

PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of June 4, 2025, Meeting
Northside Conference Room
1230 W Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA

In person meeting with optional virtual link

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' PRESENT

Lance Speirs, City of Medical Lake*
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane
Dan Sander, City of Millwood (*Ex-Officio*)
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Interim Co-CEO
Karl Otterstrom, Interim Co-CEO

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Hank Bynaker, City of Airway Heights (*Ex-Officio*)

STAFF PRESENT

Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications and Customer Service Officer
Kade Peterson, Chief Information Officer
Tammy Johnston, Interim Chief Financial Officer
Molly Fricano, Executive Assistant to the COO

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

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

GUESTS PRESENT

Jessica Kelch, Senior Project Manager

**Committee Chairman*

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1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
Chair Speirs called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and roll call was conducted.
 2. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**
Chair Speirs had no report at this time.
 3. **COMMITTEE APPROVAL**
 - A. **Minutes of April 30, 2025, Committee Meeting (May Meeting)**
Mr. Cathcart moved to approve the April 30, 2025, (May) committee meeting minutes. Mr. Speirs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
 - B. **Electrical Systems Upgrade: Scope of Work Approval**
Mr. Rapez-Betty introduced Ms. Kelch, Senior Project Manager, who presented the proposed scope of work for the Electrical Systems Upgrade at the Boone Campus. Ms. Kelch explained the electrical infrastructure, including main distribution panels (MDPs) and motor control centers (MCCs), is original to the 1987 construction and has reached the end of its useful life. She shared the general scope of work necessary for both the Boone North and Boone South buildings and presented a site plan and timeline. The total project budget is \$5 million. As of May 5, 2025, actuals and encumbrances total \$236,000. The estimated cost range is between \$3.5 million and \$6 million, with forecasted future encumbrances of approximately \$1.2 million.

Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the general scope of work and authorize staff to release an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for the Electrical Systems Upgrade contract.

Mr. Speirs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Board Consent Agenda

1. Customer Care Auditing Services – Award of Contract

Dr. Cortright provided background on the benefits of mystery shopper observations and reporting to identify organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was advertised on February 27, 2025, and proposals were due March 31, 2025. Two responsive proposals were received and the committee selected A Customer’s Point of View. A three-year contract, valued at approximately \$351,280, will run from July 2025 through June 2028. Under this agreement, the selected vendor will conduct monthly audits assessing customer interactions with staff, including operators, supervisors, and office personnel. The vendor will deliver detailed monthly reports based on these evaluations.

Mr. Cathcart moved to recommend the Board of Directors authorize, by motion, the award of contract for Customer Care Auditing Services and authorize the CEO (Interim Co-CEOs) to execute a three-year contract with A Customers Point of View for a total estimated cost of \$351,280. Mr. Speirs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Data Feed & Customer Information Improvements – Award of Contract

Mr. Peterson shared that from 2018 to 2024, STA used an open-source trip planning app but it became outdated and unreliable. As a result, STA no longer supports an official mobile trip planner and would benefit from a trip planning app that has better integration with STA’s existing systems. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was advertised on February 3, 2025, and proposals were due February 28, 2025. Five responsive proposals were received and the committee selected Swiftly Inc. Mr. Peterson presented the contract terms and financials and stated the cost of the five-year contract will be approximately \$1,060,120, including a one-time implementation fee.

Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the award of contract for Data Feed & Customer Information Improvements and authorize the CEO (Interim Co-CEOs) to execute a five-year contract with Swiftly, Inc., for a total estimated cost of \$1,060,120. Mr. Speirs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Cheney Transit Improvements Interlocal Agreement (ILA)

Mr. Otterstrom provided background on the Cheney Transit Improvements Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and the importance of the proposed agreement to support future transit-related infrastructure projects. He presented Project Order #1 which is the Elm Street Corridor Improvements. The agreement sets a five-year framework for collaborative project orders, with a cumulative value not to exceed \$3 million. The total cost for this initial project is capped at \$100,000 but will have \$500,000 funded through STA’s Cooperative Projects budget (CIP #894).

Mr. Cathcart moved to recommend the Board approve, by motion, the CEO (interim Co-CEOs) to execute the Master Design and Construction Interlocal Agreement with the City of Cheney, along with Project Order #1, "Elm Street Corridor Improvements." Mr. Speirs seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Board Discussion Agenda

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. 2025 First Quarter Year-to-Date Performance Measures

Mr. Rapez-Betty presented the 2025 First Quarter Year-to-Date Performance Measures Summary and advised the full presentation is included in the committee packet and on the STA website. Each Performance Measure relates to a specific Spokane Transit priority. These quantifiable benchmarks demonstrate the agency's commitment to accountability.

B. Enhanced Transit Security Update

Ms. Williams presented an update on STA's enhanced transit security strategy, which aligns with the Connect 2035 10-year strategic plan, since safety and security remain central to STA's operations. She shared several initiatives that have been implemented or are underway. Security metrics from the first quarter of 2025 show a notable improvement compared to the same period in 2024.

The Transit Ambassador Program was introduced as part of the broader safety initiative. Transit Ambassadors are non-enforcement personnel whose roles include customer support, safety monitoring, real-time incident reporting, and operator wellness checks. The program aims to enhance the rider experience, support operations, and promote accessibility. Performance monitoring will be in place to track key metrics. Five ambassadors will be hired and trained by the end of August. Operators on light duty can also be used as additional ambassadors.

C. Alternative Low-Income Fare Program Structure

Dr. Cortright presented an overview of potential structures for a new low-income fare program. The goal of the program is to make public transportation more accessible and affordable for residents with limited income, while also supporting STA's broader mission to increase ridership and maintain financial sustainability.

Based on common industry practices and modeled similarly to STA's existing reduced fare programs, staff developed three income-based eligibility program models. The first model focuses on partnering with local housing organizations to identify eligible participants based on their qualified residence in affordable housing. The second income-based model establishes eligibility and enrollment for individuals already enrolled in public assistance programs verified by a state agency. The third model permits open enrollment based on defined income requirements and relies on STA to verify eligibility directly and administer the documentation process.

Each model varies in terms of how many people it could serve, the expected increase in ridership, and the associated costs. The housing-based model is the most limited in scope but also the least expensive. The open enrollment models could reach more people and generate more ridership, but they would also require more administrative resources and result in greater fare revenue loss.

Discussion ensued about the financial impact of reduced fares, community outreach and stakeholder engagement, eligibility and verification, pilot program design, zero-fare option and policy interpretation and board direction. Staff recommended the full board discuss the interpretation of the phrase “reduced fare” to determine if a zero-fare option is consistent with the agency’s fare policy and the development of the low-income fare initiative in the Connect 2035 strategic plan. A Low-Income Fare Pilot Program Resolution will be brought to the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee and the Board meeting in July.

D. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was postponed.

6. CEO REPORT

- Mr. Otterstrom discussed the APTA Legislative Conference in May held in Washington DC. In attendance were Commissioner French, Council Members Zappone, Council Member Speirs, and Interim Co-CEOs Karl Otterstrom and Brandon Rapez-Betty. Meetings included a briefing with Cardinal Infrastructure, discussions with the FTA on the Division Street BRT, and visits to congressional offices.
- Mr. Rapez-Betty shared the STA Rodeo was held on May 31 at the STA ballpark property. The event featured hourly double-decker bus tours and was attended by STA employees, their families, Deputy Mayor Hattenburg and Council Member Cathcart. STA volunteers staffed the event. Mr. Rapez-Betty recognized winners across categories that included Fixed Route, Paratransit and Maverick.
- Mr. Rapez-Betty discussed the All Employee Meetings which were held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025. Four sessions were held with 301 total attendees. Topics included wellness, Division Street BRT, Facilities Master Plan, Safety Ambassador Program, Low Income Fare Pilot, Telematics technology, and a Q&A with department chiefs.
- Mr. Otterstrom shared there was a roundtable event on June 3, 2025, held at Ruby River Hotel to discuss the Division Street BRT project and Division Street Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This event featured a panel discussion on TOD opportunities and challenges. Panelists included private sector employers and regional developers, with facilitation by MIG. Mr. Otterstrom listed presented the upcoming open houses being held in June.

7. JULY 9, 2025 – COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW (ONE WEEK LATE)

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ EXPRESSIONS

10. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Speirs adjourned the meeting at 3:48p.m.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, (one week late) at 1:30 p.m. in person with a WebEx option.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Fricano

Molly Fricano

Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer