

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
Held Remotely
January 6, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Cox called the January 6, 2021, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely keeping in compliance with the Governor's guidance to "Stay Home and Stay Healthy" and in keeping with the Governor's Proclamation 20.28 Open Public Meetings Act.

Members Present: Vice Chair and City of Lacey Councilmember Carolyn Cox; City of Tumwater Councilmember Debbie Sullivan; City of Olympia Councilmember Clark Gilman; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Citizen Representative Justin Belk; and Labor Representative David Sharwark.

Members Excused: City of Yelm Councilmember Molly Carmody.

Staff Present: Ann Freeman-Manzanares; Jason Aguero; Magic Aguinaga; Sean Barrett; Emily Bergkamp; Suzanne Coit; Cameron Crass; Daniel Driscoll; Cindy Fisher-Waterhouse; Jessica Gould; Josh Jacobs; Steve Krueger; Ally McPherson; Kyle McPherson; Pat Messmer; Eric Phillips; Rob Rinehart; Heather Stafford-Smith; Brian Sutherby; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Riley White; Kerri Wilson; Ann Xiong; Jonathon Yee.

Others Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Myers; Denise Clark and Ursula Euler, Community Advisory Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Melnick and Councilmember Sullivan to approve the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was available through email to pmessmer@intercitytransit.com and the commenting period closed at 12:00 p.m. on January 6, 2021.

No public comment was received.

INTRODUCTIONS

- A. Sean Barrett, Operations Trainer** (Cameron Crass)
- B. Kyle McPherson, Vanpool Coordinator** (Cindy Fisher-Waterhouse)
- C. Daniel Driscoll, Inventory Specialist** (Brian Sutherby)
- D. Joshua Jacobs, Network Systems Analyst** (Rob Rinehart)

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E. Ann Xiong, IS Database Developer, (Jason Aguero)

RECOGNITION

Surplus Van Grant Recipient Recognition. Cindy Fisher-Waterhouse, Vanpool Manager, introduced the recipients of the Surplus Van Grant program. Each agency provided a brief description on how their agency will use the vans:

- Laurie Tebo, Behavioral Health Resources
- Stacia Vierra, SafePlace
- Pastor Tim Ilgen, Ric Ordos, and Caroline Huber, Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- Gabe Ash and Neil Hilton, Catholic Community Services
- Jeri Moomaw, Innovations Human Trafficking Collaborative
- Judy Jones, Thurston County Food Bank
- Meg Martin, Interfaith Works

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Citizen Representative Pierce and Commissioner Mejia to approve the consent agenda.

A. Approval of Minutes: December 2, 2020, Regular Meeting.

B. Payroll - December 2020: \$2,738,626.81

C. Accounts Payable December: Warrant numbers 31377-31393; 31394-31437; 31441-31483; 31489-31523; and 31524-31552 for a total amount of **\$2,823,993.17**; and Automated Clearing House Transfers in the amount of **\$8,344.34** for a monthly total of **\$2,832,337.51**.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Youth Education Update. Kerri Wilson provided an update on the Youth Education Program including highlights from the 2020-2021 school year and the adjustments made due to the pandemic.

Wilson said prior to the pandemic, in January, February and March, she was able to conduct the regular programming. During this time 335 youth and families were provided with education on public transit, including an opportunity to meet a bus driver. Bus Operator Steve and Wilson spent the entire day with a class of students from Mt. View Preschool, singing songs, reading stories and teaching preschool students about the Intercity Transit bus.

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Transportation was also provided through the Class Pass program to 51 Salish Middle School Orchestra students. Most of these students would not have been able to perform at their orchestra concert at North Thurston High School, if it was not for Intercity Transit.

In January, February and March the program helped schools organize 19 Walk N Roll to School events, and despite rainy and cold weather, 932 youth and families attended.

The Walk N Roll bike shop volunteers contributed 475 hours refurbishing 44 donated bikes. These volunteers included seven Bike MVP students who completed their 20 hours of required volunteer time earning a bike of their own. Unfortunately, the pandemic forced the bike shop to close in late March and it remained closed for the rest of the year.

When the pandemic arrived in March, the Walk N Roll program was forced to find new ways to engage the community. Schools moved to remote learning and in-person events and activities were no longer safe. The Walk N Roll program rose to this challenge with the help from many creative and strong partnerships.

In 2019, with the support of Thurston Regional Planning Council, Wilson formed the Healthy Kids, Safe Streets Network. The network brings together organizations and individuals in Thurston County working on increasing the number of youth safely walking and rolling for transportation. There are representatives from city government, police departments, parent volunteers, nonprofit organizations, parks and recreation, and school districts. The network provides the opportunity to learn about each other's work, share resources and build stronger partnerships. It's these partnerships that made the Walk N Roll program successful in 2020. Wilson shared the creative ways the Walk N Roll program partnered with local organizations and adapted our programming to meet the challenges of our new reality.

Safe Kids Thurston County moved their annual safety fair to a virtual platform and asked Intercity Transit to participate by providing a video on pedestrian safety. This video inspired the creation of an entire series of safety videos starring T-Rex. This was a new and fun way to reach out to youth and continue the education. Through IT's own outreach and with the help of our partners the videos received over 2,400 views and counting.

The videos provided education on:

- Crossing the street
- Fitting a helmet
- Doing a bike safety check
- Hand signaling
- Mounting a bike on the bus

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- Tips for riding the bus

Intercity Transit partnered with the City of Tumwater's Parks and Recreation program to bring a few mini-bike rodeos to their summer camp program. Because all large bike rodeo events were canceled this gave IT a chance to test out the new bike rodeo kit and put it to good use. Students learned and practiced bicycle handling and safety skills through a series of fun games and exercises. The City of Tumwater invited IT to return in 2021.

Many of the typical bike month events and activities were canceled, but IT partnered with the Bicycle Commuter Challenge to come up with some fun alternatives including a scavenger hunt, bicycle art contest and bike BINGO. Combined, these activities had over 90 participants.

Intercity Transit usually helps schools celebrate National Bike to School Day in May. This year to try and keep the spirit alive, IT partnered with the Olympia Police Department and wrote inspirational messages about walking and biking with chalk at seven schools.

To help encourage youth and families to get outside and walk and bike, Wilson organized a community scavenger hunt for the month of August, partnering with cities, local organizations and businesses to hide over 70 T-Rex images in windows, parks and community spaces around Thurston County. There were over 200 youth and families who participated in the event. Wilson received a lot of positive feedback from participants. People said it gave them something fun and safe to do as a family. It also encouraged many families to get outside and explore new places around the community.

Wilson partnered with the Wet Science Center on their Science on the Go program. The theme for the month of September was transportation. Together, they created a packet of activities that families could complete at home and teachers could use in the classroom. The activities included a neighborhood walkability survey, scavenger hunt, walk BINGO, bus coloring page, and safety word search. Participants sent a photo of their completed activity and in return we sent them a prize in the mail.

Unfortunately, the Rolling Storytime events were canceled that were planned in partnership with the Timberland Library. Instead, Wilson and the Library worked together to create a series of Virtual Rolling Story times. The videos received over 300 views and included:

- Pedestrian safety
- Bike safety
- Meeting a bus driver
- A tour Intercity Transit's maintenance facility

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In October IT usually helps schools celebrate International Walk to School Day, but this year we organized the first ever Youth Walk Challenge. The event encouraged over 300 youth to walk ten days during the month. The event was successful thanks to the many partners who helped us spread the word. Many elementary PE teachers also included the challenge as part of their curriculum. We received lots of positive feedback about the event. Many said the event encouraged the entire family to get outside and walk together. Others shared that it gave them a chance to teach and practice pedestrian safety skills.

Wilson partnered with the Olympia Police Department, Target Zero and Safe Kids to organize a youth art contest. The top traffic safety yard sign designs will be displayed in yards near school zones and neighborhoods where youth walk and roll. The signs will be printed and distributed this spring, and we will print them with a grant we received from State Farm in 2019.

It's anticipated that 2021 will be similar to 2020 and Wilson looks forward to developing new creative ways to engage youth and families while borrowing from the successes in 2020.

A few things in store for the 2021 include:

- Launching the Safe Streets Ambassador program encouraging drivers to commit to making our roads safer for youth walking and rolling.
- Working with our partners to print and distribute traffic safety yard signs.
- And partnering with Safe Kids on creating a pop-up traffic garden kit that will use for community events.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston Regional Planning Council. Cox said at the December 4 meeting:

- The Council conducted staff milestone recognitions.
- The Council appointed JW Foster, Tom Oliva, Cynthia Prat, Hilary Seidel and Joe Downing as volunteers to serve on the Executive Director's Evaluation Committee.
- Received a report on the Rural Community Support Program Call for Projects and four applications were received and approved: Rainier SR 507/Myer Street Crosswalk; Bucoda Main Street Sidewalk Replacement; Tenino North Hodgden Street Improvements and Pedestrian Improvements for the new Nisqually Indian Tribe's Elder Services Facility.
- There was a presentation by Davit Troutt, Natural Resource Director, Nisqually Indian Tribe on a recent study of I-5 and the Nisqually River Delta.
- The Council received the 2020 update on The Profile which is a compilation of statistics and data about Thurston County.

A. Transportation Policy Board. Melnick said at the December 9 meeting:

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- The Board received a presentation by Candice Bock, Government Relations Director from the Association of Washington Cities on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) on the background and history of this and other economic development/redevelopment tools.
- Karen Parkhurst asked the Board about topics they would like to include in their 2021 Agenda Planning. Melnick asked if the TPB could get a report from Washington State DOT on their ongoing regulatory efforts regarding autonomous vehicles as well as on transportation as a service.
- Katrina Van Every and TRPC staff reviewed The Profile, and provided an interactive opportunity to look at data of the Thurston region.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

- Freeman-Manzanares reported there have been several fires near the Pattison Street facility in the last week - to the east of the facility, in the area known as the "Jungle," and near the exit gate on Pattison Street. These fires create health risks to our employees and our community assets (our vehicles) which is very concerning.
- Since 1985, entry and exit points to provide service to the community are exclusively on Pattison Street. When construction is completed on the north parcel, there will be another entry/exit point on Martin Way, however, until then, and that will be in 2022, the possibility of having Pattison Street close down is particularly concerning in terms of our ability to provide both regular services, and if IT is called into service to respond to an emergency.
- We have been paying close attention and navigating the multitude of protests and unrest in the community. IT's focus remains on keeping staff, passengers and assets safe while ensuring people get where they need to go. People need to get to work, the grocery store, to the doctor, and dialysis despite it all, and we have amazing people working at IT ensuring we are re-routing and communicating and making it all happen. That, and so many other actions by our employees, deserve a lot of praise. **Kudos to staff!**
- In addition to those hazards, staff is forging ahead despite the heavy winds and rain to get people where they need to go. Among other things, there was an unfortunate encounter with a tree that came down on a bus as it was on route. No one was injured. Maintenance staff is dealing with the aftermath.
- Here is a link to an article in Thurston Talks about the Pattison Street construction project. <https://www.thurstontalk.com/2021/01/04/renovation-and-rehabilitation-improvements-at-intercity-transit/>. Also, Intercity Transit was mentioned in an Olympian article on December 25, 2020, about a family who moved to Olympia last

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August and are receiving services through the Family Support Center. They mentioned how the free transit system has been hugely helpful to them.

- Staff is monitoring information related to the vaccine distribution. We have frontline workers, transporting frontline workers so we, like so many, are very interested in the details and trying to be patient as this is rolled out. According to the Department of Health, our frontline staff are in groups B2 and B4, which are anticipated to receive the vaccine in February and April. We will continue to monitor and do what we can to assist staff in receiving the vaccine.
- DASH is not in the Governor's budget for the 2021-2023 biennium. We will be working with the state legislature with the goal of ensuring it is in the budget by the end of session.
- The October sales tax, which was received at the end of December was 8.4% higher than December 2019. Through October 2020 we are \$3.1M over what was anticipated for sales tax revenue in our 2020 budget.
- We are very excited to welcome two classes of new Operators starting this month. These are smaller classes than normal due to COVID-19; and these are the first classes since the pandemic struck.
- Several volunteer Bus Buddies recently returned to service to assist individuals who need personalized support for essential travel. Kudos to Scott Schoengarth and the Bus Buddies for being safe and reaching out to help individuals in need. We look forward to getting beyond COVID and welcoming back all of the Bus Buddies.
- There are 13 Dial-A-Lift vehicles with the new brand out on the streets - they are bright and colorful.
- Twelve vanpool vehicles have been delivered. These are replacement vehicles for current groups
- Multiple service plans are at the ready depending on how COVID impacts our community and frontline staff. It is a daily exercise to ensure everyone is safe and healthy, who is being tested and who needs to quarantine.
- Freeman-Manzanares shared a **BIG THANK YOU to all of IT's resilient staff**. Work looks different, and COVID added a significant amount of work on top of already full schedules, and staff have moved forward in that changed space in such creative and successful ways.
- Freeman-Manzanares indicated there is the possibility there may not be any agenda items for the January 20, 2021, meeting. She will notify the Board if that meeting needs to be canceled.

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AUTHORITY ISSUES

Gilman – Welcomed new members Belk and Mejia. Listening to Melnick’s report about the TPB makes him think about some reading and listening he did over the holidays about the rapid pace of electrification and autonomous technology coming in, and he believes there is the possibility with a new administration bringing another recovery act investment in transportation, and that it would make sense for the Board to prioritize both of those evolutions in transportation, decarbonizing transportation and the autonomous technology in our work and learning across this year. Gilman would like to elevate this.

Regarding the recent fires in Olympia, Gilman said he’s glad to have Mejia on the ITA because he believes it points to the intersection between critical transportation IT delivers and the urgent need for both housing and a safe place to be during the day for those in shelters.

Gilman said there is a lot of tension about the transition in federal power and Olympia has been coordinating closely with the surrounding jurisdictions and state patrol, and has called on surrounding jurisdiction police departments to assist through this weekend and next. Olympia is mindful of the events going on and working hard to keep people safe.

Melnick appreciated tonight’s presentations – well done.

Pierce welcomed the new Board members. She continues to see the buses and DAL vehicles and she said it’s encouraging to know there are drivers out there prepared to take care of the public needing transportation.

Sullivan thanked Intercity Transit and staff for the putting together the Jingle Bus. It was present at the Tumwater Holiday Drive at the City Hall, and it was a huge hit, and she received many positive comments.

Sullivan gave kudos to the bus driver who on December 28, 2020, assisted law enforcement capture the Target armed robbers at the Tumwater Square bus stop.

Belk appreciates the Lighted Bus appearances, and all of the work Intercity Transit accomplished the past year. He appreciates the opportunity to be on the ITA. He appreciates the bus drivers – they never know what they are going to experience or what hazards they may encounter daily. They are integral to the community. He’s amazed at the role IT plays to assist law enforcement.

Cox said the Ruddell Road street project is almost complete. She mentioned the City of Lacey is working with state patrol and the homeless encampments near the Sleater-Kinney exit off of the I-5 to manage the situation.

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ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Vice Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Carolyn Cox
Carolyn Cox, Vice Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer
Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority

Date Approved: February 3, 2021

Prepared by Pat Messmer, Clerk of the Board/
Executive Assistant, Intercity Transit