

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

Wednesday, March 18, 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
Julia Johnson, City of Sedro Woolley, Mayor
Bill Aslett, City of Burlington, Mayor (joined at 11:04 a.m. and left at 11:25 a.m.)
Paul Cocke, City of Sedro Woolley, Councilmember
Hannah Oliver, City of Mount Vernon, Councilmember

Members Present via Teleconference

Judy Jones, Community Advisory Committee (Chair, non-voting member)

Members Absent:

Carolyn Moulton, City of Anacortes, Councilmember
Tracy Cook, Labor Representative (non-voting member)

Providing Legal Counsel:

Suzanne Michael, Fisher Phillips
Cedric Adams, WSTIP

Staff Present

Eric Espraza, Capital Projects Manager
Eric Gambill, Security Supervisor
Crystle Stidham, Chief Executive Officer
Greg Latham, Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Jason Shaffer, Operations Supervisor
Larry Shelly, Coach Operator
Larissa Farrell, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board
Les O'Neil, Operations Supervisor
Rocky Bliss, Coach Operator
Wade Reinemer, Coach Operator
Maleah Kuzminsky, Planning and Outreach Manager

Staff Present via Teleconference:

Abby Bissell, HR Generalist
Clerk of the Board
Kelly Borden, Accounting Clerk
Larissa Farrell, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board
Rebekah Tuno, Grants Manager
Sarah Pelle, Events Specialist/Travel Trainer
Seeley Mullins, Procurement and Contracts Coordinator
Skagit Transit Proctor
Taylor Patti, Financial Analyst

Members of Public Present

Andrea Reiter; Colleen Kennedy; Jason Kelly; Melinda; Shelby Zimmerman; Soren Jensen;

Members of the Public Present via Teleconference:

000000; Joe Kunzler; Joe Macdonald; No Kings; Read.AI Meeting Notes; Rosie Ventura;

1 Executive Session: RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) Discuss Agency Litigation with Legal Counsel

The board met in an executive session to discuss agency litigation with legal counsel. Mr. Browning stated that the Board would meet for 20 minutes from 11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. The Board returned to the room and resumed the regular meeting at 11:20 a.m.

2 Public Comment

Public comment was made.

3 Consent / Action Items

- a) Approval of February Meeting Minutes
- b) Approval of Claims and Payroll
 - January Payroll Direct Deposit and Checks
 - January Direct Federal Withholding Transfer
 - January Claims Checks and ACH #5170-5320
- c) Approve January Budget Update
- d) Approve Fare-Free Fixed Route Service for the Spring 2026 Veteran Stand Down Event
- e) Approve Scan and Toss Policy and Procedure
- f) Approve Revised Bylaws for Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Mr. Wesen made a motion to move (f) Approve Revised Bylaws for Skagit Transit Board of Directors to the Full Discussion/Action Items part of the agenda. Ms. Johnson then made a motion to approve consent items A-E. Mr. Cocke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4 Full Discussion/Action Items:

a) Approve Revised Bylaws for Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Mr. Wesen requested that language be added to the bylaws that authorizes the Skagit Transit Board of Directors to hire and fire the Chief Executive Officer of Skagit Transit. Mr. Wesen then moved to approve the bylaws as is, and we will revisit them next month to make the requested revisions. Mr. Burns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Approve Contract 25-065 Skagit Transit MOA2 Commissioning

Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet.

Mr. Donovan moved to approve Contract 25-065 Skagit Transit MOA2 Commissioning. Mr. Wesen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Approve Resolution 2026-02 Appointing Representatives to the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool

Ms. Stidham summarized the report as presented in the board packet.

Mr. Burns moved to approve resolution 2026-02, appointing representatives to the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5 Information Items

- a) CEO Update
- b) Employee Recognition
- c) March Grants Update
- d) January Productivity and Ridership Report
- e) CAC Update

Peter Browning adjourned the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

Peter Browning

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Peter Browning, Chair Skagit Transit Board of Directors

Signed by:

Larissa Farrell

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Larissa Farrell, Clerk of Skagit Transit Board

13 March 2026

RE: Joe A. Kunzler Public Comment for 18 March 2026

Dear Skagit Transit Board;

First, I want to share here that it's been a somewhat depressing March. I happen to be transit-dependent in Sedro-Woolley, and so I've had to bow out of several events due to our span of service in Sedro-Woolley being 5:45 AM-8:45 PM weekdays plus 7:45 AM-6:15 PM weekends.

Additionally, I don't find terribly appealing having to leave Sedro-Woolley at 9:15 AM or so for an 11 AM meeting in downtown Burlington to give three (3) minutes of oral public comment, and then get home most likely around 2:00 PM. Five (5) *hours* for three (3) minutes is *very much* a deterrent to public input and participation. Some of us who actually ride Skagit Transit and have to deal with cancelled runs and fire extinguishers popping off have pressing issues with Skagit Transit that arguably require us to participate in Board discussions. If you don't want us voting on money issues, at the very least, use this new law I helped get and was spoken about on both the House & Senate floors to please let Skagit Transit riders amply inform the Board of our declining rider experience.

I will also make this pledge here in writing as I have orally in several places: If appointed, I will hold at least one town hall in a different Skagitonian community per month for Skagit residents. Non-Skagitonian folks can request one 30-minute virtual call a month, and I will offer the same to fellow Skagitonians as need be. We Skagitonians need to build community around Skagit Transit, and we Skagitonians need Skagit Transit to build a better community.

With that, I will address some issues from the agenda packet. First, I absolutely, positively, definitely reject Skagit Transit joining ORCA. I object without an affirmative vote of both the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Board on the matter. Fare collection is a matter of concern to riders. Riders who need to at the least a nonvoting voice in Board discussions such as this need to be listened to.

I also object to Skagit Transit having fare collection governance be in a Seattle conference room by book-smart folks who mean well but do not record their deliberations. Our exurban voice and needs will be diluted if not disregarded by the urban transit agencies at the ORCA Joint Board.

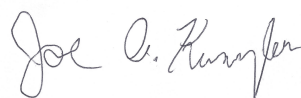
Additionally, UMO has fare capping for a \$3 in-county pass. ORCA Joint Board has a \$6 all-day fare for the buses and light rail (aka Link) inside the ORCA pod. How will ORCA and Skagit Transit adjust fares with our membership?

I also want to add that I have been posting most of Skagit Transit's route cancellations to Nextdoor, and received both appreciation plus concern from the public on that social media platform.

With that, a few thoughts on the Board of Directors By-Laws:

- 1) 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.
- 2) The by-laws do not recognize the Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee as a non-voting member.
- 3) I wish the Board was open please to having a community volunteer who rides Skagit Transit of the same jurisdiction as an elected member be an alternative representative at the pleasure of the elected member.

Respectfully submitted;



Joe A. Kunzler
growlernoise@gmail.com

**CEO Verbal Report Out
Board Meeting
March 18th, 2026**

MOA2

We finally received notification last week that our BUILD grant was approved. As I mentioned several months ago, we were required to take out all work related to EV charging infrastructure as a condition to get the grant approved. The DOT reduced the grant by \$2M, the amount that they valued the EV charging infrastructure would have cost. I was able to get \$5M from Move Ahead Washington for the project, so we still have a fully funded project.

Project

Construction started on the project on Monday, March 16th. The delay was primarily due to the FTA taking an extended period of time to reprogram the grant funds for this project. The project is expected to take 6-8 weeks to complete.

Finances

A full financial report is included in the packet, but I wanted to provide a few highlights. Sales tax revenues were up about 6.84% YoY from December 2024 to December 2025, 4.83% YTD.

We budgeted \$16.5M in sales tax revenues for 2025 and collected \$18,020,483 (\$1,520,483 over what we budgeted).

Recruitments

We currently have the following open positions:

- Director Of Operations

We have 8 Drivers in training right now and expect them to graduate in mid-April. We will be starting another class of 4 in mid-April.

Operations KPIs

January:

LTA - Average 5-6

OT

- January - \$60,897.62
 - Budgeted \$575,000

Driver absenteeism for January was 14.44%

Ridership

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

FR - Up 2.47% from January 2025 to January 2026

Para - Up 10.71% from January 2025 to January 2026

Governance Committee Update

There was no Governance meeting in March due to scheduling conflicts.

Class and Comp Workshops

The Class and Comp study is done and the changes will be reflected on our March 20th, 2026 payroll for employees that were reclassified. We have one exempt employee that the consultant deemed should be classified as non-exempt. This means that the employee should be eligible for OT if she works more than 40 hours per week. It will not impact the employee's pay, but the GL accrual is different for exempt vs. non-exempt employees. We feel that we should reclassify the employee to non-exempt and keep her accruals as exempt so that she does not lose GL. We will be bringing that to the Board for approval next month.

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 don't think we will get everyone trained in time, so this will likely happen in May instead.

Community Events

Skagit Transit participated in the following community event in March:

- March 3 – Parent Academy Resource Fair at Mt. Vernon High School
- March 4 – 8th Grade Transition Night at Sedro Woolley High School

We will also be participating in the following community events in March:

- March 25 – Developmental Disabilities Resource Fair at the Common Library in Mt. Vernon
- April 3 – Veteran's Standdown at the Skagit Fairgrounds

National Transit Employee Appreciation Day

I want to acknowledge that today is National Transit Appreciation Day. Today we recognize the dedicated transit professionals who keep our communities moving every day. From operators and maintenance teams to dispatchers and support staff, their commitment to safety, reliability, and public service makes a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve. Today, we say thank you to all of our employees for the hard work, resilience, and pride they bring to transit. Every single employee plays a key role in providing this critical service to our community and I want to extend my gratitude to all of them for coming to work every day ready to serve.