



City of Longview

1525 Broadway
Longview, WA 98632
www.ci.longview.wa.us

Minutes - Final - Not Approved City Council

*Mayor Don Jensen
Council Member Ken Botero
Council Member Tom Hutchinson
Council Member Chet Makinster
Mayor Pro Tem Mary Jane Melink
Council Member Steve Moon
Council Member Michael Wallin*

Thursday, April 16, 2015

6:00 PM

2nd Floor, City Hall

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, in accordance with RCW Chapter 42.30, that the City Council of the City of Longview, Washington, will conduct a workshop session in the Longview City Hall Training Room, 1525 Broadway, Longview, on Thursday, April 16, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. The topics of discussion follow. Final disposition shall be taken on no other matter.

The City Hall is accessible for persons with disabilities. Special equipment to assist the hearing impaired is also available. Please contact the City Executive Offices at 360.442.5004 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Mayor Jensen

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Don Jensen, Council Member Botero, Council Member Hutchinson, Council Member Makinster, Mayor Pro Tem Melink, Council Member Moon and Council Member Wallin

Staff and others present:

City Manager David Campbell; Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Kurt Sacha; Director of Public Works Jeff Cameron; Brad Windler, Amy Asher, City Attorney Jim McNamara; and HR Director Chris Smith.

Ray Byers and Brooks Johnson.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

4. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

[15-3777](#)

PARATRANSIT SERVICES, INC. CONTRACT RENEWAL

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The City's contract with Paratransit Services, Inc. expires on May 31, 2015. In accordance with the terms of the contract, the City notified Paratransit Services of its intent to renew the contract for an additional three year term. Staff has negotiated the impacts of cost increases and operational challenges experienced by Paratransit Services during the current contract, and recommends increasing the budget to provide paratransit transportation services.

The contract with Paratransit Services provides for annual price adjustments on April 1 of each year based on 80% of the Portland Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, except that no price adjustments are implemented for the final two months of the contract. During the term of the current contract, CPI price adjustments totaled 3.42%. These price adjustments have not allowed Paratransit Services to address significant operational issues affecting their ability to comply with the contract and the ability of RiverCities Transit to comply with federal law regarding disabled transportation.

Major issues affecting operations include, but are not limited to:

- Driver recruitment and retention - Low wages make it very difficult to recruit and retain drivers. Each driver must obtain a commercial driver license with passenger endorsement, maintain a commercial driver medical certification, and be subject to random drug and alcohol testing. However, starting wages are currently \$9.96 per hour; this wage is only slightly higher than the current state minimum wage of \$9.47 per hour, and notably less than starting wages at our local school districts (about \$16.50 per hour) and RiverCities Transit fixed route drivers (\$19.53 per hour).
- Affordable Care Act mandate - The Affordable Care Act mandate that health insurance be provided to employees working 30 or more hours per week has severely restricted the ability to use part-time drivers. Due to the driver hours required to meet passenger demand, some part-time drivers were converted to full-time benefited positions, the cost of which was absorbed by Paratransit Services. Additionally, the remaining part-time drivers are restricted to less than 30 hours of work, limiting their availability to cover open shifts, vacation, and sick leave.
- Management driving routes - Driver recruitment and retention challenges, along with the limitations on using part-time drivers due to the Affordable Care Act, has resulted in the need for the local Paratransit Services manager and supervisor to drive routes on a regular basis in order to meet our disabled transportation service requirements.
- Regular overtime and limits on leave - Due to driver shortages, full-time drivers are routinely required to work overtime to cover unfilled routes and cover for vacation and sick leave use by other drivers. Drivers are

also limited in their ability to use their accrued vacation leave balance, due to the need to cover for them during their absence and the lack of drivers to provide that coverage.

To address these issues and ensure RiverCities Transit complies with federal law mandating that all paratransit eligible riders are transported when requested, staff recommends providing an increased budget for the Paratransit Services, Inc. contract. Doing so will allow Paratransit Services to begin addressing driver recruitment, retention, wages, and benefits issues. A copy of the current contract is attached for your information; updates and revisions will be made as appropriate before the new contract is presented to the city council for approval.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

The Cowlitz Transit Authority and Longview City Council approved budgets for providing paratransit services in the amounts of \$875,000 in 2015, and \$885,000 in 2016. Staff recommends a revised budget of \$927,500 in 2015 (an increase of 6.03%), and \$1,019,200 in 2016 (an increase of 9.85% over the recommended 2015 budget, and 15.16% over the current 2016 budget). These budget amounts are based on an estimate of 22,800 hours of service (2014 total hours = 22,767). The actual amount paid to Paratransit Services will depend on the actual service hours and ridership.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discussion and direction to staff.

Attachments: [Paratransit Services Contract 2012-15](#)

Jeff Cameron introduced the first item of discussion: Para-Transit Services Contract Renewal

Para-Transit Services is having significant challenges with driver retention -- largely a result of the low wages and requirement for CDL's.

Entry wage for para-transit drivers is \$9.96. River City transit drivers starting wages is \$19.53 per hour. Top end of para-transit wage scale is \$14/hour

Paratransit drivers' hours are capped at 28 hours/week to avoid the provisions of the affordable care act.

Regular hours: 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., M – F; 8 am to 6 p.m. Saturday

2014 Total Annual Riderships: Fixed route – 396,000; para-transit - 62,000

Supervisors and managers for Para-Transit must drive when there are shortages of drivers.

Supervisors and manager drove 400 hours in 2014.

Para-transit services recommending adjustments to wages.

Recommended 6.03% increase in contract. \$927,500 contract in 2015-16.

Increase provides for general wage increase plus one (1) additional driver.

Riders contribute 4% to 5% toward ridership cost.

Some believe fares should be increased.

Fixed route riders have seen a significant increase in service.

*Looking for approval from Council on increase to contract for Para-Transit Services
Longview is the recipient of federal grant dollars.*

*There was a comment from Council that a request for proposal for Para-transit
services would be in order in the future. Also, fare increases are also in order.*

15-3776

RIVERCITIES TRANSIT GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The governance relationship between the Cowlitz Transit Authority (CTA) and the City of Longview has a long history. Since the creation of the Public Transit Benefit Area (PTBA) in 1987, the Cowlitz Transit Authority has acted as the governing authority of public transportation services within the PTBA, and Longview has operated as the contractor to the CTA. The model is one that has worked for many years, but is convoluted and has created challenges for auditors, the Federal Transit Administration, council members and staff as the transit system continues to grow and develop.

The CTA/City governance model and options have been evaluated twice in the past five years. In 2014, the Cowlitz Transit Authority commissioned TCF Architecture to study the governance model in detail and present options to both the CTA and the City. At a joint workshop of all CTA member agencies, the decision was made to continue the existing governance model and retain the current interlocal agreement for public transportation services. However, as the transit system has evolved and expanded, city council objections and resistance to CTA-approved actions have presented challenges for staff to implement the direction given by the CTA, and led staff to believe public transit governance may need to be revisited for a third time.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discussion and direction to staff.

Attachments:

[Longview - CTA Interlocal Agreement \(2012-15\) - Signed](#)

[Section 3 from 2014 Facilities & Governance Study - Final Report](#)

[Governance Dilemma from 2014 Facilities & Governance Study - Final Report](#)

[2010 Transit Enhancement Plan - Chapter 9 - Governance](#)

[Governance Scenarios from 2014 Facilities & Governance Study - Final Report](#)

*CTA formed in 1987 by Kelso, Cowlitz County and Longview. Five board members:
2 Kelso, 2 Longview, and 1 from Cowlitz County.*

*Following approval by the voters for the new transit tax, CTA entered into contract
with City of Longview to provide transit services. CTA would maintain control over all
service levels and pay for level of service provided.*

Council adopts budget; Council approves expenditures. According to City's

purchasing rules, Council must approve all contracts.

Proposal: Council via Resolution can allow the City Manager to provide for the purchases by Public Transit.

[15-3778](#)

LAKE SACAJAWEA FLUSHING IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT UPDATE

COUNCIL INITIATIVE ADDRESSED:

Provide sustainable water quality & environmental infrastructure

CITY ATTORNEY REVIEW: N/A

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

On December 13, 2012, the City applied to the U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers (Corps) for permits to modify the Fishers Lane Water Treatment Plant intake facility to provide flushing water for Lake Sacajawea, since the treatment plant was no longer being used to supply municipal drinking water. In addition, the permit would allow annual dredging to clear sediment from blocking the intake, ensuring adequate water supply to flush Lake Sacajawea.

On November 14, 2014, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completed their required consultation for the Corps regarding this project and issued a draft Biological Opinion containing analysis, conclusions, and recommended Reasonable and Prudent Measures, and Terms and Conditions, for the project permit. Essentially, the NMFS recommendations required the City to sample for eulachon (smelt) in the river each day at the beginning of the flushing season from May 15 through June 30, and if a single smelt egg or larvae was found, flushing could not be performed that day.

The City submitted comments to the Corps and NMFS expressing our strong concerns and objections to the NMFS recommendations. On April 3, 2015, staff met with the Corps and NMFS to discuss our concerns regarding the NMFS recommendations and see if a compromise position could be reached. Staff will discuss the results of that meeting and what it will likely mean for the permit and the project.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discussion only.

Jeff Cameron explained the outcome of the City's meeting with the Natural Marine Fishers Service (NMFS) and U S Army Corps of Engineers (CORPS) regarding the City's ability to pump water into the ditches for flushing Lake Sacajawea.

In essence, based on the meeting, all restriction previously issued have been lifted and City may proceed with pumping. The one provision City did agree to is that the City will collect data for the NMFS and CORPS. All data will be shared.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Further discussion ensued regarding the upcoming School Zone Safety Project workshop.

The ultimate goal for this workshop is to decide upon what improvements could be completed in the non-photo enforced zones with the \$135,000 available.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.