

Jefferson Transit Authority Board

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 16, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

Port Townsend Fire Station

Port Townsend, WA

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The Meeting was called to order by Jefferson Transit Authority Board Chair David Sullivan at 1:30 p.m. Other members present were George Randels, John Austin and Catharine Robinson.

STAFF PRESENT

Dave Turissini, Mike Pollack, Van Church, Carla Meyer, Rachel Katz

CAC PRESENT

Linda Pfafman

Ali Dyche

OTHERS PRESENT

Brenda McMillan

Margaret Lee

Rita Spalding

Scott [last name unintelligible]

Eric Hidle, Peninsula Daily News

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting was opened to public comments at 1:32 p.m.

- Margaret Lee complemented Turissini for his handling all the questions he was asked at the public meeting on June 4. She also commented that she did not feel prepared to comment at the public meeting as there was little information provided ahead of time.
- Brenda McMillan commented that she felt staff was unprepared for the meeting as they were unable to answer questions concerning costs. She stated that in Turissini's report to the Board there was no mention of unanimous disapproval at the meeting she attended regarding the idea of cutting all weekend service to Brinnon and Poulsbo. Ms. McMillan also spoke in favor of making the cuts that would have the highest financial impact, and suggested making cuts in Administration.

Public comments ended at 1:43 p.m.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE/AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Linda Pfafman reported that the CAC voted to move the meeting to the first Monday of the month instead of the second Monday, giving people more time to prepare and to get questions answered before the next Board meeting.

Pfafman reported on discussion regarding reductions in service. She stated that staff supplied per-trip costs by route, and the committee will be reviewing them and preparing for more concrete suggestions at the next CAC meeting. In the meantime, the committee members feel they can support the idea of narrowing Sunday service hours to four hours, perhaps between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. They also oppose cutting Saturday Brinnon service, and are interested in the possibility of reintroducing parts of the proposed new service model, originally introduced by the Authority Board last October, as part of the effort to reduce service costs.

Phil Johnson entered the meeting at 1:36 p.m.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS

New Business – 2009 - 2011 grant award report.

Executive session – personnel action

PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution 09-14: Approve New Vanpool Rates

Staff report: Church reported that staff seeks to change from a fixed price model to a formula-based model which covers operating costs (not including administrative costs) and capital recovery. He compared current vanpool rates to what it would cost for the same trip using the proposed formula, and under the proposed model the prices would be slightly reduced from where they are now.

The public hearing was opened at 1:49.

- Rita Spalding commented that holding the hearing during the day is unsatisfactory. She stated that vanpool groups are never informed about anything, and questioned what are the fixed rate costs the groups have been paying, if they are not administrative costs. She claimed that attempts to contact Jefferson Transit staff to get information are ignored, and staff does not care about their concerns. She stated that the vans procured for their use are “garbage”, that they are not consulted about vehicle features and that staff has no concern for passenger comfort.
- Brenda McMillan requested response from staff. Ms. Spalding indicated she was done and didn’t want to talk about it anymore.
- McMillan asked if there was any leniency in the fees.
- Ms. Spalding wanted to know what would happen if staff is planning to transition from 15-passenger vans to 7-passenger vans, as parking is tight at the shipyard and there might not be room for more vehicles to park.
- Dyche wanted to know if it would be possible for vanpool groups to meet with staff to discuss issues of concern. Sullivan responded that Ms. Spalding’s issues are separate from the one at hand.

The Chair closed the public hearing 2:03 p.m.

Austin suggested proceeding with the issue of the pricing structure and perhaps later to get answers from staff concerning Ms. Spalding's concerns.

Randels commented on an issue of equity, and asked if we are sending the right message to bus riders if vanpool fares are reduced.

Discussion: It is unreasonable to lower rates for vanpools at the same time that fuel costs are rising and fixed route fares are increasing.

Church explained why overhead costs are not being factored in to the pricing, stating that overhead is not significant in an agency that has such a small vanpool program.

Austin spoke about the social good provided by the vanpool program, and how it is difficult to get people to change their habits.

Motion by Austin, second by Johnson to approve resolution 09-14: Approve New Vanpool Rates.

Discussion: the same arguments that apply to vanpools also apply to fixed route bus travel, as far as the social good is concerned.

Robinson commented that perhaps more staff attention needs to be paid to administration issues of the vanpool program. She also observed that the level of service for vanpools is different. Vanpools consist of smaller groups of people who receive direct service from one location to another with limited stops, in effect, express service.

Call for the question. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Spalding left the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes, May 19, 2009

b. Approval of Expenses, May 2009

- Operating checks 85609 - 85891: \$494, 686.52 (includes payroll of \$136,477)

Motion by Johnson, second by Randels to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried 4 - 0, with Austin abstaining.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Resolution 09-12: Adopting a Policy for Posting Public Service Announcements Inside Transit Vehicles

Turissini reviewed the changes made to the draft policy, which changes the emphasis on posting length from purchasing advertising space after a free 3-month posting to removal after the initial posting at the discretion of staff.

Board recommendations:

- Specify that placards will be removed by transit staff.
- Policy ought to include the provision for a posting queue when space is not available.

Motion by Austin to approve Resolution 9-12: Adopting a Policy for Posting Public Service Announcements Inside Transit Vehicles, second by Randels.

Discussion: Board members approve of the following changes to the draft:

Page 2, paragraph 2:

“Public service notices may be removed by transit staff if the posting deteriorates or is outdated after the initial three month maintenance period.”

“Should space availability become an issue after the three month period, placards will be removed on a first-in, first-out availability basis”.

Call for the question. The motion passed unanimously.

Corey Toombs and Mark Davidson entered the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

b. Possible Service Reductions

Turissini explained that the sole purpose of the public meetings on June 4 was to solicit opinion regarding what service reductions would be the most palatable, financial considerations aside. He reported on the public response, which included:

1. Reduce overall service in Port Townsend:
 - a. Reduce Shuttle from 20 minutes to 30 minutes
 - b. Reduce Fort Worden and North Beach services during the mid day
2. Eliminate most Sunday service, but keep some form of the Castle Hill and Shuttle in place
3. Implement a reduced version of the new service model

Staff will work up a few service reduction models that include the public feedback and fit Jefferson Transit’s financial objectives. Specific recommendations will be made available to the public, followed by a public hearing, with changes to be implemented in October.

Sullivan commented that he was impressed by the people attending the public meeting in Port Townsend and their awareness and concern for comparative costs of service. He stated that it is important to get the financial information out, given the sophistication of the audience requesting it.

Randels commented that Turissini got bogged down precisely by the cost issues that he was trying to avoid, and that people who attend these meetings are public spirited and are to be commended for having and expressing concerns about costs. He recommended that staff should at least employ estimated figures to help people get their questions answered and explain why it may be a gross estimate, given all the factors that influence real costs.

Austin suggested that some service could be retained on Sundays during the summer, such as the Shuttle, to support summer activities in Port Townsend.

Brenda McMillan left the meeting at 2:29 p.m.

Discussion: has ridership increased on the Shuttle since the Visitors Center moved? Meyer commented she has not noticed changes in traffic patterns at the Park and Ride since the Visitor Information Center relocated there but there hasn’t really been enough time.

Randels recommended making choices with a long view rather than what is expedient in the short term. He cited the example of Fort Worden, which is engaged in long range planning efforts that

make the facility a year-round center of activity.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Resolution 09-15: Approving revisions to Standing Cash Practices

Church reviewed the proposed changes for standing cash amounts for the front desk cash register, dispatch change bag and petty cash for small transaction reimbursements. **Motion by Johnson, second by Randels to adopt Resolution 09-15: Approving revisions to Standing Cash Practices. Motion carried unanimously.**

b. Resolution 09-16 Adopting a General Leave Donation Policy

Church reviewed the proposed policy to allow employees to donate general leave to other employees who are experiencing prolonged periods of medical leave. **Motion by Austin, second by Johnson to approve resolution 09-16: Adopting a General Leave Donation Policy.**

Discussion: change language under conversion calculation item #2 to read:

“General leave donation requests are to be submitted to the Finance/HR Administrator using the appropriate section of Employee General and Other Leave Form.”

Call for the question. Motion carried unanimously

c. Resolution 09-17: Disposition of Surplus Property

Turissini reviewed the circumstances under which the 5 Orion V coaches were purchased. Staff has decided not to keep the coaches, largely because they are not consistent with the rest of the fleet.

Discussion: Jefferson Transit will not lose any money by selling the coaches.

Motion by Randels, second by Robinson to approve resolution 09-17: Disposition of Surplus Property. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORT

a. Operations Report

Turissini reviewed the ridership for May. Ridership is up 7.8% over the same time last year, with 65, 865 passenger trips.

Discussion: Is there redundant reporting in ridership, given that #7 ridership is reported with the regular data and the HCB ridership. Turissini stated that it may be overstated by approximately 2000 trips.

calling

Randels recommended ~~calling out~~ the data that would skew future calculations, based on an educated guess of “local” #7 riders.

b. Financial Report/ budget discussion

than

Jefferson Transit received \$19,000 more in sales tax revenue ~~that~~ was budgeted for. The price of oil has increased significantly in the last several weeks, so fuel costs will be increasing over the next few months. Next month Church will introduce a vanpool sinking fund (set aside to be used for

capital purchases), and in the future will be submitting for approval sinking funds for future capital acquisitions. There will also be a review of Section 125 changes to pre-tax deductions for health benefits, which currently do not comply with the IRS code. Church reported that he will be traveling to San Diego in August on behalf of WSTIP, which is paying all the expenses for the trip.

Randels left the meeting at 2:47 p.m.

c. Hood Canal Bridge Final Report

Pollack reported that the project was a learning process for everyone involved. He considers it to be successful overall and staff learned more than they ever thought possible in terms of highway signage, communications, politics and more. He cited the following facts:

- Forty people from thirteen different agencies, including Jefferson Transit, were employed by the transit component of the project in Jefferson County, contributing to the local economy.
- There were no accidents or injuries during the project.
- Comments were 99.9% positive; most of the rest were suggestions for improvements.

Pollack reported that he started with a disparate group of trainees who formed a cohesive group in a very short time. He introduced Mark Davidson and Corey Toombs, two of the Canal Transit employees. Mark was the sole mechanic and Corey is a school bus operator who worked as a bus cleaner, and he lauded and thanked both of them, as well as mentioning Mark Anderson, who was his second in command on the project.

d. 2009 – 2011 Grant Cycle Report

Turissini reported that Jefferson Transit received almost 2 million dollars in operating assistance, and 1.2 million in capital assistance which will fund 8 replacement vehicles and several other capital expenses including computer equipment and shop equipment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

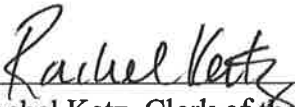
The meeting went into executive session at 3:03 to discuss agency litigation and employee disciplinary action for approximately 10 minutes. The executive session ended at 3:14 p.m. No action was taken.

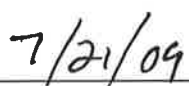
MISCELLANEOUS/CORRESPONDENCE

- **Visitor center restroom use:** the restrooms are public restrooms that are open to all the public. The City Council is the owner of the VIC, and the City has a contract with the Chamber of Commerce that includes language concerning maintaining the public restrooms. Robinson will recommend adding language to the contract regarding use of the restrooms by the public.
- **Bus stopped downtown due to delivery trucks parked in the middle of the street –** Linda Pfafman has been in contact with the police department about this issue.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. The next Regular Meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., July 21, 2009.


Rachel Katz, Clerk of the Board


Date