

BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the March 10, 2021 Meeting
Via Webex Video Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley, Chair
Chris Grover, Small Cities Representative (Airway Heights), *Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee Chair*, Chair Pro Tempore
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane
E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer, *Ex-officio*

STAFF PRESENT

Emily Arneson, *Ombudsman & Accessibility Officer*
Dana Infalt, *Clerk of the Authority*
Monique Liard, *Chief Financial Officer*
Fred Nelson, *Interim Chief Operations Officer*
Karl Otterstrom, *Director of Planning & Development*
Brandon Rapez-Betty, *Director of Communications & Customer Service*
Nancy Williams, *Director of Human Resources & Labor Relations*

MEMBERS ABSENT

Al French, Spokane County, *Planning & Development Committee Chair*

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Laura McAloon, McAloon Law PLLC

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Haley called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. APPROVE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Mr. Grover moved to approve the agenda as presented, Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Haley said STA's new battery electric buses are beautiful and liked the distinctive branding. She encouraged other Board members to see them at STA.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION/DISCUSSION

a. February 10, 2021 Committee Minutes

Mr. Grover moved to approve the February 10, 2021, committee meeting minutes as submitted, Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

a. Al French, Chair, Planning & Development (P&D)

Mr. Otterstrom said the Committee reviewed and approved two scopes of work related to the City Line: 1) Wall Street, Station 28 Construction; and, 2) High Performance Transit Amenities Installation revised scope of work. Also related to the City Line, the Committee forwarded a recommendation to the Board to approve the Browne's Addition Stations Customized Shelters Request. The Committee received reports on several projects including Division *Connects*, 2022-2027 Transit Development Plan, I-90/Valley Corridor Planning, and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council draft 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program.

b. Chris Grover, Chair, Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PMER)

Mr. Grover said the Committee forwarded two recommendations to the Board consent agenda for approval: 1) Lighted Pit Repairs Construction Final Acceptance; and, 2) SCC Transit Center Construction Final Acceptance. Both projects were under budget and Mr. Grover congratulated the STA Team.

Mr. Otterstrom reported on the May 2022 Service Revisions Draft Recommendation. A public hearing on the revisions will be held at the April 15 Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Grover noted there are many revisions and recommended Board members review the draft recommendation early in the process. The Board will be asked to make a final decision on the revisions at the May 20 Board of Directors meeting.

6. JEFFERSON PARK AND RIDE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

The Jefferson Lot is a park and ride facility under the I-90 Viaduct between Jefferson and Walnut streets southwest of downtown Spokane with approximately 400 parking stalls. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns the land; currently the City of Spokane is the master leaseholder for all the off-street areas under I-90. STA's existing lease agreement with the City of Spokane for the Jefferson Lot extends through May 10, 2021. WSDOT has proposed to execute a cooperative agreement for the Jefferson Lot directly with Spokane Transit. The shift toward a direct, no cost agreement with WSDOT will eliminate approximately \$30,000 in annual lease payments to the City of Spokane.

Continuation of a park and ride facility at the Jefferson Lot will support continued growth of ridership in the West Plains and allow for planned improvements as part of the Cheney High Performance Transit Corridor Improvement Project. The cooperative agreement is in draft form and under final legal review. Board authorization is required to enter into the agreement with WSDOT.

Mr. Grover moved to recommend the Board authorize the CEO to execute a cooperative agreement with WSDOT for the operations and maintenance of the Jefferson Park and Ride as to form of the draft cooperative agreement. Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. FTA LOW-NO PROGRAM GRANT FLEET ELECTRIFICATION APPLICATION

Mr. Otterstrom said the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity for a competitive grant program known as the Low or No Emission Program ("Low-No" Program). The Low-No Program provides funding to State and local governmental authorities for the purchase of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition and construction of required supporting facilities.

The 2021-2026 capital improvement program approved by the Board set aside \$5.658 million for the replacement of ten diesel coaches in 2023. The current Low-No Grant funding offers an opportunity to switch part or all of the replacement order to 40-foot battery electric buses. The expansion of electric buses is within the capacity of the Boone Northwest Garage, the planned location for overnight storage and charge of the current electric fleet. Staff is seeking board authorization to apply for federal grant funding to expand the battery electric bus fleet by switching ten, 40-foot diesel replacement coaches to electric, conditioned on the award of federal funding.

Mr. Grover moved to recommend the Board authorize the submission of a grant request under the FTA Low-No Program to fund the purchase of up to ten, 40-foot battery electric fixed-route buses with a grant request of up to \$6.4 million. Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA MARCH 18, 2021

The Committee reviewed an amended agenda. Ms. Meyer noted that Sherry Little from Cardinal Infrastructure will give a report to the Board on federal activities regarding transit.

Mr. Grover moved to approve the Board of Directors agenda as amended, Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

9. BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE DRAFT AGENDA APRIL 7, 2021

Mr. Grover moved to approve the draft Board Operations agenda as presented, Ms. Stratton seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

10. CEO REPORT

Congress passed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP). The ARP includes \$362.5 billion in direct assistance for state, local, tribal and territorial governments and \$26 billion for transit. The transit funds will be distributed to all transit agencies in the country by a formula used by the Federal Transit Administration. STA will receive an estimated \$35 million. Staff will prepare a recommendation for a process as starting point for the Board to begin discussions on use of these funds.

State Legislative Update:

House Bill 1329 concerns public meeting accessibility and participation at governing body meetings. It encourages public agencies to provide for remote access to meetings, and to record and post recordings of meetings online for at least six months. It requires governing bodies to provide an opportunity for public comment at or before every regular meeting, except in emergency situations. The bill passed the House and is currently in the Senate.

Senate Bill 5115 relates to establishing health emergency labor standards. It creates an occupational disease presumption for frontline employees during a public health emergency for the purposes of workers' compensation. It will require employers to notify L&I when a certain percentage of their workforce becomes infected during a public health emergency. It will require employers to provide written notice to employees on the premises and their union of potential exposure to the infectious or contagious disease during a public health emergency. The bill passed the Senate and is currently in the House.

There are several police-related bills. STA's limited commission transit officers are defined as peace officers and will be affected by these bills. The tools transit officers use are limited and based on the commission by the Chief of Police and the Sheriff.

A report was prepared for the Joint Transportation Committee analyzing the electrification of public vehicle fleets in Washington State. It was requested to give a basis to the Legislature for making an electrification or zero-emission vehicle transition with state fleets. STA has completed its own study and will compare the reports to see if the assumptions and results match.

City Line construction will begin the week of March 15. The first location is near the Fox Theater on Sprague Avenue (Station 9) and First Avenue (Station 8). Staff have prepared an information flyer to distribute to local businesses that will include contact information for questions or concerns.

The Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) presented a Stadium Proposal to Spokane Public Schools (SPS). If SPS accepts the proposal, the stadium will be built in the arena parking lot currently used by the Shuttle Park Program, a joint program with STA, DSP, and the Public Facilities District. Before the pandemic, the arena lot provided parking for approximately 600 customers each month. If the stadium is built, STA will need to relocate the Shuttle Park Program.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None

12. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Haley adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Roberson
Executive Assistant to the Chief Financial Officer