

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

## **STA BOARD MEETING**

Approved Minutes of June 26, 2025, Meeting

*STA Boardroom with Virtual Joining Option*

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Lance Speirs, Small Cities Medical Lake (*Chair pro tem*)  
(*Virtual*)  
Al French, Spokane County  
Betsy Wilkerson, City of Spokane (*Virtual*)  
Josh Kerns, Spokane County  
Kitty Klitzke, City of Spokane (*Virtual*)  
Michael Cathcart, City of Spokane  
Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley  
Rod Higgins, Alternate for Pam Haley  
Zack Zappone, City of Spokane (*Virtual*)  
Chris Grover, Small Cities Cheney-*ex-officio*  
Dan Dunne, Small Cities Liberty Lake *ex-officio* (*Virtual*)  
Dan Sander, Small Cities Millwood-*ex-officio*  
Hank Bynaker, Small Cities Airway Heights-*ex-officio*  
Rhonda Bowers, Labor Representative, *Non-Voting*

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Pam Haley, City of Spokane Valley, *Chair*

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brandon Rapez-Betty, Interim Co-CEO,  
Chief Operations Officer  
Karl Otterstrom, Interim Co-CEO,  
Chief Planning & Development Officer  
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications &  
Customer Service Officer  
Nancy Williams, Chief Human Resources  
Officer (*Virtual*)  
Tammy Johnston, Interim Chief Finance  
Officer  
Kade Peterson, Chief Information Officer  
Dana Infalt, Clerk of the Authority

### **PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL**

Megan Clark, Etter, McMahon,  
Lamberson, VanWert and  
Oreskovich, P.C.

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1. Call to Order and Roll Call – The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm and the Clerk conducted roll call.
  2. Pledge of Allegiance - Board Members, staff, and guests stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
  3. Excused Absences – Requested for Al French Board Operations May Meeting, Dan Dunne May Board Meeting, Pam Haley May Operations Board meeting, June Board Operations meeting.

**Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve the requested Excused Absences. Mr. Zappone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

4. Approve Board Agenda

Chair Lance Speirs introduced a request to move the New Business section—specifically the CEO Search discussion—to occur before the Executive Session. Mr. French objected, noting the agenda was already set and changes could interfere with members' prior commitments.

**Mr. Zappone moved to amend the agenda to move Item #15, New Business, to before item #14, the Executive Session. Ms. Wilkerson seconded.** Discussion ensued.

Mr. Dunne sought legal clarification to ensure any discussion outside of the Executive Session would not include candidate qualifications. Legal Counsel Megan Clark confirmed qualifications must remain within Executive Session. Mr. Zappone clarified that the intention was to discuss the process of the CEO search, not specific candidates. Mr. French responded by saying the Board had unanimously approved the process previously and said an attempt to change it now is inappropriate. Chair Speirs

asked Legal Counsel to review the approved process to help clarify matters. Ms. Clark advised the Board needed to formally add the topic to the agenda prior to discussion.

*Mr. Cathcart arrived at 1:41.*

The motion was re-stated and recapped for Mr. Cathcart's consideration.

**Mr. Zappone amended his motion to add CEO Search as Agenda Item 14. Ms. Wilkerson seconded, and the Chair called for a vote. Mr. French, Mr. Hattenburg, Mr. Higgins, and Mr. Cathcart voted no. Mr. Zappone, Ms. Klitzke, Ms. Wilkerson, and Mr. Speirs voted yes. The tie vote failed.**

Mr. Zappone changed his vote to nay.

**Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. French seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

*Mr. Kerns arrived at 1:44*

5. Public Expressions

Mr. Erik Lowe expressed his concern about the transparency and inclusivity of the CEO selection process and handed out a copy of his thoughts.

Ms. Sarah Rose agreed with Mr. Lowe's expressions and voiced her concern about STA's use of the term "customers" over "riders" or "passengers," shared personal disillusionment with the agency's leadership culture, and emphasized the need for improved rider amenities—particularly shade and seating at bus stops.

Chair Speirs called three times for additional public expressions. There were none.

6. Recognitions and Presentations – none

7. Public Hearing

A. 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan: Complete Draft

Chair Speirs opened the Public Hearing at 1:52 and called on Mr. Otterstrom for a report.

Mr. Otterstrom provided an overview of the draft Transit Development Plan (TDP), which outlines STA's six-year strategic outlook for 2026–2031. The TDP meets state (RCW 35.58.2795), regional, and federal planning requirements and reflects updates in revenues, costs, service expectations, and regional development trends. The draft was published online on May 22, 2025. He explained that the TDP sits within STA's planning hierarchy, guided by Connect Spokane and aligned with Connect 2035 goals. The TDP incorporates the Service Improvement Program (SIP), Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM).

He reviewed the key elements of the TDP plan and invited questions from Board members prior to receiving public testimony. Mr. Dunne observed that the detail and planning that went into this is the heart and soul of this organization, and he appreciates the work, further commenting it looks good.

Chair Speirs called for public testimony.

Mr. Erik Lowe reported attending a recent STA open house, urged the agency to pursue a more ambitious vision for public transit. He advocated for high performance transit expansion—particularly to Spokane Valley—and encouraged STA to go beyond simply reauthorizing the sales tax. He emphasized the importance of leveraging Spokane's growth and urbanist potential to significantly enhance regional transit.

Ms. Sarah Rose expressed support for Mr. Lowe's comments and urged faster installation of bus benches, even with simpler designs, to improve rider comfort and safety. She suggested STA

collaborate with the City of Spokane under the “Adaptive Design Safe Streets Now” resolution to implement temporary, visible improvements more efficiently.

Chair Speirs called three times for additional testimony, either in person or virtually. There was none and he closed the public hearing at 2:06 pm.

B. 2026-2031 Transit Development Plan: Complete Draft

Chair Speirs opened the Public Hearing at 2:06 and called on Mr. Otterstrom for a report.

Mr. Otterstrom reported the Division Street BRT project aims to enhance mobility along the corridor by providing fast, frequent, and affordable transit that connects people to jobs, schools, and services, while improving safety and clarity in roadway use. The concept dates back to 2008 and has since been integrated into regional and STA planning documents. Planning formally began in 2019 through a multi-agency partnership, with the STA Board adopting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in 2021 and amending it in 2023 to refine station locations and the northern terminus.

In 2023, the Board committed local funding and requested entry into the FTA’s Capital Investment Grant program, which was approved. The 10-mile corridor will feature 43 stations, 60-foot zero-emission buses and business access and transit (BAT) lanes, with transit signal priority and a new bike/pedestrian facility on Ruby Street.

The current proposal amends the LPA to allow for left-side BAT lanes on Ruby Street and adjusts station locations based on design coordination. It also introduces a phased approach, identifying a “minimum operable segment” from downtown Spokane to Hawthorne Road, using the Hastings Park & Ride as a temporary northern terminus. This approach prioritizes cost-effectiveness and readiness for federal funding, while future phases will expand the corridor and infrastructure.

The proposed phasing of the Ruby Street segment allows the bicycle facility to be designed and implemented independently from the bus stops, providing flexibility and accommodating ongoing input from various City of Spokane departments. This approach avoids delays in constructing transit infrastructure while allowing more time to refine the bike facility design. Future phases will extend the BRT line to a new transit center in the Mead area, add stations at Hastings Road and near Perry Street on Farwell, increase service frequency, and complete the Ruby Street bike infrastructure.

STA remains committed to supporting complementary Division Connects efforts, including active transportation and transit-oriented development (TOD). In January, STA was awarded \$2 million from USDOT for planning and design of active transportation improvements in vicinity of the corridor in partnership with local agencies. Additional funding opportunities are being pursued by the City of Spokane and Spokane County to support active transportation and safety improvements, to include along Hastings Road. STA has also secured federal funds to support TOD planning, with the City of Spokane required to align zoning with new state TOD laws near BRT stations.

Finally, STA evaluated traffic impacts of the minimum operable segment, particularly through the Division-Ruby couplet. Of 24 intersections analyzed, four showed minor degradation during peak times, with one intersection (Division & Mission southbound) rated as failing. However, these impacts are expected to be mitigated through signal optimization. The analysis also reflects temporary conditions until the North Spokane Corridor is completed, which will shift traffic patterns and reduce pressure on Division Street.

Mr. Cathcart asked about data along the route. Mr. Otterstrom responded that we can show ridership by stop but the models are more reliable in the aggregate. Discussion ensued. Mr. Otterstrom concluded by advising the Division Street BRT project has undergone a cost reassessment, with the current estimate now lower than the previously shared figure of just over \$200 million. This original estimate included project development, capital improvements, construction, and the BRT fleet. The revised cost reflects a shift to a Minimum Operable Segment (MOS), which focuses on building the core of the project up to Hawthorn Road, with an interim station at the Hastings Park & Ride. This version omits the final stations near Hastings and along Farwell Road, as well as the transit center component. Additionally, the updated fleet cost now includes spare parts, which were not part of the original Capital Improvement Program (CIP) figure. While the overall cost is reduced, this is a strategic move to present a more cost-effective project to federal partners and to ensure the project can be delivered by 2030.

Extensive community outreach supported the effort, including letters to neighborhood councils, monthly electronic newsletters reaching approximately 4,000 residents and bus riders, and events such as the Uniting Division Roundtable and a recent open house. The project also involved coordination with an executive committee composed of city, county, WSDOT, and SRTC representatives, as well as a technical advisory committee. Based on the public hearing and outreach conducted this month, the Board is expected to take action next month on several key items: entering into an agreement with partners to reaffirm commitment to the full Division Connects vision, amending the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to reflect the phased approach and MOS, and authorizing staff to submit the Small Starts Capital Investment Grant rating package. This submission is critical for the project to be considered in the federal fiscal year 2027, with an August deadline for submission.

Chair Speirs asked Board members if they had any questions or comments. Brief discussion ensued before he called for Public Testimony.

Ms. Kaitlin Malmquist spoke against the project and expressed concern regarding the impact on traffic and business. Mr. Lowe and Ms. Rose both provided thoughts and generally spoke in favor of the project. John expressed his desire to have it completed sooner, noting it has been in the planning stages since 2008. Coby spoke to say he thought the board gave too much preference to drivers.

#### 8. Board Action - Consent Agenda

**Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve Consent Agenda Items 8A – 8H as presented. Mr. French seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

- A. Minutes of May 15, 2025, STA Board Meeting– Corrections/Approval
- B. Approval of the May 2025 Vouchers – approved claims as listed.
- C. Public Works Contracts under \$35,000: Final Acceptance - Approved acceptance of the above contracts as complete and authorize release of retainage security subject to receipt of Department of Labor & Industries approved prevailing wage affidavits.
- D. Division Street Bus Rapid Transit: Parametrix, Inc. Work Order #6 Approval - Authorized the CEO (Interim Co-CEOs) to execute Work Order #6 for the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit project with Parametrix, Inc. under existing contract #2021-10610 for an amount not to exceed \$5,952,599, and to provide for 10% contingency for unforeseen additional requirements or services.
- E. Customer Care Auditing Service: Award of Contract - Approved the award of contract for Customer Care Auditing Services and authorized the CEO to execute a three-year contract with A Customers Point of View for a total estimated cost of \$351,280.

- F. Data Feed/Customer Information Improvements: Award of Contract - Approved the award of contract for Data Feed & Customer Information Improvements and authorized the CEO (Interim Co-CEOs) to execute a five-year contract with Swiftly, Inc., for a total estimated cost of \$1,060,120.
  - G. Training Facility Grant Submittal Approval - Approved submitting a grant application to the Low-No and Bus and Bus Facilities grant program for approximately \$9 million for the Training Facility Project.
  - H. Cheney Transit Improvements Interlocal Agreement - Approved 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."
9. Board Action – Other
- A. Facilities Master Plan Phase 1 Report Acceptance (Resolution)

Mr. Rapez-Betty provided background and reviewed key elements of the Phase 1 Final Report. He discussed near-term actions and next steps, as well as a tentative timeline for near-term actions which include advancing modern training facility, centralized public and executive meetings spaces, and expanded capacity for a facilities and grounds warehouse

He went on to provide an update on Phase II which will complete the Facilities Master Plan. He shared a tentative timeline of Phase II.

Mr. Rapez-Betty provided the recommendation from the Planning and Development Committee that the Board approve, by Resolution 838-25, accepting the Phase I report of the Facilities Master Plan, authorizing staff to advance near-term projects, and approve initiation of Phase II to advance a clean energy base and other long-term requirements.

**Mr. French moved to approve as presented. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**
10. Board Operations Committee
- A. Chair Report – there was no report at this time.
11. Planning & Development Committee (P&D)
- A. Chair Report – Mr. Hattenburg advised the items covered at P&D have been presented here today.
12. Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee (PMER)
- A. Chair Report – Chair Speirs recapped the meeting of the PMER Committee.
    - i. 2025 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Year-to-Date Performance Measures – in the interest of time, Mr. Rapez-Betty advised the report was available and he would forego this report but invited Board Members to contact him if they had any questions.
    - ii. Enhanced Transit Security Strategy Update – in the interest of time, Mr. Rapez-Betty advised this report wasn't time sensitive and suggested moving this report to the July meeting. There was no objection.
13. CEO Report - Interim Co-CEOs, Brandon Rapez-Betty and Karl Otterstrom, shared a slide presentation on screen prior to the meeting starting and while external participants resolved technology issues. They had no additional report at this time.

14. Board Information

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. May 2025 Sales Tax Revenue
- C. April 2025 Financial Results Summary
- D. April 2025 Operating Indicators
- E. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Proposed Goal for Federal Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, & 2028

15. Executive Session

Chair Speirs requested legal counsel read the Board into Executive Session. Ms. Clark advised the Board would adjourn into two Executive Sessions for the following items:

- A. *RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) To consider the selection of a site or the acquisition of real estate by lease or purchase when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased price.*
- B. *To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment and to review the performance of a public employee. (RCW 42.30.110(g))*

She said they anticipated the items taking approximately 20 minutes and the Clerk would be notified if additional time was needed. Ms. Clark advised action was anticipated after the Executive Session.

*At 3:01 Mayor Grove left the meeting.*

Chair Speirs invited Ms. Bowers to attend Item B and noted the time for Executive Session to begin would be 3:05 and the Board would reconvene in open session at approximately 3:25.

At 3:25, the Clerk advised the Board requested an additional 20 minutes

At 3:45, the Clerk advised the Board requested an additional 15 minutes

At 4:00, the Clerk advised the Board requested an additional 10 minutes

At 4:10, the Board reconvened in open session.

Ms. Clark informed the Chair that everyone was back in session but hadn't seen Ms. Wilkerson rejoin the meeting yet. Mr. Zappone went to help her get reconnected to the meeting.

Chair Speirs asked Ms. Clark to read a prepared statement. Mr. Dunne suggested doing the Real Estate first. Chair Speirs agreed.

**Mr. Hattenburg moved to have the Board approve, by Resolution 839-25 to have the Interim Co-CEOs to take such action and execute all documents necessary to acquire parcel #36091.1602, situated at 12122 N. Malon Parkway, Spokane County for a purchase price of approximately \$11.3M. Mr. French seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. French moved to have the Board approve by Resolution 840-25, to authorize the Interim Co-CEOs to take such action and to take such actions and execute all documents necessary to acquire parcels 35182.2907 and 35182.2909, situated at 1302 and 1308 W Boone Avenue, Spokane, for a purchase price of \$1.460,000. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Speirs asked Ms. Clark to read the prepared statement. Ms. Clark read the following statement:

*In 2024, STA began a search for a new Chief Executive Officer. In late 2024, the STA Board engaged KL2 Connects, an established recruitment firm with deep connections in the transit community, to facilitate a nationwide search. The STA Board established a Task Force that comprised of representatives from each jurisdiction: The City of Spokane Valley, The City of Spokane, Spokane County, and the small city jurisdictions. In December, 2024, KL2 Connects visited Spokane to interview the entire Board of Directors and other stakeholders to develop a leadership profile of the ideal candidate. During its visit, KL2 Connects also interviewed STA's Chiefs of Human Resources, Information, and Communications and Customer Service, as well as the Clerk of the Authority. Later in December and early January, KL2 interviewed two labor leaders. The third labor leader was offered an interview but declined.*

*In January 2024, KL2 Connects launched a web-based survey to canvass all other interested stakeholders and the general public on their opinions on the qualities and experience needed in STA's next CEO. A link to the survey was advertised. KL2 Connects gathered and analyzed 241 responses, and provided a summary of the results.*

*In January 2024, the CEO Task Force held a special meeting and approved the job candidate profile, based upon the results from the survey and interviews by KL2. The Task Force recommended a salary range and job description. In addition, the Task Force recommended a process for its role in the remainder of the CEO selection process, specifically:*

*Councilmember Zappone recommended that the Board endorse a process that have consultants perform initial review of all candidates and bring forward a short list of 4-6 candidates. The Task Force would then review and/or interview and narrow the finalist list to 1-3 candidates. Finalists would then have engagement with stakeholder groups to be determined by Task Force at a later date. If consultants have candidates with concerns about that process, the candidate can request to remain confidential. Councilmember Dunne seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*This same Motion was made by Commissioner Al French and seconded by Councilmember Zappone at the February Board Meeting. The Board also passed it unanimously.*

*KL2 Connects received 32 applications for the CEO position. KL2 selected five candidates for screening interviews. Those not selected for screening interviews were rejected as follows: sixteen (16) not qualified at all; nine (9) insufficient experience to meet position qualifications; and two (2) had career histories that included concerning events. Of the five interviewed by KL2, two (2) withdrew from consideration during this process – one internal and one external candidate.*

*The remaining three (3) finalists were referred to the Task Force, and they were interviewed on May 30, 2025. After the interviews were concluded and following conversation about each candidate, the Task Force voted 3-1 to bring forward one finalist. The two candidates who were not selected have been notified.*

*RCW 42.30.110 protects the discussions of candidates for public employment and their qualifications. As such, the meetings of the Task Force were properly held under executive session to protect the candidates from public disclosure.*

*The Task Force, pursuant to the Board's delegation of authority, developed a list of stakeholders, and a forum has been scheduled. The stakeholders include over 40 organizations with an interest in transit and the community at large. In addition, an employee forum is in the process of being set and a Board interview with the final candidate being scheduled.*

Chair Speirs thanked Ms. Clark.

**Mr. French made a motion to move the recommendation of the Task Force forward and schedule the public forums and then bring forward the candidate to the Board for final action and he asked for a roll call vote on the motion, assuming a second is received. Mr. Higgins seconded.**

Mr. Zappone spoke in opposition to the motion, expressing strong concerns and indicated he would support a motion that brought multiple candidates before the public. He stated he had heard from constituents, employees, community members, and leaders who shared similar concerns. He recalled that when the Board adopted the process six months ago, the intent behind that decision was to provide the public with multiple options, which he believed was a key part of the original debate and the reason a previous consultant declined to participate. He emphasized that presenting multiple candidates would reflect best practices in transparency and governance and would foster greater community support for the next CEO. He felt the public would trust the process more if given a choice and believed the Board had the option to reinstate candidates. He acknowledged that not all candidates might choose to participate, but in that case, the process could proceed as planned. He said he did not support restarting the process but believed the public should have the opportunity to weigh in on more than one candidate. He concluded by expressing concern that deviating from the transparent process the Board originally committed to could have serious negative consequences for both the agency and its future CEO.

Mr. Dunne spoke in support of the motion. He said he looks forward to a transparent and public process in which the candidate who has been considered for this role has the opportunity to speak to and receive feedback from the stakeholders that the Board so carefully arranged and that the community so carefully contributed to participate in this process. He said the transparency and the communication is solidly placed and he looks forward to that candidate's engagement in it.

Mr. Cathcart stated that he was not on the Board when the original motion was passed but was present at his first meeting in February when the item returned to the Board. He said he had not realized at the time that it was a re-vote but recalled no significant pushback on the language referencing "one to three" candidates. He noted that there was no emphasis placed on bringing forward more than one. Had he been more familiar with the process, he would have considered proposing an amendment, as he is generally skeptical of broadly written policies open to interpretation. While he disagreed with advancing only one candidate, he said he now understood the reasoning after hearing from those involved in the process. He acknowledged that the candidate is highly qualified and said the Board's role now is to gather input from employees and the community to make an informed decision. On the issue of transparency, he said it's less about the number of candidates and more about being clear and consistent with the public. He emphasized that the Board is following the adopted action, which allowed for one to three candidates, even if he personally disagreed with it. He concluded by saying no final decision has been made, input is still being received, and he supports moving the process forward.

Ms. Klitzke agreed with Council Member Cathcart but said there is always an opportunity to make a change and if bringing multiple candidates better reflects the Board's original intent and best practices, then that is what should be done. She noted that there was more than one highly qualified candidate and felt those individuals should be presented to the public and employees as originally intended. She distinguished the issue of advancing one to three candidates from the timing of public forums, stating that forums should have occurred before narrowing the field to

a single finalist. She emphasized that the Board now has a chance to correct that. She said the decision at hand is whether to give the full Board, employees, and community stakeholders a meaningful opportunity to weigh in or to present only one option. She concluded by saying it is clear that offering two or three candidates is preferable to just one and strongly advised against proceeding with a single finalist.

Mr. Zappone asked if the labor representative had anything to add to the motion.

Ms. Bowers expressed disappointment that more than one candidate was not brought forward, noting that multiple candidates had initially been advanced and then narrowed down. She acknowledged uncertainty about how the process could move forward given what had transpired, especially after a year-long effort. She stated that the public would likely be unhappy, as the process did not align with what had been communicated—that the public would be included in the final stages. She said the Board had dropped the ball and called it an unfortunate situation that could negatively impact everyone involved, particularly the candidate. She concluded by saying it was disappointing, but the Board would need to pick up the pieces and move forward.

Chair Speirs asked for additional comments. There were none.

**As Mr. French requested, a roll call vote was conducted by legal counsel. Mr. Kerns, Mr. Hattenburg, Mr. French, Mr. Cathcart, Mr. Higgins voted yes. Mr. Zappone, Ms. Wilkerson, Ms. Klitzke, and Mr. Speirs voted no. The motion passed 5 to 4.**

Mr. French requested a poll of the ex-officio small city representatives. Mr. Zappone said the small city representatives don't vote. Mr. French advised the small cities representative is supposed to represent the vote of all the members and he wanted to know how they would have weighed in on the topic. Mr. Zappone advised the motion was over and the vote had passed. Chair Speirs advised he would entertain the poll.

Ms. Clark polled the ex-officio small city representatives from Liberty Lake, Airway Heights, and Millwood. Mr. Dunne, Mr. Bynaker, Mr. Sander, expressed their support of the motion as it was passed. Mr. Grover from Cheney had already departed the meeting.

**Mr. Zappone made a motion to release the KL2 Report compiled about the candidates interviewed by the Task Force. Ms. Wilkerson seconded.**

Ms. Clark clarified that the candidate information would be redacted—unless Mr. Zappone was referring to sharing it only with Board members. Mr. Zappone confirmed he meant releasing the information to the public. In response, Ms. Clark stated that such information would be exempt under the Public Records Act.

Mr. Zappone expressed his intent was to make a motion to release the information, allowing redactions as needed. Ms. Clark reiterated that any release would have to comply with the Public Records Act, which includes specific exceptions.

Mr. Cathcart asked what the fullest extent of information release might look like if redactions weren't applied. Ms. Clark said perhaps a portion of the KL2 summary could be released but emphasized that she hadn't reviewed the materials under that specific lens.

Mr. Cathcart asked for confirmation that decisions concerning releasing information aren't up to the Board but are instead governed by state law regarding employment-related materials. Ms. Clark confirmed and added that if any personally identifying information were to be released, STA would first have to provide third-party notice to the individuals involved. She estimated that, if a public records request were submitted, roughly 90% of the content would likely be redacted or considered exempt under RCW.

Mr. French asked whether details like a candidate's current employment would be included in the redactions. Ms. Clark confirmed that such information, submitted as part of an employment application, would generally be exempt under the law.

Mr. Kerns asked whether applicants had been promised confidentiality in the application process. Ms. Clark responded that she wasn't aware of any specific conversations between the consultants and the candidates but reiterated that Public Records Act provisions would apply regardless. Mr. Kerns said that if such assurances had been made, he would be strongly opposed to breaching that trust—especially if a candidate's current employer might learn of their application through a public disclosure. Ms. Clark again reinforced the applicable exemptions under the law.

Mr. Zappone circled back to the KL2 summary, asking whether that document could be released. Ms. Clark reiterated that she hadn't reviewed the summary with that purpose in mind and wouldn't want to speculate on how much, if any, of it would be disclosable without a more thorough legal review.

Ms. Klitzke acknowledged the intent behind Mr. Zappone's push for greater transparency but questioned whether releasing candidates' information would meaningfully improve the process. She pointed out the uncertainty about what candidates were told regarding confidentiality. While they were willing to appear at stakeholder and staff meetings, that doesn't necessarily mean they were aware their personal information might be shared more broadly. She emphasized that finding clarity on that would take time and stated her belief that disclosure wouldn't help move the process forward. Her primary concern, she said, was ensuring the next CEO is set up for success—while also honoring the public process, the Board's role, and community input. She expressed disappointment that only one candidate was being presented for consideration, creating a binary "thumbs up or down" scenario. However, she said she didn't see releasing candidate information as a viable solution and warned that doing so wouldn't prevent the possibility of the Board having to start the search over again if the candidate was not approved.

Chair Speirs then asked Mr. Zappone if he still wanted to proceed with his motion. Mr. Zappone replied that the Board could simply vote on it. Chair Speirs confirmed the motion would move forward—with all legally required caveats and subject to proper legal review.

Chair Speirs called for the vote.

**Mr. Zappone and Ms. Wilkerson voted yes. Mr. French, Mr. Kerns, Mr. Cathcart, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Hattenburg, Ms. Klitzke and Mr. Speirs voted no, and the motion failed.**

16. New Business – none

17. Board Member Expressions

Ms. Wilkerson noted that she had been involved at the outset of the CEO search and was glad to return to the process following Ms. Navarette's departure. She expressed disappointment in how the search had unfolded and shared concern about how the public might perceive the process. She stated her belief that, as currently proceeding, the CEO selection could lead to a challenging path ahead for STA.

18. Adjourn - With there being no further business to come before the Board, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Infalt  
Clerk of the Authority