

**MEETING MINUTES**

Spokane Regional Transportation Council  
Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday July 8, 2021  
Zoom Video Conference Meeting

**# 1 - Call to Order/Record of Attendance/Excused Absences:** Vice-Chair Paul Schmidt brought the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**Board Members:**

Mayor Ben Wick, *City of Spokane Valley* (Chair)  
Paul Schmidt, *City of Cheney* (Vice Chair)  
Mayor James Weathers, *City of Airway Heights*  
Council Member Dee Cragun, *City of Deer Park*  
Mayor Cris Kaminskas, *City of Liberty Lake*  
Mayor Kevin Freeman, *City of Millwood*  
Council Member Candace Mumm, *City of Spokane*  
Council Member Linda Thompson, *City of Spokane Valley*  
Larry Stone, *Major Employer Representative*  
Matt Ewers, *Rail/Freight Representative*  
Council Member Micki Harnois, *Small Towns Representative*  
Commissioner Al French, *Spokane County*  
Commissioner Mary Kuney, *Spokane County*  
E. Susan Meyer, *CEO Spokane Transit Authority*  
Todd Coleman, *Transportation Advisory Committee Chair*  
Adam Jackson, *Transportation Technical Committee Chair*  
Mike Gribner, *Regional Administrator, WSDOT-Eastern Region*  
Kelly Fukai, *Washington State Transportation Commission*

**Alternate Board Members:**

Breean Beggs for Lori Kinnear, *City of Spokane*

**Guests:**

Katherine Miller, *City of Spokane*  
Joe Tortorelli, *Spokane Good Roads Assn.*  
Kevin Picanco, *City of Spokane*  
Karl Otterstrom, *Spokane Transit Authority*  
Chad Coles, *Spokane County*  
Sean Messner, *HDR*  
Anna Ragaza-Bourassa, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*  
Rachelle Bradley, *Spokane Tribe of Indians*  
Brandi Colyar, *Spokane County*  
LeAnn Yamamoto, *CommuteSmart NW*  
Char Kay, *WSDOT-Eastern Region*  
Kristine Williams, *Spokane Transit Authority*  
Gloria Mantz, *City of Spokane Valley*

**SRTC Staff:**

Kevin Wallace, *Interim Executive Director*  
Jason Lien, *Principal Transportation Planner*  
Mike Ulrich, *Principal Transportation Planner*  
Kylee Jones, *Associate Transportation Planner II*  
Greg Griffin, *Administrative Services Manager*  
Julie Meyers-Lehman, *Administrative-Executive Coordinator*  
Stanley Schwartz, *SRTC Legal Counsel*

Vice Chair Schmidt announced that members Mary Kuney and Tony Harbolt requested to be excused from the meeting.

**Ms. Cragun made a motion to excuse the absences. Mr. Gribner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Vice Chair Schmidt reported that Mayor Wick had a prior meeting that is running late. In order to allow for his presence for Agenda Items 2 and 3, he would entertain motion to re-order the agenda for Items 2 and 3 to occur after Agenda Item 6.

**Ms. Kuney made a motion modify the agenda as described. Ms. Cragun seconded. All votes were in favor.**

#### # 4 Public Comments

There were no public comments.

#### # 5 Interim Executive Director's Report

Mr. Wallace reported on:

- The region exceeded federal obligation target by approx. \$1.5M. SRTC received notice from Spokane Regional Health District of the intent to de-obligate the *Safe Routes to School* and *Walk-Bike-Bus* programs due to resource challenges, but because of timing these de-obligations will not impact the obligation target.
- There is currently a solicitation out for Federal RAISE grants and applications due 7/12. Contact the SRTC office if a letter of support is desired.
- Staff is continuing to work on the Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities. There have been several recent updates from member agencies and a revised list will be emailed to Board members after today's meeting. This topic will be discussed again at the August Board meeting.
- SRTC Board Chair sent Board membership invitations to the Spokane and Kalispel Tribes and we are waiting for a reply. SRTC received notification from WSDOT that extending the invitation meets the legal requirements.
- Staff held a public meeting on June 30 for the metropolitan transportation plan update; a public survey has been launched as well as a promotional video, and a link to the video will be sent to Board members.

### ACTION ITEMS

#### # 6 Consent Agenda

- (a) June 2021 Meeting Minutes
- (b) June 2021 Vouchers
- (c) 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) June Amendment

Ms. Thompson asked that the June minutes be considered separately.

***Mr. Ewers made a motion for approval of Consent Agenda items (b) and (c); Ms. Mumm seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

Ms. Thompson said that the June minutes did not include her name on the list of Board members attending and she was at the meeting. Staff will make that correction.

***Ms. Cragun made a motion to approve the June minutes as amended. Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion carried with all votes in favor.***

Vice Chair Schmidt asked for a motion to modify the agenda as Mayor Wick had not yet joined the meeting.

***Mr. Stone made a motion to proceed to Agenda Item 7. Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

### **# 7 Maintenance and Preservation Project Priorities**

Mr. Wallace recapped; in April the Board began working to establish a *Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities* which should be completed by October, at which time it will be turned over to member agencies and private sector interests as they begin to develop state and federal transportation agendas for the 2022 legislative session. An update to the *Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities* will be presented at the August Board meeting.

In June the Board discussed the possibility of a special state legislative session (where a transportation package might be considered) and instructed staff to coordinate with member agencies develop a list of potential preservation and maintenance projects for Board review and approval.

Mr. Wallace said in addition to the list of preservation and maintenance projects, staff has crafted a funding priority statement based prior statements approved by the Board in February. He said if the Board approves the statement today, it will be available to member agencies and private sector to prepared for discussions with legislators prior to the possible special session later this year.

He described and provided details about the three priority statements; he shared examples about needs in the region related to why these statements are important. A draft list of projects was presented that included the unfunded need amounts and whether the project was on the National Highway System, or a transit or bicycle project; he emphasized the list is not prioritized.

The group discussed and some questions/comments included:

- There is not a stand-alone pedestrian priority network; pedestrian projects fall under the multi-use facility.
- It might be helpful to include information about number of potential users of a project or levels of service. Mr. Wallace said staff may be unable to obtain this information for all projects, but will for as many as possible.
- In favor of this move away from project specific discussions for maintenance and preservation and instead focusing on driving more programmatic dollars to the region.

***Ms. Fukai made a motion to approve the Transportation Funding Priority Statement as presented. Mr. Ewers seconded. Motion carried with all votes in favor.***

Mr. Beggs joined the meeting at 1:30.

Vice Chair suggested that the agenda move to the Information & Discussion items beginning with Agenda Item 8 and continue until Mayor Wick is able to join the meeting, at which time the meeting move to consideration of Agenda Items 2 and 3.

***Ms. Cragun made a motion to approve the proposed agenda modification; Mr. Weathers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **INFORMATION & DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **# 8 Call for Preservation Projects**

Mr. Lien said this item will be brought before the Board next month for action. He summarized how funds were set aside by the Board from the 2018 SRTC Call for Projects to be used for preservation projects in 2022/2023 and the Board also approved a policy for SRTC to hold a biennial “preservation only” call for projects. In February the Board approved four principles of investment for the 2021 Call for Projects:

1. Limiting the call to preservation projects only
2. Cap awards at \$1M per project
3. Cap awards at \$2M per agency
4. Adhere to funding requirements for STBG funding awards to include rural and small cities

He said SRTC received 18 project applications and scoring was done by a group made up of Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) members, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members and SRTC staff. 11 of the projects are located in the urbanized area, one in small city urban and the rest in the rural category. Mr. Lien reviewed the preliminary results, requested dollar amounts, and the funding available by category.

He asked the group to consider (1) whether to fully fund fewer projects as opposed to partially funding a larger number of projects and (2) how to apply the remaining flex funding. He noted that the TAC discussed this topic last month and they expressed interest in exploring what could be done for the small Palouse towns to help their applications score higher in future calls for projects.

The group discussed:

- The pros and cons of fully funding fewer projects or partially funding more projects
- Urban Small category and definition of FHWA urbanized areas
- Difficulties for small towns to get access to funding because of lack of resources to submit application
- Possibility of re-evaluating small town project scoring, which would be a policy decision for a future call for projects. The Board could decide to create a new category.
- Population isn't the only effective metric for evaluating applications; perhaps traffic volume could be a metric.

Chair Wick joined the meeting and Vice Chair Schmidt turned the meeting over to him.

## **# 2 Executive Session to Evaluate the Qualifications of Applicants for Public Employment under RCW 42.30.110(g)**

Chair Wick asked for a motion for Board members to move into Executive Session for the purpose of Evaluating the Qualifications of applications for public employment, under RCW 42.30.110(g). He noted the session would last approximately 20 minutes.

***Mr. Schmidt made a motion to move into Executive Session as described; Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.***

- At 1:55 the Executive Session began, but due to technical difficulties in getting Board members into the virtual breakout room, the initial 20-minute timeframe was extended by a few minutes.
- Mr. Freeman was attending the meeting by telephone and unable to join the breakout room for the Executive Session. He stated that he had not been part of any prior Executive Director recruitment discussions and recused himself from the Executive Session. He left the meeting at 1:58.
- At 2:15 it was announced the Executive Session would last another 5 minutes.
- At 2:25 the Executive Session ended, and the regular session commenced.

## **# 3 Selection of SRTC Executive Director**

Chair Wick recapped the Executive Director search/recruitment process and thanked the recruitment committee members for a very thorough and thoughtful process.

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the hiring of Lois Bollenback as the new SRTC Executive Director under the terms recommended by the committee. Mr. Schmidt seconded the motion. The vote passed with all votes in favor.***

Mr. Schmidt made a motion to add "Agenda Item 3(a) Establishment of new SRTC Deputy Executive Director Position".

***Ms. Cragun made a motion to add Item 3(a) to the meeting agenda. Ms. Meyer seconded. All votes were in favor.***

### **# 3(a) Establishment of SRTC Deputy Executive Director Position**

***Mr. Schmidt made a motion for the establishment a new SRTC Deputy Executive Director position with a salary range of \$90,000 to \$120,000. Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **# 9 Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update**

Ms. Jones provided an overview of the PPP and the development of the update thus far. She explained that a group of TAC members and staff have held five in-depth workshops to evaluate the following plan components:

- Develop Goals and Objectives
- Stakeholder Engagement Matrix
- Equitable Public Participation Techniques & Methods
- Evaluation Matrix
- Administrative & Other

She highlighted activities and outcomes from the workshop on equitable outreach and explained the three plan goals developed by the group.

Ms. Fukai commented that meaningful engagement with hard-to-reach communities can be time and resource intensive and just to make note of that for budget planning purposes. She said sometimes communities can be distrustful of governmental agencies and there can be a gap in understanding about how transportation issues matter. An ongoing educational focus and stressing the importance of community opinion is an ongoing process. Ms. Jones spoke about making community connections.

## **# 10 2022 Member Dues**

Mr. Griffin reviewed the dues structure as outlined in the 2021 Interlocal Agreement. He said there was a three-year plan to increase dues by 15% per year, but this was suspended for 2021 dues in light of economic impacts of the pandemic. He provided a history of prior dues discussions and increases. A proposed 15% increase for the 2022 dues will be brought before the Board next month.

## **# 11 Return to In-Person Meetings**

Mr. Griffin explained that as the public health restrictions continue to lift, SRTC would like to begin holding Board and committee meetings in a hybrid in-person/virtual format. However, as equipment purchases and logistics are still under development, it may be prudent to plan on the August Board meeting to be on the virtual platform. He noted that as the number of Board members has recently expanded due to the revised Interlocal Agreement, the Riverside Room may be too small to comfortably accommodate all Board members, staff, and the public. He asked for Board their suggestions or ideas about alternative venues.

Mr. Gribner reported that WSDOT is currently making substantial investments in upgrading conference rooms to allow for hybrid meetings, but not sure when the changes will be complete. Mr. Weathers suggested that Airway Heights Recreation Center has a room that is large enough but doesn't know what technology is available. Mr. Schmidt said that staff and the new Executive Director can continue exploring options. Chair Wick stated that holding a virtual August Board meeting was acceptable.

## **# 12 2021 Quarterly Budget Update: Q2 (Apr-May-Jun)**

Mr. Griffin provided an overview of the 2021 budget and revenues/expenditures to date. There were no questions or discussion.

## **# 13 Board Member Comments**

Ms. Meyer commended Chair Wick, Mr. Wallace, and the other members of the recruitment committee for their hard work which has come to a very successful end. She said SGR was an excellent recruitment firm and was very impressed with them. She noted that Mr. Griffin provided good support throughout the process and she can't say enough about the quality of the search and the outcome.

## **# 14 Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:59 pm.

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Julie Meyers-Lehman, Clerk of the Board