

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

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the September 4, 2019, Meeting
Southside Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane *
Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Kate Burke, City of Spokane
Mike Kennedy, City of Liberty Lake (Ex-Officio)
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative
E. Susan Meyer, CEO (Ex-Officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Veronica Messing, City of Airway Heights (Ex-Officio)
Sam Wood, City of Spokane Valley

* Chair

STAFF PRESENT

Roger Watkins, Chief Operations Officer
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning and Development
Lynda Palmer, Director of Finance and IS
Brandon Rapez-Better, Director of Communications and Customer Service
Nancy Williams, Director of Human Resources
Sam Guzman, Executive Assistant to the COO
Emily Arneson, Community Ombudsman and Accessibility Officer

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Laura McAloon, McAloon Law PLLC

GUESTS

(none)

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

Chair Kinnear called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

(none)

3. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Kinnear had no report at this time.

4. **COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

A. Minutes of the July 10, 2019, Committee Meeting

Mr. Kerns moved to recommend approval of the July 10, 2019, Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Bowers expressed an interest in having the additional language added to the minutes prior to approval. She requested the following information be added to item 5A3 - Award of Contract: Paratransit Purchased Transportation:

- If STA had considered moving the contracted services in-house and the associated cost
- If STA intended to make that change in the future
- What the cost of additional dispatchers is

The revisions will be made and brought back to the October 2nd PMER meeting for approval.

5. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Board Consent Agenda

1. **2020 Special Community Events Fare Structure**

Each year STA proposes a special event fare structure. In 2020 STA is requesting special fares for three repeat events and one new event. The events are:

- Bloomsday –Pre-purchased day pass for \$2 (no discount for same-day purchased fares)
- Hoopfest – Day pass discounted to \$2 on Saturday and Sunday on all routes and Hooploop Shuttle
- Valleyfest – No charge associated due to charter guidelines
- Spokane County Fair (new addition) – As part of the upcoming September service change service on Havana will be removed. This will be a mitigation effort to make sure fair service is still provided and incentivizing alternative modes to reduce traffic on Havana. The offering is a day pass discounted to \$2 valid on the fare shuttle from Spokane Community College only.

Ms. Burke moved to approve item 5A1, Mr. Kerns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

B. Board Discussion Agenda

(no items presented this month)

6. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. **2nd Quarter 2019 Performance Measures**

Mr. Watkins presented a condensed version of the 2nd quarter 2019 performance measures noting that a complete set was included in the committee packet.

Ridership:

- Fixed Route is down 1.9% year to date (YTD). Snow created a challenging February and March. While ridership numbers are recovering the overall percentage is still lagging.
- Paratransit had a very significant dip in February and March, and again in May and June. As a result, the YTD ridership is down 7.9%. Analysis into the ridership drop revealed that late 2018 on time performance (OTP) issues continued into early 2019 and caused some people to stop riding. There has also been a substantial decline in Special Use Van (SUV) ridership.
- Vanpool ridership is down 0.7% YTD. Vanpool has been tracking even and slightly above for much of 2019, but a few Vanpools closed in June causing the numbers to decrease.

Other Performance measures reported on included Passengers Per Revenue Hour, Professional & Courteous, On Time Performance, Operator Ride Checks, Cost per passenger*, and Cost Recovery from User Fees. The final statistic reported on was Preventable Accident rates.

*Mr. Watkins noted that Paratransit had a significant increase in operational costs for the 2nd quarter. This was due to a one-time operational purchase of \$325K to replace the computers that are onboard the vans. These were originally budgeted in the capital budget, but because the cost per unit was less than \$5K (threshold for capital purchases) the cost was reclassified as operational.

Discussion followed regarding the impact of Lyft/Uber and the summer city youth pass, how college enrollment affects ridership numbers, and vehicle accident prevention.

B. September Service Change Communications and Marketing

Mr. Rapez-Betty shared the communication and marketing strategies for the upcoming September service change. Some of the components include:

- Communications are sent to existing passengers as well as potential customers (letting them know about a specific improvement in their area)
- New color for all printed schedules to avoid confusion
- Stanchion signs in plaza with variety of messages
- User guide handout on coaches
- Service change information front-and-center on website
- STA informed and posters for employees, bulkhead posters on coaches, billboards, new publications, etc.

Video has also been a part of the September service change strategy. Videos are used on Facebook, Twitter, Plaza monitors, digital monitors at the West Plains Transit Center, and STA informed. The videos cover a range of topics, including a general overview of the changes, the new cross-town route #4, know your zones, and reduced wait times.

Additional marketing campaigns involve general lifestyle radio ads and campaigns at area colleges promoting the UTAP program.

Discussion followed about how college IDs function as a UTAP bus pass and how to best share how-to-ride videos/information (in-house videos, local news, Facebook live).

C. Income-Based Transit Access

Ms. Arneson began the presentation by reviewing the information presented at the June PMER Committee meeting.

STA staff met with Dr. Patrick Jones, the Executive Director of Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis at Eastern Washington University (per Chair Kinnear's suggestion). Dr. Jones primarily uses data from the American Community Survey and suggested that STA staff remove children 6 and under and riders 65 and older from their calculations since they already qualify for reduced fare programs.

STA staff also looked into how much households spend on transit (per Ms. Burke's request). Ms. Arneson reported that overall households spent \$9,737 on transportation in 2017, however that figure includes travel costs as well. Transportation is the 2nd largest household expenditure after housing. Transportation costs have increased less than other major expenditures from 2000 to 2017. When breaking this data down into income quintiles the first quintile (\$0-20,738) spends 13.4% of their income on transportation.

Lastly, STA staff contacted other agencies that have instituted low-income programs to find out their experiences. Since most of the programs are quite new, there isn't much data. However, Ms. Arneson went on to share the information that was gathered from TriMet, Metro, and Kitsap Transit.

Staff estimates that there are approximately 165,000 residents at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in the Spokane area. If you remove the population under 6 and over 65 as recommended by Dr. Jones, that brings the total eligible population to 130,700. Many UTAP riders would also fall into this population. Ms. Palmer added that the spring term enrollment at the colleges and universities is around 56,000.

Ms. Burke inquired about applying King County Metro active card users vs eligible population percentage (16%) to Spokane's numbers. Mr. Kerns calculated that it would reduce the number to about 22,000 including college students and 12,000 without.

Ms. Burke asked if that number (12,000-22,000) could be used to estimate a program cost. Ms. Palmer replied that it is difficult to calculate due to all the assumptions. If we assume that only a 30-day pass was

offered and sold 12,000 passes at \$30 each, that would equal \$360,000 a month, or \$4.3M a year. Current fare revenue is around \$11M.

Chair Kinnear suggested that Ms. Burke reach out to some agency partners and find out if they offer low-income passes, how many, and who receives them, then bring a recommendation back to the committee.

7. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- July 2019 Operating Indicators – *as presented*
- July 2019 Financial Results Summary – *as presented*
- August 2019 Sales Tax Revenue Information – *as presented*
- June 2019 Semi-Annual Financial Reports – *as presented*
- 2nd Quarter 2019 Service Planning Input Report – *as reported*

8. October 2, 2019 - COMMITTEE PACKET DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

- Ms. Burke requested a presentation on the Spokane Summer Youth Pass

9. NEW BUSINESS

(No new business at this time)

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

(None)

11. ADJOURN

Chair Kinnear adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

11. NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2019, 1:30 P.M, STA SOUTHSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM, 1230 WEST BOONE AVENUE

Respectfully submitted,



Sam Guzman, Executive Assistant