

Authority Meeting Highlights ***a brief recap of the Authority Meeting of May 20, 2020***

In order to comply with the Governor's guidance to "Stay Home and Stay Healthy" and in keeping with the Proclamation by the Governor Amending Proclamation 20-28.2 Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act, this meeting was held remotely.

Action Items

Wednesday night, the Authority:

- Adopted Resolution 02-2020 Declaring an Emergency and Directing the General Manager to continue to take necessary and appropriate steps in response to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Adopted Resolution 03-2020 Amending Section 5.14 of the Intercity Transit Authority Bylaws to provide for the conduct of remotely attended meetings and public participation at meetings and hearings conducted by remote means.

Other Items of Interest:

The Authority received a briefing from Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel, regarding how public hearings will be conducted if the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 is extended or expires.

Freeman-Manzanares said the COVID-19 health emergency provided many challenges and she anticipates it will continue to do so. Because Washington State was ground zero in the U. S., we didn't have a lot of information to work with, so with all of this uncertainty and many conversations among staff, we moved forward attempting to provide the safest working conditions for our employees and the safest travel experience for the passengers.

The nature and the transmission of the disease continues to unfold, and we are continually looking for guidance from the CDC, state and local public health officials, labor and industries, other transit systems and essential businesses.

Our staff are front line serving the community seven days a week, and this is decision-making real-time. And in this instance, it is potentially deadly.

Freeman-Manzanares noted that Intercity Transit's most fundamental challenge today is the availability of Operator staffing.

- Although availability changes daily, the current best estimate is approximately 45% of Operators are available to drive on a regular basis.
- That means that 55% of the Operators needed to run Policy Level Service are unavailable to us for a variety of COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 reasons.
- A number of the individuals are considered in a vulnerable category based on age or an underlying health condition.
- Or a family member is in a vulnerable category and they need to quarantine in order to care for that individual.
- There are individuals on leave to attend to childcare issues either due to school or childcare facility closures.
- There are number of individuals who are out long-term due to surgery or injury.
- We have with attrition some natural and perhaps some brought on by COVID-19.
- We have staff who are retiring and some who may be retiring earlier because of the virus.

- Some staff may choose not to continue working in this profession due to its essential, frontline nature.
- We have had staff come back from leave, others go out on leave, making the number of available Operators a moving target.
- Another complication is we are not hiring or training Operators at this time due to the COVID situation.
- For example, pre-COVID-19 it took 258 Operators to run our policy level of service.
- We estimate that at this point we will reliably have approximately 115 Operators to work with on some combination of fixed-route, DAL and potentially some Advanced Reservation to serve those who have early or late essential trip needs.

Staff is attempting to effectively navigate what level of service makes sense.

- What can we sustain from a staffing perspective?
- We are likely talking in the 30% range of our pre-COVID service.
- The span and frequency of service will be considerably less than our policy level of service.
- It is a tremendous effort to put together a new bid.

We are tentatively looking towards the end of June.

- This may or may not coincide with Phase 3 of the Governor's phased approach which is when it moves from "limited non-essential travel within proximity of your home" - Phase 2, to "Resuming non-essential travel," - Phase 3, and we move from "Gathering with no more than five people outside your household per week" to allowing gatherings of no more than 50 people.
- We do not know how long we will have to run this limited offering of service.
- There is the potential we will not have a stable and available work force through the end of the year or even into 2021.

Our Advanced Reservation System has provided over 18,000 trips. We still have capacity. As employers open up, that might change so while we are shooting for the end of June to reintroduce fixed route service, we are attempting to pull things together as quickly as possible in case we find that we can no longer handle those essential trips through our Advanced Reservation system.

- We need several weeks to provide refresher training for our operators.
- We are installing a Plexiglas shield around the drivers' compartment to further enhance their safety and add a layer of protection against the virus. Maintenance staff designed the shields with assistance from Operators who were all invited to test and provided feedback.
- We don't know what demand will look like when we return to fixed route, but if mid-March to mid-April was any example, we can assume that social distancing recommendations likely will not be achieved.
- We attempted to limit passenger loads to achieve social distancing and it just wasn't effective, and we ended up leaving people standing beside the road unable to make their trips.
- We're talking to the community about wearing masks. It's a requirement for our Operators to wear masks. It is a confined space and if we are interested in maintaining service, we need to protect the Operators and we need to protect each other so we don't share this contagious virus.
- We continue to purchase face coverings for ourselves and we have a supply for passengers.
- We're working through the supply chain issues, and that will very likely continue to be challenging.
- We are working with non-profits to insure those in the community have masks that need them.
- We have enhanced cleaning protocols. Cleaning and sanitizing with hospital grade cleaners, and electro-static sprayers.

- We have and continue to procure hand sanitizer, touchless dispensers, wipes and gloves, but none of these items are easy to come by at this point.
- We received federal funding from the CARES Act which has allowed us to address expenses related to COVID and anticipated economic impacts.

Freeman-Manzanares gave a shout-out to staff for making all of this work in the middle of this uncertainty. Staff has been working hard, doing things outside the norm, and being incredibly creative.

Projects continue to move forward, and staff is evaluating what projects need to move forward and what could and should wait.

- The Pattison Street Expansion is moving along at a fast clip. We anticipate going to the Design Review Board on June 25, 2020 and we believe we will be in the ground by late August.
- As of today, we have had 21 fraudulent unemployment claims made for employees. We talked with all of the employees, and they reported their claim online on ESD's fraud reporting website, and some have filed police reports.
- We canceled the annual Local Roadeo.
- The State Transportation Conference and Roadeo is canceled.
- For financial and safety reasons we are not looking at travel for the remainder of the year.
- We've asked staff members who can perform their essential duties offsite to continue to do so.
- Senior Management Team is going over the budget and work plan and that will be presented to the Authority in the not too distant future about what needs to move forward and what can wait.

Pat Messmer/Clerk of the Board

Prepared: May 21, 2020