

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

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Minutes of the March 16, 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  
Chris Grover, Small Cities (Cheney) *Ex Officio*  
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Representative (Liberty Lake)  
Dan Sander, Small Cities (Millwood) *Ex Officio*  
Don Kennedy, Small Cities (Medical Lake) *Ex Officio*  
Hank Bynaker, Small Cities (Airway Heights) *Ex Officio*  
Josh Kerns, Spokane County  
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane *(Virtual)*  
Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley  
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane  
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative, *Non-Voting*

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley

#### **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. *(Virtual)*  
Michael Connelly, Etter, McMahon,  
Lamberson, Van Wert and Oreskovich, P.C.

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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. Dunne moved to approve the March Board Agenda. Ms. Wilkerson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
  3. Public Expressions  
Chair Kinnear called for public expressions in person and online. There were none.
  4. Board Action – Consent Agenda  
**Ms. Haley moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 5A through 5G. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
    - A. Minutes of the February 16, 2023, Board Meeting – Corrections/Approval
    - B. Approval of the February 2023 Vouchers

DESCRIPTION	VOUCHER/ACH NUMBERS	AMOUNT
Accounts Payable Vouchers (February)	Nos. 620807 – 621228	\$ 5,024,025.22
Worker's Comp Vouchers (February)	ACH – 2286	\$ 119,248.46
Payroll 02/10/2023	ACH – 02/10/2023	\$ 2,418,772.81
Payroll 02/24/2023	ACH – 02/24/2023	\$ 1,808,477.70
WA State – DOR (Excise Tax)	ACH – 1767	\$ 6,558.22
<b>FEBRUARY TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 9,377,082.41</b>

4. Board Action – Consent Agenda, continued

- C. 2023 Title VI Program Adoption (Resolution)
- D. Cheney Line Corridor Improvements and West Plains Transit Center Retrofit (Bay 4): Award of Contract
- E. 100% Rideshare Subsidy for STA Employees
- F. Cheney Line Corridor Improvements and West Plains Transit Center Retrofit (Bay 4) - Temporary Construction Easements
- G. Appleway Station Park and Ride Property Acquisition: Right of Entry Permit

5. Board Action – Discussion

A. July 2023 Service Revisions: Final Recommendation

Mr. Otterstrom provided a presentation and noted this was a moderate service change. He reviewed the background that explained the challenge and proposed response, as well as public outreach and implementation timeline.

Mr. Otterstrom advised staff are seeking action on the final recommendation prior to the service change July 16<sup>th</sup>. He said this approval is being sought prior to beginning the bidding process with operators next month as the schedules need to be locked down in the next week or so to deliver everything planned for this summer.

He reviewed the outreach activities, and the final July 2023 Service Changes with revisions from draft to final. He noted the final report had been posted online and was linked in the packet here <https://www.spokanetransit.com/projects/july-2023-service-revisions/>. He reviewed the key revisions, key to planning and proposed changes, the recommended revisions, as well as other considerations. Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee recommended the Board approve, by motion, the July 2023 Service Revisions Final Recommendation as presented following a discussion regarding a promotional period for the City Line.

Chair Kinnear thanked Mr. Otterstrom and asked if there were questions. Mr. Grover asked if the May 24 date for getting to the full-service level is solely dependent on staffing. Mr. Otterstrom confirmed. There were no additional questions.

Chair Kinnear advised the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee recommended the Board have a discussion regarding a promotional period for City Line. Chair Kinnear asked Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee Chair Haley to advise how she would like to proceed. Ms. Haley reiterated that the recommendation was to approve the service revisions. She advised Mr. Zappone requested a discussion regarding a promotional period for the City Line where it would be free for a certain period of time. Ms. Haley said the goal is to decide if the Board is interested in a free period to start the conversation and then discuss the length of time.

Chair Kinnear started the discussion with her thought of a promotional period from launch on July 15 to Labor Day weekend. She asked the members to start there and that she wanted to hear from other members as to whether they support or want something different.

Extensive discussion ensued with options presented to staff to come back with a report on the impacts of each promotional period. The periods to review were from City Line launch and beyond:

- No Promotional Period (0 Days)
- Two Weeks (14 days)
- Through Labor Day (51 days)
- Through the end of the Holiday Season (168 days)
- Until May 2024 (308 days)

Following the discussion, Chair Kinnear clarified the Board is voting today on the July 2023 Service Revisions Final Recommendation that Mr. Otterstrom set out. This concludes the discussion portion, and the Board can consider what the promotional piece would look like next month.

Chair Kinnear read the recommendation before the Board: “Approve the July 2023 Service Revisions – Final Recommendation as presented (following the discussion we just had regarding a promotional period for City Line)”.

**Ms. Haley moved to approve the July 2023 Service Revisions – Final Recommendation as presented. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

*Chair Kinnear noted the Board had not approved the Board Agenda. A motion was received, seconded and passed unanimously to Approve the Agenda, as indicated under Agenda Item 2 on page one.*

## 6. Board Discussion

### A. Reduced Fare Categories

Chair Kinnear introduced the reduced fare categories topic with Ms. Meyer and STA Board Member. Ms. Meyer clarified this item is requested by Mr. Zappone. She advised that staff did not provide information on the slide or cover sheet, and he will make a presentation.

Mr. Zappone thanked the staff and legal counsel for helping provide background information through this process. He said he wanted to talk briefly about a low-income fare program and three potential issues to discuss as a Board that he thought deserved attention.

Mr. Zappone mentioned hearing about need from community members and shelter providers and discussed passes and the number of clients being served by the Community Access Pass program.

He presented three questions for the Board to consider:

1. Should STA look into establishing a low-income fare program? Something similar to Orca Lyft or that the other agencies have implemented – that could be a discounted fare and/or a fully subsidized fare.
2. If yes, then we have a couple choices. 1) Continue under our current Comprehensive Plan where STA does not do Means testing but looks to community partners to Means test. If there is no outside agency, then it goes to “B” - Should STA do means testing itself. He admitted he didn’t fully understand all those challenges.
3. Under what timeline should we consider a low-income fare program if we decide we should pursue? He argued that we should decide by the end of this year. He recognized a lot of consideration with City Line and staff having a lot of work ahead of them through City Line. He proposed a consultant could do this work, even if that consultant starts after July. They could do that work rapidly. He proposed using funds in the reserves to pay for a consultant to look into this process.

Chair Kinnear called for questions.

Ms. Wilkerson and Mr. Kerns offered comments regarding need and past efforts on this subject. Ms. Meyer shared information pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan, advising that it influences this fare idea in particular. She said the Comprehensive Plan is due to be reviewed and updated this year starting in July at the P&D committee, with a final plan, after lots of public outreach, sometime in the spring of 2024. She explained the current Comprehensive Plan section on Revenues and Fare Policies discusses increasing ridership and an objective of a minimum of 20% farebox recovery. Section 2.5 states, *“STA supports opportunities for low-income individuals to use public transportation at a discounted cost. Opportunities for low-income individuals to use public transportation should be made available through community partners that subsidize the purchase of the standard fare instrument rather than as a direct STA discount or special fare structure.”* She advised this section addresses Means testing or determining eligibility and also selling directly to people. There’s a cost and an impact to implementation but we should update the Comprehensive Plan before we contemplate a fare that is inconsistent with it.

There was additional discussion regarding other transits and low-income fares and the reporting to track the metrics as well as the amount of time required to change a Comprehensive Plan. Chair Kinnear thanked everyone for the robust discussion and stated, we’re going to move on now to the Board Report on City Line Implementation.

7. Board Report

A. City Line Implementation Update (*Karl Otterstrom*)

Mr. Otterstrom provided an update on the City Line. He reviewed the Schedule, Financial, recently completed and underway tasks, and focused the balance of his report on customer experience and the new ways customers will be able to ride with All-door boarding, off-board station fare validation, center stations, and bikes on board. He covered new ways to engage with customers through digital displays.

He concluded his update by advising only 121 days until launch!

8. Board Operations Committee

A. Chair Report

Chair Kinnear advised the Board had approved the items the Committee recommended and asked Mr. Otterstrom if she missed anything. He advised there were actions on easements and right of way permits under consent agenda.

Board retreat planning is under way. Various scenarios are being considered and expect to nail down something next month.

Rules of Procedure edits are ongoing.

9. Planning and Development Committee

A. Chair Report:

Mr. French advised the items P&D referred to the Board for approval today.

10. Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee

A. Chair Report

Ms. Haley noted the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee forwarded items approved here today. Discussion on Student Fare Cards and Connect Card fees was also discussed.

i. 2022 Unaudited Financial Report

Ms. Liard reviewed the preliminary year end 2022 results. As a debt-free agency, she reiterated the importance of having funds in reserve to be able to accomplish the projects in the Capital Projects and Transit Development Plans. She shared the timeline for state auditors' process to review the finances and offered to answer questions. There were none.

11. CEO Report

Ms. Meyer reported on the following:

- Ridership through February 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 111,784 of the 628,823 Fixed Route trips in February.
- Voter approved Sales tax revenue totaled \$10,261,069 collected in December, paid in February, compared to Budget of \$9,799,005, resulting in a difference of \$462,064, or 4.7%.
- Monthly fare revenue from January 2021 to date for Fixed Route was \$974,188, Paratransit \$69,052, and Vanpool \$48,800, for total revenue as of February 2023 \$1,092,040 .
- Connect Card ridership accounted for 50% of total ridership.
- 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 reviewed the budgets coming up and bills STA is watching. She explained how they may affect STA.
- City Line Launch details in the works. Save the date July 15 (Saturday-first day of service) and July 18 (Tuesday - ribbon cutting and official launch date).
- STA sold 70K passes in CAP program last year. CM Stratton mentioned housing partnerships. Kendall Yards is an example of that, providing passes for everyone who lives and/or works in Kendall Yards. The developer pays for the passes and also buys passes for WC Community Center. They get them from Mr. Frank.

12. Board Information

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

13. New Business

There was no New Business

14. Board Member Expressions

Chair Kinnear asked for comments.

Mr. French commented that with a good handle on what the revenues for 2022 were, could staff provide the board an update report on our commitment to the voters of 20% farebox recovery in the next month or two.

Ms. Bowers asked about funding gained through the program supporting Youth Zero Fare – in addition to Mr. French’s request – to show the offset of farebox revenue. Ms. Bowers complimented Mr. Otterstrom on the icons he is using.

Mr. Dunne thanked Mr. Otterstrom for his City Line report. He suggested buses announce the next stop using special guest voices. He’d love to hear Mark Few or Commissioner French announce the next stop.

Mr. Zappone asked about the state funding STA is eligible to receive because we offer Zero Fare to 18 and under. He thought there were some requirements about how that funding is supposed to be spent equitably or with a focus towards equity. He asked staff to bring that information.

Mr. Zappone said he thinks there are two tracks for the Board to consider a new, discounted, income-based fare: 1) as part of or after the Comprehensive Plan review and 2) expanding the existing Community Access Pass program beyond discounted pass sales to non-profit organizations. He would like to move forward and is looking for direction.

Mr. Bynaker asked about the purple lights at the West Plains Transit Center. Mr. Rapez-Betty advised staff were changing them out.

Mr. Grover said he was excited for July 15<sup>th</sup> launch of City Line and offered kudos to staff for all their work. Ms. Haley and Chair Kinnear agreed with his compliments to staff.

15. Executive Session

None

16. Adjourned

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Kinnear adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Infalt

Clerk of the Authority