

Victoria Regional Transit Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Held at BC Transit  
520 Gorge Road East  
Tuesday, February 18, 2014  
9:00 AM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Susan Brice, Chair  
Mayor Dean Fortin  
Mayor Carol Hamilton  
Mayor Frank Leonard  
Councillor Marianne Alto  
Mayor Larry Cross  
Mayor Barbara Desjardins

**BC TRANSIT STAFF:** Manuel Achadinha, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Mike Davis, Vice President Operations and Chief Operating Officer  
Anwar Chaudry, Vice President Finance and Chief Financial Officer  
Erinn Pinkerton, Director of Corporate and Strategic Planning  
Dave Guthrie, General Manager Victoria Operations  
James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner  
Kevin Craig, Director of Finance and Corporate Controller  
Megan Hill, Manager Financial Planning  
Cara Weirmier, *Recorder*

**OPEN SESSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Susan Brice.

**Moved by Mayor Desjardins and seconded by Councillor Alto** that the agenda be **APPROVED** with item #8 being discussed after #10, and add late correspondence from the City of Victoria.

**CARRIED**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Moved by Mayor Fortin and seconded by Mayor Desjardins** that the minutes of the December 10, 2013 meeting be **APPROVED** as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

None

**4. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Chair Brice thanked Mike Davis for all of his hard work and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement.

**5. DELEGATIONS**

None

**6. SERVICE UPDATE****David Guthrie, General Manager, Victoria Regional Transit Operations**

Mr. Guthrie reported that winter service is going well and ridership continues to improve.

**7. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE****Megan Hill, Manager Financial Planning**

Overall, to date, forecast expenditures are expected to be under budget by two per cent. There is a trend in increased ridership. The last three quarters are expected to be on budget, whereas the first quarter of the year was trending under. The fuel tax revenue was strong for the first half of the year, dipped in the second half, and is expected to be slightly under budget by year end.

Operations expenditures are under budget to date, and should be under by \$300,000 at year end. Hours of service delivered are below budget due to scheduling efficiencies. Maintenance is favourable, administration is three per cent favourable, and lease fees are seven per cent favourable. Ridership is trending positively. Even though ridership is up, revenue is down slightly due to a higher proportion of lower yielding prepaid fares. Although The Transit Fund had slightly lower revenue, lower expenditures will result in a year end fund balance \$2.1 million above budget.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION**

**CARRIED**

**9. SERVICE REVIEW****James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner**

The final results of the Service Review process were presented. The document outlines the service review activities and public consultations, evaluations of the existing system performance and areas not served by transit, service design standards, and proposed service and infrastructure priorities.

**MOVED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON TO APPROVE THE SERVICE REVIEW**

**CARRIED**

**10. 2014/15 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN, REVISED BUDGET AND TAXATION REGULATION****James Wadsworth and Megan Hill**

Option 1: Two buses, no additional hours. Relocation of service from low volume routes to high volume routes. Change route #24 and route #25 into community shuttle. Looking to increase service to Bear Mountain, would need to move focus from a less used route to cover it. With the revised budget, property tax would not exceed three per cent each year, extra funding would come from the Transit Fund.

Option 2: Two buses with a 5,000 hour increase. To be implemented in January 2015 with a focus on high use routes. At peak times this would allow additional service to be directed to reduce pass-ups,

Mayor Desjardins questioned the use of the Fund for operating expenses rather than capital infrastructure as increases in service create an on-going expenditure obligation. Mayor Fortin suggested that September would be better for service increase than January to get riders at the start of the school year. Manuel Achadinha explained that while new buses cannot be acquired until January, BC Transit will assess the availability of buses from the Provincial fleet to enable the service increase to be advanced to September.

Mayor Leonard suggested that, given the size of the Transit Fund, Option 2 should be advanced with a September start date.

**Moved by Mayor Cross and seconded by Mayor Fortin, to approve Option 2 with increasing service starting in September rather than January.**

**CARRIED**

#### **TAXATION REGULATION**

Outlines the total budget, Commission's share based on the approved Option 2 service option and establishes the taxation rates for the 2014 taxation year.

**Moved by Mayor Leonard and seconded by Mayor Fortin**

**CARRIED**

#### **8. VICTORIA TRANSIT FUND STRATEGY**

**Kevin Craig, Director of Finance and Corporate Controller**

Transit Fund has a forecast balance of \$9 million at year end. The fund was at its lowest balance (\$980,000) in 2007/08. Otherwise, the fund has stayed stable around \$2 million per year from 2003-2010. The fund has increased in the last three years due to higher revenues and lower operating costs.

The goal of the fund is to mitigate risk due to unforeseen changes in revenue and expenditure and to smooth out revenue requirements. For their consideration, the Commission was presented with four options for the Transit Fund:

1. Maintain a balance equal to one per cent of the Commission's annual operating expense obligations; or
2. Maintain a balance equal to 2.5 per cent of the Commission's annual operating expense obligations; or
3. Maintain a balance equal to five per cent of the Commission's annual expense obligations; or
4. Continue to manage the Transit Fund on a three year basis. The Commission would direct the funds to be used to offset debt (lease fees) associated with future capital projects (e.g. the new operations and maintenance facility and/or rapid transit)

**Moved by Mayor Cross and seconded by Councillor Alto to receive as information with direction to staff that this appears on the next Agenda with a draft policy.**

**CARRIED**

#### **11. CRD TRANSPORTATION PLAN REFERRAL**

**Erinn Pinkerton, Director Corporate & Strategic Planning**

A draft letter was presented in response to the CRD request for input into the Regional Transit Plan. Mayors Desjardins and Leonard suggested stronger wording be made to request that the CRD include transit in the discussions of regionally significant gas tax projects as well that the CRD change their service span standards to align with the standards adopted by the Commission.

**Moved by Mayor Leonard and seconded by Mayor Hamilton**

**CARRIED**

#### **12. TRANSIT PRIORITY UPDATE**

**Erinn Pinkerton**

Implementation of phase one, the Douglas Street Project, will begin Monday, February 24, 2014. Phase two to Tolmie will be planned with the City of Victoria. The report also provided a summary of the land that is being held or secured by the BC Transit for future exchanges and park and rides on the rapid transit corridor. Mayor Desjardins expressed

concern at the distance to walk from the Uptown Exchange to the mall itself. Erinn explained that the goal is to push the exchange as close to the shopping centre as possible, using the MOTI land that is adjacent to the BC Transit property that was highlighted in green on the map. Chair Brice requests that this information be shared with the municipalities; Staff will send a report to Saanich, Colwood and View Royal with an update of the transit priority planning.

**MOVED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION**

**CARRIED**

**13. FACILITIES STRATEGY UPDATE**

**Erinn Pinkerton**

BC Transit is looking for property for a third conventional operating facility, and to relocate the custom transit facility. Property was purchased with Provincial funds in 2011 which can facilitate custom transit, but there is a need to purchase property for a third conventional facility.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION**

**CARRIED**

**14. PLANNING REPORT**

**James Wadsworth**

The City of Langford has requested that an amendment to the Transit Future Plan network and that the maps be amended to identify the Leigh Road overpass connecting to the Langford Parkway. The amendment is primarily housekeeping and will be made at the next opportunity.

**MOVED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION**

**CARRIED**

**15. ATAC MINUTES**

**Nothing to Report**

**16. CORRESPONDENCE**

a. Letter to Todd Stone Re: Fuel Tax

b. Letter from the City of Victoria

Councillor Alto spoke on behalf of the City of Victoria regarding a downtown circulator that they would like to pilot in the summer of this year. The City requests the Commission direct BC Transit staff to investigate the feasibility of this project and give their advice and information. The Commission was generally supportive of the concept but cautioned that ultimately a project like this will need to be prioritized according to public wants/needs.

**MOVED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR FORTIN THAT BC TRANSIT INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE REQUESTED SERVICE AND REPORT TO THE COMMISSION.**

**CARRIED**

**17. IN CAMERA**

**ATAC COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Four nominees, Kathleen Chiasson, Colina Titus, Lorraine Collett and new Chair, Chris Marks, were appointed to the ATAC Committee for two year terms.

**18. ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING MOVED BY MAYOR HAMILTON AND  
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO**

**CARRIED**

**MEETING ADJOURNED – 10:30AM**