



SOLANO COUNTY TRANSIT
Board Minutes for Meeting of
April 19, 2012

1. CLOSED SESSION

The special meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m., which recessed into closed session to discuss personnel matters. There were no matters to report.

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patterson reconvened the meeting of the SolTrans Board at 7:10 p.m. A quorum was confirmed.

MEMBERS

PRESENT:	Elizabeth Patterson, Mayor	City of Benicia, Chair
	Erin Hannigan, Vice Mayor	City of Vallejo, Vice Chair
	Mark Hughes, Councilmember	City of Benicia
	Osby Davis, Mayor	City of Vallejo
	Jim Spering, Supervisor, County of Solano	MTC Representative
	Harry Price, Mayor	City of Vallejo, Chair Ex-Officio – STA Representative

MEMBERS None.
ABSENT:

STAFF

PRESENT:	<i>In Alphabetical Order by Last Name:</i>	
	Greg Anderson	SolTrans Director of Administrative Services
	Bernadette Curry	SolTrans Legal Counsel
	Suzanne Fredriksen	SolTrans Clerk of the Board
	Jim McElroy	SolTrans Interim Executive Director
	Nancy Whelan	SolTrans Interim Chief Financial Officer
	Jeanine Wooley	SolTrans Director of Operations

OTHERS

PRESENT:

In Alphabetical Order by Last Name:

Tom Bartee	ASM District 7
Michelle Berd	
Richard Burnett	MTC Policy Advisory Council
T. Cunningham	
George Gong	
Jackie Lane	MV Transportation
Bob Lichty	
George McClain	
Fergie Owens	
Scott Rovanner	City of Benicia
Ward Stewart	Vallejo City Unified School District
Novae Vue	City of Benicia
Kathy Walsh	
Denise Williams	MV Transportation
Joyce Williams	
Ricky Williams	MV Transportation

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion by Vice Chair Hannigan, and a second by Board Member Hughes, the SolTrans JPA Board approved the agenda.

A quorum was confirmed by the Clerk of the Board. There was no Statement of Conflict declared at this time.

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None presented.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE ON SERVICE CHANGES

Jim McElroy noted that the current plan to achieve significant cost savings is comprised of three parts. The plan incorporates reductions in operating costs through savings with SolTrans’ transit operator, proposed reductions in service, and one time revenues with Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and through Solano Transportation Authority (STA). He stated that the public hearing was being held to target the proposed reductions in service.

PUBLIC HEARING

6a. Receive Staff Report on Service Change Implementation

Jeanine Wooley outlined the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), highlighting key elements in the Operations Plan, fare structure, Financial Plan, and Capital Plan. She presented a summary of the goals and objectives of the SRTP including the various service reduction options considered. She also highlighted the public comments and concerns received through the public outreach process related to the proposed service changes and fare restructure.

6b. Hold Public Hearing on Service Change Implementation

Public Comments:

Tracy expressed concern that the service cuts will negatively affect ridership, particularly low income riders and the working class who cannot afford taxis. She suggested cutting services of certain routes during off peak hours in order to keep the existing local service operating until 7:30 p.m.

Fergie Owens also expressed concern that the proposed reduction of local service span will negatively affect riders who depend on transit to get home from work, and cannot make it to the bus station until 6:30 p.m. just as the last bus is leaving. She noted that if those evening hours are cut, many people will not be able to connect to the Route 78.

Pat noted that as a resident of Contra Costa County, the elimination of Route 80 Sunday service will greatly impact her ability to attend events. She also expressed concern as a representative of the blind community and as a worker at the Department of Rehabilitation, that certain disabled members of the community will be unable to make it to work on Sundays due to the cuts. She proposed offering some service on Sundays at certain times of the day. She also commended the bus drivers on Route 80 for their level of excellence in customer service.

David indicated concerns regarding the economic impact of discontinuing Sunday service for those who work on Sundays. He also noted that there would be further economic impact upon the Arts and Entertainment District in Downtown Vallejo. He highlighted one example, noting that attendees of the Dance Unlimited events on Sunday afternoon will no longer be able to utilize the bus to get to their destination.

Michelle Baron noted that the fare restructure proposes to reduce the monthly pass fare on the regional routes from \$118 to \$100 for Vallejo residents. She proposed keeping the current rate of \$118 if it would assist in the effort of preventing elimination of service.

Kathy Walsh noted that as a bus rider on Route 78 for the past two years, the headcounts she has noticed from Walnut Creek are significantly larger than headcounts from Pleasant Hill. She noted that many people depend on public transit and she expressed concern that Walnut Creek riders would disproportionately suffer over Pleasant Hill riders.

Staff Comments:

Jeanine Wooley responded to the concern regarding the decrease in the monthly pass fare for regional routes. She noted that there was a disparity in the monthly pass rates in Benicia and Vallejo, and the proposed fare is the result of marrying the two fares. She stated that the monthly fare decreased slightly in Vallejo, and increased slightly in Benicia in order to achieve the proposed \$100 rate system wide.

6c. Provide Direction to Staff on Service Change Implementation

Board Comments:

Board member Davis noted that prior to the consolidation of Benicia Breeze and Vallejo Transit, the decision was made to increase fares for Vallejo Transit due to a financial deficit. He stated that the resulting loss of riders was never recovered and the City rapidly lost more revenue.

Board Member Spering expressed concern regarding harmonizing the monthly pass fare at the expense of people who desperately need the service. He requested that staff return to the Board with numbers showing how much money was lost with the \$18 adjustment.

Chair Patterson suggested that staff include the \$118 monthly pass rate as an option for the Board to consider in the final service plan which will be presented in May.

Board Member Hughes suggested that staff consider whether there is an opportunity to maintain some level of service on Route 76 and some level of Sunday service in order to keep the most popular hours instead of cutting those services entirely.

Jim McElroy noted that staff is considering this and will bring a consideration back to the Board for restoring some level of service on Route 76.

Board Member Davis suggested that staff consider taking an hour or more from another route or a few hours from various routes in order to reinstate some level of Sunday service.

Jim McElroy noted that staff has currently proposed to cut service back to peak hours only. He stated that in order to restore some level of Sunday service, staff may be faced with complete elimination of service on certain routes during certain times of the day.

Vice Chair Hannigan stated that the Walnut Creek stop on route 78 should be reconsidered from a ridership perspective in addition to the consideration of distance and fuel. She suggested that if there are more riders on the Walnut Creek stop that staff should add back in the Walnut Creek stop and pass by Pleasant Hill.

Chair Patterson concurred with Vice Chair Hannigan that ridership is a main concern in eliminating the Walnut Creek stop on route 78. She also requested that staff consider partnerships with other organizations with regards to providing Sunday service. Chair Patterson expressed concern with the elimination of Route 76, in particular for persons with disabilities who cannot ride Paratransit.

Board Member Hughes requested a complete inventory of transit alternatives for each service that is being eliminated.

Chair Patterson requested that staff include strategies for improving the Dial-a-Ride service in the final service plan.

Board Member Spering expressed concern over cutting service during the week, which could disproportionately affect the working public in order to reinstate Sunday service for leisure travel. He did concur, however, that staff should consider if there are ways to mix and match the service hours without negative impact upon riders who are using the services to get to and from work.

Chair Patterson commended the public for their level of input during the public process.

Recommendation:

After holding public hearing, direct staff to develop a final service plan ~~including the proposed reductions~~ for Board adoption at the May meeting. *Prior to finalizing the service plan, staff shall address the following issues:*

- *Reconsider the proposed unified \$100 monthly pass rate for regional routes, retaining current monthly pass rates with the goal of retaining revenue to support service that would otherwise be eliminated.*
- *Regards Route 78, review passenger counts and consider maintaining the Walnut Creek stop and eliminating the Pleasant Hill stop.*
- *Regards Sunday service, consider options for shifting service hours from various lower productivity routes to maintain limited Sunday service.*

Provide staff with direction on priorities for restoration of service should additional funding become available.

On a motion by Board Member Spring and a second by Vice Chair Hannigan, the SolTrans JPA Board unanimously approved the recommendation as amended shown above in ~~striketrough~~ ***bold italics***, and directed staff to include the following priorities for restoration of service should additional funding become available:

1. Retain Monday through Friday service in early morning and evening to support travel to and from jobs.
2. Retain limited service to and from DVC currently served by Route 76.
3. Retain limited Sunday service

COMMENTS FROM STAFF

7. Report from the Executive Director

CONSENT CALENDAR

On a motion by Board Member Spring, and a second by Vice Chair Hannigan, the SolTrans JPA Board approved Consent Calendar Item 8a through 8b.

8a. Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2012

Recommendation:

Approve the meeting minutes of March 15, 2012.

8b. Authorization for the Execution of Certifications and Assurances for the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Bond Program

Recommendation:

Adopt Resolution No. 2012-01 authorizing the Executive Director to execute certifications and assurances and all required documents of the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account Program (PTMISEA) program, including any amendments, with the California Department of Transportation.

REGULAR CALENDAR

9. Update on Benefits Subcommittee

Jim McElroy noted that the Benefits Subcommittee met on two occasions since the last Board meeting. He addressed the need for SolTrans to hire permanent staff. He also noted that staff has been encouraged to consider PARS as an alternative to CalPERS and that the Benefits Subcommittee and STA have spoken positively of PARS.

Public Comments:

None presented.

Board Comments:

Board Member Price noted that CalPERS has been unresponsive, while PARS has been very responsive.

Board Member Hannigan noted that there is a lot of flexibility to the PARS plan and it can be adjusted to the needs of the agency. She stated that pursuing benefits with PARS is a good opportunity as a new agency.

Board Member Davis expressed his support in considering an alternative to CalPERS.

Recommendation:

Possible direction to staff to proceed with procuring an alternative to CalPERS for the SolTrans employee retirement benefits program.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hannigan and a second by Board Member Davis, the SolTrans JPA Board unanimously approved the recommendation.

10. Proposed revisions to the Solano County Transit (“SolTrans”) Joint Powers Agreement

Bernadette Curry noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) requested a minor change to the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in include clarified language which authorizes the claiming of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds.

Public Comments:

None presented.

Board Comments:

None presented.

Recommendation:

Authorize the Executive Director to request of the Member Agencies action to amend the Joint Powers Agreement to amend the language to specifically allow SolTrans to claim TDA funds.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hannigan and a second by Board Member Sperring, the SolTrans JPA Board unanimously approved the recommendation.

11. Approval of Contract Extension with MV Corporation for Consolidated Transit Services for Fiscal Year 2012-13

Jim McElroy stated that staff has been negotiating with MV Transportation with the goal of obtaining a cost per hour that is closer to the average. He noted that the negotiating team has succeeded in moving from roughly \$105/per hour to \$101/per hour. He stated that SolTrans needs to obtain \$95/per hour over the long term in order to be sustainable, however staff has a contract that will get the agency through the Fiscal Year 2012-13.

Public Comments:

None presented.

Board Comments:

Board Member Spering indicated that if MV Transportation is unwilling to meet the challenges of the agency over the long term, then staff should put a bid process in place for the next budget cycle.

Recommendation:

Authorize the Executive Director to execute a one-year contract extension with MV Corporation for FY 2012-13.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hannigan and a second by Board Member Hughes, the SolTrans JPA Board unanimously approved the recommendation.

12. Application for Insurance Services

Bernadette Curry described the insurance coverage for Vallejo Transit and Benicia Breeze prior to the consolidation of transit services into what is now SolTrans. She noted that due to delays in the application approval process of insurance through CalTIP, staff is recommending maintaining insurance coverage through the transit operator's insurance provider.

Public Comments:

None presented.

Board Comments:

None presented.

Recommendation:

Authorize SolTrans Executive Director to procure non-transit insurance coverage through Alliant Insurance Services and return with a recommendation on transit coverage for FY 2013-14.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hannigan and a second by Board Member Hughes, the SolTrans JPA Board unanimously approved the recommendation.

INFORMATIONAL – NO DISCUSSION

13. FY 2013 Draft Budget

14. Public Advisory Committee Informal Meeting Notes of April 5, 2012

15. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Board Member Price expressed appreciation for the public comments and the realistic suggestions that members of the community provided during the public hearing.

Board Member Davis concurred and noted that the public hearing was remarkably pleasant because the public came to offer solutions to the issues at hand.

Board Member Spering also commended the public and expressed appreciation for their patience and understanding as difficult decisions are made with regards to a very delicate transit system.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m. The next regular meeting of the SolTrans Board is *tentatively* scheduled for **Thursday, May 17, 2012, 4:00 p.m., Benicia Council Chambers.**

Attested by:



4/23/2012

Suzanne Fredriksen
Clerk of the Board

Date