

Minutes
INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
May 17, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Belk called the May 17, 2023, meeting of the Intercity Transit Authority to order at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was held remotely, with an in-person component at the Pattison Street facility.

Members Present: Vice Chair and Citizen Representative Justin Belk; Thurston County Commissioner Carolina Mejia; City of Tumwater Mayor Debbie Sullivan; City of Lacey Councilmember Robin Vazquez; City of Yelm Councilmember Brian Hess; Citizen Representative Don Melnick; Citizen Representative Sue Pierce; Labor Representative Mark Neuville.

Members Excused: Chair and City of Olympia Mayor Pro-Tem Clark Gilman.

Staff Present: Emily Bergkamp; Eric Phillips; Jonathon Yee; Nicky Upson; Daniel Van Horn; Pat Messmer; Ramon Beltran; Jessica Gould; Steve Krueger; Jana Brown; Michael Maverick; Peter Stackpole; Nick Demerice; Dena Withrow; Brian Nagel; Zach Heinemeyer; Joy Gerchak; Kellin King.

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

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

A. Kellin King, Customer Service Rep (*Joy Gerchak*)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Melnick to adopt the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Grants Administrator, Jessica Gould said the public comment period was open between April 20 and May 17, 2023, with notice being published in the Olympian and promoted on social media, the agency's website, and a news release in the May Rider News.

Nine public comments were received, however, only two were specific to the TIP. The other comments were focused on service planning and suggestions for improvement. All comments were compiled and included for the Authority's consideration. Following this hearing staff will come back to the Authority on June 7 with a recommendation to adopt the draft TIP. After the TIP is adopted, staff will submit the TIP to the Thurston Regional Planning Council and the Puget Sound Regional Council. Intercity Transit's projects will be included in their Regional TIP's and move forward into the Statewide TIP, which is expected to be adopted in early January of 2024.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 2 of 8

Vice Chair Belk opened the public hearing at 5:39 p.m.

With no one from the public giving testimony, Vice Chair Belk closed the public hearing at 5:39 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ursula Euler, Olympia, WA. Euler is a member of the Community Advisory Committee, however, tonight she spoke as a citizen of Thurston County and a volunteer for various aviation related groups. Euler said this week the Governor vetoed a large section of House Bill 1791 pertaining to the aviation expansion work. The interpretation by many, although the Governor didn't say specifically, is a move to exclude any possibility of a new mega airport or new greenfield airport anytime soon. The Governor didn't specifically say that but said his reasoning for the veto is about how important it is to first look at capacity of potential and existing facilities at existing airports. Euler said this opens the door for public transportation discussions. Large portions of Bill 1791 were struck, but the voice to introduce a rail service for example, is becoming louder, and she doesn't know the viability of solutions, but it did prompt a thought in her mind having lived in Europe where there are extensive rail systems and rail services available. Here in the United States, the first step is to always introduce bus service. If the public starts using bus service, that is a good sign that rail service might be a good next step. Bus service would be a first step to rail service.

There are more funds available through the Climate Commitment Act through the Capital Trade Program for local jurisdictions. She suggests Thurston County continue to think about better bus service north of Thurston County, including an HOV lane or a bus dedicated lane between Olympia and Tacoma. These might be a new and better opportunity to rethink and bring that in front of the legislature again.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

It was M/S/A by Sullivan and Melnick to adopt the agenda as presented.

- A. Minutes - April 5, 2023, and April 19, 2023, Meetings**
- B. Payroll April: \$2,922,752.89**
- C. Accounts Payable April: \$2,251,296.14**
 - Warrants: \$2,238,730.75
 - ACH Payments: \$12,565.39

NEW BUSINESS

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 3 of 8

- A. Resolution 01-2023 End Universal Vaccination Requirement.** Bergkamp presented Resolution 01-2023 for adoption.

In the wake of the Governor's proclamations concerning the COVID-19 emergency, the Authority recognized the COVID-19 public health emergency granted explicit rights to the General Manager to take steps to protect and safeguard public health, safety, and welfare, including the health, safety and welfare of Transit passengers and employees. The Governor issued proclamations requiring state and educational system employees be vaccinated. These proclamations were intended to promote universal vaccination of state and school workers to safeguard the health and safety of such workers and those who come into contact with them.

Intercity Transit shared many of the underlying concerns that were addressed by a universal vaccination requirement for its employees and volunteers. Intercity Transit provides essential transit services to the public and community, which was threatened by the increase in cases among its staff. To maintain staff levels necessary to provide basic services, the General Manager requested Board approval to follow the State's lead in implementing work rules that established a universal vaccination requirement for employees and volunteers of Intercity Transit. On September 1, 2021, the Intercity Transit Authority Board passed Resolution No. 03-2021 titled, "Universal Vaccination Requirement." This initiated Intercity Transit's COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Policy as a condition of employment on October 29, 2021.

The Department of Health and Human Services declared the federal Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 expired effective May 11, 2023. In alignment with the ending of the national public health emergency, the Governor rescinded Directive 22-13.1, May 11, 2023, ending the COVID-19 vaccination requirement as a condition of employment for executive cabinet and small cabinet state agencies. Following this example, with the end of the national public health emergency, the end of COVID-19 vaccination requirement as a condition of employment for executive cabinet and small cabinet state agencies, and guidance from Thurston County Public Health on the status of COVID-19 locally, the Interim General Manager requests the Intercity Transit Authority to consider discontinuing its COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Policy.

Before officially ending the requirement, the Intercity Transit Authority needs to repeal Resolution No. 03-2021. Following that action Senior Management will update existing policies and procedures to reflect this change.

Intercity Transit employees will continue to be eligible for a \$200 stipend for COVID-19 boosters they receive. To date, about 70% of employees have received at least one booster since receiving the initial vaccine.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 4 of 8

It was M/S/A by Vazquez and Mejia to adopt Resolution 01-2023 ending/repealing Resolution 03-2021 Universal Vaccination Requirement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Thurston Regional Planning Council (May 5):** Sullivan said TRPC approved the Executive Director's annual evaluation, and Marc Daily scored well. He was presented with a one-time bonus which fits in with the criteria of approximately 3.5%.

The Council approved the State Fiscal Year 2024 Indirect Cost Proposal.

Daily provided an overview of a new position classification – Planning Manager. Planning and Policy Director Karen Parkhurst is retiring and they created this new position that will focus on supervision, mentorship and project/program management and other parts of the management team.

The Council discussed the State Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program. The Work Program is a requirement to receive federal and state planning funds and consists of six parts: Program management, project programming and tracking, ongoing planning and outreach, data collection, analysis and forecasting, major initiatives, and contingency and carryover. The Council will take action on June 2. The full presentation can be found here: [PowerPoint Presentation \(trpc.org\)](#)

The Council received a legislative update from Karen Parkhurst. Full presentation: [2023 State Legislative Session \(trpc.org\)](#)

- B. Transportation Policy Board (May 10):** Melnick said Marc Daily announced Parkhurst's retirement who has been an amazing resource and will be a tough act to follow.

The Board received an overview of the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). TRPC has about \$500,000 annually in CRP funding to program out between 2022 and 2026. The Board will act on a recommendation to TRPC at the June 14 meeting.

The Board received an update on the Martin Way Corridor Study. This is a joint planning effort between TRPC, Thurston County, IT and the cities of Olympia and Lacey. Things are not proceeding as rapidly as hoped. Melnick took the opportunity to mention that IT's bus rapid transit prototyping is occurring on Martin Way and is going well, and we're very hopeful things that are contemplated for Martin Way which enhance our ability to provide service do show up. There seemed to be some angst in some quarters that maybe some sort of a separate sub-organization should be created within TRPC to oversee the corridor improvement, and Melnick thinks there's some challenge as it runs

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 5 of 8

through different cities and there are different views of what ought to happen, but nothing was decided about that.

- C. Community Advisory Committee (May 15):** Jihan Grettenberger reported the members discussed conducting hybrid meetings and it was decided a more formal process such as a survey/poll will be conducted to help make a final decision. She knows from a previous meeting it was very important to have a hybrid meeting to increase accessibility, knowing that people have transportation barriers, health differences that may prevent them from being able to attend.

INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Bergkamp said the Community Advisory Committee met Monday, May 17 and the members discussed conducting hybrid / in-person meetings. Amanda Collins will put together a formal poll to capture all CAC members' preference. Bergkamp noted it was also discussed possibly holding CAC meetings at the OTC2 because several members felt it would be easier to meet there because many ride the bus and it would eliminate transfers.

Bergkamp took a moment to honor the dedication of all Intercity Transit employees throughout the pandemic the past three years. This time wasn't easy for anyone, but we never wavered in our dedication to providing quality public transportation for our community. Although it was a team effort, she will be forever thankful for the frontline workers who showed incredible bravery and courageousness each day during the pandemic. They continued showing up for us in our community, driving, dispatching, providing road support, vehicle and facilities maintenance and kept our work environment clean and transit center safe. Together, we continue to be transit strong.

Bergkamp shared photos provided by Eric Phillips showing the progress at the Martin Way Park-and-ride. Photos included the on-ramp to I-5 and some of the curb and sidewalk amenities where passenger loading will take place and the bus pull through lane. There will also be amenities for Operators such as Operator only restrooms.

Bergkamp reminded everyone participating in the Bicycle Community Challenge or who regularly bike in our community that there are free day use bike lockers at the OTC. Users need to bring their own lock to secure the bike. The lockers are located south of the main covered bus terminal. They are available from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. and all items need to be removed nightly by 11 p.m. There is also 24-hour live and recorded video surveillance.

Bergkamp and Jonathon Yee attended the Southwest Washington Regional Transit Partners meeting at Centralia Community College hosted by Twin Transit. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss agency projects, gaps and service, and how we can best collaborate in the coming year. Other attendees included Mason Transit, WSDOT,

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 6 of 8

Cowlitz, Rural and Tribal Transit, plus their contractor, Around the Sound and River Cities Transit.

Bergkamp attended a 30th year celebration on Saturday, May 13 honoring the Amtrak Centennial Station. Also attending were Mayor Sullivan and Commissioner Mejia. Intercity Transit has maintained the Centennial Station since 1994 and IT's Facilities Maintenance team takes great pride in keeping Centennial Station looking her best, but we know the true heroes behind Centennial Station are its volunteers. Centennial Station president and volunteer coordinator William AKA Al Jackson and his team worked tirelessly to open and close the station, provide information, and help passengers at the platform and monitor trains. The volunteers play a vital role in our region's mobility and help connect passengers to IT's local service so they can enjoy all that our community has to offer. Bergkamp gave a shout out to Facilities Manager, Julie DeRuwe and Dean Taylor, Facilities Specialist Supervisor for quickly taking care of issues at the station.

Bergkamp said Authority members are invited to attend the State Transportation Conference, Vendor Expo, and State Rodeo, being held in Vancouver, Washington August 12 through 15. Members interested in attending should contact Clerk of the Board, Pat Messmer.

The Olympia Police Department presented Intercity Transit with a Community Partner Award, and the ceremony was held today. Bergkamp said it was an honor to accept the award on behalf of the many IT employees who work in partnership with OPD to keep our transit system and surrounding community accessible, welcoming, and safe for all. When we call for support, our friends at OPD take action, making sure we get the assistance that best meets our needs, whether it's an officer that shows up, a crisis response unit team member, or Familiar Faces peer. And with our transportation resources and hundreds of eyes on the road each day, we take pride assisting OPD to help those in crisis access, transportation to the support systems they need, and we also help locate missing children and vulnerable adults. IT provides video from buses of accidents and incidents and also provide buses as mobile warming or cooling centers as well as transportation to groups to a safer location when an evacuation is needed. Bergkamp looks forward to being a continued ally with law enforcement from all jurisdictions.

Intercity Transit will operate on a weekend schedule for Memorial Day, Monday, May 29. Customer Service at the Olympia Transit Center will be open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and we encourage anyone who needs assistance planning their trip that day to contact Customer Service.

Jonathon Yee worked with the Center for Transportation and the Environment staff, and Pat Messmer worked with IT staff and the Authority to identify a date to conduct a workshop to learn about the status of Intercity Transit's Zero Emissions Transition Plan. The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 12.

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 7 of 8

AUTHORITY ISSUES

Hess said the City of Yelm is growing, and he was approached by the Planners from the Public Service Department to discuss access to Tahoma Terra residences, and the availability of bus service to that particular area where apartments are almost completed.

Hess said summer events are coming to Yelm and wanted to know if Intercity Transit could provide bus service to satellite parking to help bring people from the satellite parking to the main events. Thousands of people show up for these events and parking is very limited in downtown Yelm.

Bergkamp said IT is currently focused on restoring service following COVID and trying to determine how much pre-COVID service might be restored specifically in September. However, Bergkamp will bring this to the attention of Rob LaFontaine, Planning Manager, and he can reach out to obtain more information and to see about the possibility of bringing more service to this newly built area in Yelm. His staff tracks population density, etc. Regarding providing service to summer events, Bergkamp will connect with Hess to get more information.

Vazquez said there's been media coverage of the partnership developing between the YMCA, North Thurston School District, and the City of Lacey to build a childcare center and they're looking at a site close to Nisqually Middle School on Marvin Road. It's a good location for building a childcare center and the planning phase now suggests that we would be able to provide slots for preschool for up to 600 kids. There aren't enough childcare centers in the North Thurston School District and estimates are that about 30% of our childcare providers went under during the COVID-19 pandemic. It exacerbated an already very tough situation for families, including military families who live in Lacey. Last week, the City of Lacey held a joint meeting with the North Thurston Public School District, and a question was asked by one of the board members about transportation options. If this gets built it would be a community amenity that would include indoor and outdoor playgrounds and other offerings as well as the slots for childcare. We might want to look at enhancing the transportation support in that particular area. If we see 10,000 families using that space in one way or another it would be similar in terms of the goal for community use like the Briggs YMCA. Vazquez wants to put this on IT's radar now so in four or five years if we end up building the center, are we going to support folks needing transportation so that they can take their kids to their childcare?

Melnick responded to Euler's public comment about the airport exercise and what the Governor did to the House Bill. Something is happening and that is high-capacity transportation between Olympia and Tacoma. TRPC has an ongoing program to study that and Freeman-Manzanares did a lot to influence how that happened. Even though IT isn't actively involved in it, Melnick thinks TRPC did get some more funds and

Intercity Transit Authority Regular Meeting

May 17, 2023

Page 8 of 8

studies will continue. There is funding for a long-term high-capacity transit system from the north to the south. He doesn't know where that stands, but it is another avenue that will be included in the planning effort that the latest surgically altered legislation will cover.

Melnick referred to the Amtrak celebration and is glad IT was represented there. He has a neighbor who was Chair of the volunteer crew and he expressed concern about the fact they lost 20% of their volunteers during COVID and IT did several things including putting an announcement in the newsletter that Amtrak was in need of volunteers. IT did all they could to help with that situation.

Pierce said she'll be attending the state conference and Roadeo in August being held in Vancouver and said it's two busy days of meetings and the classes are informational, and there's the opportunity to watch the different transit agencies compete in the Roadeo. If you can't attend, there's the Regional Roadeo being held in July locally. David Dudeck and Bill Miller do an amazing job to get that set up and they always need volunteers. Even for just one day, you can volunteer or come and watch. A great way to spend the day outside.

Belk said kudos to everyone who keeps the Amtrak station going. He doesn't get the opportunity to pass through that area very often or as much as he'd like, but it's one of his favorite places in Thurston County. It's important to the community and he hopes we all give it the support it needs to keep going.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Authority, Vice Chair Belk adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Clark Gilman

Clark Gilman, Chair

ATTEST

Patricia Messmer

**Pat Messmer
Clerk to the Authority**

Date Approved: June 21, 2023

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