

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Draft Minutes of the October 16, 2008, Meeting
City Council Chambers
808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Richard, Spokane County, Chairman
Dick Denenny, City of Spokane Valley
Al French, City of Spokane
Richard Rush, City of Spokane
Nancy McLaughlin, City of Spokane
Bonnie Mager, Spokane County
Richard Munson, City of Spokane Valley
Allan Gainer, City of Cheney

STAFF PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Jim Plaster, Director of Finance & Administration
Steve Blaska, Director of Operations
Mike Volz, Assistant Director of Finance & Administration
Steve Doolittle, Human Resources Manager
Molly Myers, Communications Manager
Gordon Howell, Planning and Grants Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT

Patrick Rushing, City of Airway Heights

PROVIDING LEGAL COUNSEL

Laura McAloon, K & L Gates LLP

GUESTS

None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Richard called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and conducted roll call.

2. RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Meyer recognized Board member Al French for winning the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Board Member of the Year award. The national award was presented to Mr. French at the APTA Annual Meeting in San Diego which both Ms. Meyer and Mr. French attended. Ms. Meyer showed a recording of the ceremony at which Mr. French was presented with the award. Mr. French said he was very proud to receive this award and that it reflected on all STA employees and the CEO; it was a collective effort.

Mr. Rush and Mr. Gainer arrived at 5:40 p.m.

3. PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS

Mr. K.C. Traver said there have been misconceptions in the cost of light rail. The lowest cost was \$263 million for a non-electric single track but the press reported that it would be \$600 million. The cost for an electrified system was \$315 million in 2006 dollars. Ms. McLaughlin asked if that was for single or dual track. Mr. Traver said it was single. The cost is escalating and the population is growing so light rail should be planned for now.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 and Section 5309 2008 Program of Projects and Budget

This public hearing was a continuation of the hearing at the September 18, 2008 Board meeting. Mr. Richard opened the hearing at 5:47 p.m. Mr. Howell reported that STA has two projects for 5307

funding: Preventative maintenance for federal funding of \$7,218,723 with a local match of \$1.8 million; and, transit enhancements for federal funding of \$73,000 with a local match of \$18,250.

Under the 5309 funding is the Smart Bus Technology project at \$686,000 with a local match of \$171,500. The hearing has been advertized twice.

Mr. K.C. Traver commented on the use of both Section 5307 and 5309 funds. He said a portion of the funds should be used for planning and preliminary engineering for High Capacity Transit (HCT) and downtown streetcars. This can be authorized by the STA Board of Directors. Mr. Traver continued by saying the right-of-way can be purchased by funds in STA's budget. Mr. Rush asked if there is the potential to put light rail track over the Latah Creek bridge to the west. Mr. Traver said the Light Rail Steering Committee did not consider the west side of the city in their planning. If the City of Spokane decides to renovate or replace the bridge, light rail planning should be taken into consideration. Ms. Meyer said the costs of light rail from downtown to the airport have not been evaluated. The project in the South Valley corridor cost \$9 million to evaluate. She added that the bridge proposal is not funded. Mr. Rush said he would confer with Katherine Miller at the City and let the Board know.

Mr. Richard closed the public hearing at 5:59 p.m.

5. BOARD ACTION

- A. Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 and Section 5309 2008 Program of Projects and Budget

Mr. French moved to adopt a resolution authorizing the filing of the FY 2008 FTA Section 5307 and FTA Section 5309 Program of Projects with the Department of Transportation, United States of America, under Section 5307 and Section 5309 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and other matters properly related thereto. Mr. Munson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- B. Eligibility Criteria for the Use of 49 USC §5307 Funds

Mr. French moved to adopt a resolution establishing eligibility criteria for the use of 49 USC §5307 funds to be used to evaluate and prioritize the Program of Projects for annual federal formula transit funds. Mr. Denenny seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. BOARD ACTION: CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion to approve minutes of the September 18, 2008 Board Meeting.
B. Motion to Approve Accounts Payable Voucher and Warrant nos. 553121 through 553522, and Worker's Compensation Warrant nos. 201128 through 201382 totaling \$2,158,527.31 for the period September 1 through September 30, 2008.
C. Motion to approve the award of contract for the leasing and service of tire vehicle mileage to Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc., for five years beginning December 1, 2008, for an estimated first year amount of \$349,888 based upon current levels of service, and an estimated cost of \$1,767,260 for the term of the contract.

Mr. Munson moved to approve consent agenda items 6. A – C. Mr. French seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. BOARD ACTION: OTHER ITEMS

A. Special Fare Policy Structure for 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships

Ms. Myers said that Spokane has been chosen to host the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships and the event will be held January 14-24, 2010. Spokane's event organizer, STAR USA, has requested that STA be the "Official Event Shuttle." Spokane Transit provided this service in 2007 and received many compliments as a result. Ms. Myers requested the Board adopt a fare policy for the event. Mr. Rush asked how much the event cost in direct operational expenses for 2007. Mr. Blaska said it was \$55,000. Mr. Denenny asked staff to look at the Valley routes to provide more express service for people coming downtown from that area. **Mr. French moved to adopt the following fare policy for the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, January 14-24, 2010: general public fare on the additional shuttle at the current rate for a shuttle fare at the time of the event, and \$12.00 for a system-wide ten-day event pass, and event passes for credentialed personnel in exchange for STAR USA's advertising and marketing of STA's public transportation services for the events.** **Mr. Denenny seconded.** Mr. Richard said the event was a great success in 2007 and gained national recognition. He thanked STA employees in advance since a lot of effort is involved in making these events a success. **The motion passed unanimously.**

B. Request to Provide Service for the 2009 National Veterans' Wheelchair Games

Ms. Myers announced that Spokane has been selected to host the twenty-ninth National Veterans' Wheelchair Games. The event will be held July 13 – 18, 2009 and Spokane Transit has been asked to provide transportation for all participants and their support group (approximately 600 people). Twenty low-floor, ramp-equipped buses with all seats removed have been requested for this purpose. STA will be reimbursed in the amount of \$106,968.80. **Ms. McLaughlin moved to allow the CEO to enter into an agreement with National Veterans Wheelchair Games to provide transportation for all participants and support group for the 2009 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Provision of service is dependent on approval through the FTA Charter Service procedures.** **Ms. Mager seconded.** Mr. Richard asked what impact this would have on regular service. Mr. Blaska said twenty new buses are arriving and those that would have been retired will be kept in service so that regular bus service will not be impacted. Mr. Munson said this is another great opportunity to show that Spokane has an excellent transit system. **The motion passed unanimously.**

8. BOARD INFORMATION

- A. Committee Minutes
- B. Miscellaneous Correspondence
- C. August 2008 Financial Results Summary
- D. August 2008 Operating Indicators
- E. Third Quarter 2008 Travel Report
- F. Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) and Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center (SRTMC) 2009 Budgets

9. STAFF REPORTS:

A. September 2008 Ridership Highlights

Mr. Blaska reported an increase in ridership on fixed route of 32.7% between September 2007 and September 2008. There were two additional weekdays and two less weekend days in 2008. Mr. French said he spoke with staff from other transit agencies nationwide at the convention in San Diego and the national increase is 5 – 6%. Their staff wondered how STA was coping with such a large

increase. He complimented coach operators and staff on managing to keep up the service levels. Mr. Richard also mentioned the Federal Transit Administration award for increased ridership that STA received for 2007. Ms. Meyer said staff is currently submitting the application based on 2008 ridership. It is not known whether any transit agency has won the award two years in a row.

B. Downtown Transit Center Options - Recommendation

Mr. Blaska said the options offered by the consultant, Nelson/Nygaard a year ago at the Board Retreat have been narrowed down to two: 1) Remain at, and enhance the Plaza; 2) Move to the Intermodal Center. The City's consultant, DKS, and the Downtown Plan Update both recommend STA remain at the Plaza and make improvements. Staff recommends remaining at the Plaza and making facility and operational enhancements there. There will be a public hearing at the November 20, 2008, Board meeting and the Board will take action in December. Mr. Rush asked if there could be uses for the second floor other than office space. Mr. Blaska said there were no specific proposals but leasing the space out would generate revenue. Mr. Rush said a supermarket would be a popular choice and would introduce people to The Plaza who would not otherwise be there. Mr. Blaska said the retail functions would remain on the first floor. Ms. Meyer said she liked the idea of a grocery store and would consider it for the first floor. However, there is already a mini-market next door. Mr. French said when the Plaza was appraised by Auble, Jolicoeur & Gentry in 2005, they recommended a social services agency be housed on the second floor. He agreed that the second floor should be kept for office use and the first floor for transit and retail. The estimated costs for capital improvements are \$2.2 million with the second floor configuration and technical enhancements not included. The sidewalk on the Sprague side is proposed to be widened and changed from saw tooth to parallel bus parking. This is part of a transition from a pulse system to interlining the routes. Currently some routes are already interlined.

Mr. Munson asked how this information would be given to the public. Ms. Meyer said it was discussed at the recent Community Forum and will be circulated to the stakeholders who were involved in the process at the beginning, including Downtown Spokane Partnership, Greater Spokane Inc., Business Owners' and Managers' Association, and transit advocates. They will be invited to the public hearing next month. Staff is not planning on making presentations to service organizations. Mr. Denenny asked what the reaction of the drivers was to the final two options. Mr. Blaska said the majority prefers the Plaza, mostly due to difficult and challenging movements that would be necessary for vehicles at the Intermodal Center. He said he would evaluate the drivers' feedback and let the Board know next month. Ms. Meyer said she made a presentation to GSI and DSP with the Nelson/Nygaard consultant and the majority wants STA to remain at the Plaza since it doesn't make sense to move out of the downtown core.

C. August 2008 Financial Highlights

Mr. Plaster reported that sales tax revenue is -4.9% for the month of September. Staff has tracked other jurisdictions and STA is in the middle. Overall there is a -2.15% growth rate for 2008 versus 2007. It is anticipated that 2009 will be flat or negative. STA has experienced a decrease of \$2.6 million in revenue year-to-date.

10. **NEW BUSINESS** – None.

11. **CEO REPORT**

Ms. Meyer said the Board met for a financial planning workshop on October 1. There will be a follow-up meeting on November 5 at 2:45 pm at STA. Regarding right-of-way for high capacity transit, she said STA staff is negotiating planning agreements with jurisdictions. The Riverside extension is being

discussed with City of Spokane staff and STA staff is negotiating with a property owner in the Valley. Also, an appraisal is being done of property owned by the County.

Information about the cost of the Geiger Spur was provided: construction was \$1,540,000 per mile and total project cost including land acquisition was \$2,025,000 per mile for a three and a half mile spur. The light rail project costs did not include land acquisition. Mr. Rush requested a copy of the light rail report. At the last meeting, Board members requested information about the light rail in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte is twice as big as Spokane and has double the transit system. Planning for electric light rail began in 1999 and the grand opening was in November, 2007. It was not apparent whether federal funds were used. Mr. Munson thought federal funds were used for heavy rail and Bus Rapid Transit in Charlotte. Mr. French said he was in a meeting with federal officials who said there would be no federal funding for light rail in Spokane. Spokane does not qualify in terms of potential ridership or congestion relief. He said federal guidelines would need to be changed for Spokane to become eligible. Mr. Munson said Bus Rapid Transit is a third of the cost of light rail, even with dedicated bus lanes. Mr. Rush asked staff to find out if economic development resulted from the light rail in Charlotte. Ms. Meyer said STA cannot get federal funding but may qualify for an earmark.

STA will contribute a total of \$53,600 to SRTC for 2009. Mr. French asked if an STA staff member sits on their Board. Ms. Meyer said no; Mr. Gainer is STA's representative and the person must be a small city member of the Board. Ms. McLaughlin and Mr. Richard are also on the SRTC Board but as representatives of their own jurisdictions.

Bill Millar, President and CEO of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) will be in Spokane during the morning of October 30. Ms. Meyer invited Board members to a meeting with him at the Spokane Regional Business Center beginning at 9:00 a.m.

12. BOARD MEMBERS' EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Rush said the Rails to Trails organization is seeking federal funding for non-motorized transit and there will be a "Smart Routes" presentation on October 20 at noon at the Plaza. Complimentary transit passes are available. Ms. Meyer, Commissioner Mielke and Mayor Verner will speak. Mr. Rush added that he would be hosting Council Connections on October 23 on Channel 5.

Mr. Munson said the Board should consider planning for Bus Rapid Transit. **He moved to task staff to begin the process for planning for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Spokane County. Ms. Mager seconded.** Ms. Meyer said she was supportive and that it would be in sync with the Transit 2020 plan. She said staff would gather information. Mr. French also supports BRT and wanted staff to come back with a process first. In 2004 there was federal funding available for BRT but the Light Rail Steering Committee did not proceed with that option. Mr. French said FTA staff told him there may be funding available for BRT. **Mr. Munson amended his motion to begin the preliminary planning process for BRT.** Mr. Richard asked if this would set the community's expectations too high. He suggested bringing this idea back to the next meeting before expending any planning funds. Mr. Munson said his motion did not specify a timeframe and it would not be before the end of the year. Mr. Rush asked if a consultant would need to be hired. Ms. Meyer said Nelson/Nygaard would be back with more planning information in March 2009. **Mr. Richard amended the motion to read: Staff should gather data on cost alternatives and planning requirements with an emphasis on Bus Rapid Transit for the Board to consider. Mr. Munson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Rush left at 7:40 p.m.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:40 p.m., Ms. McAlloon announced that the Board would adjourn for an Executive Session for the following purpose:

- Reviewing the performance of a public employee.

The STA Board of Directors will reconvene in open session at approximately 8:10 p.m. If it becomes necessary to extend the executive session, a member of the staff will return to 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.

At 8:10 p.m., Ms. McLaughlin returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 8:20 p.m.
At 8:20 p.m., Ms. McLaughlin returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 8:30 p.m.
At 8:30 p.m., Ms. McLaughlin returned to announce the Board would reconvene at 8:40 p.m.

At 8:40 p.m. the Board of Directors reconvened and Chairman Richard declared the meeting back in open public session.

14. Cable 5 Broadcast Dates and Times of the October 16, 2008 Board Meeting:

Saturday, October 18, 2008	4:00 p.m.
Monday, October 20, 2008	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, October 21, 2008	8:00 p.m.

15. **Next Committee Meetings** (1230 West Boone Avenue, Spokane, Washington):

Operations & Customer Service November 5, 2008, 1:30 p.m. (Southside Conference Room)
Citizen Advisory Committee November 12, 2008, 5:00 p.m. (Northside Conference Room)

16. **Next Board Meeting**, Thursday, November 20, 2008, 5:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, 808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington.

17. **ADJOURNED**

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Richard adjourned the meeting at 8:43p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Watson
Executive Assistant to the CEO
& Clerk of the Authority