

**MEETING MINUTES  
SPOT**



**SELKIRK PEND OREILLE TRANSIT  
January 20, 2022**

**NANCY LEWIS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 11:03 A.M.**

**PRESENT:** Clif Warren, Colleen Culwell, David Sims, Gary Kunzeman, Nancy Lewis, Ron Smith, Shannon Pittman, Zale Palmer

**Absent:** Wally Cossairt

**Public Comment Period:** No public present.

**MINUTES:** Approve minutes of the December 16, 2021 regular meeting as presented.

**Motion to Approve:** Gary Kunzeman/ Zale Palmer. All in favor. Approved

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

- A. Accept Financial Reports for December. The Finance Committee reviewed the financial reports. Expenses are under budget. Following up on unpaid match pledges from Ponderay & Schweitzer Mountain Condo Assn.

**Motion to approve financial reports:** Nancy Lewis/ Gary Kunzeman. All in favor. Approved

- B. Approve payment of prepaid bills and outstanding bills. Colleen to look into cashing out points on credit card before they expire.

**Motion to approve payment of prepaid bills and outstanding bills:** Ron Smith/ Zale Palmer. All in favor. Approved

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Ridership:** David Sims reported that ridership for December was much improved. Paratransit is strong, Boundary County is back to 2019 levels, Mountain Route exceeded 2019 ridership, fixed route is still weak when compared to prior years, but more than the last few months.

**Operations:** December was a very eventful month. ITD's building flooded due to a broken pipe and there is a chance of asbestos contamination. They won't be allowed back into their building for around 6 months. Employees are working remotely. ICRMP reviewed the new employee manual and had only a few comments. We need to give employees 30 days advance notice of the changes, so will make it effective April 1, 2022 to coincide with start of calendar quarter and allow time for printing/distribution to employees. The 2 new grants for planning & technology are ready to start. The planning grant deals with analyzing the possibility of new routes and micro transit. The technology grant is to replace the existing tablets in the buses. David and Shannon are gathering information to issue requests for quotes. Our current tracking system provider, DoubleMap, was bought out. They will not be supporting our existing system much longer. The contract expires February 22<sup>nd</sup> and they will renew on a month-to-month basis for a while. NEPA studies are needed for the new bus shelter locations. There have been numerous issues with drivers including illness, medical issues, personal transportation issues, damages to buses, and quitting. Mountain

Route buses have required numerous repairs for hitting barriers, broken windshields, radiator repair due to hose cut by fan. The bus loads are heavy and road conditions are bad. Bus service had to be suspended last week on the heavy snow day – rain on ice and no traction. Since the last board meeting, 39 driver shifts had to be filled for one reason or another, even using previous employees to fill in. We have not received any responses to an ad placed on Indeed for the past couple of weeks. Clif requested that David submit for reimbursement funds he paid to house a driver at a local hotel that could not make his shifts due to personal transportation issues.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Boundary County Service Development Committee:** The deliveries for the Boundary County Food Bank are ending as they are interfering with our regular operations.
- B. Finance Committee Update:** Reported above under Financial Reports heading.

#### **ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- A. Approve changing new route bus passenger capacity.** Starting February 7, 2022, the rules to obtain a CDL license will be changing. In the past only a written test and local skills test were required. Our drivers also require a passenger endorsement. The new rule for any passenger endorsement will require attending a formal training program, lasting two weeks or more and costing \$2,000-\$3,000. RTAP has increased their training limit per employee to help cover these costs. One option for SPOT is to reduce the bus size to under 16 passengers as CDL's are only required when the original design of the bus allows for 16 or more passengers. Removing seats to reduce capacity is not an option as it is based on the original design. We currently have two larger route buses on order, for which a change order can be issued to reduce the chassis size. We would also need to clear this with ITD as the grant was issued for the larger buses. Another option is to become a recognized trainer so SPOT can train their own drivers at a significant savings.  
**Motion to submit a change order to reduce the size of the two route buses on order. Nancy Lewis/ Gary Kunzeman. Approved.**
- B. Consider driver wages.** David has been running driver ads with no response. There are a lot of openings on Indeed. Would like to raise wages in order to keep current drivers and possibly entice new ones. Wage increase would only be for route drivers. Mountain drivers would stay the same for this season. Would need to establish different wage scales for drivers with CDL's and those without. David presented a wage comparison worksheet proposing a \$2/hour wage increase for route drivers and the mechanic. David feels that this increase is well within our current budget.  
**Motion to increase driver and mechanic wages by \$2/hour effective February 1, 2022. Zale Palmer/ Ron Smith. Approved.**
- C. Consider holiday pay exception.** David is requesting a one-time exception to our current holiday pay policy to allow for time and a half pay for the drivers that worked Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Would equal approximately 19 hours or around \$400. Drivers that worked these holidays were expecting to receive the extra holiday pay, even though the current employee manual states that holiday pay is paid when the holidays are recognized, which might not be on the actual holiday. The new employee manual removes this confusion as holidays will be recognized on the actual day going forward.  
**Motion to pay a one-time exception to the holiday pay policy for Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Zale Palmer/ Gary Kunzeman. Approved.**
- D. Consider mountain route operations.** Issues with the Mountain Route were discussed in the operations section above. Having the Mountain Route is a great challenge due to road conditions, Schweitzer expectations, passenger expectations, mask policy, higher maintenance buses, no full-time mechanic or shop building to work on the buses. David feels we should consider approaching Schweitzer again with the option to contract out the Mountain Route to them. Nancy requested that this issue be tabled for further consideration.  
**No action taken.**

**COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBERS:** Nancy requested that any questions and/or comments regarding the Mountain Route be submitted to David Sims before the next meeting.

**Meeting adjourned 12:13 p.m.**