

Victoria Regional Transit Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Held at BC Transit  
520 Gorge Road East  
Tuesday, June 17, 2014  
9:00 AM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Susan Brice, Chair  
Mayor Dean Fortin  
Mayor Carol Hamilton  
Councillor Marianne Alto  
Mayor Barbara DeJardins

**REGRETS:** Mayor Larry Cross  
Mayor Frank Leonard

**BC TRANSIT STAFF:** Manuel Achadinha, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Brian Anderson, Vice President Operations & Chief Operating Officer  
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 the February 18, 2014 meeting be **APPROVED** as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

None

**4. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Thanked Mayor Fortin for his work with BC Transit in the implementation of the Douglas Street Priority Bus Lane. Chair Brice received a letter from MOTi reiterating their support for working with the VRTC and BC Transit during the next phase of construction (Hillside Avenue to Tolmie Avenue). The letter will be received later in the meeting during correspondence. Mayor Fortin added that he would like BC Transit staff to continue to collaborate with MOTi staff to prioritize the extension of bus lanes from Tolmie Street to McKenzie Street.

**5. DELEGATIONS**

**1) Hugh McDonald and Robert Bettauer – Pacific Institute for Sports Excellence (PISE)** 2014 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commonwealth Games that were held in Victoria. PISE would like to thank the Commission for hearing their request for bus

services during the anniversary event. PISE requests that free transit to and from the event at the PISE campus be granted to individuals wearing their volunteer uniforms or presenting a copy of a coupon they plan to print in the Times Colonist.

**6. PISE – COMMONWEALTH GAMES SPONSORSHIP REQUEST – for APPROVAL  
Maureen Sheehan, Director, Sales, Marketing and Communications**

BC Transit staff are excited to support the anniversary of the Commonwealth Games, as Transit was very involved in the games when they were in Victoria. It was confirmed with both the General Manager of Operations and the Manager of Scheduling that the expected passenger loads can be accommodated should the Commission approve the request. The two main routes serving the facility include Route 21, which runs once an hour, and Route 8, which runs every 35 minutes, ending at 6:30 PM.

**MOVED BY MAYOR HAMILTON AND SECONDED BY MAYOR FORTIN**

**CARRIED**

**7. SERVICE UPDATE - Verbal  
David Guthrie, General Manager**

The Admirals Road Bridge is now open and regular bus routing has resumed.

BC Transit has received many positive comments from the public as well as Transit Operators regarding the priority bus lanes on Douglas Street.

In terms of summer service levels, all 209 required buses are available and there are some hours on standby if required to accommodate unexpected peak loads. Additional service has been added to Routes 75 and 81 to accommodate higher volumes of tourists and in response to concerns raised by locals of pass-bys and overcrowding. Additionally, there is now added capacity for routes 8 and 21 to Camosun.

The terminus for Routes 27 and 28 have moved from the Legislature to the Blanshard terminus to allow buses to get in and out of town faster, and to ease congestion. BC Transit Staff have been on site during the transition period to assist customers.

The contract with Community Travel Training has been renewed for the next five years to train seniors and those with disabilities to ride conventional transit.

Looking ahead to September, the new Exchange at the University of Victoria is expected to be fully operational in time for class starts. A media event will be held to announce the expansion.

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

**CARRIED**

**8. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT  
Megan Hill, Manager Financial Planning**

Overall fiscal 13/14 year-end results were positive compared to budget. While fuel tax revenue was slightly below budget, operating expenditures were also below budget due to scheduling efficiencies achieved throughout the year. Service increased by 24,000 hours, or three per cent while passenger trips increased by 1.3 million or five per cent. Victoria Transit System continues to benchmark well compared to similar sized systems across Canada.

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

**CARRIED**

**9. TRANSIT FUND POLICY – for APPROVAL**

**Megan Hill, Manager Financial Planning**

A Transit Fund policy was presented for approval that identified a minimum Fund balance of 2.5 per cent of annual operating costs to mitigate an unexpected loss in revenue or non-recurring expense.

Commission members stressed the importance of keeping a balance to mitigate potential future costs and requested the Fund be separated into two accounts: one restricted account set at 2.5 per cent of annual operating costs which can only be used to address situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expenses, or unanticipated loss in funding. The second account would be used for one-time, nonrecurring expenses that will build long-term capacity, including investment in facility or vehicle infrastructure. The Douglas Street bus priority lane was identified as a recent example where the Fund was used in such a manner. By using the Fund, the Commission lowers its overall expenses by not having to pay financing charges related to borrowing for their share of project costs. Staff will report on the associated account balances at the September meeting.

**MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ALTO with direction to Transit Staff to report on the two account balances at the September meeting.**

**CARRIED**

**10. THREE-YEAR SERVICE EXPANSION PLANS – for APPROVAL**

**James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner**

The Three Year Plan approved at the February 2017 meeting identified 5,000 expansion hours for 2014/15 with no further expansion for 2015/16 and 2016/17. In preparation for budget development, staff requested confirmation of expansion expectations for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. The expansion over the next three years is constrained by a lack of garage facility capacity. As a result, only a maximum of 13 buses can be added to the system until a new facility is constructed.

The Commission requested additional information on the financial and service implications of adding additional buses in future years in light of expected cost increases related to existing service. It is understood that due to ordering timelines, any new buses are not going to be in service until January 2016 at the earliest. The timelines associated with draft budget development and potential service expansion will be presented at the September meeting.

**MOVED TO TABLE UNTIL SEPTEMBER BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HAMILTON with direction to Transit staff to prepare a preliminary budget for 2015/16 based on year to date results to inform future expansion discussion.**

**CARRIED**

**11. PLANNING REPORT**

**James Wadsworth, Senior Transit Planner**

Routes 27 and 28 now terminate at Fairfield and Blanshard rather than at the Legislature during the daytime to relieve congestion and improve reliability. The transition was well supported by Transit Staff. Construction of the expanded UVic exchange is progressing well and the new exchange is expected to be complete in time for the start of classes in September. Also aligned with the Fall service change, Routes 6 and 15X will begin their new routing. As a result of the change, there will be more service to Camosun Lansdowne; the 15 will be extended to Esquimalt; and Route 6, the busiest route in the

city, will be shortened to make it more efficient. Transit Staff will be positioned at major timing points and the exchanges to assist customers throughout the transition. Looking ahead, Staff are assessing options to extend service to Bear Mountain, increase service to the Tsawout First Nation areas in Central Saanich and service expansion from the West Shore to the Camosun Interurban campus, as well as to the dockyards. Updates will continue to be provided in the regular Planning Reports to the Commission.

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

**CARRIED**

**12. 2013/14 CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS**

**Maureen Sheehan, Director, Sales, Marketing and Communications**

BC Transit conducts quarterly surveys to gauge customer satisfaction. Results consistently show strong ratings for customer service, safety on buses, and driver courtesy. There are indicators that in Victoria, more than anywhere else, passengers choose to ride transit even when they have other choices of transportation.

92 per cent of survey respondents in Greater Victoria indicated that transit is an important service in their community.

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

**CARRIED**

**13. ATAC MINUTES**

**Dave Guthrie, General Manager**

Quorum was not achieved at the last scheduled meeting; the group will reconvene later this summer.

**14. CORRESPONDENCE**

**1) Cowichan Valley Regional District – Fare Increase for CVRD Commuter**

In 2008 the government funded the commuter program by purchasing buses for the service. There are eight buses in total, six of which are in service. The Commission pays 50 per cent of the net service, approximately \$42,000 per year. The CVRD is looking to expand and will be increases fares in October, 2014.

**2) Province of British Columbia – Douglas Street Bus Lane**

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

**CARRIED**

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING MOVED BY MAYOR FORTIN AND SECONDED BY MAYOR DESJARDINS**

**CARRIED**

**MEETING ADJOURNED – 10:27AM**