

## PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of November 5, 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\*  
Dan Sander, City of Millwood (*Ex-Officio*)  
Josh Kerns, Spokane County  
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane  
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane  
Karl Otterstrom, Chief Executive Officer

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Hank Bynaker, City of Airway Heights (*Ex-Officio*)

*\*Committee Chairman*

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brandon Rapez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer  
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications and Customer Service Officer  
Emily Poole, Interim Chief Planning & Development Officer  
Kade Peterson, Chief Information Officer  
Robert Hamud, Chief Financial Officer  
Molly Fricano, Executive Assistant to the COO

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

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

### **STAFF ABSENT**

Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer

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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 October 1, 2025, Committee Meeting**  
**Mr. Kerns moved to approve the October 1, 2025, committee meeting minutes. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
    - B. **Appointment of Members to Citizen Advisory Committee**  
Dr. Cortright advised the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is requesting approval of the appointment of four new members: Mr. Pablo Monsivais, Ms. Eileen Schurtz, Mr. Connor Williams, and Ms. Michelle Johnson. Dr. Cortright noted the committee is composed of no more than fifteen members and currently has eleven, leaving four vacancies. She stated that the recommended candidates bring diverse experience and perspectives. Chair Dan Brown was in attendance and expressed strong support for these candidates, noting their qualifications and commitment to public transit. Approval of their appointments would bring the CAC closer to its full membership and strengthen its role as a forum for public input and accountability.

There was discussion about possible new requirements for CAC members when the charter is next updated which could include emphasizing the importance of diversity among participants, particularly regarding geographic location, and commuting patterns. In addition, it was suggested that input be gathered from potential riders, in addition to current riders, specifically those who don't use transit now but might if certain conditions were met.

**Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the appointment of Pablo Monsivais, Eileen Schurtz, Connor Williams, and Michelle Johnson to the Citizen Advisory Committee for a first term and upon the effective dates presented. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

4. COMMITTEE ACTION

A. Board Consent Agenda

1. Legislative & Government Consulting Services - Award of Contract

Mr. Otterstrom explained the purpose of contracting Legislative and Government Consulting Services is to ensure STA remains informed about legislative activities and supports effective advocacy. A competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process was completed, and Jennifer Zeigler Public Affairs Corporation was identified as the top-ranked and cost-effective firm. The proposed agreement is for a three-year contract, with two optional one-year renewals, totaling an estimated \$397,616 over five years.

Discussion ensued about the collaboration between Ms. Zeigler and Ms. Munguia, STA's current lobbyist. Ms. Munguia is partnering with Ms. Zeigler on this contract, therefore, STA will continue to retain her services but to a lesser extent.

**Mr. Zappone moved to approve, by motion, the award of contract for Legislative & Government Consulting Services and authorize the CEO to execute a five-year contract with Jennifer Ziegler Public Affairs Corporation for a total estimated cost of \$397,616. Mr. Cathcart seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

2. Boone Electrical Systems Upgrade - Award of Contract

Mr. Rapez-Betty provided background on the Boone Electrical System Upgrade project which will replace the Main Distribution Panels (MDP) for Boone North and South. He shared an Invitation for Bid was advertised on August 13, 2025, and only one responsive bid was received from Colvico, Inc. The bid evaluation committee confirmed the bid was fair and reasonable. The proposed contract amount is \$2,551,319 with a recommended 20% contingency. Work is expected to begin in December 2025 and will take approximately 12 months to complete. The project aligns with STA's Facilities Master Plan and Zero Emission Transition efforts.

**Mr. Zappone moved to approve, by motion, the award of contract for the Boone Electrical Systems Upgrade project to Colvico, Inc. for \$2,551,319 and authorize the CEO to apply contingency funds, as necessary. Mr. Cathcart seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

3. Customer Safety & Security Reporting Solution - Award of Contract

Ms. Williams provided background on the Customer Safety & Security Reporting Solution. This initiative, which is part of the System-Wide Enhanced Safety and Security Strategy, will allow customers to report safety concerns confidentially and in real time, improving responsiveness and operational efficiency. An Invitation for Bid was advertised on July 10, 2025, and five responses were received. After a committee

evaluation of all responses, ELERTS Corporation was selected as the most qualified and cost-effective vendor. The recommended contract is for five years, from February 2026 through January 2031, at an estimated cost of \$510,678.

**Mr. Cathcart moved to approve, by motion, the award of contract for the Customer Safety & Security Reporting Solution and authorize the CEO to execute a five-year contract with ELERTS Corporation for a total estimated cost of \$510,678. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

B. Board Discussion Agenda (*none*)

5. REPORTS TO COMMITTEE

A. Draft 2026 Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee Work Program

Mr. Rapez-Betty presented an overview of the Draft 2026 Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PMER) Committee work program. This work program is made up of annual reports, surveys, procurement timelines, and other items as needed. Items and timelines are subject to change, and new items will be added as they arise. The next step is to finalize and approve in December and share with the Board of Directors as information.

Discussion ensued about adding an update on the Opportunity Fare Program and Employee Survey Results.

B. FIFA World Cup Grant

Dr. Cortright outlined key details about the 2026 FIFA World Cup which will take place in June and July 2026 in Seattle and Vancouver, BC. She shared that Spokane has been selected as a potential team Base Camp and confirmed as a Fan Zone location, with Spokane Sports serving as the point of contact for FIFA. Dr. Cortright reported that the Washington State legislature has allocated \$9 million in the transportation budget, noting that \$529,569 is designated for Spokane Transit to improve service and customer experience during the event. The grant proposal deadline is December 1, 2025, and funds must be used between June 1 and July 30, 2026.

There was discussion on the status and future plans for fan zones, and potential promotional fare options and strategic partnerships. Dr. Cortright shared that a line item for promotional passes had been included in the 2026 proposed budget.

C. 2026 Service Revisions: Draft for Public Input

Ms. Poole provided background on the 2026 Service Revisions Draft for Public Input which included an overview of proposed adjustments to routes, minor changes to service hours, and plans for public outreach and feedback.

Concerns were raised about routes with consistently low ridership, and whether policies should allow for changes when routes do not meet performance expectations.

There was a suggestion to put a mechanism in place to review route performance on a route-by-route basis rather than only at an aggregated level. Staff explained that ridership is evaluated annually as part of the fixed-route performance report. While some routes may appear underperforming in certain segments, they often serve key destinations and perform well overall. There was a request to add North Hill neighborhood and Spokane Public Schools for community outreach.

D. Draft 2026 State Legislative Priorities

Dr. Cortright reviewed the draft legislative priorities for 2026 which focused on maintaining state funding for public transit, preserving local authority over transit operations, and supporting safety and security measures for employees and riders. Funding needs for ongoing projects and grants were acknowledged. The next step is to provide Committee input before finalizing priorities in December for PMER and Board approval.

A question was raised about whether there is an opportunity for STA or its lobbyists to encourage continued funding for road maintenance. While STA's primary focus should remain on its own priorities, staff agreed to stay informed about regional transportation issues and support specific requests when appropriate. They also acknowledged that SRTC maintains a comprehensive list of regional priorities, which STA generally supports.

The committee discussed the importance of alignment between transit investments and other regional transportation projects like the North Spokane Corridor (NSC). An example was given that delays in the NSC project will create challenges for the Division Bus Rapid Transit Project. There was further discussion about support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) legislation and remaining neutral rather than taking a position on consolidation proposals when it comes to governance structure.

6. CEO REPORT

Mr. Otterstrom turned his CEO report over to Dr. Cortright who gave a live demonstration of the features of the mobile application Transit App, including how to trip plan, track the bus via map, receive real-time updates on bus arrival, and look up schedule information for all the routes in STA's system.

7. DECEMBER 3, 2025 – COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

10. ADJOURN

With no further business to come before the committee, Chair Speirs adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. in person with a virtual WebEx joining option.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Fricano  
Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer