

# Jefferson Transit Authority

## Public Hearing Minutes

Tuesday, November 20, 2018, 1:30 p.m.

63 4 Corners Road, Port Townsend, WA

### CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

The meeting was called to order by Jefferson Transit Authority (JTA) Board Chair David Faber at 1:30 p.m. Other members present were David Sullivan, Kate Dean and Ariel Speser, with Kathleen Kler excused. A quorum was present.

### STAFF PRESENT

General Manager Tammi Rubert, Finance Manager Sara Crouch, Operations Manager Leesa Monroe, Fleet and Facilities Manager John Bender and Mobility Coordinator Miranda Nash for Laura Smedley.

**The Public Hearing for the 2019 Proposed Budget is opened.**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Lee asked about electric buses and encouraged JTA to be aggressive in getting electric buses. She also asked if a dialog has been started with the PUD to encourage them to install the type of charging stations that would be necessary. The 2019 Budget does not show a plan to purchase electric buses before 2021. She believes that Transit should set an example to the community and take the lead in helping the environment. Ms. Lee also asked about the trolley bus that may be purchased for the uptown/downtown route.

**David Faber stated that the Public Hearing would remain open until December 18, 2018, for comments and questions.**

Mr. Faber also responded to Margaret Lee's questions by stating that JTA has looked at electric buses and the problem is that the technology is not there yet to facilitate the size of our rural community. Those concerns are the purpose of going with a consultant in 2019 to see how far the technology has come because it is developing rapidly.

Tammi Rubert said JTA is continuing to apply for grants. Recently we met with the PUD to discuss infrastructure, and have also written the PUD in the hopes that eventually JTA can put in an electric vehicle charging station for an electric bus. EV buses are very expensive, and JTA would like to see the bigger transit agencies test them first. The electric bus companies are promising a certain amount of miles per charge, but they are not delivering it. JTA has buses that go to Poulsbo and back, and we can't be sure that an electric bus will make it over there and back. We are not giving up on that option. The feasibility study will tell us what JTA must have in order for us to go down the path of electric vehicles.

David Sullivan said the feasibility study should give us what we need to hopefully effectively lobby the State, because they are the ones that need to make the commitment to having electric buses, especially in rural areas because basically, they are the ones that will fund it. We will take the money and do it when it is available, but we have to know that it is going to meet our needs and they are going to have to step up and say this is valuable enough to do. So that is another place you can put your efforts.

Kate Dean stated in terms of a policy direction. I think this Board would support a decision that was a little experimental and providing some leadership in testing technology. Not just making it about what is most cost-effective, but what does JTA need to do to be headed in the right direction towards fewer carbon emissions.

Sara Crouch stated that the March 2019 Finance Officer's Leadership Committee Meeting will be about electric vehicles. We decided in the Finance Group that we wanted to continue the discussion about electric buses as we continue to have more facts. Whatcom Transit is currently testing a Proterra bus with a six-month lease. Valley Transit in Walla Walla purchased five electric buses, and we want to hear about how those are working for them. Those transit agencies have agreed to attend our next Finance Committee Meeting and report out on their results, and how it is changing their business model. JTA's feasibility study is to look at where we would place slow and fast chargers in our County and if we have enough power for demand. We want the consultant we hire to discuss with the PUD what the issues are and give us expansion plans so we have a shovel-ready project when funding becomes available.

Kate Dean asked if the planning will include looking at which routes are most suitable for electric buses.

Sara Crouch said it is an open study.

David Sullivan said there are some shorter routes, and we don't have to look at our maximum routes because maybe that range isn't there. We can also look at hills and determine what will be successful.

Tammi Rubert said the issue that Link Transit in Wenatchee is having with their power might not be our issue with power. Our PUD said they could sell us that kind of power. Link Transit is having trouble buying the power.

Leesa Monroe said she went to Wenatchee and Link Transit is having three issues. They are similar in size to JTA. Their buses would run out of power driving between Wenatchee and Leavenworth. What they are finding is they have to have a matching diesel bus for every electric bus that they have so that they can keep service on the road. When they talked about power, I think the assumption with the PUD was that the buses would charge at night when there isn't such a demand for power, but they are charging through the day also because their buses are running all the time. They have so many types of vehicles in their fleet now that sometimes they have an electric bus available and don't have a driver that has been trained on that electric bus yet. Link Transit's advice is to let the larger agencies be the testers. Another Transit Agency also

had a fire on one of their electric buses and the fire department had no experience with electric vehicles and didn't know how to safely put the fire out. We are not giving up, but it is good to have a plan and to learn from everyone's experience.

David Faber said while he likes the idea of testing the buses on shorter routes, don't our current routes tend to switch? So we would have to change that structure as well.

Tammi Rubert said our service model routes switch between local routes and commuter routes throughout the day.

Ms. Monroe said the catch with the shuttle route is that it starts very early in the morning and the driver's switch but the bus doesn't change, so in the middle of the day the drivers switch, and the bus continues on. The issue is not just the distance the buses are going, but how many hours they are on the road, which is sometimes 10 to 12 hours in service.

John Bender said the trolley bus we are considering is a diesel bus with a classic appearance, like a street car with arched window frames. It's more or less a visual appeal vehicle, but it's functionally the same as the rest of the fleet.

## **Board Discussion**

Sara Crouch said there is one change in the Capital Budget page that is under Tab 3. There will be additional changes before the December meeting. The change noted here is to change the "Vehicle Engine Transmission Replacement" to "Major Component Replacement." The reason for that change is because we would like to test...the new buses that just arrived have what they call a Hanover Annunciator, and we would like to retrofit our other buses with this, but we want to do that process slowly because they are a little pricey. The annunciator fits in that general location, and that will enable us to use the funds to purchase more than just engine and transmission replacements. The other two changes are we are going to remove two items because we were able to complete the purchases in 2018. That includes the parking lot striping under Service Equipment, and the new bus stop Wayfinding signage under Capital Assets Other Buildings and Structures will also come out before the next meeting.

David Faber asked questions regarding 6 under Operating Revenues, we have a decrease in projected revenues for Operations down in the lower 17%. Why are we projecting such a steep drop?

Ms. Crouch said it is related to what we received this year. I expected more revenue than we actually received, so I reduced my expectations for 2019.

David Faber went on to the next page under Capital Projects. The third paragraph discusses various projects that were in the 2018 budget, but not completed, so they make an appearance in the 2019 budget. So all of those expenditures were already appropriated in 2018, we are just rolling them over to 2019. And then lastly, the trolley-style bus. Looking at the cost difference, the trolley bus seems to be 2/3 of the cost of the regular bus. John Bender mentioned these are fairly similar to our regular buses, are these buses somewhat smaller or less capacity?

John Bender said the number that we budgeted for is essentially a ball-park figure based on vague quote figures. The model that we quoted out was a 29-foot bus, so it will be smaller than the majority of our existing fleet. These vehicles are built with wood slat seating to complete the retro look and feel.

Ms. Rubert said the trolley is ADA compliant, and it also answers the question that we often hear about putting a smaller bus downtown. This bus is just like one of our regular buses, but it has a unique downtown feel for Port Townsend. We will check to see if we can have a bike rack installed on the bus.

Kate Dean asked if the line items in the Capital budget associated with EV's for the 4 Corners location are already planned?

Ms. Crouch said there are two EV car chargers already here, but we will have to put EV bus chargers at 4 Corners as well. If we put an inductive, fast charger, it would be a ten-minute quick charger, but the others are for slow chargers. There is a placeholder in the Transit Development Plan (TDP) capital budget for EV.

Ms. Rubert said we are looking at the fast charger for Haines Place to charge the buses throughout the day. The PUD knows we are interested in the near future to have the capability to install a drive-under fast charger at this location.

This Public Hearing will remain open for comments until the December 18, 2018 Board Meeting.

We now have an Executive Session for discussion regarding property per RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) with action anticipated. David Faber will recuse himself from this Executive Session. He will also leave the meeting and turn over the Chair to David Sullivan. We will anticipate the Executive Session to last 15 minutes.

David Faber left the meeting at 2:00 pm.

***Motion: Kate Dean moved to authorize the General Manager to sign a Purchase and Sale Agreement on terms she deems appropriate for the purchase of the property located at 111 4 Corners Road, Port Townsend. This will be subject to ratification of the Purchase and Sale Agreement by the Board by Resolution to be adopted after the Board review of the Agreement. Ariel Speser seconded.  
Vote: The motion carried unanimously, 4-0 by voice vote.***

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm. The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, December 18, 2018, at 1:30 pm at 63 4 Corners Road, Port Townsend, WA.



Laura Smedley, Clerk of the Board

12/19/2018

Date