

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

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

The Skagit Transit Board of Directors met in regular session in Burlington, WA. Chair Gere called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, and Introductions.

Members Present:

Laurie Gere, City of Anacortes, Mayor (Chair)
Kenneth Dahlstedt, Skagit County Commissioner (Vice Chair)
Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner
Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon, Mayor
Steve Sexton, City of Burlington, Mayor
Erin Moberg, City of Mount Vernon, Councilmember
Germaine Kornegay, City of Sedro Woolley, Councilmember
Rick DeGloria, City of Burlington, Councilmember
Melinda Hunter, Labor Representative (non-voting member)

Staff Present

Dale O'Brien, Executive Director
Allan Schaner, Maintenance/Facilities Manager
Brad Windler, Planning and Outreach Supervisor
Whitney Davis, Clerk to the Board

Members Absent:

Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Commissioner
Julia Johnson, City of Sedro Woolley, Mayor

Members of Public:

None

Providing Legal Counsel:

None

I Public Comment:

None.

II Consent / Action Items:

- a) Approval of March Meeting Minutes
- b) Approval of Claims and Payroll

March Payroll Direct Deposit and Checks #16102 – 16111	\$710,606.16
March Direct Federal withholding transfer	\$144,782.37
March Claims Checks and ACH #36912 - #37098	\$463,776.57

Ms. Boudreau moved to approve all Consent / Action items. Ms. Moberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III Full Discussion/Action Items:

- a) Monthly Budget Update for March 2019

Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit received \$914,387 sales tax revenue in the month of March which compares with \$902,748 in March of 2018. Mr. O'Brien stated this is a 1.29% or \$11,639 increase over last year with a year to date increase of 5.58% or \$167,830. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit also received \$395,272 Federal Capital Grant Reimbursement.

Mr. O'Brien stated expenses included a Dispatch radio system upgrade, a Road Supervisor vehicle, new MOA design and engineering and bus stop surveys. Mr. O'Brien stated fuels are currently within budget and all other expenses were as expected.

Mr. O'Brien stated the Reserve Accounts currently are: Operating \$2,251,951; Facilities \$400,000; Capital Replacement \$4,029,078; Non-Designated \$2,172,921 with total reserves equaling \$8,853,950.

Mr. O'Brien stated staff recommends the Board approve the monthly budget reports.

Mr. DeGloria moved to approve the March Monthly Budget Update. Mr. Wesen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Fare Free Day for Project Homeless Connect

Mr. Windler stated Project Homeless Connect is a one-day event that aims to engage the local community and build sustainable partnerships to help end homelessness. Mr. Windler stated free services will be provided by local non-profits, businesses, and volunteers and the event will take place on Friday, August 23rd, 2019. Mr. Windler stated Event organizers have asked if Skagit Transit will continue support of the event by operating fare free on August 23rd. Mr. Windler stated At last year's event, 1,192 individuals from 416 households were able to connect with social and medical services and the event organizers said many of the adult attendees identified the bus as their transportation to the event. Mr. Windler stated fare free transit service removes transportation as a barrier to accessing this event.

Mr. Windler stated staff recommends operating local routes fare free on August 23, 2019 in support of Project Homeless Connect with a budget impact of one day's revenue which is approximately \$600 cash not counting monthly passes.

Ms. Boudreau inquired if staff could track how many riders were using the bus to get to the event. Mr. Windler stated the new buses Skagit Transit has purchased have automated passenger counters, and those buses could be put on route to track ridership to the college. Mr. Windler added that he would reach out to the event organizers to see if they survey how those who attend found transportation to the event. Ms. Konegay inquired where the statistics that are in the report staff gave came from. Mr. Windler stated in the previous year, event coordinators had door counters and some of the social services at the event perform intakes.

Mr. Dahlstedt moved to approve Fare Free Day for Project Homeless Connect. Mr. Sexton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Commitment of Local Match to Federal Transit Administration FY19 Low or No Emission Vehicle Grant Program

Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit is preparing an application to the FTA's FY2019 Low or No Emission Vehicle Grant Program requesting funds to assist in the project to replace two aging diesel transit coaches with two all-electric coaches; also included in the project is the purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging equipment to recharge the coaches.

Mr. O'Brien stated as part of the FTA Low or No Emission Grant Program process, a local match is required and the granting agency is requesting a letter of commitment for the local match from the agency's governing board.

Mr. O'Brien stated two all-electric coaches at \$966,100 each equal \$1,932,200, Washington State sales tax is \$164,237, the signage on the bus is \$5,000, bringing the total Bus Project to \$2,101,437. Mr. O'Brien stated the federal share or 85% of total bus project, is \$1,786,221 and the local share or 15% is \$315,216.

Mr. O'Brien stated the equipment, installation, support, training and site validation is \$122,136, tax on the equipment only is \$8,126, and the electrical planning and installation is \$33,000 bringing the total Project to \$163,262. Mr. O'Brien stated the federal Share or 90% of total equipment project is \$146,936 and the local Share or 10% is \$16,326.

Mr. O'Brien stated the total project will cost \$2,264,699. Mr. O'Brien stated the federal share will be \$1,933,157 and the local Share will be \$331,542. Mr. O'Brien stated staff recommends the Board to approve the local match share and commit to the FTA the local match. Mr. O'Brien stated the obligation of funds will take place in budget year 2020 and the impact to the 2020 budget is \$331,542.

Mr. O'Brien stated staff is not currently asking the Board's approval to spend the money if successful with receiving the grant. Mr. O'Brien stated at this time, staff is asking the Board to approve the commitment that the agency would match the required funds.

Ms. Gere inquired if staff was confident the grant money will come forward. Mr. O'Brien stated staff is confident as there are requirements the agency will need to provide alternative fuel in the future and this would be the first step for this agency. Mr. O'Brien stated electric is the most cost efficient energy source for Skagit Transit as opposed to compressed natural gas.

Ms. Boudreau inquired if it was cost effective to use electricity and charging compared to fuel. Mr. O'Brien stated Link Transit and King County Metro currently have the most electric buses, however they have not been in use long enough to provide data. Mr. O'Brien stated at the end of April, Skagit Transit staff will be traveling to California to the Gillig bus company site. Mr. O'Brien stated the Gillig electric bus seems to be the most efficient and dependable electric bus on the market and Skagit Transit has been waiting for Gillig to release their electric bus before committing to going electric.

Mr. O'Brien stated there is a general manager's meeting next month, and he will ask the other transit agencies for information and data on the performance of their electric buses. Ms. Gere inquired if Gillig was the gold standard in buses. Mr. O'Brien stated they are the best buses and are well built. Mr. O'Brien stated the electric buses will travel between 200 to 250 miles on one charge.

Mr. Schaner stated according to testing, electric buses are averaging 17 miles as comparable to five miles per gallon with diesel buses. Mr. Schaner stated the variable cost per mile experience with fuel prices fluctuating would be eliminated with electric buses and the lifespan of electric buses is expected to be more favorable than petroleum fueled buses.

Mr. O'Brien stated an additional benefit to purchasing electric buses from Gillig is their parts are interchangeable and approximately 95% of Skagit Transit's fleet is Gillig.

Mr. Wesen inquired what the price difference is between electric buses and diesel buses. Mr. Schaner stated diesel Gillig buses cost approximately \$520,000 each with a 12 year useful life benchmark. Mr. Schaner stated it is approximately a \$400,000 price difference in the hardware to purchase an electric bus.

Ms. Kornegay stated she had heard that the Sedro Woolley School District had changed their buses over to electric. Mr. Schaner stated they began converting to propane buses. Mr. Schaner stated Skagit Transit is already using propane buses and stated a significant amount of the Paratransit fleet is operating on propane fueled coaches. Mr. O'Brien stated there is a substantial amount of money coming from the Volkswagen Settlement that is going to school districts that is not available to public transit.

Mr. Sexton stated these electric buses are a huge cost, but they are the way of the future. Mr. Sexton requested to have the buses delivered to Burlington so that the sales tax would go to the city.

Ms. Kornegay stated Janicki Industries is building electric buses for Seattle but was not sure for what company.

Mr. O'Brien added staff is also asking the Board for approval to ask the Chair to sign the letter of commitment to the Federal Transit Administration.

Ms. Boudreau moved to approve the Commitment of Local Match to Federal Transit Administration FY19 Low or No Emission Vehicle Grant Program. Mr. Dahlstedt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV Community Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Windler stated staff gave a presentation on the proposed fare increase, which was received positively by the committee. Mr. Windler stated the committee will have feedback which they will take as an action item to their next meeting. Mr. Windler stated the Community Advisory Committee members will be attending the public meetings to discuss the fare increase. Mr. Windler stated the committee members are also organizing a trip to Everett Transit to look at the new Bulb bus stops on Broadway which Skagit Transit's 90X uses. Mr. Windler explained the bus bulbs extend the sidewalk at the bus stops so that the bus can stop in the lane of traffic. Mr. Windler stated this creates room for amenities such as shelters, signage and trash cans.

V Executive Directors Report

Mr. O'Brien stated compared to March 2018, ridership with Skagit Transit has increased by 470 riders, or a 0.8% increase for a total of 62, 547 riders in the month of March. Mr. O'Brien stated ridership on the 90X which is the Commuter route that travels to Everett is up by 598 riders or an 11.5% increase, ridership on the 80X which is the Commuter route that travels to Bellingham is up by 350 riders or a 12.9% increase, ridership on the 40X which runs from Skagit Station to March's Point is up by 590 riders or a 17.7% increase. Mr. O'Brien stated local ridership is down by 1,072 riders or 2.1%.

Mr. O'Brien stated Paratransit routes carried 6,471 passengers in March of 2019 compared to 5,869 passengers in March of 2018. Mr. O'Brien stated this is a 10.3% increase.

Ms. Gere inquired if the increases in ridership were out of the ordinary in comparison to other years. Mr. O'Brien stated Skagit Transit has not seen an increase in ridership in the last few years. Ms. Gere inquired if the agency had done something different. Mr. O'Brien stated staff has improved the routes and filled gaps in service.

Mr. O'Brien stated in June staff will have completed design and engineering documents with bidding documents for the new MOA. Mr. O'Brien stated staff is looking at the possibility of getting a lobbyist in Washington DC to have a voice advocating on behalf of the agency. Mr. O'Brien stated there is a grant opportunity coming up in June that staff will apply for and that would be awarded in December. Mr. O'Brien stated the limit of the grant request is \$25 million. Mr. O'Brien stated having all the necessary plan documents ready will help the agency secure grant funding to complete the project.

VI Information Items:

None.

VII Unfinished Business:

Mr. O'Brien stated at last month's Board meeting, Commissioner Janicki asked about the Vanpool program, however the Vanpool Coordinator is sick and was unable to attend the Board meeting. Mr. O'Brien stated the Vanpool Coordinator will come to the May Board meeting and give a presentation on how the Vanpool system works and the cost of operation.

VIII New Business:

Mr. Wesen stated during the Guemes Island Ferry haul out, Skagit Transit had a bus on the island and asked for details on how it worked. Mr. O'Brien stated it worked very well and staff received positive feedback. Mr. O'Brien stated he spoke with Mr. Glen Veal, a Guemes Island resident, to discuss the possibility of future bus service on the island. Mr. O'Brien stated he also met with the Director of Whatcom Transit to determine what requirements the agency would need to meet to initiate service. Mr. O'Brien stated he discussed partnering with a non-profit, and donating a Vanpool van that could be driven by volunteers. Mr. O'Brien stated the biggest challenge would be operating service under Skagit Transit would require the vehicle used to be ADA compliant. Mr. O'Brien stated the agency would consider the

possibility of operating a pilot program with a cutaway style vehicle that is ADA compliant to get service to the island.

Mr. Sexton stated he received a call from the Burlington Senior Center Director requesting a public meeting regarding initiating a fare on the Paratransit service be held at the senior center or close by so that members who may be affected by the fare initiation could attend a local meeting. Mr. O'Brien stated staff will issue a public notice and add an additional meeting in Burlington.

Mayor Gere stated she will sign all documents that have been approved at this Board meeting.

Mayor Gere adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Mayor Laurie Gere, Chair
Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Attest:

Whitney Davis,
Clerk of Skagit Transit Board