

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
Held Remotely
September 1, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cox called the September 1, 2021, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28.15 Safe Start/Roadmap to Recovery.

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; Jason Aguero; Emily Bergkamp; Suzanne Coit; Cameron Crass; Katie Cunningham; Jessica Gould; Zach Heinemeyer; Roshan KC; Steve Krueger; Rob LaFontaine; Ally McPherson; Pat Messmer; Brian Nagel; Eric Phillips; Rob Rinehart; Heather Stafford; Steve Swan; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Commissioner Mejia and Councilmember Sullivan to adopt the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were received.

INTRODUCTIONS

- A. **Cameron Crass introduced Operator Class 21-03:** *John Taylor; Ronald Bice; Shaundra Everett; Sharon Aldridge; Robert Preble; Tyler Bain; Terry Swartos*
- B. **Rob Rinehart introduced Roshan KC, Network Systems Analyst.**

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Councilmember Sullivan and Commissioner Mejia to adopt the consent agenda.

- A. **Approval of Minutes:** August 18, 2021, Regular Minutes
- B. **Payroll for August:** \$2,877,564.21

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 2 of 9

- C. **Accounts Payable August:** Warrant numbers 32773-32804 dated August 4 in the amount of **\$582,558.24**; numbers 32812-32813 dated August 7 in the amount of **\$64,931.74**; numbers 32814-32856 dated August 10 in the amount of **\$164,301.07**; numbers 32857-32897 dated August 18 in the amount of **\$2,254,352.60**; numbers 32898-32940 dated August 24 in the amount of **\$231,168.24**; for a total amount of **\$3,297,311.89**; and Automated Clearing House Transfers in the amount of **\$6,382.05** for a monthly total of **\$3,303,693.94**.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Dial-A-Lift Vehicle Purchase.** Procurement Coordinator, Katie Cunningham, presented the purchase of twenty-eight replacement Dial-A-Lift vehicles.

Intercity Transit received a Consolidated Grant Program award from the Washington State Department of Transportation (\$2,275,344) to replace Dial-A-Lift vehicles which have reached their useful life. To utilize this award, and two prior regional awards (\$491,320), Intercity Transit seeks to purchase new propane Aerotech Light Duty Ford (E-450) Cutaway Dial-A-Lift vehicles from Schetky Northwest (Schetky) under Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Contract 06719 to serve as replacement vehicles.

To meet vehicle replacement cycles, Intercity Transit planned to purchase eighteen (18) replacement Dial-A-Lift vehicles in 2021, and ten (10) additional replacement Dial-A-Lift vehicles in 2022, for a combined total of twenty-eight (28) replacement vehicles. Currently, Schetky is experiencing pandemic-related vehicle production delays. To ensure our ability to receive these within the grant period and refresh our fleet and keep vehicles on the road, Intercity Transit intends to purchase all twenty-eight (28) planned replacement Dial-A-Lift vehicles this year. The current production timeline for these vehicles from date of order placement is estimated to be at least one (1) year.

This purchase request includes replacing eighteen (18) 2011 series and ten (10) 2012 series Dial-A-Lift vehicles. Under DES Contract 06719, the total purchase price of each Dial-A-Lift vehicle is \$179,167.54, or a total of \$5,016,691.21 for twenty-eight (28) vehicles. DES competitively bid this contract awarding to the lowest responsive and responsible bidders by vehicle category, and Schetky was selected for this replacement purchase. As a member of the Washington State Purchasing Cooperative, Intercity Transit is eligible to purchase from the DES contract.

Intercity Transit concurs with DES's assessment regarding fair and reasonable pricing, and Schetky's ability to perform. Based on our experience with Schetky and their provided cutaway vehicles, staff is confident these vehicles are mechanically sound and will serve our staff and customers well for many years to come.

It was M/S/A by Commissioner Mejia and Councilmember Gilman to authorize the General Manager, pursuant to Washington State Contract 06719, to purchase twenty-eight (28) replacement Dial-A-Lift vehicles from Schetky Northwest in an amount of \$5,016,692.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 3 of 9

- B. Service Restoration Update September 2021.** Planning Manager, Rob LaFontaine and Senior Planner, Steve Swan provided an update of the ongoing restoration of fixed-route bus services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LaFontaine said pre-pandemic, IT was at approximately 247,000 annualized fixed-route service hours, with an average weekday ridership at about 13,100 passengers. After the turn of the year 2020, the zero-fare policy was in place, and ridership moved upward. Then in March 2020 the pandemic hit resulting in reductions that were made to fixed-route service and creating a decrease in fixed-route ridership. Over a period of about a month many decisions were made regarding fixed-route service.

LaFontaine reviewed the journey IT's been on to restore fixed-route service the last 15 months and IT is coming upon the seventh adjustment to routes and schedules as part of the restoration effort. Staff is preparing for service change number seven coming up September 19, however, service isn't yet at the pre-pandemic level.

The main variable driving service is Intercity Transit's supply of sustainable labor, bus operators, who can help deliver the critical service. The Planners make sure the service that we're supplying not only meets the community's expectations and desires for service, but also aligns with the supply of bus operators. At the end of August 2021 there were 208 operators available to drive, about 81% of where we would otherwise be pre-pandemic. Looking toward September service restoration, LaFontaine forecasts 210 bus drivers which is the low end of the target and headed in a healthy direction, and he hopes that trend continues so IT can continue the journey of restoring bus service. The relationship between available bus operators and the restoration of fixed-route service is tied together.

LaFontaine reviewed ridership statistics. He noted that August 27, 2021, had the highest ridership IT has seen in 2021 - 8,024 boardings. Not quite back to the 13,000 - 15,000 we've seen historically in the past. LaFontaine showed the distribution of where those rides fell by route. Route 62 had the highest number of boardings.

LaFontaine reviewed passenger loads - the number of people on the bus at a moment in time. Our technology records the load on every single bus every time it changes and when buses come back to the yard, we transfer a large volume of data back into our databases, and it gets cumbersome to try to review and present. Using August 27 as an example (the day with the highest ridership), he illustrated Routes 62A and B on the Martin Way corridor with a time set at 1:00 p.m. which shows what ridership or loads looked like on that Friday. There were eight buses in motion at 1:00 p.m. and the chart showed buses at the Olympia Transit Center downtown with 19 passengers on board. There was a bus inbound to the transit center with two passengers on board, and the remaining buses scale with 5, 12, 20 passengers. We tend to see our higher ridership periods in the afternoon from about 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Sullivan likes the data presented in this fashion because it shows the differences between the routes and different times of the day. Often times, the public comes back to IT saying there's no one on the bus. This data shows there's a bus with maybe five people on it, but there's also another bus somewhere on the route that has 24 people on it. This is very beneficial showing the complexity of what each bus is doing at different times.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 4 of 9

Senior Planner, Steve Swan, talked about the adjustments to the fixed-route service coming up on September 19. The biggest item is going to be the span of service. IT is increasing that by about an hour and a half. Typically, throughout the years, IT always had service beginning around 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. But recently during the pandemic and with the shortage of labor, most of the bus routes have been starting around 7:30 a.m. We're at a place now where we can increase that span of service by about an hour and a half. This is a good time for it because as we move into the fall, we're at a place where more workers are transitioning back to a traditional workplace, and school is starting back up. Swan went on to review the individual routes.

The One route is typically a commuter peak hour-based service. Originally, it started out as a 15-minute service during the morning peak and then it would be off during the day and return to 15-minute service during the evening peak. However, that changed during the pandemic, and we sometimes use that service to help supplement our service on the Martin Way corridor with the 62A and B. One of the challenges during the pandemic was there were a lot of riders on the Route 62 and it didn't allow adequate spacing between passengers. The One seemed to be very useful in helping provide that additional service and keep passengers safe by reducing the passenger loads on the bus as we were trying to socially distance during the pandemic - keeping our passenger loads at around 10 passengers at a time and The One helped out with that. The One will be moved back to how this route was designed with 15-minute service during the morning and afternoon peak times.

Route 13 - Historically this route has been on 15-minute frequency and is one of the most frequent routes. During the pandemic we didn't have the operator strength to run the service at 15-minute levels, however, assuming there are enough operators, which all of these changes are contingent upon, the intent is to run the 15-minute service on the Route 13 beginning in September.

Route 60 - We had to make a quick change on the fly with this route due to conditions on Ensign Road because we felt it was unsafe to operate buses in that area. We moved the 60 off of Ensign Road onto Martin Way and Lilly Road. There is uncertainty about how long this will continue and we're looking at a semi-permanent change and changed other inner workings on the bus, like the onboard, announcements. We announce the stops on Martin Way and on Lilly Road rather than the stops on Ensign Road. If in the event we need to make this a permanent change, we will follow a process to allow the public an opportunity to express their views and provide input.

Route 65 - We're adding a bus stop on Hogum Bay Road at Campus Glen Drive. That's an area that when we implemented a year and a half ago, we didn't have a lot of activity because it wasn't well developed. However, recently, we've seen more development in that area with new warehouses like an Amazon distribution center.

Swan said all of these changes are contingent upon having the necessary number of Operators to operate the service. One thing we've done to provide that contingency is move some of the service from a biddable work for the Operators onto the extra board. Currently, the 10 Operators that it takes each day to drive The One, the 6 Operators it takes to bump

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 5 of 9

the Route 13 frequency up from 30 minutes to 15 minutes, and the 6 Operators it takes each day to run the express service in September will come from the extra board. This allows for flexibility if things go wrong, and we lose Operators and are not able to run the service. We can pull back that service if necessary and not mess up an Operator's biddable work.

The Dash and Nightline – These are currently suspended, with hopes to bring them back in the future.

Swan reviewed a chart showing weekday span of service by route. He noted the changes being implemented effective September 19 will bring IT back to about 79% of pre-pandemic levels.

Swan reviewed a chart showing where there is still a lack of service in the neighborhood routes. Pre-pandemic there was half-hour frequency. Currently, Routes 21, 42, 45, 47, 60 and 64 that serve our neighborhoods are currently still only at an hour frequency. The Pierce County Express pre-pandemic was at 29 round trips daily going to Tacoma, but now that's down to 13 roundtrips.

Effective September 19, weekday service hours will be increased to 631 hours per day, about 8,775 daily miles. On weekends, that will be about 500 hours per day, 7,178 daily miles. The weekday number represents a 13% increase from our current July service level. That brings service up to about 75% of the pre-pandemic level for weekdays. The weekends have increased much faster, and with a 7% decrease in the weekend service because we're taking out The One on weekends, we're still going to be at about 95% of our pre-pandemic levels. When combining the two, the 75% weekday service and the 95% weekend service comes out to about 79% of the service that we had prior to the pandemic. That's an 8% increase from the changes that were made in July.

This represents about 215,000 in annual number of hours, a little over 3 million miles. That's about 48 buses on a weekday and 40 buses on the weekend.

LaFontaine referred to the Advance Reservation Service, in which the Dial-A-Lift vehicles were made available to the general public during the pandemic. The forthcoming increases and the earlier morning span Swan mentioned, we will have effectively absorbed all of the Advanced Reservation trips – there may be a small handful remaining in the evening. The Advance Reservation Service that's been in place since April 2020 will be retired.

Gilman referred to the changes made on Ensign Road, recognizing bus stops on Ensign are no longer in close proximity to the hospital, and he wants to know how the public will gain access to/from the hospital. He hopes that either IT or the community can figure out a solution to fill that gap.

Cox asked if physical distancing restrictions on the buses will continue. LaFontaine said IT has not been enforcing any particular distancing restriction for loads on buses. Signs are in place encouraging riders to practice social distancing from one another if possible. There are no plans to alter or change the load restrictions on the buses.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 6 of 9

Melnick noted that on a whole considering the circumstances of the pandemic, the Planning staff has been resilient the last 18 months and have done a “pretty darn good job.”

C. Universal Vaccination Requirement Resolution 03-2021. Freeman-Manzanares presented for adoption Resolution 03-2021. The resolution directs the General Manager to establish work rules and policies providing for and implementing a universal vaccination requirement for all employees and volunteers of Intercity Transit. The primary philosophy behind every action is to protect the health and safety of employees, passengers and community. This resolution is consistent with the requirements imposed by the Governor’s proclamation.

It requires all Intercity Transit employees and volunteers be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 no later than October 29, 2021, and establishes COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment.

It identifies that either the two-dose series of Pfizer or Moderna or the single dose Johnson and Johnson must be completed no later than October 15, 2021, to allow for the two-week period in which the vaccines achieve their full effectiveness. It includes verification requirements, and recommended COVID-19 boosters, as well as provides for medical and religious accommodations.

To date, management has met with the IAM on three occasions and the ATU on two occasions to discuss the impacts of this resolution and will continue to work together to bring those discussions to resolution.

Intercity Transit shares many of the underlying concerns addressed by a universal vaccination requirement for its employees and volunteers. Intercity Transit provides essential transit services to the public and community, which is threatened by the increase in cases in the community and among its staff. To maintain staff levels necessary to provide basic services, the General Manager is requesting Board approval to follow the State’s lead in implementing work rules that establish a universal vaccination requirement for employees and volunteers of Intercity Transit.

Jeff Myers, Legal Counsel, said the spread of COVID-19 in our community is a fluid situation and a number of Operators have been affected by the pandemic and the spread of the Delta variant. Those who are not vaccinated are at very high risk of contracting COVID-19 and IT needs to take steps to protect their workforce and passengers. IT also recognizes that dialog with the Union is extremely important because we recognize this is a big deal – it’s a big deal for individuals who have chosen not to be vaccinated, and it's now going to be a job requirement. IT wants to follow state and federal law as far as offering those accommodations, however, it's necessary because voluntary programs only got us to 64.6%. In order to be effectively protective of our workforce and the public, we need to get much higher levels than that. The resolution was put together following a lot of the precepts that the Governor's proclamation used and there’s a lot of information and it's a fairly lengthy resolution. Myers said we tried to follow the science and the facts, and most importantly, tried to take measures that are protective of our workforce. The WTA was instrumental in providing a lot of information through the Summit Law Group, and we looked at resources that are available through MRSC. This boils down to the leadership of the Authority and

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 7 of 9

Freeman-Manzanares as the General Manager in and setting forth this policy to be protective of our workforce as much as possible.

Chair Cox opened the floor to the Authority for comments. She started by saying that according to the number of cases for the last three weeks, the pandemic is the worse it's ever been in Thurston County along with an increased number of deaths. Cox said this is getting really serious, and we need to pay serious attention. As Chair of the Authority, her very first concern is for the care of IT employees and their safety. As good stewards of this organization, it's safety first for employees. Cox is pleased to see IT taking this step.

Sullivan said she is very much in support of this resolution and encourages everyone to get the vaccine. She understands there is a lot of resistance and fear. She has personally experienced seeing friends who have been in the hospital on ventilators, and that was before the Delta variant. She watched what their families went through. She knows of one friend who has permanent health issues, and another friend who passed away. These individuals were all friends, local within Thurston and Pierce Counties.

Sullivan said we have the vaccine now, and don't need to put our families through all of that. We all need to be taking responsibility for our family members and neighbors. Everyone she knows who had the vaccine hasn't had any adverse side effects except for an achy arm, a headache or slight fever that all went away in a day or two, which is better than the alternative of ending up in the hospital on a ventilator.

Pierce thanked Freeman-Manzanares, Myers and staff for the long hours and the great job putting together the resolution. It is very readable and that's important to her to be able to read through it and understand and see that great care was taken to be inclusive of any of the situations that may come up. She agrees it's tough, and there are some arguments and people who are concerned about this. We have to look at the greater good for the greater group. Pierce has a one-year-old grandson who is not allowed to do a lot of the things other children his age in the past have done because his parents are sheltering him. Getting more people who are medically able to be vaccinated would be wonderful and help ease the stress and illnesses that are coming up. In addition to protecting IT staff, it's important to their families because people can be asymptomatic and not realize it and risk the possibility of taking the virus home. She knows it's tough and we've been through tough things in this pandemic all along. She said this is just one more step, and everyone is going to have to step up.

Mejia agrees with what everyone else has said and is in full support. She thanked Freeman-Manzanares and Myers for looking into this and taking the time to make sure it was right. This decision doesn't come lightly. It's alarming to see those high numbers and they keep going up. It wasn't easy for the County to make the same decision for their employees. We're doing it for the protection of employees and the community, who rely on us.

Melnick votes in favor of the resolution. He believes the problem is really complicated when we talk about the light at the end of the tunnel becoming more visible. At one point it did become more visible and then suddenly it wasn't again because of the Delta variant. He believes this is the time to take this action.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 8 of 9

Gilman also supports the resolution. He is really proud of what Intercity Transit's employees do every day. They act in the public good to provide mobility for our community. He knows this is asking more, but we're asking that you model support for community public health and we're confident that it will reduce the level of infections and illnesses in our community. The City of Olympia made a similar decision and just put a communication out to their employees on Friday. They are going to require vaccination or weekly testing by October 31. Like Intercity Transit, Olympia is meeting with each of the employee unions to talk about whether there are impacts of this rule that need to be bargained. He appreciates that IT has had those conversations and appreciates staff stepping up. It sets a great example of leadership and putting the community first all through this pandemic, and now we're asking you to do a little bit more. He's very grateful for that.

Belk appreciates the time that everyone went through to think the resolution through and the various issues at hand. He echos everything that's been said so far. He also noted the hospitals' situation are alarming, not just for those experiencing the impact of COVID, but also for those who need the hospital services for other emergencies. Hospitals won't be as accessible or even available until we get over this hump. Belk said this is the right time to use every tool available that we can to relieve the pressure on our medical services and step up as an agency to do what's right.

Tischer said this has been a very difficult time for all of us and appreciates the meetings the Union has had with Freeman-Manzanares, Stafford-Smith and Bergkamp. The ATU had two meetings and have another one scheduled for Friday. The statement that we have, and this is challenging for him to say, but it's a statement that we have from the ATU, we're very concerned about the recall provisions that are being proposed to them in relation to our membership. Listening to everyone who talked about family members and the community, he wants the Authority to know that this is affecting many people who have invested a lot of their time and a lot of their lives working for Intercity Transit. Tischer said in the past year and a half, he has experienced personally seeing the sacrifices that his fellow members, brothers, and sisters have made. They have concerns or are very worried about the recall and how this will work in the future. He appreciates everybody's input.

It was M/S/A by Councilmember Sullivan and Citizen Representative Melnick to adopt Resolution 03-2021, Universal Vaccination Requirement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - NONE.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- The COVID pandemic, particularly the reality of the Delta variant, requires that Intercity Transit remain flexible in the work we do. As our path changes, Freeman-Manzanares will notify the Authority of possible changes.
- The Transportation Security Administration extended the Federal Mask Mandate for planes, trains, ferries, buses through January 18, 2022.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

September 1, 2021

Page 9 of 9

- The State Auditor notified us this week that Intercity Transit received a perfect State Audit. Such a designation requires many talented people doing their job extremely well, and it really encompasses individuals throughout the entire organization. Freeman-Manzanas recognized, in particular, Finance Manager, Suzanne Coit, Accounting Supervisor, Angie Shamburger, and the entire Finance Team, Development Director, Eric Phillips, Grants Program Administrator, Jessica Gould, Procurement Manager, Steve Krueger, Procurement Coordinators, Katie Cunningham, Tammy Ferris, Jeff Peterson, and Inventory Supervisor, Jon Licht.

AUTHORITY ISSUES


Melnick said he voted for the purchase of propane fueled Dial-A-Lift buses because they are the most viable low hydrocarbon option available right now. But hopefully, IT realizes that propane is manufactured from either natural gas or petroleum in which both are doomed hydrocarbons in the long term and one byproduct of propane combustion is carbon monoxide, a known greenhouse gas. While he's supportive of our comprehensive assessment of hydrogen fuel cell propulsion for fixed-route buses, from what he's read there is very little interest in hydrogen fuel cell propulsion for lighter weight Dial-A-Lift and vanpool buses; the emerging preference for these is battery electric.

Melnick continued that since Ford is currently marketing battery electric passenger vans and other manufacturers are soon to follow, he urges IT to seriously investigate BEV technology for these lighter weight buses.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY



Carolyn Cox, Chair

ATTEST



Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: October 6, 2021

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