

**Jefferson Transit Authority  
Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)  
Board Composition Conference**

**Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, December 18, 2019, 2:52 pm  
63 4 Corners Road, Port Townsend, WA

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME**

The meeting was called to order by Jefferson Transit Authority (JTA) Board Chair and Jurisdiction Representative for the City of Port Townsend David Faber at 2:48 pm. The second Jurisdiction Representative for Jefferson County present was David Sullivan.

**STAFF PRESENT**

General Manager Tammi Rubert, Finance Manager Sara Crouch, and Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board Laura Smedley.

David Faber stated that in consultation, and after confirming with the Washington State Department Deputy Director of Public Transportation, the interpretation of RCW 36.57A.055 the Composition Conference is supposed to be composed of one City Councilmember and all three County Commissioners. That is a variation on what was specified in today's meeting Agenda, but that is the proper constitution of this conference. Barring any objections, I believe that is what is required by State law to move forward with this Composition Conference.

David Sullivan asked who was involved in the consultation.

David Faber said an email was forwarded to him from the Deputy Director of WSDOT.

First, on the Agenda is a discussion of the service area. That shouldn't be necessary because that section of the RCW doesn't apply to our Board because we have not had any change in the service area.

Tammi Rubert agreed that there had been no changes in JTA's service area.

David Faber said, with that in mind then the discussion of the Board composition can commence. Would someone like to lead the discussion?

## DISCUSSION ON BOARD COMPOSITION

Kathleen Kler stated that four years ago when this composition came up there was the property sale, the move, and the issue of capacity as to whether or not expanding the Board in the midst of all of the moving parts would be helpful. Some of the reasons for the Board Composition were different issues four years ago. This year it feels like there is a different conversation because we just passed the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Bylaws, and we are going to be forming a CAC group. Looking at the members that we are going to be seeking in terms of interest groups makes her wonder if we will be taking a double bite of that apple. If JTA gets an advisory board established, they could look at who and how we invite into the Board composition. In doing expanded Board composition, she is left with how are we going to choose who that is going to be. And she is wondering if that wouldn't be one of the first duties of the CAC to further explore which area the Board might benefit from for the composition.

Kate Dean stated she is fairly new to this topic and is curious to learn in this conversation. She has also been receiving public input on this and is in a position of listening and learning the positions.

David Sullivan stated that the City of Port Townsend passed a Resolution regarding the Composition of JTA's Board. He is curious as to what research was done before that was passed. Our main focus has been to try to increase ridership as we look at the CAC and as we look at this, but he doesn't know what the effect would be on that issue having a different Board composition. For him, the main concern is that transit has to represent everybody. And it has to have a broad focus which needs to be countywide. It has to include South County, the West end, Port Ludlow, and Tri-Area, it has to include Port Townsend as well. The Board has to be able to look at the big picture and consider everything, and County Commissioners are accountable to everybody. People with special interests have a narrower and more limited view in who they represent. It would service this Board well to have a majority be the County Commissioners that do look at the big picture and look at how it affects everybody and looks regionally. We have much more of a regional focus, and transit is an agency that connects the different regions. A large part of our funding from our State grant is the fact that we are the connectors to Kitsap County, Mason County, the Washington State Ferry to Whidbey Island, and with Clallam County, and it is a big consideration, and we have to pay attention to that part of the service. Along with that, we've actually heard today from people in the County about their concerns. We are accountable for that, and rather than divide and have more special interests represented on the Board, that place is for the CAC. He would encourage anybody that has those kinds of interests to apply there. JTA has a history of working with entities like the schools, the PUD, and the hospital on issues that pertain to them, so it is not like we are not communicating, and it is not like we don't have relationships. He doesn't believe it rises to the Board level to do that.

David Faber stated his part is that he was appointed the Representative of the City of Port Townsend and at the same time there was a unanimous vote by the Port Townsend City

Council to support expanding the Board from its current makeup. There were a significant number of reasons given in the meeting discussion that we had as a City Council, to Mr. Sullivan's point about wanting to make sure that the entire County ends up being represented on the Board. Mason Transit has the County Commission appoint all of the non-City or County elected officials to the Board and makes sure that they have equal representation across their three districts. It makes sense to have a goal to try and pull from the non-Port Townsend districts in appointing representatives. He recommends having the County Commission determine who the other electeds are to be appointed to the Transit Board. His thought process on why the Board would look at and include electeds from other bodies, is that while David Sullivan is not wrong that the County Commission is the general and legislative authority for Jefferson County, it has a general legislative brief. The Commission doesn't specifically deal with issues affecting school children, many of whom are too young to have a driver's license, so are most directly affected in terms of needing to get where they need to be. Especially if they live in the County, if they have an afternoon job, or if they have extracurricular activities. For instance, in Port Townsend, there is a trial group that has the participation of County kids, but if they don't have a ride, they would have to take the bus. He has personally given rides to kids who lived outside of the immediate service area to the Port Townsend mock-trial group because they didn't have another option of getting there. Other groups like the Port deal with people who frequently arrive via maritime vessel in Port Townsend. They don't have a car with them. If they are going to get around and are not staying in the central walking area of Port Townsend, or at the airport, they need to be able to take a bus. Having a broad perspective of someone who works daily with these groups makes sense. The same with the hospital, there are a number of people who may be unable to drive. His mother, for instance, was going to chemotherapy. She could drive herself to chemo, but she couldn't drive herself home. The Board needs that sort of mindset, looking at how service is specifically affecting certain populations. A "special interest" representative being on the Board makes sense because while we have the mindset both in the City, I'm referring to the City Council members, but also in terms of the County Commissioners being the general legislative brief, we don't have our minds on the specific groups that may be affected more than just the general population. Whereas the three groups mentioned are the most affected groups in terms of special populations in our County. He supports expanding the Board to include as many as four additional members of other elected bodies to be appointed by the County Commission and to be drawn from the various districts of the County to make sure we have broad representation.

David Sullivan stated he would look at all of David Faber's arguments as being arguments for putting them on the CAC. He would take issue that they don't as County Commissioners look out for the school children, look out for the patients, and look out for the visitors. The Commissioners do that in a variety of different ways and thinks you also have to look at that in the context of everybody else. He thinks that argument is still valid, and he can see your argument as being one that is valid putting people on the CAC. When you consider school districts, it becomes which school districts to include. We have more than one school district. Our general position is to work with the advisory committee and see how that works and move on from there.

David Faber asked who was included in "our."

David Sullivan said the Commissioners talked about this at the Commissioners workshop because we had to appoint one of us to be the representative, and he was selected. The Commissioners were not notified that all three of us would be included in this meeting.

Kathleen Kler stated she knows the different needs from talking to people in Quilcene who have tried to work at the hospital and understands the limits of our service. What she has come to understand is that just by asking, you can't produce a new route and a new driver. This is our stuck point of being a small rural transportation service. There is a moveable sweet spot of where to put the buses, the drivers, and the routes. The most people who use transit are the people who need it the most. Where do you put that emphasis of "most," most people, or people needing it the most? The Board struggles with that, but we don't always have the time and capacity to get into that weed of exactly what the data is. I understand having more people on a Board gives you more worker bees, but at the same time, would the worker bees have more ability to do what they need to do outside of this Board function. Is the CAC going to be a working group? Not knowing that she was going to be part of this discussion today, she is here unprepared.

David Sullivan said having the CAC take on this issue would be a chance to see how it works with other places, and it is a place where people that work with those different interests can learn about the limits of transit and the capacity of transit. As we know, we are limited by our State grants and our sales tax, which is at its maximum level. If there can be some efficiencies found, or if there can be some ideas that come forward or some ideas with money attached to them that come forward to provide different things. Those are things we can already do with the system that we have, but it may be more fruitful to have those discussed in the CAC first and then come here. We can see if that works. He suspects that the advantage would be we could have more people that could go back to their groups and say we need to lobby in Olympia. It may not just be money, but things like coordinating with school districts. Last time we looked at that seriously with one of the school districts, we discovered that the safety requirements for buses were different for school children in school buses than they are in our transit buses. That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me that you couldn't resolve that issue and come to a place where, guess what, the buses are safe for everybody everywhere. But somebody needs to work through those issues, and they need to work through them with Olympia. And probably with two different siloes, one for schools and one for transportation. Those are the kind of things that our citizens could get involved with and find a path to make meaningful change. He thinks the idea that we expand capacity when we expand representation is not a valid argument. We could have everybody in the County on this Board, and it wouldn't give us any more money.

Kate Dean requested from the Chair to hear from the General Manager on the feasibility and work associated with increased Board Members, or if the General Manager has had conversations with other managers with different compositions.

Tammi Rubert stated that Mason Transit has a larger Board. She also knows that Mason Transit is examining the composition of their Board as well. We've asked the question,

does it work? We know that the Fire Department was on the Mason Transit Board and they lost interest and indicated they didn't want to be on the Board any longer. What Ms. Rubert learned about designated representatives the last time JTA had the Composition Review Conference was from an email sent to her from the Community Liaison at WSDOT. The email stated the process was that there would be only one representative from each jurisdiction (the County and City of Port Townsend) The question always comes back to, who has the authority to operate transit systems? Does the school district have the authority to operate the transit system? She knows that the County does and that the City does, but she doesn't believe that school districts do. Do they have the authority to direct the spending of sales tax dollars? This decision is truly up to the Board. The conversation at the last Composition Review was about adding work to staff with a CAC because that does add work for JTA staff. If the Board is larger, Laura will be making more board packets, and yes, we probably will answer more questions, but if the Board needs more people, it is up to the Board. If we had another incorporated city, or if our PTBA expands, we would need more representation on the Board at that point. If the Board decides to expand, the Bylaws will need to change because the Bylaws state there will be the five of you on the Board and one non-voting member.

Kathleen Kler stated to the Chair that she is in a very awkward position in that she was not aware that she was going to be part of this discussion. She is scheduled to Chair another very important meeting at 3:30 pm. She expressed the tension between unexpectedly being involved in this discussion, and having other duties.

David Sullivan made a motion that we keep the Board Composition as is right now. Kathleen Kler seconded.

David Faber stated we have a motion and a second, any further discussion?

Kate Dean said she generally errs towards inclusion and being more collaborative. She thinks there is a lot of benefit to that. Largely we are facing a major crisis in our culture where we are going to have to wean ourselves off of individual vehicles, and she thinks transit is a huge part of that solution. The potential for getting the buy-in of other partners and helping to institutionalize transit throughout more agencies is a huge benefit that she is very compelled to explore. She thinks it's a little unfortunate that we took on the CAC discussion before this discussion because they are in relation to one another. But she is not highly optimistic that the CAC would serve in that same function. She and her son have in the last year become regular transit riders. She sees a huge benefit and a change in her entire understanding and perspective on transit after becoming a regular rider that she has found extremely valuable. She thinks that there very well could be a disconnect from this Board to ridership and wants to acknowledge that. All of those reasons lead her to want to support the expansion of the Board. She is a little concerned about the authority question that the General Manager brought up and would be curious if we have any more information on that.

David Faber stated he would like to speak to the authority question. It is true that the Counties and Cities have the capacity to run transit authorities, the State law in question

here specifically allows the County and City or Cities that constitute the members of the Board to also appoint other electeds. So, with that in mind, they are serving at the pleasure of the general legislative authorities, which means that they are a conduit to Jefferson Transit through the City and the County.

Kathleen Kler asked if that means specifically electeds. School Board members, PUD Commissioners, Port Commissioners, Hospital Commissioners. That is our pool?

Kate Dean asked if those were the four that he is recommending.

David Faber said he would suggest we expand to include generally any elected official in Jefferson County, and the County Commission would have the authority to vet and appoint.

Kathleen Kler asked which school district? Quilcene school district has a whole different need of access to transit than Port Townsend. Are we going to be guaranteeing access or falling into special interest? I am really troubled by the pressure of this conversation that has so much impact on the future of the Board, and again not being able to be prepared, and with the time crunch, it is very distressing right now.

David Sullivan said this is a solution looking for a problem. We can address all the problems that have been brought up with the configuration that we have right now. It has been critical in the evolution of transit over the last decade that the broader interest prevail. It has been because of the actions of County Commissioners that indeed transit has stabilized its finances. That transit has been able to move to this new facility, and that it has kept this tool intact that the community is going to need in the future. What we've found, frankly, is that the City has been an unreliable partner in this over the years. He knows this was before all the current Board Member's terms, but it has been critical for the stabilization and preserving transit, and having it be available for the future to move forward. Especially if the State decides to make this more of an emphasis, which it needs to do, to solve some of the transportation problems that Kate was talking about during our last Board meeting. He believes it is critical that we keep that broad focus. In consideration of your time and everything else, I would call the question.


David Faber said I do intend to call the question. So with that in mind, I suppose we call that question — all those in favor of the motion on the table.

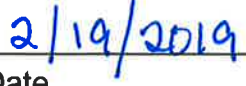
**Vote: 2 in favor, 2 opposed.**

David Faber said that the vote is 2 to 2, and unfortunately, that means that the Board composition remains as is. Thank you everyone. We are adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The conference was adjourned at 3:21 pm.

  
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Laura Smedley, Clerk of the Board

  
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Date