



City of Longview

Cowlitz Transit Authority
Agenda
RiverCities Transit

Minutes

Cowlitz Transit Authority

Wednesday, October 12, 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: 6 - Mary Jane Melink, Rick Roberson, Dennis Weber, Anthony Harris (nonvoting member), Larry Alexander and Don Jensen

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, CWCOCG

3. Constituent Comments

None.

4. Consideration of Minutes For August 10, 2016

On a motion from Roberson, seconded by Jensen, the minutes of the regular meeting held on August 10, 2016, were unanimously approved.

5. Consent Calendar

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

2016 Annual Fixed Route Ridership

2016 August Fixed Route Ridership

2016 September Fixed Route Ridership

2016 August Paratransit Ridership

2016 September Paratransit Ridership

Ridership Graphs

August 2016 County Treasurer's Report

August 2016 Fund Balance Report

6. Consideration of Invoices

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

Invoice - City of Kelso September \$565.76

Invoice - City of Kelso October \$565.76

Invoice - City of Longview October \$300,207.08

Invoice - City of Longview November \$300,207.08

Invoice - Columbia Security Service September \$520.00

Invoice - Columbia Security Service October \$520.00

Invoice - City of Longview Finance \$7,640.00

Invoice - Law Office of Jesse D. Conway \$122.50

7. Authorize RiverCities Transit Staff to Designate Fare-Free Dates

Asher stated that several months ago the board requested that staff look at developing a policy that would allow staff to approve fare-free dates. The interlocal agreement between the City of Longview and the Cowlitz Transit Authority states that the Cowlitz Transit Authority Board sets fares so the board would need to approve a resolution in order to give staff the ability to designate fare-free dates. This resolution establishes the Veterans Stand Down and Project Homeless Connect as Fare-Free Dates, and would allow the Transit Manager and Public Works Director to approve additional fare-free dates not to exceed twelve (12) days per calendar year.

Jensen mentioned transporting folks on holidays or after city events in an effort to keep people out of their cars after they have been drinking. Asher said the agency would be unable to provide such transportation unless there was a set origin and destination. For example, if we were able to have a set origin and destination such as Go 4th at Lake Sacajawea and a park and ride location. The board would have to discuss fare for such an event.

Melink said she supported offering additional free dates to introduce people to our service. Asher said she has heard of agencies offering fare-free days around Black Friday, Dump the Pump Day and Transit Appreciation Day.

On a motion from Melink, seconded by Roberson Resolution 2016-02 authorizing staff to designate fare-free dates was adopted. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No 2016-02: Authorize RiverCities Transit Staff to Designate Fare Free Dates

8. 2016-17 LCC Agreement

Asher told the board that the Lower Columbia College ridership agreement has been a great partnership since 2013. A lot of LCC faculty members and students are taking advantage of the agreement. There has been a slight decrease in ridership from the previous year of about 4.5%, which was expected with LCC's slight dip in enrollment and RiverCities' ridership decrease. Staff is recommending renewal of the Lower Columbia College Ridership Agreement.

Weber asked if there was a discount in the price LCC is paying. Asher responded that with the formula set by the agreement, we are offering them a slight discount; however, staff is not confident that these students would ride if it wasn't free to them. Melink asked about bringing the high schools on board with a similar agreement. Asher said staff could approach the high schools and have the conversation to see if they are interested.

On a motion from Melink, seconded by Weber, the 2016-2017 Lower Columbia College Ridership Agreement was approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Ridership Agreement with Lower Columbia College

9. Consolidated Grant Application Committee

Every two years the Washington State Department of Transportation offers a consolidated grant program to public transportation agencies and nonprofit transportation agencies within the State of Washington. There is one application per project and rather than the agency deciding which pot of money is applicable, or completing multiple applications, the state decides where it best fits.

Asher reported that The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) is looking for volunteers to join the Consolidated Public Transportation Grant Application Ranking Committee. Volunteers must be nominated by public agencies involved in the RTPO. This Committee will complete the first phase of the State's granting process by ranking grant applications from agencies within the RTPO. From there the applications will be put into a statewide ranking process.

The RTPO Board will select the final ranking committee members from all the parties nominated. During the previous grant ranking process, the RTPO Board took two volunteers from each county. The selected ranking committee will participate in reviewing the Consolidated Grant Applications and complete a numeric ranking process for each pot of money. The deadline for nominations of volunteers is November 1, 2016.

Roberson added that there is fairness in the competitive grant process. Melink nominated Steve Harvey, Weber nominated a retired bus driver; saying they would have a unique perspective.

10. Letter of Support for Lower Columbia CAP

Asher said in years past this board has submitted a letter of support for Lower Columbia Community Action Program's (CAP) consolidated grant application. The project is for the I-5 connector from Castle Rock to Vancouver. This route is used by community members to get to medical appointments, college, and jobs. Due to us and CAP being different types of agencies it is unlikely that we would be competing for same pots of money. We are only eligible for 5310 and 5311. Nonprofits may be eligible for up to 5 different programs. While we are in the same Regional Transportation Planning Organization we don't really compete in the same categories.

Jensen responded, stating he supports CAP however he is leery about signing a letter of support when we could be competing for the same funds. Weber asked about who is using the service. Asher said that the route was established so that the vulnerable population may reach essential services. This is not a route we as an agency are looking into it providing service on.

Melink made a motion to issue a letter of support for CAP's consolidated grant application, Roberson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Request from Lower Columbia CAP for Letter of Support

11. Establish Public Hearing - 2017 Cowlitz Transit Authority Budget

Motion made by Weber, seconded by Melink to hold a public hearing November 9, 2016, to hear public comment on the 2017 Cowlitz Transit Authority Budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Establish Public Hearing for 2017 Cowlitz Transit Authority Budget

12. Interlocal Agreement for Public Transportation Services

Cameron spoke to the interlocal agreement between the Cowlitz Transit Authority and the City of Longview, stating it expires at the end of the year. Staff feels that it is appropriate at this time to address some challenges the State Auditor has brought up about the agencies sub-recipient status of FTA funds. The draft interlocal agreement makes some changes to formatting, clarifies references to CTA and PTBA, as well as major changes to section 5. This would be a 3-year extension of the current agreement with authorities, services provided, information and obligations remain the same. The primary change is in section 5 which addresses the ownership of assets.

It is the opinion of the FTA that all of the assets that were acquired with FTA funds where the City of Longview is the grant recipient remain in the name of Longview. The assets that are already titled CTA that were acquired with federal grants need to be retitled in Longview's name. Section 5 also addresses circumstances where Longview and the CTA's partnership dissolves.

Both the CTA attorney and the City of Longview attorney have reviewed and approved the agreement. Weber asked about the name change from Cowlitz Transit Authority to PTBA (Public Transportation Benefit Area). Cameron responded that he is not changing the name; he is clarifying the roles. The Cowlitz Transit Authority is the governing body for the PTBA.

The board asked staff to do some research about changing the name.

Motion made by Roberson, seconded by Melink to approve the draft interlocal agreement as provided. Jensen, Melink, and Alexander voted aye, with Weber and Roberson voting no. The motion passed.

Draft Interlocal Agreement with City of Longview for Public Transportation Services

13. Mobility Management

Nolen reported that mobility management covers a wide variety of activities including teaching people how to ride the bus. He recently trained a group of 20 young adults through ESD 112's STEPS (Student Transition Educational Program Services) program to ride the bus so they can more easily navigate public transportation on their own. Nolen also held a presentation explaining RiverCities Transit's services at Sunset Retirement home and has been coordinating with Lifeworks to present at a Life Skills class.

The RiverCities Transit bus was a popular attraction at Extreme Machines. Staff was present at the Local Government Open House and the Woodland Job Fair, sharing our service and program opportunities. RiverCities Transit provided transportation to the Woodland Job fair via a shuttle that started at the Transit Center with a pick up at the Kelso Train Station, then proceeded to the job fair.

Mobility Management includes communication with current and potential riders, staff has increased that by putting route specific information in shelters. RiverCities is now on Facebook which is a fast and effective way to communicate upcoming events, detours and hopefully connect with younger riders.

14. Manager's Report

Asher reported that included in the agenda packet there is a report on fares collected through the end of August showing about a 39% increase. Our farebox recovery for 2015 was 2.87%; as of July 31st, 2016 we are at 4.39%. We are collecting more fares even with ridership being down. Sales tax collection is good.

Staff is taking a look at bus stops and bus stop locations including looking at moving closer to CAP. Currently there is not a way to return to the front of CAP on Commerce, however, hopefully, there is a closer viable location. Staff is also identifying places that are frequently flooded, and moving those stops to drier locations.

Staff will be holding a team meeting tomorrow to go over emergency weather procedures. Any weather-related disruptions of service will be posted on Flash Alert and Facebook.

Staff was successful in securing two national competitive grants in September: one for the Downtown Transit Center Expansion (\$2.7 million) and the other for two 35-foot bus replacements (\$832,000) to replace the two oldest buses in the active fleet. Asher recently submitted a state competitive Regional Mobility Grant to help fund the Downtown Transit Center. If successful, the state funds will be used to match the federal grants just received which will greatly reduce the amount of match funds required by the CTA.

Al Hatton the director of (Washington State Transit Insurance Pool) has been invited to attend our next board meeting to present the Safety Star Award.

Fares Comparison Fixed Route

Fares Comparison Paratransit

15. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:12 p.m.

Tabitha Hayden, Clerk of the Authority

Don Jensen, Chairman