

<p>Victoria Regional Transit Commission          Minutes of the Meeting          Held at BC Transit          520 Gorge Road East          Tuesday, September 11, 2012          9:30 am</p>
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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Susan Brice, Chair	
	Mayor Dean Fortin	
	Mayor Carol Hamilton	
	Councillor Marianne Alto	
Regrets	Mayor Frank Leonard	
	Mayor Barbara Desjardins	
	Mayor Larry Cross	
<b>BC TRANSIT STAFF:</b>	Erinn Pinkerton, Director of Corporate & Strategic Planning Emily Watson, Senior Planner James Wadsworth, Senior Planner Gerald Chang, Manager, Sales & Revenue Jonathan Norgaard, Director Finance Mike Davis, VP & COO Dave Guthrie, General Manager, Victoria Operations Shawn Ridout, Service Delivery Manager Meribeth Burton, Corporate Spokesperson Linda Moss, <i>Recorder</i>	

**OPEN SESSION**

**1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 am by Chair, Susan Brice.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND MAYOR FORTIN** that the agenda be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**MOVED BY MAYOR HAMILTON AND MAYOR FORTIN** that the minutes of June 12th meeting be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**3. Business Arising from Previous Meeting**

None

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

None

#### 5. Delegations

The Chair noted that there would be 3 delegations today. The Langford Meadows delegation has requested to be heard at the next Commission meeting.

**David Langley** – Mr. Langley, a former CRD planner, raised comments about the analysis used in the LRT project. Mr. Langley asked that the Commission request staff to provide a presentation of the findings from published Technical Report Volume 5 and an explanation of the selection of LRT as the preferred option.

Chair Brice asked staff to take the information presented by Mr. Langley and prepare a response for the next Commission meeting.

**UVIC and Camosun Student Societies** – Lucia Orser, UVIC Director of External Relations & Madeline Keller MacLeod, Camosun External Affairs Director thanked the Commission for restoring 7,000 service hours this year. Information presented included possible solutions to reach the goal of the Provincial Transit Plan which was to double ridership by 2020. It was noted that more buses and more service hours are needed to address the pass up issues riders are experiencing. Possible sources of funding for this solution were outlined, including gas tax, carbon tax allocation to transit and employer bus pass programs for regional employers. Implementation of transit priority measures were raised as a solution to increase bus speed which would result in savings for the entire system. Support was noted for the creation of an infrastructure reserve fund to address future infrastructure improvements. UVic Students' Society, Camosun College Student Society and the CAW Local 333 are engaged in a 'Make Transit Work' campaign which is working on three areas; greater transit funding, transit priority measures and reform governance, creating regional transportation authority. The delegation noted that they wanted to work with BC Transit to make transit better for the whole community, not just students.

**Westhills Delegation** – Rohan Rupf, and Janet Evans, Keycorp Consulting distributed information about the Westhills project and the needs for increased transit service. A petition was submitted with a total of 355 signatures. It was noted that the Westhills project has zoning for 5950 units with 500 already completed. There is a diversity in the buyers and they are interested in increasing their transit service to get back and forth to work and shopping in the downtown core.

The Chair noted that it is always a challenge to balance needs and limited resources. The Commission is trying to get the most service for the money available.

#### 6. September Service Implementation – verbal

Staff presented a verbal update on September service implementation. Overall the September implementation went well. Managers and trainers were out on the road at key points to monitor the system. TComm provides the ability to efficiently track exactly when and where pass ups are.

Hillside & McKenzie are the two corridors where passups are most frequently encountered. Riders do not have as many complaints regarding pass ups if there is another bus within 5 minutes. If the wait is longer than that, they are less tolerant. Adding to problems in the afternoon rush is the lack of space at UVic exchange.

The Chair thanked staff for their efforts and expressed appreciation that this was made a priority. The Chair requested that the Commission be kept apprised of how this evolves over the wet season.

**The Commission accepted this report FOR INFORMATION.**

## **7. 2012/13 Financial and Performance Report**

Staff presented July 2012 year-to-date results along with a fiscal 2012/13 year end forecast. The year-to-date total Commission revenues and expenditures for July 2012 were both 4% lower than budget primarily due to the reallocation of service hours to September in order to maximize available service starting this fall. Other items noted included:

- July year-to-date passenger revenues were on budget and are forecast to remain on budget at year end
- Ridership is slightly below budget as of July due to the reallocation of service hours to September
- Fuel tax revenues were 9% higher than budget as of July and this has been carried forward into the year-end forecast
- Operations expenditures excluding fuel were 4% lower than budget due to the reallocation of service hours to September.
- Year-end administration expenses forecast is expected to be less than 1% above budget primarily due to the Transit Priority Planning project approved by the Commission in May 2012.
- Fuel costs are 11% below budget as of July and are forecast to reflect these year-to-date savings as at year end.
- Maintenance was 3% lower than budget and is forecast to be less than 1% below budget at year-end
- Fleet maintenance cost per hour is lower due to lower than expected activity relative to service hours
- Year-to-date administration was 2% lower than budget as a result of timing in hiring and this favorable variance is forecast to carry forward into year end
- The transit fund was budgeted to be \$4.4M at year end. Based on July year-to-date results, the transit fund is forecast to be \$5M at year end as a result of increased revenues from fuel tax and lower than anticipated operating expenditures. This forecast does not include any allowance for labor cost increases.

Victoria continues to perform strongly when compared to CUTA population peer groups for both conventional and custom transit services.

**The Commission accepted this report FOR INFORMATION.**

## 8. Planning Update

Staff presented an update of planning activities in the following areas:

### Service Update

- Fall Service
- Winter Service
- School District 63 – Saanich School Bell Times
- Special events and construction projects

### New Planning Initiatives

- Service Review
- Transit Priority Studies
- Facilities Master Plan
- UVIC Campus Transit Plan

### On-going Infrastructure Planning

- Sayward Transit Priority
- BC Transit Shelter Program

**MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO** that a letter should be sent to municipalities from the Chair to help facilitate the goals we want to achieve, for example:

“As a Commission, our target is to implement transit priority on the five identified corridors (Mckenzie, Douglas, Island Highway, Highway 1 and Highway 17) by September 2013.”

**CARRIED**

## 9. Service Performance Guidelines

Staff presented the highlights of the Service Performance Guideline report that was originally presented at the October 20<sup>th</sup> workshop held at BC Transit. Input gathered at the workshop was incorporated into the report. Further analysis will be presented at the December Commission meeting.

Mayor Fortin raised the point that residents need to provide input on possible service changes. Staff responded that consultation is a part of the planning process.

Staff inquired if it would be possible to create a link to put on each municipal website so residents accessing those webpages could click on the BC transit link to receive current information. The Commission members expressed support for this idea.

**MOVED BY MAYOR HAMILTON AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO** to approve the Victoria Regional Transit System Service Performance Guidelines with support for staff providing municipalities with a link for transit planning updates for placement on individual websites.

**CARRIED**

## 10. 3 Year Service and Financial Strategy

Staff presented the base budget which outlines projected costs of the transit system over the next three years if service hours and fares are held constant. The average increase required to fund the base budget is approximately 2.8% and is based on the following key assumptions:

- No changes in service levels, fares or ridership
- No changes in labour wage rates
- Increases in fuel costs of 3.5% in 2013/14 and 7% thereafter
- Increases in lease fees due to vehicle replacements, the acquisition of the two expansion vehicles for 2013/14, infrastructure projects to address existing capacity constraints at the UVic Exchange and parking for custom transit, seismic upgrades required for the maintenance building in Victoria and waste water treatment in 2014/15
- No changes in residential or business property occurrences or assessed values
- Transit fund is maintained at approximately \$5 million.

Staff presented funding information which included that to fund the base budget increase entirely from fares would require an increase of revenue of 4% in 2013/14, 7% in 2014/15 and 6% in 2015/16 which equates to an estimated one-time weighted average fare increase of approximately 25% in 2013/14. Staff recommended that a combination of transit levy and fare increases be used to support maintaining base service and/or to accommodate any service expansion.

Staff presented 4 fare structure options which were developed to balance the goals of increasing revenue and increasing ridership. The options have been prepared for the Commission's consideration and for public consultation. These options will be communicated through printed leaflets available on vehicles and published on the website. Feedback options, including online, phone-in and write-in submissions will be provided. An online survey will also be used to gather customer feedback and a public hearing will be held in Victoria in November. Results of the public consultation will be included in the final report of the fare strategy in December which will be put forth for approval. The implementation of the fare strategy approved in December will occur in April 2013.

Commission members requested a list of questions that will be on the survey. Staff responded that this will be provided when completed which is estimated to be one week.

Staff also presented three service expansion options for conventional and custom service ranging from 1% to 3% growth per year for the Commission's consideration.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON** to receive this report for information, and specifically to:

- Receive the base budget for information and,
- endorse fare options to proceed to public consultation.

**CARRIED**

## 11. Vicinity Bus Opportunity

Staff presented an opportunity to obtain 5 of the Vicinity buses out of the 15 bus trial fleet BC Transit has purchased for use throughout the province. It was noted that the commercial life of the vehicle is 10 years as opposed to typical buses in that same size range which are 5 years.

The Vicinity bus manufacturer is Yaxing imported by Grande West. These are not additions to the fleet, but instead to replace community shuttle buses who have reached the end of their life. Some Ford Polars have already been replaced with Arbocs. Vicinity buses offer increased accessibility and flexibility through the ability to accommodate standees and low floor loading.

Mayor Fortin noted that discussion was held with the Mayor of Penticton who has a concern with capacity for accessible mobility devices with only one spot available on this type of bus as well as one door entry. Staff noted that Penticton was considering replacing 40' heavy duty buses with Vicinity buses. In Victoria community bus service is operated using Ford Polars or Arbocs which are one door, rear-lift vehicles.

Mayor Fortin requested an opinion In Camera about Class 4 Licencing. He requested a legal opinion and wanted more security when spending public money.

It was suggested by Commission members that this matter be brought to the Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting being held next week for discussion.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON** to bring this information to September 18<sup>th</sup> ATAC meeting for discussion and to defer this item to next Commission meeting.

**CARRIED**

## **12. 2013 Meeting Schedule**

Staff presented the 2013 meeting schedule and it was decided that meeting dates will be canvassed and the schedule can be set offline.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON** to agree that Linda Moss will canvass Commission members with potential meeting dates and schedule will be set offline.

**CARRIED**

## **13. ATAC Report**

Staff presented the ATAC report and noted that a supplemental member to the committee had concerns about the process for customer complaints at BC Transit. A tour was provided of the new TComm system and the response was positive.

Councillor Alto, ATAC liaison, noted that there was an item raised at the June 19<sup>th</sup> ATAC meeting regarding signage around accessible stops and the request from ATAC members to have the right to decide if the area they want to depart from the bus is safe or not without the driver's input. Liability issues were raised.

The Chair raised that appropriate staff to respond on this and that Shawn Ridout, staff representative for ATAC and Councilor Alto could report results to the ATAC committee.

**COUNCILLOR ALTO** requested staff report on options available to make accessibility of buses of people with disabilities more open and more accessible to all passengers.

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON** to accept the draft ATAC minutes of June 19th as presented.

**CARRIED**

**14. Correspondence**

Staff presented correspondence received.

**MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON** to move to receive correspondence as presented.

**CARRIED**

**15. Adjournment – Public portion of meeting adjourned at 11:55 am**

**In Camera Session held.**