

Spokane Transit Authority
1230 W Boone Ave
Spokane, WA 99201-2686
509-325-6000

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the October 9, 2024, Meeting

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

STA Northside Conference Room

1230 W Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA

In person w/ Virtual Public Viewing Option

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Brown, Chair
JT Ramsey
Chris Fortensky
Andrew Tse
Tino Andrade
Jackson Deese
Linda Carroll
Caleb McDougall
Perry Crandall
Julie Corpuz
Kinzie Michael
Rhonda Young

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

E. Susan Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Karl Otterstrom, Chief Planning & Development Officer
Carly Cortright, Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer
Delana Combs, Ombudsman & Accessibility Officer
Brandon Rapez-Betty, Chief Operations Officer
Tammy Johnston, Sr. Financial Services Manager
Dianne Peach, Executive Assistant to the Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Susan Gray
Konrad Capeller

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

Mr. Dan Brown, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and roll call was conducted.

2. **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Brown reported that he had a brief problem with his Connect Card, but the issue was corrected immediately with no further issues noted.

3. **COMMITTEE ACTION**

A. **Minutes of September 11, 2024, Committee Meeting**

Dr. Carroll moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Deese seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. CAC Consideration for Membership

Dr. Cortright reviewed the process for committee member selection to the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) noting that the CAC evaluates applications, interviews and recommends members to the Performance Monitoring & External Relations (PMER) Committee. There can be up to fifteen members on the committee. Chair Brown, Mr. Andrade, and Mr. Deese all volunteered to participate with Dr. Cortright in the interview process. Mr. Fortensky offered to be a backup. Ultimately Mr. Andrade and Mr. Fortensky were not available, so Mr. Tse volunteered. Chair Brown reported the reference findings of the two recommended applicants to be able to move forward to the PMER committee for approval. The two applicants that are recommended are Tyler Salyer and John Lemus.

Dr. Carroll moved to approve the recommendation of Mr. Tyler Salyer to the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee for membership approval of the Citizen Advisory Committee. Mr. Deese seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Carroll moved to approve the recommendation of Mr. John Lemus to the Performance Monitoring and External Relations Committee for membership approval of the Citizen Advisory Committee. Mr. Deese seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. 2025 DRAFT Budget

Ms. Tammy Johnston reported an overview of the 2025 Proposed Budget. The proposed core actions that are aligned with *Connect 2035* Strategic Plan Goals are to elevate the customer experience, lead and collaborate with community partners to enhance the quality of life in the region and to strengthen STA's capacity to anticipate and respond to the demands of the region.

Operating Revenue Budget – The draft 2025 Operating Revenue Budget assumes \$155,352,619 in revenues, an increase of \$12,155,087 (8.5%) compared to the 2024 adopted budget of \$143,197,532. The sales tax collection is the biggest contributor to the revenue changes.

Operating Expense Budget – The draft 2025 Operating Expense Budget is forecasted to be \$131,473,981, an increase of \$9,283,934 (7.6%) compared to the 2024 operating budget of \$122,190,047. Fixed Route is the largest expense at \$86,199,499, with Paratransit at \$21,893,956, Administration at \$18,284,439, Plaza at \$4,144,634, and Rideshare at \$951,453.

2025 Capital Budget and Budgeted Fleet Replacement Contribution – The draft 2025 Capital Budget is forecasted to be \$79,022,143. The Fleet Replacement will be \$16,478,723. The Capital Budget sources include Federal funding of \$5,030,159 (8.1%), State funding of \$17,216,175 (27.5%) and local funding of \$40,297,086 (64.4%).

Next steps for the 2025 budget process were reviewed.

B. 2023 Fixed Route Rider Survey Results Summary

Dr. Cortright reported that the Rider Survey was conducted during October 2023 by the ETC Institute. The survey collected feedback from riders regarding their perceptions of the services provided by STA. Dr. Cortright reviewed the demographics of the riders, including race, employment status, gender, and household income. Twenty-one percent of riders reported riding the bus less than one year ago and 42% reported they are riding the bus more, which is consistent with prior surveys. Dr. Cortright went on to report that 82% of respondents said they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with Spokane Transit bus service, and 32% of respondents reported that not having a car was one of their main reasons for riding the bus. Riders primarily either purchased their bus pass at the Plaza or it was provided through their school with only 15% purchasing online. Seventy percent reported using a Connect card. Like the Community Perception Survey, the ETC Institute asked riders if they were aware that youth 18 and under ride free, finding that 74% were aware compared to 48% who were aware on the Community Perception Survey. Respondents were asked to rate certain aspects of STA's bus service, including driver courtesy, driving safely, personal safety on the bus, and cleanliness of bus interior; 75% reporting that they "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the statement "Bus operators operate the vehicle safely"; 74% reported they "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the statement "Bus operators are helpful" and 74% reported they "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the statement "Bus operators are courteous." Finally, when rating STA's customer service, all five areas (call center, customer service, staff, coach operators/supervisors, and security) were ranked as "Excellent" or "Good" by most respondents.

C. Technology Options for Trip Planning

Dr. Cortright demonstrated the variety of technological options for STA Trip Planning. She demonstrated the Spokane Transit Website as well as Google Maps and Apple Maps and described how Transit App and Moovit mobile applications work. She also went over the Text Your Stop (99689) option or calling 509-328-RIDE (7433) that can all be used to plan a bus trip. Discussion ensued.

5. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer reported that STA has three funding sources. The first is local voters approved sales tax at 0.8% of a cent, the second is customer fares at approximately \$7.5 million per year and the third is federal and state funding. The federal funding is used for preventative maintenance and is calculated by formula funding. Since *Move Ahead Washington* was passed by the WA State legislature in 2021, STA also receives approximately \$10 million per year in state funding, but this is at risk with Initiative 2117 on the November 2024 ballot. There is a small amount of revenue that is made from three vendor leases at the Plaza. In September, from the July 2024 sales, there was \$10 million dollars from sales tax revenue compared to the budget of \$8.5 million, with \$1.5 million revenue over budget bringing the YTD sales tax collection to 2.4% above budget. Ms. Meyer reported that Dr. Grant Forsyth, an economist with Avista, was consulted and gave his recommendations for 2025 sales tax projections of between 1.5 and 2% growth.

Ms. Meyer reported that she along with five Board members and STA leadership all attended the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Transform Conference in Anaheim CA. The conference was very productive. The STA team met with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) including the Executive Director and Region 10 Administrator from the WA, OR, ID, and AK region. The team spoke to them regarding City Line ridership and reported that STA is \$12-14 million under budget, and the board voted to dedicate the local funds to the Division BRT project. The team also talked about the Division BRT project status and overall agency update. They were very complimentary about the STA Board and staff and the work that has been done.

Ms. Meyer reported that Mr. Otterstrom and the Planning team hosted the Northwest Transit Planning Exchange meeting in Spokane where two large transit systems from Canada and large and small transit systems from six states participated. The CEO from the Boise transit system was also in attendance.

Ms. Meyer stated that she is preparing for the CEO Search Task Force meeting scheduled on October 16, 2024, to see what recommendations on next steps for the CEO search they may have.

Ms. Meyer reported to the board that there are two new members that will be brought forward to the PMER Committee to be considered for membership on the Citizen Advisory Committee. She stated that STA conducted four 2-hour workshops for employees regarding Connect 2035 to gather input on the long-range plan.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPRESSIONS

Dr. Carroll stated that she has heard very positive remarks regarding the new route between Airway Heights and Cheney as many students commute every day. She also said that when people asked her where she parked downtown, she was happy to say that she didn't need to park as she rode the bus, but also asked if the northeast routes could be staggered for better 15-minute availability.

8. November 13, 2024 – COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

The committee reviewed the proposed agenda items for the November 13, 2024, meeting. There were no suggested corrections or additions.

9. ADJOURN

With no further business, Chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in person at STA Northside Conference Room with a virtual viewing option.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Peach

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Executive Assistant to the Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer