

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

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

The Skagit Transit Board of Directors met in a regular meeting in Burlington, WA. Commissioner Peter Browning chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

**Members Present**

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner (Chair)  
 Joe Burns, Skagit County Commissioner (Vice Chair)  
 Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner)  
 Peter Donovan, City of Mount Vernon, Mayor  
 JoEllen Kesti, City of Sedro Woolley, Mayor  
 Bill Aslett, City of Burlington, Mayor  
 Paul Cocke, City of Sedro Woolley, Councilmember  
 Hannah Oliver, City of Mount Vernon, Councilmember  
 (joined at 11:01 a.m.)

**Staff Present**

Abby Bissell, HR Generalist  
 Chris Arkle, Director of Finance  
 Crystle Stidham, Chief Executive Officer  
 Derek Messling, Marketing and Public Affairs Specialist  
 Eric Gambill, Security Supervisor  
 Greg Latham, Director of Maintenance and Facilities  
 Jennifer Davidson, Director of Human Resources  
 Larissa Farrell, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board  
 Rebekah Tuno, Grants Manager

**Members Present via Teleconference**

Carolyn Moulton, City of Anacortes, Councilmember  
 Judy Jones, Community Advisory Committee (Chair, non-voting member) (joined at 11:15 a.m.)

**Staff Present via Teleconference:**

Clerk of the Board  
 Eric Esparza, Capital Projects Manager  
 Jim Young, Operations Supervisor  
 Kaitlin West, Rideshare Administrator  
 Kelly Borden, Accounting Clerk  
 Kelly Myiow, Payroll and Leave Coordinator  
 Larissa Farrell, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board  
 Maleah Kuzminsky, Planning and Outreach Manager  
 Ryan Quast, Electronics Systems Technician  
 Sarah Pelle, Events Specialist/Travel Trainer  
 Seeley Mullins, Procurement and Contracts Coordinator  
 Taylor Patti, Financial Analyst  
 Wayne Simmons, Facilities Supervisor

**Members Absent:**

Tracy Cook, Labor Representative (non-voting member)

**Providing Legal Counsel:**

**Members of Public Present**

Colleen Kennedy; Jason Kelley; Joe Kunzler

**Members of the Public Present via Teleconference:**

1-916-501-8890; Arkle for CEO; Michael Rainey; R; Skagit

**1 Public Comment**

Public comment was made.

**2 Consent / Action Items**

- a) Approval of March Meeting Minutes
- b) Approval of Claims and Payroll
  - February Payroll Direct Deposit and Checks
  - February Direct Federal Withholding Transfer
  - February Claims Checks and ACH #5321-5461
- c) Approve February Budget Update

**Mr. Burns made a motion to approve consent items. Mr. Aslett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**3 Full Discussion/Action Items:**

- a) Approve Resolution 2026-03 Appointing the Internal Auditor and Treasurer of the PTBA  
 Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet.

**Mr. Aslett made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-03 Appointing the Internal Auditor and Treasurer of the PTBA. Mr. Cocke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- b) Approve Resolution 2026-04 Appointing the Agency Investment Officer  
Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet.

**Mr. Donovan moved to approve Resolution 2026-04 Appointing the Agency Investment Officer. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- c) Approve Advertising and Sponsorship Policy  
Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet.

**Mr. Burns moved to approve the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy. Mr. Cocke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- d) Approve Revised Bylaws for Skagit Transit Board of Directors  
Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet and noted that additional work remains in the bylaws to add language on board member training. After board discussion, this item was tabled so that the changes could be presented at the next meeting.

- e) Approve Fare-Free Fixed Route Service for the Spring 2026 Welcome Home Skagit Event  
**Mr. Donovan made a motion to approve adding this item to the Full Discussion/Action Items. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. The motion to add the item to the agenda passed unanimously.**

Ms. Stidham summarized the report, which is also included in these minutes.

**Mr. Wesen moved to approve the provision of Fare-Free Fixed Route Service for the Spring 2026 Welcome Home Skagit Event. Ms. Moulton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### 4 Information Items

- a) CEO Update
- b) Employee Recognition
- c) End of Year 2025 Productivity Report
- d) February 2026 Productivity and Ridership Report
- e) CAC Update

**Peter Browning adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.**

Attest:

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Peter Browning, Chair Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Signed by:  
  
52442EE5FA0F474...  
Larissa Farrell, Clerk of Skagit Transit Board

13 April 2026

**RE:** Joe A. Kunzler Public Comment for 15 April 2026 Skagit Transit Board

Dear Skagit Transit Board;

First, I want to share here I've decided to rejoin the Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee (CAC). I think it's time I'm back, because apparently I feel I'm being blown off from time to time. As I shared in my application, staff, the CAC and the Board need to be actively collaborating on the big issues for the best possible outcome. Notice I said the word collaborating.

We the public need to know what factors went into the decisions this Board has made. Hence my support for your new rules on public records.

However, I must reiterate I do not see what value or need there is to have City Councilors on the Board of Directors. Having a rotating membership thwarts direct accountability at the ballot box for delivering Skagit Transit services. The Board does not need to have the maximum number of members, but the Board needs to have members directly accountable to the community.

To that end, I am hearing reports of efforts to have Skagit Transit Boardmembers make the time to attend Skagit Transit CAC meetings and vice versa. I hope to see this come to fruition, I believe it's necessary to at least find a way to increase rider representation to the Board, if not on the Skagit Transit Board.

Additionally, the bylaws fail to recognize the Skagit Transit CAC Chair as a non-voting member. I also ask that the Skagit Transit CAC Chair report please start being *before* any action items, as a courtesy to the committee's representation of riders before any substantial decisions are made about Skagit Transit. At times, the CAC report has had to be rushed or denied due to time constraints from staff & consultant reports.

I would also add that the Skagit Transit Board By-Laws, unlike the Sound Transit equivalent, lack a public comment segment. As such, I would suggest using [Sound Transit's Board Rules and Operating Procedures](#), part 3.16, as a baseline for Skagit Transit's policies. Both are federated Boards, Sound Transit Legal internally reviewed the rules before the Board – with several lawyers on the Board at the time – approved with my support, and Sound Transit rules have survived several years of actual operation. Sadly, having a public comment policy on hand is a damn good idea.

I want to conclude on this thought: Sedro-Woolley has a new Mayor who has promised to ride a Skagit Transit bus in the next 90 days or so. I am hopeful we will see every single Skagit Transit Boardmember do the same. You need to understand please what we who ride Skagit Transit experience and pay fares into – nothing about us without us please, or something like that.

Respectfully submitted;

Joe A. Kunzler  
[growlernoise@gmail.com](mailto:growlernoise@gmail.com)



**TO:** Skagit Transit Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Crystle Stidham, Chief Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Approve Fare-Free Fixed Route Service for the Spring 2026  
Welcome Home Skagit Event

**INFORMATION:**

Skagit Transit was recently contacted by staff from Welcome Home Skagit about an upcoming event for low-income and unsheltered individuals on May 15, 2026.

Welcome Home Skagit has asked Skagit Transit to provide fare-free service on our fixed route services that operate solely in Skagit County. This may assist low-income residents in attending this event.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Board approve fare-free fixed route service on May 15, 2026 for all routes except Routes 80X and 90X for individuals attending the Welcome Home Skagit event.

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

Estimated Budget Impact: \$550 in lost cash fares.

**CEO Verbal Report Out  
Board Meeting  
April 15, 2026**

**MOA2**

We are still working with the FTA to get the paper grant agreement in place for BUILD. We expect to execute it in the next few weeks. We are still planning on going out to bid to start construction in May.

**Projects**

The Skagit Station employee bathroom project is still in progress. We expect it to be completed mid-May.

**Finances**

A full financial report is included in the packet, but I wanted to provide a few highlights. Sales tax revenues were down about 5.5% YoY from January 2025 to January 2026, 5.5% YTD.

Despite ridership being up, fares are down 14.75% YoY. This is just due to a timing issue with rideshare payments. We had about \$10k in rideshare payments for February posted in March, so we'll likely see higher fares in March compared to last year.

I also wanted to share some the impacts of the conflict in the middle east. We were average about \$3.25 for diesel at the beginning of the year. We are now averaging about \$5.07 a gallon, which is a 56% increase. We hope the price comes back down soon so it doesn't have a significant impact on our fuel budget.

We're also noticing increases in parts and shipping costs.

**Operations KPIs**

February

LTA - Average 6

**OT**

- February \$76,343.3
  - YTD - \$137,240.65
  - Budgeted \$575,000 for 2026

Driver absenteeism for February was 18.98%, up 14.44% in January.

**Ridership**

There is a full ridership report included, but here are the highlights:

FR - Up 11.29% from February 2025 to February 2026

Para - Up 27.26% from February 2025 to February 2026

The 2025 ridership report is also included in the packet I am happy to report that our fixed route ridership is up 6.68% over 2024, it is still down 29.16% pre-pandemic though.

2025 Paratransit ridership is up 12.68% over 2024 and has fully recovered from the pandemic. We are about .66% pre-pandemic.

Youth ridership is up 9.28% YoY. And was 14.1% of ridership.

### **Recruitments**

We currently have the following open positions:

- Finance Manager
  - I am happy to report that I promoted Chris Arkle to the Director of Finance
- Director Of Operations
  - We have an onsite interview (second) with an external candidate
- Dispatcher

We had 8 Drivers in the last training class. 5 of them have already graduated, the remaining three will graduate this week. We will be starting another class of 2 on April 23.

### **Governance Committee Update**

The next Governance Committee meeting is April 29<sup>th</sup>. We will be reviewing the following policies:

- Public comment policy
- Procurement policy
- Time tracking for grants policy
- Cash handling and till reconciliation policy
- P-card update
- Public participation policy
- Data management policy
- Title VI Policy

### **Class and Comp Workshops**

After further review with our consultant, we have decided not to reclassify the exempt employee that we spoke about at the last Board meeting to non-exempt.

We have two employees that have requested an appeal after the study. The consultant is reviewing the request and will provide a recommendation in the coming weeks.

### **Long-Range Transit Plan**

We are in the implementation process for the new paratransit and microtransit software. We'd hoped to go live with the new software in April, but we weren't able to get everyone trained on time or provide adequate notice to our paratransit clients that the online booking portal is changing so we are delaying the rollout to May.

## **Community Events**

### **Event Name: YMCA Healthy Kids Day**

Event Date: April 18, 2026

Event Location: Skagit Valley YMCA in Mount Vernon

Population Served: Families and youth of Skagit County

Type of Event: The YMCA's national initiative aimed to inspire kids and families to keep their minds and bodies active throughout the summer months and beyond. There will be community resources and supports in attendance.

### **Event Name: Children of the Valley Families Day**

Event Date: April 22, 2026

Event Location: Skagit Valley College

Population Served: Families and youth

Type of Event: The day is designed to help children feel at home on our college campus, spark curiosity about future careers, and inspire them to see all pathways as possible. We believe it's never too early to start exploring education and career opportunities. Families will also have access to valuable community resources and support services to help them navigate the journey ahead.

### **May Events (so far):**

Event Name: Skagit County and Skagit Transit Blood Drive

Event Date: May 5, 2026

Event Location: Skagit Station

Population Served: General Public

Type of Event: Community health and service event focused on collecting donated blood to support local hospitals and emergency care needs. This will be a mobile blood drive. Community members and staff off the clock can stop by throughout the day to donate blood, usually by appointment or as walk ins if space allows. Trained Bloodworks Northwest medical staff will guide donors through a safe, step-by-step process that includes registration, a brief health screening, the donation itself, and a short recovery period with refreshments held in the community room at Skagit station.

### **Event Name: Children of the Valley Families Day**

Event Date: May 6, 2026

Event Location: Skagit Valley College

Population Served: Families and youth

Type of Event: The day is designed to help children feel at home on our college campus, spark curiosity about future careers, and inspire them to see all pathways as possible. We believe it's never too early to start exploring education and career opportunities. Families will also have access to valuable community resources and support services to help them navigate the journey ahead.

### **Event Name: Canine Companion Training**

Event Date: May 16, 2026

Event Location: MOA

Population Served: Puppies in training to be service animals, guide dogs in training, and their trainers.

Type of Event: Training opportunity with Canine Companion to bring 5-10 puppies in for low stress training opportunity with buses that are not on route, to explore ramps, lights, sounds, movements without the general public being present.

**Event Name: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual North Star Connect Symposium**

Event Date: May 21, 2026

Event Location: Swinomish Casino & Lodge

Population Served: Skagit County community partners

Type of Event: The North Star Connect Symposium brings together professionals from multiple sectors to network, collaborate, and advance professional development. This is an excellent opportunity for behavioral health, housing, social service providers, business leaders, and other leaders to sharpen their knowledge and skills, connect with key community partners, and be a part of the effort to create a thriving Skagit County for all. Where Skagit Transit can connect with people from various sectors making a difference in our community, including government, tribes, healthcare, education, community services, recovery, and more.

**Event Name: City Works Touch-A-Truck**

Event Date: May 28, 2026

Event Location: Central Skagit Library in Sedro-Woolley

Population Served: Families, youth, school age children

Type of Event: Providing hands-on, interactive education about city services and public safety. This event allows families and youth to explore city vehicles and equipment up close, meet the professionals who operate them, and learn how different departments (such as public works, fire, and law enforcement) contribute to keeping the community safe and running smoothly. Activities encourage curiosity, engagement, and awareness through direct experience and informal learning.