

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of the April 15, 2021, Board Meeting Via
WebEx Video Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pamela Haley, City of Spokane Valley, *Chair*
Candace Mumm, City of Spokane
Chris Grover, Small Cities Representative (Airway Heights) *Chair Pro Tempore*
Al French, Spokane County
Josh Kerns, Spokane County
Karen Stratton, City of Spokane
Kate Burke, City of Spokane
Lori Kinnear, City of Spokane
Tim Hattenburg, City of Spokane Valley
Don Kennedy, Small Cities Representative (Medical Lake) *Ex Officio*
Hugh Severs, Small Cities Representative (Liberty Lake) *Ex Officio*
Veronica Messing, Small Cities Representative (Cheney) *Ex Officio*
David Todd, Labor Representative Alternate, *Non-Voting*

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Freeman, Small Cities Representative (Millwood) *Ex Officio*

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Fred Nelson, Chief Operations Officer (Interim)
Monique Liard, Chief Financial Officer
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Director of Communications and Customer Service
Karl Otterstrom, Director of Planning & Development
Nancy Williams, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations
Dana Infalt, Clerk of the Authority

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Laura McAloon, McAloon Law PLLC

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL -**

Chairwoman Haley called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and the Clerk conducted roll call.

2. **APPROVE BOARD AGENDA**

Mr. Hattenburg moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Grover seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS**

Rosie Zhou, representing the Chase Youth Commission, spoke in support of the Regional Summer Youth Pilot Pass Program, noting its importance and value to young people of Spokane. She encouraged board members to support the Summer Youth Pass this year and into the future, as well.

Chairwoman Haley called three times for public expressions. There were no further comments.

4. **RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

A. Mr. Nelson acknowledged Bryan Prescott who retired from STA's Facilities & Grounds Department with 32 years of service. Bryan began his career in 1988 as a custodian and was a first-class maintenance specialist when he retired. STA thanks Bryan for his 31 years of safe driving and his 32 years of service to STA and wishes him the best in retirement.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. May 2022 Service Revisions: Draft Recommendation for Public Comment

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the Draft Recommendations for service revisions proposed to be implemented in May 2022 and offered a summary of the planned STA Moving Forward service improvements. He advised the requirement for a public hearing was noted in STA's Comprehensive Plan, *Connect Spokane*, Communication and Public Input policies when there was a service change over 10%. The proposed increase is 12.6% in estimated annual revenue hours. He provided the service revision planning and outreach that has been accomplished since 2019, and a thorough review of the new routes. He explained how the existing routes will change, providing maps as visual aids to understand changes.

Mr. Otterstrom explained the analysis completed to assure nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A final draft report was completed by a consultant and is attached to the draft recommendation. It found no disparate impact on minority or low-income populations. Impacts to Paratransit are such that the service area will grow to encompass new areas.

He noted the draft recommendation feedback received to date which included multiple comments seeking better east-west connectivity servicing the West Central neighborhood and other north-side destinations. He advised of a virtual workshop opportunity for additional feedback and the next steps which contained final recommendation to the Performance Monitoring & External Relations Committee and Board action in May. Following the anticipated approval at the May Board meeting, design and construction of new bus stops, development of new schedules, and preparation for service implementation in 2022 concurrent with the launch of the City Line will occur.

Ms. Mumm asked if staff had contacted neighborhood councils and Mr. Otterstrom said they had been reaching out to them. She advised they may be able to send out notice of the virtual workshop opportunity to their email list for additional participation. Mr. Otterstrom thanked her for the suggestion.

Following the presentation, Chairwoman Haley called three times for public comments on the hearing. With no comments being provided, the public hearing was closed at 1:50 pm.

6. BOARD ACTION – CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 2021, Board Meeting – Corrections/Approval
- B. Approval of the March 2021 Vouchers
- C. Acquisition of Real Estate – Resolution
- D. Division BRT: Locally Preferred Alternative

Ms. Mumm requested item 4D. Division BRT: Locally Preferred Alternative be reviewed separately for further discussion prior to approval.

Mr. French moved to approve items 4A, 4B, and 4C on the consent agenda as presented. Mr. Grover seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4D. Division BRT: Locally Preferred Alternative

Chairwoman Haley asked if Ms. Mumm had a specific question. Ms. Mumm advised that she and Ms. Burke discussed the potential for cycle-track wording and requested that the resolution be updated to include language for cycle tracks. Mr. Otterstrom explained the locally preferred alternative language included in Section 1-I, Other Multimodal Treatments read “protected bicycle facilities along Ruby Street with pedestrian, ADA, and bicycle improvements throughout the corridor.” Ms. Burke noted she may not have seen the ‘protected’ wording. He explained the reasoning behind not including the specific “cycle track” wording and advised of the areas along the corridor in which a cycle track might be practicable. After discussion, it was decided to update the

resolution to change the wording in Section 1-I, Other Multimodal Treatments, to read “Protected bicycle facilities, *including cycle tracks, where practicable*, along Ruby Street with pedestrian, ADA and bicycle improvements throughout the corridor.”

Ms. Burke moved to amend the language as indicated and approve Item 4D. Division BRT: Locally Preferred Alternative as updated. Ms. Mumm seconded.

Mr. French asked if this had been brought up during the committee’s work. If not, since the committee’s work was being altered, he questioned if the item needed to go back to the committee. He advised he had no opposition to it but wanted to ensure the proper procedure was being followed. Ms. Burke noted cycle tracks were discussed at the committee level and that the specific wording was not included in the final resolution. She advised they understood the potential for cycle tracks would be limited to where practicable but if they were not practicable, they wanted to include protected bike lanes.

Chairwoman Haley asked for questions or comments.

Ms. Stratton asked the difference between cycle track and protected bike lane. Mr. Otterstrom explained a cycle track is a form of protected bicycle facility. However, a cycle track is a protected bicycle facility that has lanes in each direction –similar to its own bicycle roadway but protected from other motor vehicle traffic. He advised that is just one form of a protected bicycle facility.

Ms. Stratton asked the follow up question to Mr. Otterstrom about his thinking about going back to the committee due to the change in wording. Mr. Otterstrom thanked Ms. Stratton for allowing him to provide his opinion and noted this is in line with what the Steering Committee was endeavoring to do. He said it helps expound on the idea, noting there will be more engineering work to be done but the new wording does not change anything proposed going forward but simply clarifies that it includes cycle tracks, where practicable.

Chairwoman Haley asked for additional comments or questions. There were none.

Chairwoman Haley called for the vote and the motion to approve as amended passed unanimously.

7. BOARD ACTION – OTHER

A. Regional Summer Youth Pass Pilot

Mr. Grover provided an introduction and summary of the proposed Regional Summer Youth Pass Pilot program in cooperation with the local libraries, school districts, and local jurisdictions, to be potentially funded initially with savings from STA’s Spokane Community College capital project budget. At the Board Operations committee meeting, Mr. Grover asked for this item to be included for discussion and potential approval at the Board meeting today. With approval from the Board today, staff are ready to roll out the project. He said Mr. Rapez-Betty will give details of the program.

Mr. Rapez-Betty provided high level details on the potential execution of the program, upon board approval. He noted the implementation steps would include card procurement and programming; delivery and distribution; data gathering and future cost estimating; project partners (distribution, promoted service, and communication partners); program communication and marketing; monitoring and evaluation; and summary performance and cost information.

Chairwoman Haley asked for questions. Mr. Hattenburg asked if we could use COVID relief funding or if it was best to use money on hand. Mr. Rapez-Betty referred the question to CEO Meyer. She advised the funding STA has left over from unspent capital project funding seemed the best way to fund a pilot program. She noted the funding received from the federal government related to COVID relief is something the Board will have strategic and deliberate discussion about potential deployment and investment. Ms. Meyer advised the savings from a

project which allows funding availability seemed the easiest and most appropriate way to fund a pilot program.

Ms. Kinnear thanked Mr. Rapez-Betty for his thorough presentation. She recalled that the program the city provided in 2019 was a huge success adding, for the future ridership of STA, it is a great way to bring on young riders and get them used to riding the bus and the best way to get around prior to and after getting a driver's license. She thanked Mr. Grover for bringing it forward and said she thought that it would be a game changer.

Ms. Mumm said the pilot was a great launching point. She expressed her thoughts on how well received the program will be especially coming out of COVID since the students have been through so much.

Ms. Mumm moved to approve the Regional Summer Youth Pass Pilot, PTBA-wide, funded up to \$380,000, with unspent monies from the SCC Transit Center Project. Mr. Hattenburg seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

8. BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

A. Chair's Report

Ms. Haley reviewed the property acquisition item that was brought to the Board Operations Committee and approved under the consent agenda today, at Mission Avenue, south of Spokane Community College.

9. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

A. Chair's Report

Mr. French advised the committee discussed the Locally Preferred Alternative approved earlier today and received presentations from Ms. Liard and Mr. Otterstrom.

1. 2022-2027 TDP Mid-Range Planning Guidance – Mr. Otterstrom reported on timeline and the 2021-2026 guidance previously provided by the Board. He reviewed the 2021 regional and national trends as well as the proposed integration of planning activities being adopted prior to budget preparation this year. He noted impacts and changes that may occur in future years, including evaluate agency response to trends and develop an investment prioritization framework. He reviewed next steps for 2022-2027 TDP guidance.
2. 2022-2027 TDP: Review Preliminary Revenue and Expenditure Forecast Assumptions – Ms. Liard advised that as part of the TDP timeline, the revenue and expenditure forecast assumptions are reviewed with the Board. She shared the monitoring indicators and talked about recent developments in the news concerning the economy.

Sales tax revenue history was described, indicating how it has performed year over year. Over 25 years, STA averaged an annual 3.4% increase. She explained the other variability throughout the more recent years and looked at the recent assumptions compared to the actual budget. The post pandemic sales tax revenue assumption recommendation is to use 2020 as a “reset” year and start the 3.0 % growth per year based on 2020 actual sales tax revenue.

She shared information on fare revenue and discussed years 2022 through 2027, along with the most recent fare changes and an ABBG comparison. The 2020 fare increase is deferred, and ridership recovery is the focus post pandemic with an objective to retain current fares through 2025 and assume a \$0.25 increase in 2026 to realign with farebox recovery goal. She reviewed the other revenue categories, the expenditure assumptions, and the next steps.

Mr. French asked if there were any questions for Mr. Otterstrom, Ms. Liard, or him? There were none and he advised that completed his report.

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS (PMER) COMMITTEE:

A. Chair's Report

Mr. Grover noted discussion at PMER was focused on the Regional Summer Youth Pass Pilot program approved earlier in the meeting. He also talked about a mid-term update received regarding the Community Access Pass Pilot program which was provided by Mr. Rapez-Betty

11. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer noted ridership month over month and year-to-date comparisons for Fixed Route, Paratransit, and Vanpool. She reminded that the early weeks of 2020 had no restrictions but March represents the first month over month comparison with COVID-19 restrictions in place.

Fixed Route experienced a 25.8% decrease in March 2021 vs. March 2020, and a 48.4% decrease year-to-date. Paratransit ridership continues to improve from prior months and saw just a 12.1% decrease March 2021 vs. March 2020, with a 48.9% decline year-to-date. Vanpool realized a 40% decrease March 2021 vs. March 2020 and a 52.5% decrease year-to-date. Ridership trend slides provided the year over year comparison of 2019, 2020, and 2021. Monthly fare revenue by service type was also shown. She discussed the monthly revenue by service type that indicated fare suspension from April through June 2020 in response COVID-19 to allow for rear door boarding in order to protect drivers. Once shields were installed around the driver compartment of the bus, STA resumed fare collection and front door boarding.

Sales tax came in at 8.7% above March 2020; 4.8% year-to-date above 2020 actual; and 21.3% year-to-date above budget. Ms. Meyer reminded that sales tax was very conservatively budgeted for in 2021 and as such, staff are not surprised we are exceeding sales tax budget.

Operating expenditures through February 2021 were 13.1% lower than budget, although timing of expenditures may cause this to vary throughout the year.

City Line finance update indicated \$20.4M expensed and uncommitted at \$16.8M. Ms. Meyer shared some information on core construction progress and status of the project, including on route charging units for the battery electric buses. Ms. Meyer advised on the status of projects and the upcoming core construction of stations. She noted the invitation for bids (IFB) for amenities installation was not yet out and the Riverside Westbound Stations 13, 15, and 17 designs were being worked on with advertising of the IFB anticipated in June.

An Enviro500EV Double Decker bus from Alexander Dennis (a subsidiary of New Flyer International Group) visited STA. It is a zero emissions bus (ZEB) with 80 seats, 44' long, and 13.5' tall. She reminded that the Cheney line in 2023 is expected to be provided by double decker buses and STA is considering the purchase of seven vehicles for this route.

Legislative update – Ms. Meyer noted that it is the last two weeks of regular state session. She reviewed the Forward Washington funding package which passed out of the senate transportation today. The CAP and Trade (Climate Commitment Act) was heard in the House Environment & Energy on Wednesday and is scheduled to be moved out of committee on Friday. The Low Carbon Fuel Standards passed both houses and will likely be handled in a formal or informal conference committee.

Federal update – Ms. Meyer reviewed the Administration’s American Jobs Plan, the FY 2022 Budget Request to Congress, and other items of interest to the Board.

Spokane Transit’s 40 Year Celebration is going on now and as a tribute STA has repainted a vintage theme on one of its coaches. Ms. Meyer shared a short video of the people involved in the outfitting of the livery and commended them on the job well done. She said to watch for the bus on various routes in Spokane this year as part of our ongoing celebration of turning 40.

STA will have a vaccine clinic on site April 29th for employees and their families. Staff are working with Rite Aid Pharmacy and are pleased to be able to provide the opportunity at STA.

Mr. French asked Ms. Meyer about the City Line budget pie chart. He said of the \$92M established as budget, he understood that uncommitted is \$16.8M. He asked if the other categories are indicative of the final budget? Ms. Meyer stated that is staff’s aim. Mr. French complimented Ms. Meyer and staff and reminded that staff’s original budget was in the low \$70M range but FTA and outside consultants said we had underestimated. Now that we are close to the end, it appears that staff, with Ms. Meyer’s leadership, are closer to being accurate than outside consultants. The \$16.8M is money the Board pulled out of reserves to close the gap to be able to get the federal grant. He said thank you and congratulations on a job well done, noting we are not at the finish line yet but that he wanted to say thank you.

Ms. Meyer thanked Mr. French and clarified that STA must spend a proportional amount of its funding with FTA and the state funding to make it happen, saying we do not get to keep what is unexpended in total. She offered kudos to STA’s team for the good work they are doing on the project.

There were no additional questions or comments.

12. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. March 2021 Sales Tax Revenue
- C. February 2021 Financial Results Summary
- D. February 2021 Operating Indicators
- E. 2020 Year End Performance Measures
- F. May 2021 Service Change Summary
- G. Connect Spokane: Timeline for Review of Plan Elements
- H. FTA Section 5310 Funding Call for Projects Timeline
- I. US-195/I-90 Study Update

13. NEW BUSINESS (*None*)

14. BOARD MEMBERS’ EXPRESSIONS

Chairwoman Haley called on board members for comments. Mayor Grover offered his happy anniversary thoughts to STA and Ms. Mumm stated she is excited to ride the double decker bus. Mr. Hattenburg said he was very excited about the Summer Youth Pass program. Chairwoman Haley echoed Mr. French’s previously stated comments.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairwoman Haley read the following: At this time (2:58), the STA Board of Directors will adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing, planning, or adopting the strategy or position to be taken during the course of ongoing collective bargaining. The STA Board of Directors will reconvene in open session at approximately 3:10. If it becomes necessary to extend the executive session, a member of the staff will announce the time at which the STA Board will reconvene. If any action is to be taken as a result of discussions in the executive session, that action will occur at the open public session.

Staff returned at 3:10 and there was no action taken.

16. ADJOURNED

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairwoman Haley adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Infalt".

Dana Infalt

Clerk of the Authority