

**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
SKAGIT TRANSIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

The Skagit Transit Board of Directors met in regular session in Sedro Woolley on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. Mayor Steve Sexton called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, and Introductions.

**Members Present**

Lauri Gere, City of Anacortes, Mayor  
Steve Sexton, City of Burlington, Mayor, Chair  
Rick DeGloria, City of Burlington, Council Member  
Keith Wagoner, City of Sedro Woolley, Mayor, Vice Chair  
Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner  
Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Commissioner  
Will Reichardt, Skagit County Sheriff  
Dale Ragan, City Mount Vernon, Council Member  
Soren Jensen, Labor Representative (non-voting member)

**Staff Present**

Dale O'Brien, Executive Director  
Troy Fair, Operation Manager  
Al Schaner, Maint. & Facilities Manager  
Mary Lozeau, Clerk to the Board

**Member of Public:**

Colette Arvidson

**Members Absent**

Kenneth Dahlstedt, Skagit County Commissioner  
Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon, Mayor

**Providing Legal Counsel:**

**I Public Comment:**

None.

**II Consent / Action Items:**

a) Approval of Minutes

b) Approval of Claims and Payroll

January Payroll Direct Deposits and Checks # 15589 - # 15605 .....	\$ 568,818.55
January Direct federal withholding transfer.....	\$ 121,160.66
January Checks and ACH # 31562 - #31662 .....	\$227,244.91

**Ms. Gere moved to approve all Consent / Action items. Mr. Wagoner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV Full Discussion/Action Items:**

a) Monthly Budget Update

Mr. O'Brien reported Skagit Transit received \$785,003 sales tax revenue in the month of January. This compares with \$741,227 in January of 2015. This is a 5.91% or \$43,776 increase over last year with a year to date increase of the same.

Mr. O'Brien stated expenses included Skagit Station improvement. Fuel is within budget and all other expenses were as expected.

**Mr. Wagoner moved to approve the Monthly Budget Update. Mr. DeGloria seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

b) South Fidalgo Service

Mr. Fair reported on January 20, 2016 the Board expressed interest in providing two days per week service to South Fidalgo Island on a six month trial period. At the December 15, 2015 Board meeting staff proposed the South Fidalgo Connector as an alternative to a taxi-voucher program. Mr. Fair stated this connector would be a demand-response service that is over and above what is required by

the American with Disabilities Act. The connector would transport customers to and from points near their homes to the March's Point Park & Ride where customers can access Skagit Transit's bus system. Rides would be shared whenever possible and all rides would be pre-scheduled. Mr. Fair stated a pilot program six month trial period could be extended to twelve months with board approval. Mr. Fair noted after the pilot trial period, the service would be continued or discontinued based on performance. Mr. Fair recommended a June 1, 2016 start date and December 1, 2016 or May 31, 2017 depending on extension option and performance. Mr. Fair stated service performance of two boardings per revenue hour or greater. Preliminary service days and hours recommended by staff Tuesday and Saturday and advance scheduling would be required. Mr. Fair noted customers could schedule a ride up to four days in advance but no later the 4:00 p.m. the day before a ride is needed.

Mr. Fair stated staff recommends against providing service to South Fidalgo Island similar service, known as Pocket Service, was terminated in 2012 due to low ridership and a strategic decision to move away from demand-response services that went beyond what was required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Pocket Service in South Fidalgo Island averaged 1.7 boardings per hour between 2010 and 2012, its last three years in operation. Mr. Fair noted the decision to move away from providing rural transportation in areas with very low ridership was strategic. Doing so has allowed the Agency to focus on the challenge of providing ADA paratransit service as required by Federal law. All transit agencies must provide complementary ADA paratransit within ¾ of the fixed routes they operate to serve those that cannot access the fixed route, this service is known as ADA paratransit.

Mr. Fair stated approving service to the South Fidalgo Area would be a policy decision that runs counter to recent efforts by Skagit Transit to focus limited resources on productive fixed routes and meeting our ADA paratransit requirements. Demand for ADA paratransit service is growing and will continue to grow with our aging population. An ADA denial is any event where Skagit Transit is unable to fulfil a ride requested by an ADA client within an established time window. Mr. Fair reported there is no acceptable number of denials for a transit agency and staff has been working very hard to keep denials at zero following a 2014 Federal Transit Administration audit finding.

Mr. Fair reported Skagit Transit receives service requests each year for rural out laying areas of the County and often these requests are for paratransit service. It is difficult to communicate that Skagit Transit cannot provide countywide coverage. The cost per boarding to operate demand-response services is very high as compared to operating fixed route transit. This is because fixed route transit is more efficient and typically operates in urban settings.

Mr. Fair informed the Board members Skagit Transit's six year Transit Development Plan identifies areas for new service. There are urban areas of Skagit Transit's PBTAs that are unserved or underserved by public transit, East Mount Vernon, South Mount Vernon, and areas of Burlington and Sedro Woolley. Skagit Transit hopes to expand service into these unserved and underserved areas. This planned expansion is laid out in Skagit Transit's approved six year Transit Development Plan (TDP). Shifting resources to provide service in rural areas of the County could impact the Agency's ability to respond to latent demand for transit service in urban areas where a higher density of the population resides.

Mr. Wagoner stated he supports staff recommendation and requested documentation from DOT or FTA that the taxi voucher program must be open to everyone. Mr. Wesen asked what the increased cost is to provide extra service to South Fidalgo Island. Mr. Fair answered the estimated cost for this type of additional service would include vehicle maintenance and depreciation, fuel, and manpower. Mr. Wesen inquired how this would draw down the ability to provide ADA service to the rest of the county. Mr. Fair answered staffing would need to be increased and availability of vehicles. Mr. O'Brien added spare vehicles is a critical area of concern since it unknown when vehicles are in need repair and out of service. Mr. O'Brien noted today staff has one spare vehicle available.

Ms. Gere asked what options are available for South Fidalgo residents. Mr. O'Brien answered staff is in favor of following planning documents for service expansion and South Fidalgo Island is not an area planned for increased service at this time. Mr. O'Brien reminded the Board members Island Transit Route 411W travels through this area to March's Point Park & Ride. Mr. O'Brien stated in recent discussions with Island Transit a stop could be added at the Shrimp Shack on Hwy 20 which could bring Fidalgo Island residents to March's Point Park & Ride and they will have access to all Skagit Transit service from there.

Mr. Wesen stated East Mount Vernon has been mentioned as an area planned for additional service and asked what that involves. Mr. Fair answered planning documents have identified a need to serve

the residential area of Skagit Highlands. Mr. O'Brien added South Mount Park & Ride and the new county jail have also been identified in planning as areas for additional service in 2017. Sheriff Reichardt inquired if staff is aware of additional areas requesting similar service to South Fidalgo Island. Mr. Fair answered Alger, Samish Island, Big Lake and areas outside of Sedro Woolley. Mr. Fair noted if residents in these areas can get to our service area to a bus stop or Park & Ride we can serve them.

Sheriff Reichardt asked staff if South Fidalgo would be the first choice to expand service compared to other areas identified as needing additional service. Mr. O'Brien answered staff would concentrate on east Mount Vernon. Mr. Sexton noted this is an important point to consider if the Board agrees to expand in South Fidalgo Island. Mr. Sexton questioned if we serve the first group to request service or prioritize the requests according to planning documents. Mr. O'Brien noted this is the challenge staff is faced with frequently and noted increased service is needed in Burlington, Sedro Woolley, and high urbanized areas of Mount Vernon. The focus is to build foundation in urbanized areas and then the outlying areas. Mr. Wesen stated he understands the challenges being discussed and appreciates work and planning efforts of staff.

**Mr. Wesen moved to approve demand response service in the South Fidalgo Island area as a pilot program at a level of 16 revenue hours per week beginning June 1, 2016 and ending December 1, 2016 at which time the Board may decide to extend the pilot program an additional six months or until May 31, 2017. At the end of the pilot period the service will either be terminated or continued based on performance. The service should meet or exceed two boardings per revenue hour during to pilot period. Ms. Gere seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Wagoner, Ms. Janicki, and Sheriff Reichardt opposed.**

c) Report of Grant Projects

Mr. O'Brien stated on September 15, 2010, the Board passed Resolution 2010-09 authorizing the Executive Director to sign grant agreements upon Board approval of the report detailing the project, amount of grant award and budget impact to the agency. The Federal Fiscal Year 2015 FTA Section 5307 and 5339 program funds allocated to Skagit Transit \$325,843 from Puget Sound Regional Council.

Mr. O'Brien explained the project consists of design and engineering services to remodel the newly acquired facility located at 11784 Bay Ridge Drive in Burlington, to accommodate all of Skagit Transit's maintenance, operations and administration activities. Mr. O'Brien reported Skagit Transit completed a feasibility study in March 2015. The study identified the agency's needs for the next twenty plus years. Three potential sites were identified as suitable and ranked based on weighted criteria. Preliminary estimates for design, engineering were included in the feasibility study for all three sites. The number one ranking site, which was recently purchased by Skagit Transit has an estimated design and engineering remodel cost estimate of \$537,000.

Mr. O'Brien noted this is a multi-year phase project and additional funds from Federal Fiscal Year 2016 FTA Section 5307 and 5339 program funds apportioned to Skagit Transit from Puget Sound Regional Council will be programed in the future.

Mr. Wagoner asked where the match money comes from. Mr. O'Brien answered it comes from local funds.

**Ms. Janicki moved to approve the grant projects and authorize the Executive Director to sign the grant agreement. Mr. Wagoner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

VI **Citizens' Advisory Committee**

VII **Information Items:**

a) County Connector Update

Mr. O'Brien reminded the Board members the Office of Financial Management (OFM) has monies for the Regional County Connector \$500,000.00 for both Skagit Transit and Island Transit. The distribution of the monies have been pending due to Island Transit's lack of fare boxes. It has been

approved by OFM to release the monies when Island Transit installs fare boxes on their Regional Connector buses. Mr. O'Brien stated Island Transit has proposed three round trips per day to Everett, the 411C Camano Island to Skagit Station, and 411W Oak Harbor to March's Point with a \$2.00 fare with a transfer. Island Transit has proposed to Skagit Transit to honor their transfer and their passengers can travel on to Anacortes or Mount Vernon. Mr. O'Brien noted an area of concern is on the return trip from Mount Vernon to March's Point Skagit Transit charges a \$1.00 fare.

b) Per Diem Payment to Non-Voting Union Representatives

Mr. Jensen stated he reviewed the RCW 36.57A regarding Public Transit Benefit Area non-voting union representative board members and his interest in attending executive session. Mr. Jensen stated he understands that an executive session regarding labor negotiations would exclude him from attending. Mr. Jensen requested a decision be made prior to each executive session or annually to exclude non-voting union representative from attending. Mr. O'Brien noted the board chair or co-chair may exclude the non-voting member from attending any executive session.

Mr. Jensen requested payment or per diem be arranged to compensate the non-voting board member from labor organization. Mr. Jensen suggested a two hour payment be made for attending board meetings. Mr. O'Brien stated staff conducted a survey among other Washington Transit agencies. The survey had thirteen responses and four agencies pay per diem for attending board meetings. Mr. Wesen inquired if we are allowed to choose which members are paid. Mr. Ragan stated if the labor representative wants to be paid for attending the meeting the union can compensate him. Mr. Sexton requested another survey to determine if all board members are paid or just the non-voting union representative and the RCW be distributed to all board members prior to March meeting.

**VIII Unfinished Business:**

Ms. Arvidson stated she recalled hearing at previous meetings Island Transit cannot stop anywhere except Oak Harbor and March's Point and asked for clarification. Mr. O'Brien agreed that has been discussed and explained the 411C is classified as an express run. Express runs must travel five miles between stops cannot open their doors less than five miles apart. Mr. O'Brien noted in recent meetings with Island Transit two stops at least five miles apart have been identified as areas to safely make a stop along Hwy 20. The Shrimp Shack and Sharp's Corner are possibilities for safe stops. Mr. O'Brien noted in the past Island Transit has done flag stops anywhere a passenger flags the driver. Mr. O'Brien added for safety reasons Skagit Transit has never done flag stops.

**VIII New Business:**

None.

**Chair Sexton adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m.**

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Mayor Steve Sexton, Chair  
Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Attest:

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Mary Lozeau,  
Clerk of Skagit Transit Board