

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

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Draft Minutes of the March 16, 2017, Meeting  
Spokane Transit Boardroom  
1229 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley, *Chair*  
Ed Pace, City of Spokane Valley  
Amber Waldref, City of Spokane  
Al French, Spokane County  
Josh Kerns, Spokane County  
Aspen Monteleone, Small Cities Representative  
(Airway Heights)  
Odin Langford, Small Cities Representative  
(Liberty Lake)  
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative  
Kevin Freeman, Small Cities Representative  
(Millwood) *Ex Officio*  
Tom Trulove, Small Cities Representative  
(Cheney) *Ex Officio*

### **STAFF PRESENT**

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations  
Lynda Warren, Director of Finance & Information Services  
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning  
Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources  
Beth Bousley, Director of Communications & Customer  
Service  
Susan Millbank, Ombudsman & Accessibility Officer

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Brian Werst, Witherspoon Brajcich McPhee PLLC

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Candace Mumm, City of Spokane  
John Higgins, Small Cities Representative  
(Medical Lake)

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#### 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 BOARD AGENDA**

**Mr. Pace moved to approve the Board agenda, Ms. Waldref seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

#### 3. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

**Tammy Hullin, Wanda Smith, Laura Renz**

Ms. Hullin, Ms. Smith and Ms. Renz spoke about the Northwest Service Dog Alliance – an advocacy group for service animals. Ms. Hullin has issues with traveling with her service dog on the bus due to impostor animals upsetting and attacking the service dog. Ms. Smith said the public needs to be aware of fraudulent “service” animals. Ms. Renz said she started the alliance group.

Ms. Meyer said Ms. Millbank, STA’s Ombudsman & Accessibility Officer, will follow up with them about their concerns.

**Thomas Leighty, President ATU 1015**

Mr. Leighty addressed the recent assault on a coach operator and thanked everyone involved at STA for their prompt response. The police were able to quickly apprehend the suspect. The STA Safety Committee met yesterday and had some positive discussions about handling this kind of incident.

4. RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Gene Truppe, Coach Operator - Retirement

Mr. Blaska said Mr. Truppe served STA and the community as a coach operator for 35 years. During his career he received many compliments from his passengers, earned 28 years of safe driving awards and participated in the Roadeo.

B. Jess Schloss, Coach Operator - Retirement

Mr. Blaska said Mr. Schloss began his career as a coach operator in 1996 and earned 20 years of safe driving awards and numerous excellent ratings in the Quality Counts! awards program.

C. Steve Doolittle, Director of Human Resources - Retirement

Ms. Meyer said Mr. Doolittle is retiring after 11 years at STA. He joined in 2006 as Manager of Human Resources and was promoted to Director of that department in 2012. Prior to joining STA, Mr. Doolittle was the Director of HR at Gonzaga University for 17 years and served 12 years in the telecommunications industry.

He has always been an advocate for employees and management with a calm demeanor and sense of teamwork. His work has been consistent and fair with a win-win approach. He is a true gentleman and a dear friend to many; he will be truly missed.

Mr. Doolittle said it has been a privilege to work at STA and to contribute to the work of a great team.

Ms. Meyer added that Nancy Williams, formally of Embassy Management, has accepted the position of HR Director and introduced her to the Board.

5. BOARD ACTION – CONSENT AGENDA

**Mr. French moved to approve the following consent agenda items 5.A through D, Mr. Pace seconded and the motion passed unanimously:**

A. Approve the minutes of the February 16, 2017 Board meeting.

B. Approve the following vouchers and payroll for February, 2017:

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>VOUCHER/ACH NUMBERS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Accounts Payable Vouchers (February)	Nos. 592834 - 593155	\$ 2,767,562.53
Workers Comp Vouchers (February)	Nos. 218750 - 218862	\$ 93,564.61
Payroll 02/03/2017	ACH – 02/03/2017	\$ 1,118,655.15
Payroll 02/17/2017	ACH – 02/17/2017	\$ 1,580,795.78
WA State – DOR (Use Tax)	ACH – W0640	\$ 7,185.03
<b>FEBRUARY TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 5,567,763.10</b>

C. Approve the Title VI Program.

D. Approve the purchase of seven (7) 60-foot coaches from New Flyer Industries for the contract amount not to exceed \$5,610,000 (including sales tax and contingency).

6. BOARD ACTION – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board Operations

A. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Seven Week Training Period Wage Adjustment for New Fixed Route Coach Operators

Mr. Doolittle said there have recently been challenges in recruiting Fixed Route Coach Operators. The training wage is 50% of the highest pay grade for a period of seven weeks and this may be causing financial difficulties for newly hired trainees. The training wage in Paratransit is 65% of the top wage. Staff is asking the Board to consider approving training wage for fixed route at the same percentage as Paratransit. It is unusual to make an interim change to the Collective Bargaining Agreement which expires March 31, 2017 but it may take a while to complete a new agreement and in the meantime there are several recruitments forthcoming.

Ms. Meyer said in a tight labor market it is essential to recruit, train and retain good coach operators.  
Mr. Langford asked about the last training class.  
Mr. Doolittle said it has just been completed with another due in May.  
Mr. Langford asked if this request would mean an amendment to the budget.  
Ms. Meyer said it would not.

**Ms. Monteleone moved to authorize the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding amending Article VI of the collective bargaining agreement with ATU 1015 to approve a wage rate for newly appointed Coach Operators, during their training period, equal to sixty-five (65) percent of the top level wage rate for the position of Coach Operator in effect during their training period. Mr. Pace seconded.**

Ms. Waldref said this item was discussed at the Board Operations committee and she supports the motion.  
Mr. French agreed, having asked a number of questions about it at that committee meeting.  
Mr. Langford asked how this will affect the recruitment of minorities and women for coach operator positions.  
Mr. Doolittle said STA is advertising continuously and the higher wage through the training period will probably help.  
**The motion passed unanimously.**

B. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Supplemental Hourly Pay for Intermittent Paratransit Field Instructor Pay

Mr. Doolittle said that Fixed Route Operations has the field instructor position whereas Paratransit has not. Staff proposes the position for Paratransit at an extra \$5 per hour. This means a change to the labor contract.  
Ms. Haley asked about the cost.  
Mr. Doolittle said it will cost approximately \$1,600 annually.

**Ms. Waldref moved to authorize the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding amending Article 17, Section 17.9 of the current collective bargaining agreement with AFSCME 3939 to provide that a van operator assigned as an intermittent Field Instructor shall receive five dollars (\$5.00) per hour in addition to their regular base wage rate for each hour assigned and provided they are performing those duties. Mr. Pace seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

7. BOARD ACTION – OTHER: None.

8. BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

A. Chair's Report

Ms. Haley said the committee discussed the MOUs and the City Ticket program and approved the Board agenda.

9. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Mr. French said the committee discussed the Transit Development Plan (TDP) planning guidance and the Central City Line. He asked Mr. Otterstrom to briefly review these items.

A. Chair's Report

i. 2017 Transit Development Plan: Mid-Range Planning Guidance

Mr. Otterstrom said the TDP is the current year plus six. Staff is seeking the Board's guidance for planning purposes and no action is necessary at this time.

ii. Central City Line (CCL) Update

Mr. Otterstrom said a workshop took place on March 1 with the Board and consultants from Cardinal Infrastructure. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts grant program was discussed as well as the next steps in the process. The CCL Steering Committee meets on March 30 and will consider recommending to the Board the submittal of the Small Starts Application for evaluation and rating. On April 12, the Board Operations Committee will forward the Steering Committee recommendation to the full Board for their approval on April 20.

Ms. Meyer said the President's "skinny" budget was announced today. It eliminates capital improvement grant programs except for those already in process. It also eliminates the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grants. These are both important programs for STA. The Highway Trust Fund (of which mass transit is a part) is not mentioned in the budget. More details of the budget will be available in May.

Ms. Meyer added that STA will submit the application to FTA and noted that the proposed budget is not final; staff will take a "wait and see" approach.

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

A. Chair's Report

Ms. Waldref said the committee recommended action by the Board to purchase seven coaches and received the year-end 2016 unaudited financial report. She asked Ms. Warren to present the financial report to the Board.

i. Year End 2016 Unaudited Financial Report

**Revenue**

Fares:	\$1M below budget (decline in ridership in 2016 so fares also declined).
Sales tax:	\$3.8M above budget.
Federal/State grants:	\$29K below budget.
Misc. revenue:	\$164K above budget.
Total:	104% of budget at \$73M

**Expenses**

Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued standards on how pensions should be reported and it depends on the market regarding what is reported. This resulted in a credit of \$1.2M in 2016 expenses. Without GASB, the 2016 expenses would have been \$61M.

Fixed Route:	\$3.4M under budget
Paratransit:	\$900K under budget
Vanpool:	\$148K under budget
Plaza:	\$51K under budget
Administrative:	\$913K under budget (includes Information Services-related expenses such as licenses and also the mobility mentoring program)
Actual budget:	\$59.8M
Total Favorable Budget:	\$8.3M

**Capital Budget**

Several major projects are now complete e.g., the Smart Bus Program and the Business Enterprise Program. The remaining balance is approximately \$1.5M which rolls over into 2017.

**Federal Grants**

These are multi-year grants which total \$18M.

### **Cash Balance**

\$61.1M including Board designated reserves; future capital and operating funds; and, the fleet replacement fund.

### 11. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer said she appreciated the approval of the two MOUs in order to continue hiring consistently high performing coach and van operators.

#### Ridership

Fixed Route bus ridership in February 2017 decreased by 7.4% over February 2016. The actual decrease with the same number of weekdays would have been about 3%.

Paratransit ridership increased by 0.6% over February 2016.

Vanpool ridership decreased by 12% over February 2016 with 8 fewer vans in service (88 vs. 96)

*It should be noted that February 2017 had one less weekday than February 2016.*

#### Sales Tax Revenue

February 2017 sales tax revenue (collected on December 2016 retail sales) increased 4.1% over February 2016 for a year-to-date increase of 9.1% over budget.

The sales tax increase of 0.01% approved by voters last November will be effective April 1, 2017.

#### Safe Working Environment

Mr. Leighty earlier referred to a recent assault on a coach operator who was training a new operator and standing next to him when he was assaulted.

The suspect was arrested and charged with assault and other offences.

STA will exclude him from service for at least five years.

Ms. Meyer said this incident prompted a review of the safety program and action plan by the Safety Committee. There have been very few assaults on coach operators in recent years and staff compiled a list of all incidents since 2014 in order to validate the numbers and assess whether patterns emerge.

Additional ideas for driver safety include shields; however this would not have helped this situation since the coach operator assaulted was standing not driving.

Staff will report findings to the Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PMER) committee on April 5.

Mr. Freeman asked if threats as well as physical assaults are tracked.

Ms. Meyer said threats are considered separately. Assault also includes spitting.

Ms. Waldref said she appreciated the update and asked who represents STA's Safety Committee.

Ms. Meyer said an equal number of union and management members are represented on that committee.

#### APTA Conference

Ms. Meyer reported that she, Chair Haley, Commissioner French and Mayor Trulove attended the conference in Washington, D.C. March 10 – 13. They had intended to return on March 15; however a winter storm hit and they left early. They still managed to meet with various Senate Committee staff members, Cardinal Infrastructure staff, and the CEO's of Uber and APTA.

#### State Legislative Update

The following bills are of interest to STA:

HB 1371/SB 5289: Revises distracted driving provisions to exempt the use of portable electronic devices by a transit employee for time-sensitive relay of communication to dispatch.

HB 1417: Executive Sessions to discuss information regarding the security of agency computers.

HB 1395: Allows Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBA) to use job order contracts and procedure.

#### Dead Bills

HB 1860: Would have required PTBA Boards in Clark, Pierce and Spokane Counties to be selected to assure proportional representation based on population.

SB 5414: Would have required transit agencies to provide Paratransit-like service to people over 70 and those with physical and developmental disabilities throughout the entire PTBA.

#### Plaza Update

The Sprague Avenue entry re-opened on May 3.

Cougar artwork installation is underway.

Seating in the waiting area consists of benches instead of the previous pods.

The community events area is being blocked off.

This renovation project is anticipated to be complete by June.

#### 12. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. February 2017 Sales Tax Summary
- C. 2016 State Audit Timeline
- D. January 2017 Operating Indicators
- E. Year End 2016 Performance Measures
- F. *Connect Spokane* Update: Emerging Trends & Local Factors

#### 13. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Pace would like STA to help educate the public on the service dog issues presented earlier in the meeting. The Northwest Service Dog Alliance presented a similar report to the City of Spokane Valley Council. He noted that coach operators can ask passengers whether their dog is a service animal and what it is trained to do.

Ms. Meyer said this is an ongoing problem for transit providers since those with imposter animals have learned the correct responses when challenged.

#### 14. BOARD MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Trulove said the Plaza renovation looks good.

He added that although it was cut short, the APTA trip was productive.

Ms. Bowers said Mr. Doolittle will be missed and thanked STA for making the safety of drivers a priority.

Ms. Waldref thanked Mr. French, Ms. Haley and Mr. Trulove for making the trip to Washington, D.C.

#### 15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 2:50 p.m., Ms. Haley announced that the Board would adjourn for an Executive Session for the following purposes:

1. Discussing, planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the STA Board of Directors during the course of ongoing collective bargaining.

The STA Board of Directors will reconvene in open session at approximately 2:56 p.m. If it becomes necessary to extend the Executive Session, Legal Counsel or a member of staff will return to announce the time at which the STA Board will reconvene. No action is anticipated.

At 2:56 p.m., Mr. Werst announced the Board of Directors will reconvene at 2:59 p.m.

At 2:59 p.m., the Board of Directors reconvened and Chair Haley declared the meeting back in public session.

16. ADJOURNED

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Haley adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

A video of the Board meeting may be viewed on STA's website [www.spokanetransit.com](http://www.spokanetransit.com) the week after the meeting.

Cable 5 Broadcast Dates and Times of March 16, 2017 Board Meeting:

Saturday, March 18, 2017	4:00 p.m.
Monday, March 20, 2017	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, March 21, 2017	8:00 p.m.

Next Committee Meetings (STA Conference Rooms, West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington):

Planning & Development	April 5, 2017, 10:00 a.m. (Southside) 1229 West Boone
Performance Monitoring & External Relations	April 5, 2017, 1:30 p.m. (Southside) 1229 West Boone
Board Operations	April 12, 2017, 1:30 p.m. (Northside) 1230 West Boone

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, April 20, 2017, 1:30 p.m., STA Boardroom, 1229 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington.