

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DRAFT Minutes of the December 21, 2023, STA Board Meeting  
1230 W Boone Ave., Spokane  
*with a WebEx Video Conference Option*

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Stratton, City of Spokane, Chair  
Al French, Spokane County, (*Chair Pro Tempore*)  
Josh Kerns, Spokane County  
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Representative (Liberty Lake)  
Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley  
Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley  
Paul Dillon, City of Spokane (Alternate) *Virtual*  
Betsy Wilkerson, City of Spokane  
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane  
Chris Grover, Small Cities (Cheney) *Ex Officio*  
Don Kennedy, Small Cities (Medical Lake) *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

Michael Connelly, Etter, McMahan,  
Lamberson, Van Wert and Oreskovich, P.C.

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane

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#### 1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Pro Tempore, Al French called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and the Clerk conducted Roll call.

At the January 18, 2024, Board meeting, **Mr. Zappone made a motion to amend the Minutes of the December 21, 2023, Board Meeting** – Corrections/Approval to add wording to the beginning of the minutes as it was not captured in the audio due to the technical difficulties that occurred at the beginning of the December Board meeting. In particular, after roll call when they started discussing the chair – who would chair until the end of the year. He requested to summarize it to say that Mr. Connelly advised the City of Spokane held the chair seat until December 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Zappone asked why the City of Spokane was not notified before the meeting. Mr. Connelly said he notified Attorney Mike Piccolo. Mr. Zappone asked if Mr. French knew about this advice. Mr. French then said...

**Ms. Wilkerson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. French advised that the question had come up prior to the Board Operations committee meeting concerning the City of Spokane having the chairmanship until January 1<sup>st</sup>. Due to their interest in continuing to chair the STA Board in the absence of Ms. Kinnear, Mr. French advised he was open to a nomination for a City of Spokane representative to chair the December meeting.

**Mr. Kerns made a motion to nominate Ms. Karen Stratton to chair the remaining Board meeting. Ms. Haley seconded.**

Discussion ensued and there was a brief auditory technical issue which staff resolved.

**Mr. French called for a vote to have Ms. Stratton chair the meeting and the motion passed unanimously.**

2. Approve Board Agenda

Chair Stratton asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve the December Board Agenda. Mr. Dunne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

3. Public Expressions

Mr. Terry Hill, retired Paratransit operator, appeared in person to share his thoughts about fares and opinions regarding a recent article.

Mr. JT Ramsey submitted a written public expression form. After verifying JT Ramsey was not in attendance virtually, Chair Stratton advised the written expression received had been distributed to all board members and read into the official record.

4. Recognitions & Presentations

A. Mark Friemuth, Paratransit Operator - Retirement

Mr. Rapez-Betty presented Mark Friemuth with a plaque to commemorate his 33 years of service to the STA Paratransit department. Mr. Rapez-Betty celebrated Mark's career and noted he had driven over 800,000 miles during his career and received awards for 30 years of safe driving. Mr. Friemuth accepted the plaque and thanked STA for providing a great career. Board members and staff congratulated Mr. Friemuth on his retirement and thanked him for his service to STA.

5. Board Action - Consent Agenda

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

A. Minutes of the November 16, 2023, Board Meeting – Corrections/Approval

B. Approval of the following October 2023 Vouchers:

DESCRIPTION	VOUCHER/ACH NUMBERS	AMOUNT
Accounts Payable Vouchers (November)	Nos. 624655 – 625105	\$ 4,944,312.60
Worker's Comp Vouchers (November)	ACH – 2286	\$ 148,471.45
Payroll 11/03/2023	ACH – 11/03/2023	\$ 2,636,759.28
Payroll 11/17/2023	ACH – 11/17/2023	\$ 1,946,544.75
WA State – DOR (Excise Tax)	ACH – 1767	\$ 8,510.47
<b>NOVEMBER TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 9,684,598.55</b>

C. Acceptance of the contracts listed as complete and authorize release of retainage security subject to receipt of Department of Labor & Industries approved prevailing wage affidavits.

D. Accept of the contract with Halme Builders for Tire Shop Door Modifications as complete and authorize release of retainage security subject to receipt of such certificates and releases as are required by law.

- E. Accept the contract with Halme Construction, Inc. for the STA Fuel Facility contract as complete and authorize release of retainage security subject to the receipt of such certificates and releases as are required by law.
- F. Approve, by motion, an increase to the overall project budget from \$1.5M to a revised total of \$2.9M and the award of contract for the Fleck Fuel Facility Replacement project to Granite Petroleum, Inc. for \$1,738,630.90 plus applicable Washington State sales tax, and authorize the CEO to apply contingency funds, as necessary.

6. Board Action – Committee Recommendation

Planning & Development Committee

A. Final Proposed 2024 Budget

Ms. Liard reviewed the final proposed 2024 Budget and noted the recommendation to the Board was to Adopt, by Resolution 815-23, the Final Proposed 2024 Budget.

Ms. Liard offered to answer questions. Discussion ensued about fuel costs.

Discussion ensued concerning allocating \$100,000 of the overall 2024 Communications budget to advertising Zero Fare for Youth ridership.

Ms. Meyer confirmed the Board was asking staff to dedicate, of the existing 2024 budget, \$100K to communicating Zero Fare for Youth and the ways to access it. Ms. Meyer said staff can do that without an amendment. Mr. Zappone requested a report back throughout the year and Ms. Meyer agreed.

Mr. Connelly advised the vote to adopt a motion with Mr. Zappone's amendment had not been moved, seconded, or voted on.

**Mr. Zappone moved to adopt, by Resolution 815-23, the Final Proposed 2024 Budget as presented. Mr. Dunne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

7. Board Action – Other

A. 2024 Board & Committee Meeting Calendar

Ms. Infalt reviewed the current Committee and Board meeting for the 2024 calendar year. She noted exceptions for the February and July meetings and an expressed interest by Board members to adjust the April calendar schedule to hold Planning & Development and Performance Monitoring & External Relations meetings a week earlier than usual. There was agreement with the suggestion.

Ms. Meyer asked for confirmation that the Board's intention was to move the P&D and PMER Committee meetings to one week earlier in April and the Board Operations and Board meeting remain the same.

**Ms. Wilkerson moved to approve the 2024 Board & Committee meeting calendar as presented, including the change to the April P&D and PMER Committee meetings to occur one week earlier than shown. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

B. Draft 2024 State Legislative Priorities

Ms. Cortright reviewed the draft 2024 State Legislative Focus & Priorities advising the Board the item was presented at the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee

(PMER) meeting, where there were two tie votes. This item was forwarded to the Board Operations Committee, which was called to order and adjourned with no action. She said the 2024 State Legislative Focus & Priorities were being presented to the Board for a vote today.

Discussion ensued.

Chair Stratton explained there would be two motions. The first was to approve the draft 2024 State Legislative priorities as presented. The second would be to create a Legislative Task Force.

**Mr. Dunne moved to adopt the legislative priorities as presented and Mr. French seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion ensued.

**Mr. Zappone moved to create a Legislative Task Force with one member from each of the four jurisdictions and labor. Each jurisdiction can decide who they would like to designate for that task force. That task force's role would be to meet on an ad hoc basis to determine STA's interest on specific pieces of legislation and relay that to the CEO to relay to legislators and others and report back to the Board. Mr. Dunne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

C. 2024 Performance Measures

Mr. Rapez-Betty reviewed the proposed 2024 Performance Measures. He advised this item was presented by staff to the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee (PMER) where it received two tie votes. The Board Operations Committee was called to order and adjourned with no action, and the 2024 Performance Measures are being presented to the Board for a vote today.

Discussion ensued.

**Mr. Zappone moved to approve the 2024 Performance Measures as presented. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

8. Board Report

A. Connect 2035 Strategic Plan Phase 2 Update

Mr. Otterstrom provided a review of the Connect 2035 Goals, Phase 2 Desired Outcomes, Outreach, and progress in Phase 2 of the Connect 2035 Strategic Plan. He mentioned the first Board tour and noted Council Members Zappone and Dunne attended. He shared the Phase 2 Project Schedule and updated on next steps, reminding everyone of the February 15<sup>th</sup> Board Workshop before the Board meeting. Mr. Otterstrom offered to answer questions.

Brief discussion ensued.

B. Safety & Security Update

Ms. Williams provided the Board with an in-depth update of STA's Safety and Security program. Ms. Williams offered to answer questions. Ms. Wilkerson strongly encouraged partnering with mental health providers as well as SPD for de-escalation training of security officers.

Brief discussion ensued.

9. Board Operations Committee

A. Chair Report (*Al French*)

Mr. French advised the Board Operations Committee meeting was called to order and adjourned with no action pursuant to legal advice and there was no report this month.

10. Planning & Development Committee

A. Chair Report (*Al French*)

Mr. French reviewed items discussed at the Planning & Development Committee meeting.

11. Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee

A. Chair Report (*Pam Haley*)

Ms. Haley reviewed items discussed at the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee meeting.

11. CEO Report

Ms. Meyer reported on Ridership for October and November 2023. The November increase was 27.4% for Fixed Route (8,017,697 vs. 6,295,178); 16.5% increase for Paratransit (332,121 vs. 285,184); and 6.3% increase for Rideshare (88,382 vs. 83,149) year-to-date 2023 vs. 2022. She noted Zero Fare for Youth ridership year-to-date increased 130.4% (1,492,078 vs. 647,482) over 2022.

Ms. Meyer shared information from an article published by Axios on 12/14 showing where transit ridership in areas with populations of 500,000 or greater has recovered throughout the US. She noted Spokane Transit was one of nine transit systems in the US that met or exceeded 2019 ridership in September 2023.

Sales tax for October and November were reviewed. Year-to-date in November, sales tax is 6.3% above budget.

The Board Member tour took place November 29<sup>th</sup> and the next one will visit Fixed Route Dispatch operations on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Meyer offered to answer questions. None were forthcoming.

12. Board Information

A. Committee Minutes

B. October 2023 Sales Tax Revenue (*Monique Liard*)

C. September 2023 Financial Results Summary (*Monique Liard*)

D. September 2023 Operating Indicators (*Brandon Rapez-Betty*)

E. Draft 2024 Planning and Development Committee Work Program (*Karl Otterstrom*)

F. Connect Spokane Comprehensive Plan: Equity and Inclusion (*Karl Otterstrom*)

G. 2024 Service Revisions: Preliminary Proposal Outreach Update (*Karl Otterstrom*)

H. Third Quarter Service Planning Input Report (*Karl Otterstrom*)

I. STA's Holiday Services & Office Hours (*Dana Infalt*)

13. New Business

A. Election of the 2024 Board Chair

**Mr. Zappone moved to nominate Mr. Kerns as Chair for 2024.**

Mr. Kerns expressed gratitude for the nomination but respectfully declined due to prior commitments.

**Mr. Kerns moved to elect Mr. French as Chair for 2024, Ms. Haley seconded.**

Lengthy discussion ensued. Ms. Haley called for the question and Chair Stratton called for the vote to end discussion and vote on the motion on the table. There was unanimous consensus to end discussion and vote on the motion.

Chair Stratton called for the vote on the motion.

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

B. Presentation of Commendation to Karen Stratton – Retiring Board Member

Mr. French presented a plaque to Ms. Stratton to commemorate her years of service to STA from 2020 to present. He noted that Ms. Stratton had been a member of the Planning and Development Committee and, in addition to chairing today's Board meeting, had chaired multiple Planning and Development committee meetings. He thanked her for her leadership and dedication. Ms. Stratton thanked Mr. French and offered her thoughts.

14. Board Members' Expressions

None

15. Adjourned

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Stratton adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Infalt

Clerk of the Authority