

Victoria Regional Transit Commission
Minutes of the Meeting
Held at BC Transit
520 Gorge Road East
Tuesday, December 10, 2013
9:00 AM

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

REGRETS: Mayor Barbara Desjardins

BC TRANSIT STAFF: Manuel Achadinha, President & Chief Executive Officer
Mike Davis, Vice President Operations & Chief Operating Officer
Erinn Pinkerton, Director of Corporate & Strategic Planning
Dave Guthrie, General Manager Victoria Operations
James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner
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 HAMILTON AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO that the agenda be **APPROVED** as circulated.

CARRIED

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON that the minutes of October 28, 2013 meeting be **APPROVED** as circulated, with the amendment that the meeting had been adjourned with a motion from Councillor Alto, not by Chair Brice.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

None

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

None

5. DELEGATIONS

1) Camosun College, presented by Kathryn Le Gros, Director, Ancillary Services

Camosun would like to see BC Transit consider the college more of a priority partner as they have the same goal to increase ridership amongst their students, as well as providing revenues for BC Transit. They are concerned about the volume of students being passed up by buses due to being at capacity, particularly to the Interurban Campus. They would also like to see a late night service provided to both of their campuses.

2) Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber), presented by Bruce Carter and Jane Crocker

Mr. Carter provided a summary of the Chamber's recommendations with respect to the draft budget presented to the Commission in September. The Chamber is concerned regarding the size of the forecasted property tax increase. They suggest looking at reducing, or removing all together, under used services/routes rather than increase property tax. The Chamber is supportive with the gas tax increase, especially as the monies are targeted for capital projects.

3) Oak Bay High School, presented by Isabella Lee and Oleg Saldayga

The students presented a slide presentation regarding the overcrowding on the afterschool buses. They request that BC Transit look into increasing the number of buses at peak school times, or using double decker buses.

4) Sooke Council, presented by Councillor Carrie Reay

Councillor Reay expressed concerns regarding the need for more bus service or right sizing the bus (i.e, Double Deckers) to Sooke, especially during peak times due to increased ridership.

5) UVic Student Society, Camosun College Student Society, presented by Rachel Barr and Simka Marshall respectively

Presented regarding the overcrowding of buses to the post-secondary campuses, and the need for more service, especially during peak times to get students to their classes on time. Also, support for a gas tax increase?

6. SERVICE UPDATE

David Guthrie, General Manager, Victoria Regional Transit Operations

David Guthrie reported that right now there is record ridership compared to last September. The goal of Operations is to get as many people onto buses as possible by monitoring every five minutes to get buses to the high volume areas. He recently met with Municipalities regarding snow removal and route allocation during the inclement weather. December 16 should see regular service return to route 11 on Admirals Rd.

The Island Farms Santa Parade was well attended, as was Stuff the Bus. Mr. Guthrie thanked all the volunteers for their hard work.

The routes 75 and 81 will be increased for the Butchart Gardens Christmas season.

For the winter service starting after New Year's, changes have been implemented to improve service efficiency, addressing operating issues within the funds available.

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

CARRIED

7. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Megan Hill, Manager Financial Planning

Megan Hill presented financial status up to Oct 31, 2013, and the forecast to March 31, 2014. Revenue is below budget by one per cent. Chair Brice asked about maintenance on the double decker busses. Manuel Achadinha explained that it is time for their mid-life refit. The plan is to do four buses at a time. David Guthrie indicated that there are 46 in the fleet and that maintenance does a good job of keeping as many as they can on the road at one time. Manuel also explained that although double decker buses have been requested on certain routes, it is not an easy task due to overhead obstructions

such as trees and power lines, and that it would be a real undertaking to get those routes double decker ready.

MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION

CARRIED

8. VICTORIA TRANSIT SERVICE REVIEW

James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner

James gave an update regarding the Transit Service Review and public consultations that have taken place. 700 people were surveyed on the buses in October, over 500 people filled out a survey online, and there were workshops held throughout the region. Main issues brought forward were identified. A key challenge is the Interurban campus, and key service expansion priorities were identified. One of the primary ones is the development of the Frequent Transit Network to the 15 minute service level 7am-7pm over the next five to seven years. Staff is also looking to rebrand the maps to make them more user friendly.

MOVED BY MAYOR CROSS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION

CARRIED

9. 3 YEAR SERVICE AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Erinn Pinkerton, Director Corporate Strategy

Erinn gave an update on the draft strategy that was presented in September. Erinn reminded the Commission members that BC Transit had previously recommended an order of 15 buses over the next three years, a service expansion strategy supported by the CRD; however, due to concerns with respect to funding requirements, the recommended plan has been reduced to two buses in 2014.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON

1. That the 2014/15 base budget be accepted as presented
2. To direct management to make every effort to bring the base budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17 within a 3 per cent property tax increase each year.

CARRIED

The Commission discussed the need for additional service and fleet and the requirement for additional funding to support these costs. Buses for 2014 need to be approved at this meeting due to ordering lead times. Service does not need to be approved at this time.

MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON

1. That the acquisition of two vehicles for September 2014/15 be approved using the Transit Fund for the additional lease cost
2. That the decision in regards to the additional operating hours be deferred until the February 2014 meeting.

CARRIED

10. FUEL TAX MOTION

Motion is supported by the CRD, Chamber of Commerce, and through public consultation.

MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO

Whereas the Victoria Regional Transit Commission faces significant capital expenses to provide for transit service expansion and

Whereas the growth in transit service is a priority of the region's growth and transportation strategy and
Whereas property tax funding cannot reasonably accommodate the increases necessary for capital and service growth and
Whereas the *BC Transit Act* enables a local motor fuel tax surcharge dedicated to Victoria Regional Transit Commission expenses and
Therefore, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission requests that the Government of BC amend the *Motor Fuel Tax Act* to increase the dedicated fuel tax applied in the region under the *BC Transit Act* by 2 cents per litre to support transit system development in the Capital Region.

CARRIED

11. PLANNING REPORT

Erinn Pinkerton, Director Corporate Strategy

Mayor Leonard questioned the status of transfers; staff assured him that transfers are being looked into as they realize that it is a problem to be addressed. Recommendations are likely at the next fare review.

Mayor Hamilton asked about the 50 Goldstream service to Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre in the new year, staff advised that service will use the stops on the highway next to the centre, it just won't pull into the exchange anymore.

Chair Brice asked if an invitation had been sent out to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to come present regarding Highway 1 transit priority plans. Transit has not heard a response yet from the Ministry.

Chair Brice, on behalf of Mayor Desjardins, asked about signage in the bus shelters regarding being a no smoking area. Stickers have been put up in the past; it is suspected that they have been removed by the public. Staff will look into this.

Mayor Leonard requested that any information presented as part of the land acquisition project include linkage to the existing maintenance facilities as well as the land purchases at Royal Oak in 2011.

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR FORTIN TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION

CARRIED

12. ATAC MINUTES

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR FORTIN TO RECEIVE AS INFORMATION

CARRIED

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING MOVED BY MAYOR HAMILTON AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO

CARRIED

MEETING ADJOURNED – 10:30AM