



City of Longview

Cowlitz Transit Authority
Agenda
RiverCities Transit

Minutes

Cowlitz Transit Authority

Wednesday, August 10, 2016

4:00 PM

Longview Council Chambers

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jensen at approximately 4:00 pm in the Longview Council Chambers.

2. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Rick Roberson, Dennis Weber, Anthony Harris (nonvoting member) and Don Jensen

Absent: 2 - Mary Jane Melink and Larry Alexander

Altern Abs: 2 - Chet Makinster and Jim Hill

Staff Present

Amy Asher, City of Longview
Jeff Cameron, City of Longview
Jim Seeks, City of Longview
Ben Nolen, City of Longview
Tabitha Hayden, City of Longview

Others Present

Judith Donovan, CWCOG

3. Constituent Comments

Chris Forward of unincorporated Cowlitz County, an employee of PeaceHealth, addressed the board by first saying thank you for providing awesome transit to folks who need it. Chris works with quite a few patients who use paratransit LIFT to get to appointments. Chris had brought up the question a couple months ago of whether or not the hours of LIFT's service may be expanded.

Today, Mr. Forward was asking for an idea of the cost associated with expanding paratransit's operations to start earlier in the day. He will then take those costs to PeaceHealth. PeaceHealth is becoming more actively engaged in trying to work on population health. PeaceHealth received a grant to focus energies, time and effort to make sure the population of Longview is doing better. Part of that is getting patients to appointments. Mr. Forward stated he wants to advocate a potential partnership with the understanding that this would be for the entire community.

Asher stated she had provided comments to Mr. Forward via email in regards to what it would take logically to expand our hours. One of the concerns

staff has, especially with the paratransit service, is the ability to hire and retain operators. Staff can come up with what it may cost and the logistics in adjusting the schedules. Asher explained that there are transportation agencies in Washington that have partnered up with health organizations to provide transportation service and we may want to look at their models, however, they were providing transportation in a much more rural community. Staff is researching these models and trying to come up with a feasible option. Weber asked about the percentage of patients who use paratransit LIFT. Mr. Forward responded that he currently has 10 patients that use LIFT. Only the afternoon schedule is available for those patients that utilize LIFT. The morning shift starts at 6 AM which is too early for LIFT. The earliest LIFT can get patients to dialysis is 7:30 AM. Weber asked the Chair if this would be on the September agenda, Chair Jensen concurred.

4. Consideration of July 13, 2016 Minutes

On a motion from Weber, seconded by Roberson, the minutes of the regular meeting held on July 13, 2016, were unanimously approved.

5. Consent Calendar

On a motion from Roberson, seconded by Weber, the items on the consent calendar were approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Weber mentioned that ridership trends continue to decline. Asher agreed that July ridership for both Fixed Route and Paratransit is significantly lower than years past. Staff is looking at ridership trends by route, operator data entry, as well as the on board technology.

2016 Annual Fixed Route Ridership

2016 July Fixed Route Ridership

2016 July Paratransit Ridership

June 2016 County Treasurer's Report

June 2016 Fund Balance Report

6. Consideration of Invoices

On a motion from Weber, seconded by Roberson, all invoices were approved for payment. The motion carried unanimously.

Invoice - City of Kelso - \$551.96

Invoice - City of Longview - \$300,207.08

Invoice - Columbia Security - \$520.00

7. Public Hearing for 2016-2021 Transit Development Plan and 2015 Annual Report

Asher reported that the RiverCities Transit Six-Year Transit Development plan is a state requirement that outlines our organizational structure, transportation services we offer, major accomplishments of last year and proposed future action strategies along with a program for funding those strategies. This planning document is used in the Washington State Department of Transportation Annual Report which is given to the legislature.

Page 16 depicts our 6 year capital plan. The projects listed are the same as those included in the 6 year TIP, Transportation Improvement Program, that was adopted by the Longview City Council in July 2016. The majority of the projects are dependent on grant funding and will not occur without the grants. The 2018 expenditure column did not auto calculate, therefore it will be corrected prior to publishing.

There are no plans at this point to expand service as staff is looking to replace our aging fleet in order to maintain an acceptable level of service. Our vehicles are aging and as they do our reliability decreases. We need to keep our buses in good working order. If staff is not successful in obtaining grants for bus replacements we will be looking at engine replacements to extend the life of the vehicles.

Weber mentioned that we raised the fares to reach an 8% farebox recovery. Ridership has declined therefore are we at our goal? Asher responded that she hasn't pulled that report, however, she did look at the pass sales database that an employee made.

Chair Jensen opened the public hearing at 04:19 PM.
Mr. Forward addressed the board stating that during summer with long days and good weather many patients choose to drive. During the winter months these patients will need paratransit.
With no other comments, Chair Jensen closed the hearing at 04:21 PM

On a motion from Roberson, seconded by Weber, the RiverCities Transit 2016-2021 Transit Development Plan and 2015 Annual Report was approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Roberson asked staff to present the information to the Kelso City Council as well as the Cowlitz County Commissioners. He said the information would be better received with a presentation.

RiverCities Transit Six-Year Transit Development Plan 2016-2021 and 2015 Annual Report

8. Manager's Report

Asher reported that RiverCities welcomes Jim Seeks as our new Operations Supervisor.

Seeks addressed the board stating he is very pleased to be joining the RiverCities Transit Team. He started out as an operator in Southern California 39 years ago driving both Dial-A-Ride and Fixed Route, before becoming part

of a management team. Most recently Seek was the Transportation Manager at Northshore Senior Center in Bothell a two-county agency. Northshore Senior Center has an extensive membership and a large adult day health program, providing 3500 trips a month.

Asher stated that we are thrilled to have him on board. She has tasked him with looking at ridership using our RouteMatch data, as well as coordinating with Nolen on a Customer Service Survey.

Nolen signed up our very first vanpool group with a local employment agency. They are renting our 12 passenger van and will have a 130-mile round trip commute. We hope that the vehicle being out on the road will be great advertisement to other commuters between here and the coast.

Back in December 2015, we began negotiations with our operators bargaining unit the Amalgamated Transit Union. The negotiating parties have reached an impasse and will be going to mediation. I'll keep the board updated on our progress as we attempt to come to a resolution.

Weber mentioned that Asher's predecessor, Corey Aldridge's wife Gina recently passed away.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:32 p.m.

Tabitha Hayden, Clerk of the Authority

Don Jensen, Chairman