

**CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes of the July 17, 2024, Meeting

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**STA Northside Conference Room**

**1230 W Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA**

*In person meeting with optional virtual link*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**GUESTS**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Perry Crandall  
Susan Gray

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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 there was a concern noted that emails were not getting through to employees at Spokane Transit. He contacted STA staff, and the problem was corrected promptly. He reminded CAC members that if they ever have a question or concern to feel free to contact STA staff. Chair Brown stated that during Hoopfest, he had a wonderful experience with one of the Coach Operators on Route 4 who handled a stressful situation with kindness and grace. Ms. Meyer asked Dr. Cortright to track down the name of the coach operator to be able to thank her for her service.

3. **COMMITTEE ACTION**

A. **Minutes of July 17, 2024, Committee Meeting**

**Mr. Fortensky moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Ramsey seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Connect 2035 Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the followup from the June 2024 Citizen Advisory Committee meeting where the CAC members independently identified up to three initiatives that they best believed supported STA's mission over the next 10 years. He stated that the top three ranked initiatives that best support STA's mission are to organize and advance initiatives that align with STA strategic and financial priorities, assess impact and cost of candidate initiatives across a range of key outcomes and to identify initiative investment packages. The next steps are to finish the outcome evaluation of the preliminary initiatives and to develop alternative packages for input and feedback. The target date is December 19, 2024 for Board adoption.

B. Division Street BRT: Design and Public Outreach Update

Mr. Otterstrom provided a general update on the Division BRT. He stated that the Division Street BRT is intended to be STA's 2<sup>nd</sup> BRT project, running north/south with City Line running east/west. There will be 44 new stations within a roughly 10-mile corridor and an envisioned future transit center on the north end, with downtown charging/layover location and Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes. This initiative is currently in the project development phase and STA is working toward the 30% design milestone by June 2025. As STA is engaged in this project as an agency that does not own any roadways, it is critical that STA partner with the jurisdictions that have authority over infrastructure, such as Spokane County, City of Spokane and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Spokane Transit Authority also partners with the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), who is the lead agency for transportation planning services for the area covered by Spokane County. There are regular agency and committee meetings with all project team members and partner agencies. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) holds quarterly meetings so STA can demonstrate the development of a baseline project schedule, risk register and traffic impact analysis requirements. The 30% plans are under review by STA for Zone 4 (stations north of Francis to Holland) to include Utility coordination, ongoing coordination with the City and WSDOT on fiberoptics locations, site specific surveying, lighting analysis, possible Gen-2 High Performance Transit (HPT) shelter design options and charging/layover evaluations. Mr. Otterstrom reviewed the various outreach activities that have taken place to date and the project schedule through inception. Ms. Meyer stated that the art that was used for City Line, in collaboration with local artists, gave customized neighborhood identification, and she would like to see the same collaboration with Spokane Arts for the Division Street BRT shelters.

***Discussion ensued***

C. Zero Emission Transition Board Workshop Summary

Mr. Rapez-Betty presented a summary of the content and key findings of the Zero-Emission Bus Fleet Transition Board Workshop held on May 3, 2024. STA is compliant with zero-emission and carbon reduction legislation and is exploring alternative fuels such as hydrogen fuel cells. Many factors have changed the state of the bus manufacturing industry to such an extent that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is working with the manufacturers to see what can be done to help support this market. Mr. Rapez-Betty provided the timeline of STA's journey through electrification beginning in 2005 through to the present-day. STA's team was extremely successful in acquiring grant funding in support of the zero-emission transition. Between 2016 and 2022 a total of over \$31M in grants provided support to the electrification of the fleet. Mr. Rapez-Betty reviewed projected block feasibility for battery electric buses, garage charging analysis, grid power demand, cost per mile-maintenance/fuel, and a total fleet cost comparison. Mr. Rapez-Betty presented the FTA safety recommendations based on August 2023 industry best practices, and next steps. STA's draft Workforce Development plan has been modeled according to FTA's guidance. A full Zero-Emission Bus Fleet Transition Plan was included in the packet.

***Discussion ensued***

D. 2023 Community Perception Survey Results Summary

Dr. Cortright reported the 2023 Community Perception Survey is intended to collect data on public opinion regarding transit issues within the community. Spokane Transit hired ETC Institute to conduct the survey. They collected data from a random sample of households within the Spokane Public Transportation Benefit Area. The survey was conducted in the fall of 2023 with a sample size survey goal of 400 responses with 403 completed surveys collected. The survey results were representative of Spokane County in most categories. The categories included in the survey were annual household income, race, gender, age, employment status, political philosophy preference, and past ridership. More specific survey questions were asked regarding overall ratings for the transportation system in the Spokane region and qualities of Spokane Transit specifically. The survey results demonstrate that the Spokane community believes transit is valuable for those with special mobility needs, low-income individuals, and to the Spokane region overall. The public also views STA employees favorably and has a positive perception of the STA brand overall. They also indicated STA is not providing enough service, though an equal portion thought the amount of service provided was just right. Dr. Cortright reported two STA Performance Metrics that were obtained from the Community Perception Survey report: 27% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that STA does a good job of listening to the public, though 30% of respondents reported they didn't know and STA manages financial resources well", this was previously phrased as "STA is financially responsible", 21% of respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this statement and 25% were Neutral and another 39% Didn't Know. Since STA added new discount programs in October 2022, including Zero Fare for Youth 18 and under, leadership wanted to gauge knowledge of the public. Almost 50% of the respondents had knowledge regarding Zero Fare for Youth, but overwhelmingly there was lack of knowledge on other discount programs. The Community Perception Survey is an opportunity to understand Spokane's region support of transit. This feedback can be leveraged as STA continues to work on the *Connect 2035 Strategic Plan*.

5. CEO REPORT

Ms. Meyer reported that she has announced her intention to retire the end of 2024 at the Board meeting. She also stated that STA has had another clean audit report from the state auditor, and that the organization is in perfect condition to transition to the next CEO. Ms. Meyer reported that the Board Operations Committee will recommend the STA Board to form a task force to hire a professional firm to perform a national search. Congratulations were given.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Fortensky stated that he and Ms. Combs attempted to get his scooter on the bus but was unsuccessful in showing Ms. Combs his difficulties with loading his scooter as the only available bus was the 2100 series bus and not the size bus he normally rides.

7. SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 – COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW

The committee reviewed the proposed agenda items for the September 11, 2024, meeting. There were no suggested corrections or additions.

ADJOURN

With no further business, Chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

**The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in person at STA Northside Conference Room with a virtual option.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Dianne Peach*

Dianne Peach

Executive Assistant to the Chief Communications & Customer Service Officer