

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
Held Remotely
March 3, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the March 3, 2021, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with [SCR 8402](#) extending certain gubernatorial orders issued in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Members Present: Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; Vice Chair and City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Citizen Representative Justin Belk; and Labor Representative Paul Tischer.

Members Absent: Labor Representative David Sharwark.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Cameron Crass; Katie Cunningham; Jason Agüero; Emily Bergkamp; Mike Burnham; Suzanne Coit; Tammy Ferris; Joy Gerchak; Jessica Gould; Kevin Karkoski; Steve Krueger; Rob LaFontaine; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Jeff Peterson; Eric Phillips; Heather Stafford-Smith; Steve Swan; Nancy Trail; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Jonathon Yee.

Others Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers; Ursula Euler, Community Advisory Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Councilmember Gilman to adopt the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT - No public comment was received.

INTRODUCTIONS

Fixed- Route Manager, Cameron Crass, introduced the Operator Class of 21-01: *Neil Ward; Stacy Catarina; Trenton Reid; Troy Kelly; Jameyson Miller; Mirra Merkel; Robert Andrews; Elandra Chatman; Caroline Glainyk; Carey Leanord; Nicholas Org; Kimberly Miles.*

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Councilmembers Sullivan and Carmody to adopt the consent agenda.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 2 of 9

- A. **Approval of Minutes:** February 3, 2021, and February 17, 2021, Regular Meetings.
- B. **Surplus Property:** Declared Coach Vehicles as surplus. These vehicles have exceeded their useful life and will be replaced by new Coaches in April 2021. The total value of the vehicles is estimated at \$27,000. *(Katie Cunningham)*

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Legal Services Contract Extension.** Procurement Coordinator, Jeff Peterson, presented an extension of the legal services contract with Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich.

Intercity Transit entered into a one-year term contract with Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich on April 1, 2018 for as-needed legal services. The current contract allows for four annual extensions in one-year intervals subject to annual approval. This extension represents the third of four one-year extension options and once approved, would extend the term to March 31, 2022.

Under the current contract Intercity Transit's primary Counsel is attorney Jeff Myers. Jeff is a Principal at the Firm and has municipal experience providing counsel to several local agencies in our area including the Olympic Region Clean Air Authority, TCOMM 911, LOTT Clean Water Alliance and City of Olympia.

Rates have remained unchanged over the last two terms. The Contract permits negotiation upon contract term extension and due to a general wage increase, the firm is requesting to increase Jeff's rate by 7.5%, as referenced herein. Procurement reviewed the adjustment requested and determined it is fair and reasonable based on local market comparisons.

Staff values the services Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich have provided Intercity Transit and supports the proposed contract extension.

It was M/S/A by Councilmembers Carmody and Sullivan to authorize the General Manager to execute an amendment of our legal services contract with Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer & Bogdanovich extending the term of the agreement through March 31, 2022.

- B. **Maintenance Building HVAC Platform Contract Award.** Procurement Coordinator, Tammy Ferris, presented for approval a contract for the construction of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning service platforms in the Maintenance Facility.

On June 3, 2020, the Authority authorized the General Manager to amend our Interagency Agreement (IAA) with DES for project management services that included use of DES' competitively awarded job order contracting services, on-

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 3 of 9

call consulting contracts, and small works roster for Transit public works projects.

Transit has since engaged MSGS from the DES on-call Architectural and Engineering contract to provide architectural, structural engineering, and construction support for the addition of platforms to access the HVAC units safely and more efficiently in the Maintenance Facility. Maintenance Facility employees have been performing routine maintenance and repair on seven (7) of the heat recovery units throughout the Maintenance Facility using lifts and ladders. Each heat recovery unit is situated differently, some are attached to the facility ceiling and others are suspended over the vehicle maintenance bays; thereby, making it difficult to access the units to safely perform routine maintenance.

MSGS finalized the design and construction documents in mid-January. DES advertised for Request for Bids on January 29, 2021 for fabricating and installing the metal platforms around the HVAC units. A total of eight (8) bids were received by the submittal deadline of 3:00 p.m., on February 25th. The bid submitted by Forma Construction Company in the amount of \$253,676.72 was determined to be the lowest, responsive and responsible bid.

Forma Construction Company is a reputable and competent contractor. Forma was awarded the contract for the Pattison Base MOA project. In addition, they have completed numerous projects in the community, including the successful completion of the Martin Way Park and Ride concrete repairs project.

Accordingly, staff recommends award of the contract for the construction of platforms with Forma Construction Company in the amount of \$253,676.72.

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Commissioner Mejia to authorize the General Manager to approve funding to have DES enter into a contract for the construction of platforms with Forma Construction Company in the amount of \$253,676.72.

- C. Service Restoration Overview.** Freeman-Manzanares and Planning Manager, Rob LaFontaine provided an overview of Intercity Transit's service levels during 2020 and the agency's March 2021 service change.

Freeman-Manzanares said it's been an incredibly interesting and challenging year. The time leading up to COVID-19 had been extremely busy and successful for Intercity Transit in terms of what the agency had accomplished meeting community goals.

- The legislature approved IT's request to allow the voters an opportunity to increase sales tax authority if they chose to do so.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 4 of 9

- IT focused on conducting an extensive public engagement process to understand what the community wanted their public transportation system to look like.
- The Intercity Transit Prop 1 was approved by the voters in November 2018 by nearly 66%. The Long-Range Plan was approved by the Authority in November 2018. It was a huge and successful effort establishing the long-range plan to provide the community with the service they desired. IT was determined to not only live up to the promises made to the community in terms of increased service but to exceed them, and IT did.
- While IT was doing all of that, staff was evaluating the pros and cons of providing the community with a zero-fare system, which delivered on their priorities in terms of providing access and equity and speeding up service among a whole host of other benefits.

In January 2020, IT's ridership increased by over 66,329 which was a 20% increase over 2019. In February 2020, ridership increased by over 112,062 which was a 39% increase over 2019. And then COVID hit really fast and there was no playbook. Washington was the first place in the nation to have this experience. What public health officials knew about the disease was little and evolving, but several things were clear - COVID was highly contagious, it spread when people didn't have symptoms, and it was deadly.

The majority of IT employees are directly involved in supporting service on the street and are directly exposed daily to thousands of encounters. It felt like we were trying to outrun an avalanche working 24/7, reading everything we could get our hands on trying to keep staff and passengers as safe as possible while providing access for essential travel.

Freeman-Manzanares is proud to say that IT has not had a single confirmed case of COVID transmitted at IT facilities or on vehicles for either staff or passengers. That is not to say, however, that IT hasn't had COVID positive passengers or that employees haven't had COVID or weren't potentially exposed to COVID. IT has become expert contact tracers and can quickly move to quarantine and keep everyone as safe as possible. And that is the bottom-line goal.

Now the really tough part is remembering this isn't over. There is good news about more vaccine on the way, and hopefully we are in a safer position sooner rather than later, but with low vaccination rates thus far and active variants, we must remain vigilant. If the last year has taught us anything, we need to expect the unexpected. Unlike any other time in our history, we must have three game plans ready at all times, status quo, expanding service as able and a fallback plan in case things take a turn for the worse. That has been an exhausting amount of work to create and while we have attended to that business, we are also planning

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 5 of 9

for the future – renovating and expanding Pattison Street, which was designed to support up to 80 vehicles and has been supporting over 400. We've been focused on creating our first long-range plan for our DAL program, looking at TSP, corridor study and BRT. And staff presented to the ITA last month the culmination of years of work to replace our first-generation CAD/AVL system.

IT's goal is to restore service to pre-COVID levels and continue on the path the ITA set in the Long-Range Plan and the Strategic Plan. This is dependent on the course of COVID in the community.

Staffing is a huge piece of the puzzle and hiring the right people is a huge effort and a large part of the recovery efforts. There are staff out on government mandated COVID leave, and there is a year's worth of employee attrition. That number is higher than perhaps it might have been because some individuals chose to retire earlier due to this public health emergency. Testing, hiring and training operators became a lot more complicated. The first post-COVID new operator class began in January and that application process opened when COVID rates in the community were higher than they had ever been. There is an open advertisement for a second operator class of 2021. Focus is on safely and professionally hiring staff and restoring service.

Freeman-Manzanares shared a huge "thank you" to all staff for keeping up with the rapid changes in requirements and doing what they needed to do to keep themselves, their co-workers and passengers safe.

- Operations staff is frontline on the street providing and supporting direct service.
- Maintenance is keeping facilities and vehicles in top shape and everything is cleaner than it has ever been.
- Development, Planning, Marketing and Communications, Procurement, Grants, Administration, Finance, HR, Executive, Safety and Information Services staff have performed beyond expectation. We are lucky to have such dedicated staff.

Planning Manager, Rob LaFontaine, provided an overview of Fixed-Route Revenue hours. He noted that from February 2020 to beginning of April 2020 five substantial adjustments to service were made, primarily decreases, with administrative staff working remotely from home. The following reductions were implemented in order:

1. Suspended Dash, Nightline and "The One"
2. Reduction of the Olympia Express with select trips
3. Began the Route 65; reduced Express
4. Began weekend schedule (using emergency bid)
5. Reduced span; end service at 9 p.m.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 6 of 9

6. Essential trips only; use Advance Reservations
7. June 2020 minimal service restored (most routes on a 60-minute frequency).
8. September 2020 more service added with an adjustment to Route 42, and along the Martin Way Corridor restored The One running every 30 minutes and added frequency to Route 94.
9. What's queued up for March '21 is what was targeted back in December '20. Beginning January '21 additional bus trips were added to Martin Way Corridor with Route 62.

Looking ahead, restored service is anticipated for March 21, 2021 to include:

- Additional trips in morning and evening (span of service)
 - Most routes beginning service between 7 and 8 a.m.
 - Busier routes operating until 9 p.m.
- Additional route frequency
- Continued suspension of Dash, Nightline and 612/620

Planned Hours, Miles and Buses (fixed-route only)

- Annualized – looking at 191,132 hours or 2,417,325 miles
- Weekday schedule = 532 daily hours
 - 6,729 daily miles
 - 46% increase from existing level
 - 63% of pre-pandemic level
- Weekend schedule = 519 daily hours
 - 6,556 daily miles
 - 47% increase from existing level
 - 99% of pre-pandemic level

Looking Ahead Beyond March 2021:

- Continual focus on safe restoration of service
- Redistribution of service to match demand
- Implementation of long-range plan

LaFontaine answered questions:

Q. Regarding where to expand service safely, is the primary driver how crowded the buses are during certain times of the day or is there another measurement?

A. Yes, paying attention to passenger activity has been the primary driver.

Q. As long as social distancing rules stay in place, is there a scenario where in order to keep buses from overcrowding you have to enter into something that was more frequent than what was planned previously?

A. In April [2020] we did supplement the Route 62 with some additional service to help distribute ridership, however it is better if we can add the service

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 7 of 9

more formally into the schedule rather than simply adding buses onto a route, which may not be very effective if passengers are not expecting higher frequency.

Q. If the daytime weekday schedule is running two-thirds of where we were pre-pandemic how much of that is the three colleges not having on-campus activity? Can you tell how much is commuter or student and if we're meeting the needs of people who rely on transit as primary transportation?

A. We're seeing the really heavy loads on the Martin Way corridor, the Route 66 on Pacific Avenue, and Route 13 on Capital Way. Where we're not seeing the heavier loads are the routes that service the colleges/universities.

Q. Are there any learned lessons that can carry over into more normal times after COVID?

A. There are a lot of lessons learned, but the need for contingency planning is at the forefront.

Q. Do you plan on creating an after-action report when we get back to normal? Lessons learned would be great preparation for disaster emergency preparedness.

A. Management is putting together all of the documentation created since the beginning of the pandemic (i.e. internal staff communications, external community information, etc.).

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Freeman-Manzanares shared a recent photo of the construction at the Pattison Street Project, showing the steel erection that started Monday, March 1. Excavating for the fuel wash facility starts next week, and construction is humming right along. The "topping off ceremony" will take place sometime in April, and the Authority is invited to participate to sign the last beam going up.

Coaches went into production at Gillig, and seven 35' and six 40' coaches are expected to arrive later this month.

Staff is working with Thurston County Public Health to get the first group of Phase 1A employees their second COVID vaccine shot within the next two weeks and the second and last group of employees classified under Phase IA their first shot of the vaccine in two weeks.

Our state representatives submitted a Capitol Request for \$5M for the next phase of the Pattison Street Project, as well as a request to support DASH operation in the 2021-2023 biennia.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

March 3, 2021

Page 8 of 9

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Gilman - Last week the City of Olympia approved a bid from Sound Pacific Construction for a major rebuild of Franklin Street across from 4th and State which will include the corner the transit center is located. He's glad IT staff was involved in planning of both the construction and mitigation of the impacts of the time under construction and he's willing to "ring his bells" if there are any challenges along the way. Gilman is also glad to hear about IT's service restoration, newly ordered coaches, and new operators - it feels like things may be getting back to normal.

Melnick - Appreciates the presentation on the service restoration. It confirms that IT has fared pretty well during the pandemic.

Sullivan - Tom Oliva stepped down from the Tumwater City Council and they are looking for a new council member. Applications can be found on the City's website and are due by March 13, 2021.

Belk - Wants to raise awareness about planned construction projects on the State Capitol Campus, the Pritchard Building as well as other changes to the campus are planned in light of all the other things the campus has dealt with last year. There has been positive feedback from neighbors as well as the City of Olympia. In addition to concerns about traffic and parking - only two of the many concerns, there seems to be agreement in the idea for the need that these improvements match up with previous master planning efforts in light of everything that has happened, and there is a need to step back and look at more comprehensive planning and general public engagement about these types of improvements to campus. He thinks it's imperative that Intercity Transit tracks these efforts and if there is opportunity to engage early on in planning to do so, or find a way to inject in the conversations, especially in relation to traffic concerns.

Carmody - The Yelm City Council discussed their vision for Yelm. They talked about whether to become a federal community or stay a farming community; to include big box stores or retain small mom and pop businesses. Yelm is thinking about the structure, work and feel of the future for the community.

Mejia - Met with IT staff for the new Board member orientation and appreciates all the time staff took to walk her through the operations of the agency. Mejia said the County received 4,728 vaccines this week and public health is hosting a first-dose vaccine clinic at the Fairgrounds on March 5.

Cox - Has been serving as Chair of Lacey's Transportation Committee and the Committee voted to recommend to the full city council approval of the Interlocal Agreement with Intercity Transit for Transit Signal Prioritization.

**Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting
March 3, 2021
Page 9 of 9**

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox

Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: April 7, 2021

Prepared by Pat Messmer, Clerk of the Board/
Executive Assistant, Intercity Transit