



City of Longview

Cowlitz Transit Authority
Agenda
RiverCities Transit

Minutes

Cowlitz Transit Authority

Wednesday, May 11, 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

Absent: 2 - Chet Makinster and Jim Hill

Staff Present

Amy Asher, City of Longview
Jeff Cameron, City of Longview
Ben Nolen, City of Longview
Tabitha Hayden, City of Longview

Others Present

Betsy DeSpain, Paratransit Services
Judith Donovan, CWCOCG

3. Constituent Comments

Chris Forward, a Social Worker with PeaceHealth Dialysis on Broadway, and resident of Longview approached the board. He stated LIFT is saving lives and allowing patients to choose life. Most dialysis patients start off feeling ok and able to drive to and from appointments, however, as the disease and time progress it becomes harder on the patients. Typically patients transition to using family for transportation to and from dialysis. Dialysis is a choice and that choice can be hard to make while a patient feels burdensome on their family. Having the option to use LIFT for transportation continues the patients independence. The afternoon time slot is the only time frame that works for patients using LIFT. This time slot is packed as patients choose it due to poor eyesight and care facilities use it to take advantage of LIFT. If LIFT could give rides earlier getting patients to dialysis by 6:30 A.M. it would open up an additional time slot. Seven percent of dialysis patients ride LIFT. Board Chair Jensen introduced Chris to Betsy Despain the RiverCities LIFT Manager.

4. Consideration of Minutes

On a motion from Weber, seconded by Melink, the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 13, 2016, were unanimously approved.

5. Consent Calendar

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

Weber mentioned that ridership growth seems to have tapered off, and asked Asher if she thought we had reached our peak. Asher responded that staff will keep an eye on ridership, the weather was unseasonably warm and may have played a role in the ridership dip.

2016 Fixed Route Annual Ridership

2016 April Fixed Route Ridership

2016 April Paratransit Ridership

March 2016 County Treasurer's Report

March 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 - \$551.96

Invoice - City of Longview - \$300,207.08

Invoice - Columbia Security - \$520.00

Invoice - TCF Architecture - \$6,392.50

7. Travel Training "Bus Riding 101"

Asher stated we received some grant funds for travel training which is one of Nolen's tasks. She asked him to tell the board a little about travel training and how it is beneficial. Nolen said travel training is teaching or showing someone how to ride the bus. Currently our paratransit application asks the applicant if they are interested in travel training. There are many obstacles and fears to overcome when planning and taking a trip via public transit. Currently the training is individualized based on the clients needs and skill level which is evaluated at a pre-training meeting. The training can include how to read a schedule, cross a street, board the bus and pay a fare. Typically Nolen will teach the client one trip. Riding the bus with the client showing them the route and schedule, until the client is confident and the trainer feels that they may ride the bus safely. The grant fund will allow us to develop a travel training program. Those who are house bound or only use paratransit find a lot of freedom when they can use the fixed route system because they don't have to call a day in advance to make a reservation. Studies show that for every dollar spent on travel training the agency will save \$1.45 - \$4. Weber hopes our goal is not to cut out Paratransit. Nolen replied the program goal is to help those who want to ride fixed route but need a little guidance. Performance measures for the program include a survey and follow up interview as well as cost savings by trips and number of persons trained.

8. Complaints of Unfair Competition Policy

Asher asked the board to review and approve the included Complaints of Unfair Competition Policy. This policy is required by Washington Department of Transportation because we receive tax payer funds. This policy outlines a process for private carriers to file an unfair competition complaint. On a motion from Roberson, seconded by Melink, the Complaints of Unfair Competition Policy was adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

City of Longview / RiverCities Transit Complaints of Unfair Competition Policy

9. Bus and Bus Facilities Grant

Staff is working on two FTA grant applications and needs Board approval for matching funds and a letter of support. One grant addresses part of our facilities shortfall with an expansion at the downtown Transit Center, the other is for two new fixed route buses. We have doubled the size of our staff with our increase of bus service since 2011 and our facilities are not keeping pace. During a shift change at the transit center we can have up to nine operators squeezed into an 8 x 8 breakroom. Staff has been working with TCF Architecture to develop a design for expansion.

Forty percent of our fixed route fleet is at or past the manufacture intended service life. Staff is requesting grant funds to replace two fourteen year old busses that have over 400,000 miles on them. New coaches have ramps rather than lifts that deploy. New vehicles are safer, more fuel efficient and have cleaner emission technology. Last year we replaced two engines in our older vehicles, staff is hoping to avoid that going forward.

The estimated cost to expand the downtown Transit Center is \$3,480,000 and the estimated cost for two fixed route coaches is \$1,040,000. The grant requires a 20% local match and we are asking for a letter of support to supply the match should we be awarded the funds. If we do receive the grant we would be responsible for an additional \$540,000 in preconstruction costs. Staff does not expect to receive both grants. Melink asked about funding the projects, Asher responded that we may pull the funds from our reserves and that we have additional awards with the FTA that we will draw and use towards operations. Cameron stated another option is to debt finance as both the projects would qualify for financing.

On a motion from Weber, seconded by Melink, the Cowlitz Transit Authority approved the Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Letter of Support and matching funds. The motion carried unanimously.

Approve Letter of Support and Local Matching Funds for FY2016
Federal Transit Administration Bus and Bus Facilities Grant

10. Manager's Report

Asher reported sales tax revenue for April 2016 was up 4.9% over April 2015, year to date we are up 6.7%. Ridership as previously stated dipped slightly which may have to do with spring break and the slightly warmer temperatures. Paratransit ridership is also down for the month.

The supervisor position vacated by Windler has been posted, the job announcement closes at the end of May. If all goes well we may have a supervisor on board by the middle of July. We have had additional staff changes as our customer service clerk, Janie Hughes, retired after 13 years of service with the City of Longview. We wish her well and we will be filling that position soon.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:46 p.m.

Tabitha Hayden, Clerk of the Authority

Don Jensen, Chairman