

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

Approved 5/18/23 di

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of the April 20, 2023, STA Board Meeting
1230 W Boone Ave., Spokane
with a WebEx Video Conference Option

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane, *Chair*
Al French, Spokane County, *Chair Pro Tempore (Virtual)*
Betsy Wilkerson, City of Spokane
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Representative (Liberty Lake)
Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane (*Virtual*)
Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley
Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane
Chris Grover, Small Cities (Cheney) *Ex Officio*
Dan Sander, Small Cities (Millwood) *Ex Officio*
Hank Bynaker, Small Cities (Airway Heights) *Ex Officio*
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative, *Non-Voting*

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer
Karl Otterstrom, Chief Planning & Development Officer
Monique Liard, Chief Financial Officer
Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer
Dana Infalt, Clerk of the Authority

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Megan Clark, Etter, McMahon, Lamberson,
Van Wert and Oreskovich, P.C.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Kennedy, Small Cities (Medical Lake) *Ex Officio*

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

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

2. Approve Board Agenda

Mr. French moved to approve the April Board Agenda. Mr. Dunne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Expressions

Chair Kinnear called for public expressions.

Mr. Ross Gete from the Spokane Dream Center spoke to advocate for additional passes. He left a business card for Roseanna Peterson, Director, Ministry Resource Center, for follow up.

A written public expressions form was received and read into the record from Wilhelmina Zurbuchen regarding the restrooms at the STA Plaza.

There were no virtual attendees that requested to speak.

4. Recognitions and Presentations

A. Employee Recognition Awards

Ms. Williams advised of the nominations and employees who received recognition from their peers for the months of January, February, and March. She said the Employee Recognition Committee reviews the nominees for embodying and displaying STA's core values of "teamwork, respect, accountability, neighborliness, service, innovation, and trained". Employees selected for January, February, and March included Kristian Botts, Payroll Specialist, Mary McMahon, Accounting Specialist, and Bobby Davis, Coach Operator, respectively.

B. First Quarter 2023 Years of Service

Ms. Williams advised that at the conclusion of each quarter, Spokane Transit acknowledges and recognizes its employees for their successive years of service with the organization and thanks them for their continued association with it. She read the names of individuals who have been employed with STA for significant periods of time. She read the names of 5, 10, 15-, 20-, 25-, and 30-year recipients and the Board recognized them for their contribution to the success of the agency.

Fixed Route Supervisor, Vern Mullett received recognition in person for 30 years of service.

5. Public Hearing

Division Street Bus Rapid Transit: Refined Locally Preferred Alternative

Chair Kinnear opened the Public Hearing and asked Mr. Otterstrom to present. Mr. Otterstrom offered a presentation that included project background, the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) approved by the Board in March 2021, lane configurations, refinements to the LPA, refinements to the alignments and stations, as well as station locations.

He reviewed the public, partner agencies, and stakeholder outreach before sharing next steps which included a Board Resolution adopting the northern and southern termini and updated station locations in May 2023, and preparing to enter into FTA project development for Capital Investment Grant projects in the summer of 2023.

The public hearing was then opened for Public Testimony. Chair Kinnear called three times for testimony. There was none.

The public hearing closed at 1:53 pm.

6. Board Action – Consent Agenda

Mr. French moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5E. Mr. Dunne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- A. Minutes of the March 16, 2023, Board Meeting – Corrections/Approval
- B. Approval of the March 2023 Vouchers
- C. Approval of Amendment to Resolution 801-22 (Tariff Policy)
- D. Approval of 2022 Service Change Bus Stops Phase 2: Site License Agreements and Temporary Construction Easements
- E. Approval of Plaza Suite 200 Build Out Contract-Final Acceptance
- F. Approval of Procurement Rollup Door Replacement – Final Acceptance

7. Board Action – Other

A. City Line Promotional Period

Ms. Cortright provided a presentation of options for a free fare promotional period upon the launch of the City Line. She presented Options A-E listed below for consideration, including the estimated foregone fare revenue, advantages and disadvantages of each. The estimated fare revenue loss was based on multiple factors and averaged \$1,782 per day.

Option A – no fare-free promotion

Option B – two weeks fare free (7/15-7/29)

Option C – fare-free through Labor Day (7/15-9/4)

Option D – fare-free through holidays (7/15-12/31)

Option E – fare free until service agreement frequency achieved (7/15/23-5/18/24)

Ms. Cortright noted that after consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of each option, staff recommended Option C: Fare-Free through Labor Day. She noted it achieved the balance of encouraging ridership with moderate impacts to developing rider habits, data collection, and foregone fare revenue.

Discussion ensued. Chair Kinnear called for a motion.

Mr. French made a motion to accept the recommendation from staff. Mr. Hattenburg seconded.

Additional conversation followed and a roll call vote was called by the Chair.

Mr. French, Ms. Haley, Ms. Stratton, Mr. Kerns, Mr. Hattenburg, Mr. Dunne, and Ms. Kinnear voted yes. Mr. Zappone and Ms. Wilkerson voted no. The motion passed 7 to 2.

B. City Line Celebratory Events

Ms. Cortright presented a Resolution to the Board for approval of celebratory events for eastern Washington's first Bus Rapid Transit. She said STA is planning a series of events on July 15th to celebrate the occasion with the community and key supporters of the project. The events include five outreach parties in neighborhood locations along the City Line route on the first day of service, along with an official ribbon cutting ceremony on July 18th at Gonzaga University.

She provided details of the July 15th events at Coeur d'Alene Park (*Browne's Addition*), Wall Street between Spokane Falls and Main (*Riverside*), WSU Spokane campus (*U-District*), Mission Park (*Logan*), and Chief Garry Park (*Chief Garry Park*), as well as the official ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mr. French moved to approve, by Resolution, the City Line Celebratory Events as presented. Mr. Hattenburg seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Connect Fare Collection System: Administrative Fees (Resolution)

Ms. Liard noted administrative fees related to fare media require Board approval.

She provided background, and staff's proposed detailed implementation approach and reviewed the card fee cost recovery figures. This was presented at the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee but comes to the Board with no recommendation from that Committee.

Ms. Liard examined the Title VI fee equity analysis and findings which showed no disparate impact and no disproportionate burden to minority and low-income customers with the implementation of an administrative fee or with access to purchasing fare media. She spoke about the mitigations considered which included:

- The first months of free initial and replacement cards serve as a valuable mitigation measure prior to the introduction of an administrative fee.
- Provide zero-fare youth riders with replacement cards with no administrative fee assessed.
- Continue partnerships with area social service agencies, through Community Access Pass program, to improve transit access for low-income populations.
- Increase access to retail locations through continued expansion of the retail network.
- Encourage adoption and use of the eConnect app (no cost to use).

Staff's recommendation was presented that the Board authorize the CEO to implement a \$5 administrative fee for new Connect cards, a \$5 credit upon Connect card registration to offset the administrative fee and implement a \$5 administrative fee for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged physical cards, excluding cards issued to youth 18 years of age and under.

Mr. Zappone made a motion to implement a \$5 administrative fee for new Connect cards with an automatic \$5 credit that is preloaded and implement a \$1 administrative fee for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged physical cards that is waived if you are in a discounted fare program. Ms. Wilkerson seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Grover left the meeting at 2:53 pm.

Chair Kinnear asked Ms. Clark to read back the motion. Ms. Clark said she heard it was to have a \$5 administrative fee for purchase of new card with an automatic \$5 credit added to that card upon purchase; a \$1 replacement fee that is waived for anyone who has a discounted fare.

Chair Kinnear noted there was a motion and a second and called for the vote.

Mr. Hattenburg, Ms. Wilkerson, Mr. Dunne, Ms. Stratton and Mr. Zappone voted yes. Mr. Kerns, Ms. Haley, Mr. French, and Chair Kinnear voted no. The motion passed 5 to 4.

8. Board Report

A. City Line Implementation Update

Mr. Otterstrom provided a recap of the City Line, its schedule, a financial update and he reviewed recently completed, underway, and upcoming portions of the project. He mentioned the City Line Launch celebration for Community on Saturday, July 15 and the official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Tuesday, July 18th.

He concluded his presentation noting 86 days until launch!

B. Washington State Transit Support Grant Update

Mr. Otterstrom provided a briefing on the background and the uses of Transit Support Grant, 2021-2023 Biennium. He reviewed STA's application and long-term considerations. He offered to answer questions. There were none.

9. Board Operations Committee

A. Chair Report

Chair Kinnear said Board Operations had a difficult meeting with connectivity issues. The primary discussion focused on the procedures for what committees could move out of a committee and how many people were required. The PMER item was discussed with no recommendation. The staff recommendation came forward. The discussion centered around Board Operations' role in situations like a tie vote. She asked Mr. French to restate his comments.

Mr. French said STA functions as a Policy Board, not an Administrative Board. He reminded members that the Board sets policy and the CEO is directed to implement that policy and direct staff. When Board members go around the CEO, it violates STA Bylaws and the CEO's employment contract.

He advised it is the duty of the Board Operations Committee to regulate and monitor the activities of the Board to be an effective and high functioning Board. He encouraged members to return to the proper functioning of the Board as a Policy Board, with the CEO directing staff. Mr. French said he will continue to advocate for this cohesiveness.

Ms. Wilkerson asked to comment. She asked what the process was if a Board member is challenged with the leadership or they have disagreements. Ms. Wilkerson commented if the Board doesn't agree, but a member wants to bring an issue, not against the CEO but against the process. Ms. Wilkerson commented that she, as a Board member, has to advocate not only for STA but for citizens, too. She stated, "What you described makes my hands feel tied."

10. Planning and Development Committee

A. Chair Report:

Mr. French reviewed the agenda and said the following items were covered at the P&D meeting.

- i. 2024-2029 Transit Development Plan: Planning Guidance-
- ii. 2024-2029 Transit Development Plan: Financial Assumptions

Mr. Otterstrom and Ms. Liard said they could be contacted with any questions.

11. Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee

A. Chair Report

Ms. Haley noted the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee forwarded items approved here today under Board Consent and other.

12. CEO Report

Ms. Meyer reported on the following:

- Ridership through March 2023 as compared to 2022 and year-to-date. Fixed Route, Paratransit, and Vanpool saw increases month-over month and year-to-date. Zero Fare Youth Ridership was provided as a subset of Fixed Route to answer the previous question about the amount of ridership increase attributable to the youth. Zero Fare Youth accounted for 138,032 of the 721,407 Fixed Route trips in February.
- Voter approved Sales tax revenue totaled \$8,241,832 collected in January, paid in March, compared to Budget of \$7,564,336, resulting in a difference of \$677,496, or 9.0%.
- Monthly fare revenue from March 2022 to date for Fixed Route, Paratransit, and Vanpool were reviewed.
- Connect Card ridership accounted for 55.3% of total ridership in March.
- Recruitment and Retention program included total hiring since the beginning of the year, hiring comparison month over month and year over year, and coach operator turnover.
- A legislative update was provided. Ms. Meyer noted the session adjourns Sunday night; we expect to see the transportation budget soon. She also advised SHB 1236 sent to Governor enhancing access to clean fuel (hydrogen) for agencies providing public transportation.
- She offered to answer questions. There were none.

13. Board Information

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. February 2023 Sales Tax Revenue
- C. January 2023 Operating Indicators
- D. January 2023 Financial Results Summary
- E. 2024-2029 Transit Development Plan: Develop Mid-Range Planning Guidance
- F. Draft SRTC 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- G. 2022 State Audit Timeline
- H. Division Street Bus Rapid Transit: Project Update
- I. 2022 Year-End Performance Measures

14. New Business

There was no New Business

15. Board Member Expressions

Chair Kinnear asked for comments.

Mr. Dunne thanked staff for their work.

Mr. Zappone said there seems to be no steps forward for a low-income fare program based on last week's discussion so he is still looking for that.

Ms. Wilkerson thanked STA for the Carl Maxey Center's van. They will share a picture once they've tricked it out.

Mr. Hattenburg thanked staff for their hard work.

Mr. French reiterated his thoughts concerning the Board directing the CEO and the CEO directing staff. He also mentioned having a representative from the Northeast area of Spokane on the STA Board.

Ms. Stratton thanked everyone for their hard work.

16. Executive Session

None

17. Adjourned

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Kinnear adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Infalt

Clerk of the Authority