Plaster
- G. Summary of September 2008 Route Adjustments

Mr. French wished to recognize Mr. Plaster for the award in item 6.F. He is only one of two officers in the state who have received this award for the past 24 years.

7. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer reported that this year's Hoopfest event was the biggest ever with over 200,000 participants and a 34% increase in ridership. STA has received a draft technical memo from the City of Spokane concerning their consultant, DKS's traffic analysis of STA's downtown options: enhance the Plaza or relocate to the Intermodal Center. This memo and options will be presented to the Board in September.

STA staff presented the proposed selection criteria for the use of 2009 FTA Section 5307 funds to the SRTC Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) on July 16 and received their input. Staff will bring the proposed eligibility criteria to the Board for a public hearing in September and action in October.

Four consecutive quarters of testing for arsenic at the Fairgrounds property have been completed and all results were below clean-up levels. It is anticipated that the property will now be removed from the clean-up site list.

A draft Board agenda for September's meeting was provided.

8. STAFF REPORTS:

A. June 2008 Ridership Highlights

Mr. Blaska said there was a 22.5% increase in fixed route ridership for the month of June, resulting in a 15.4% increase year-to-date. Paratransit had a 5.8% increase in June with a 2.1% increase year-to-date. Mr. Richard commented on these excellent numbers which were indicative of increased gas prices. He thanked staff for their efforts.

B. June 2008 Financial Highlights

Mr. Plaster reported a combined year-to-date, as of May 2008, favorable total revenue and total expenditures budget variance of \$405,832. The financial update for May 2008 shows a favorable budget variance for total operating revenues of \$3.4 million which is a variance of 13.0% with a growth over 2007 of 10.8%. The total revenue of \$26.9 million shows a budget variance of 0.7% and a 2.5% growth over 2007. Operating expenses of \$23.5 million show a favorable variance of 0.7% and a growth of 18.1% over 2007. Capital expenditures year-to-date are \$1.5 million out of a \$24.3 million annual budget. Sales tax receipts for April 2008 are 1.7% lower than budgeted and 1.8% higher than April 2007. Sales tax receipts for June 2008 are 8.2% lower than budgeted and 4.9% lower than June 2007. July figures have also been received. Sales tax receipts for July 2008 are 3.9% lower than budgeted and 0.5% lower than July 2007. He commented that one month does not make a trend but perhaps the decrease in tax may be bottoming out.

C. Strollers on Buses

Mr. Blaska said this item is a follow-up from the May Board meeting when there was public comment from a group of mothers on this topic. STA Ombudsman, Susan Millbank, met with the maintenance department to see if a seat could be taken out of a bus behind the wheelchair and elderly preferred seating, thus creating space for a stroller. Contra Costa Transit in California has done this. It is not feasible however with STA's buses since this is where the wheelchair safety restraints are located. This was an initial assessment and further research will be done. Ms. Millbank is in communication with the mothers that made comment and has met with them. Mr. Rushing said he has spoken with parents about this and they commented that they are pleased with STA's service and the difficulty in collapsing a stroller before boarding with children depends on the size of the stroller. Mr. Richard asked if there are other areas where a seat could be removed. Mr. Blaska said if a seat were to be removed further back in the bus there would be aisle width problems. The mothers made it clear that they would give up seats at the front if needed by the disabled or elderly as regulated through the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ms. Meyer added that strollers are getting quite large and there is a safety fear that the stroller could move and the child could fall while the bus is moving.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None.

10. BOARD MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Gainer said he appreciated the approval of the Eagle Pass item on the agenda. He said it is very important to the students. Mr. Munson expressed his appreciation to STA for its special service to victims of the recent fire in the Valley. Ms. McLaughlin said her neighbor is a coach operator and shared that Mr. Blaska has a wonderful reputation and is very popular with the drivers.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:35 p.m., Ms. McAloon announced that the Board would adjourn for an Executive Session for the following purpose:

1. Discussion with legal counsel representing STA in litigation or potential litigation to which STA, the STA Board of Directors, or STA employees are, or are likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to STA.
2. Reviewing the performance of a public employee.

The STA Board of Directors will reconvene in open session at approximately 6:55 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 at the open public session.

At 6:55 p.m., Ms. McAloon returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 7:05 p.m.

At 7:05 p.m. the Board of Directors reconvened and Chairman Richard declared the meeting back in open public session.

**Mr. Rushing moved to settle the Robinson claim in an amount recommended by Counsel and to authorize the CEO to execute all documents to finalize the claim. Mr. Munson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Richard directed the Executive Committee to conduct an evaluation process of the CEO and a salary and compensation survey of her position. He said the results would be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

12. Cable 5 Broadcast Dates and Times of the July 17, 2008 Board Meeting:
- |                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Saturday, July 19, 2008 | 4:00 p.m.  |
| Monday, July 21, 2008   | 10:00 a.m. |
| Tuesday, July 22, 2008  | 8:00 p.m.  |

13. Next Committee Meetings (1230 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington):

Operations & Customer Service	September 3, 2008, 1:30 p.m. (Southside Conference Room)
Citizen Advisory Committee	September 10, 2008, 5:00 p.m. (Northside Conference Room)

14. Next Board Meeting, Thursday, September 18, 2008, 5:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, 808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington.

It was noted that there are no committee or Board meetings in the month of August.

15. ADJOURNED  
With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Richard adjourned the meeting at 7:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Watson  
Executive Assistant to the CEO  
& Clerk of the Authority