

KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2021

Board of Commissioners Present:

Daug, Leslie, Council Member, City of Bremerton
Deets, Joe, Council Member, City of Bainbridge Island - *absent*
Erickson, Becky, Mayor, City of Poulsbo
Fuller, Mark, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*
Garrido, Charlotte, Kitsap County Commissioner
Gelder, Robert, Kitsap County Commissioner – *absent*
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard, **Chair**
Schneider, Leslie, Mayor, City of Bainbridge Island
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton
Wolfe, Edward, Kitsap County Commissioner, **Vice Chair**

Staff Present:

Vanessa Audett, Human Resources Director; Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing Director; Jill Boltz, Clerk of the Board; John Clauson, Executive Director; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle & Facilities Maintenance Director; Steffani Lillie, Service & Capital Development Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Ray Scott, Marine Services Director; Jeff Vinecourt, Acting Operations Director.

Also Present: David Weibel, Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Putansuu called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 8:32AM.

Clerk of the Board Boltz shared the following opening statement: this meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners is being held virtually in accordance with Governor Inslee's Proclamation No. 20-28 and subsequent extensions relating to the suspension of certain provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Staff has provided numerous resources for the public to listen, view and provide comment for this meeting. This meeting will be recorded and available upon request. This information was provided to the public through regular distribution of the agenda, posting on Kitsap Transit's website and Rider Alert.

The public was invited to submit written comments to be included in the record by 4:00PM on Monday, May 17, 2021 to myself, Jill Boltz, Clerk of the Board. No comments were received. The Board will also take Public Comments during the designated time on the agenda. When called upon, please state your name for the record and you will have three (3) minutes to address the Board.

2. AGENDA REVIEW

Commissioner Putaansuu asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

None.

4. PRESENTATION

a. Fleet and Facilities

John explained this presentation on Kitsap Transit's (KT's) Fleet and Facilities and the information provided at the May 4th meeting on Ridership and Services are in preparation for the June 1st presentation regarding KT's Financial Position and Capital Needs/Mid-Year Budget Adjustment.

Current Fleet Status

Executive Director Clauson explained that a large portion of the fleet was purchased at the same time and now are all coming due for replacement at the same time. A replacement schedule has been established to maintain affordability and avoid the need for a large number of replacements at the same time in the future.

Clauson provided the following information

- Current Routed and ACCESS fleet and replacement schedule and spoke to the changes to ridership due to COVID-19 as it relates to future fleet needs.
- Worker/Driver. The current fleet was purchased used and refurbished. These coaches are now reaching the vintage where it is challenging to get parts. The manufacturer (MCI) has been sold and the new owner is not interested in maintaining parts for older coaches. The Vehicle Maintenance Department has been researching the possibility of rebuilding coaches in-house for approximately \$200k or less. One coach will be refurbished to determine cost, including time, and put into service for rider feedback. Clauson noted the replacement fleet could include electric buses, diesel and/or refurbished Routed coaches.
- Vanpool. The fleet includes a variety of sizes. The plan, pre-COVID, was to move away from larger vans to smaller ones. With the decline in vanpool program participation, staff will be requesting to surplus more vans and there will be a greater need to look at the future of the vanpool fleet. The Washington State Legislature has reduced the number of riders required to be considered a rideshare; however, the Federal regulations have not changed. At the last Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Transportation Policy meeting, the results of a regional survey were provided sharing how respondents

plan to commute after the pandemic. The survey shows a significant decline in vanpool and carpool options.

Commissioner Wolfe spoke to the replacement of the Gillig coaches and whether there have been any changes to the buses. Clauson explained most of the changes are in propulsion system, not the coach design itself. There is a big effort for battery electric and fuel cell buses are now coming on the market. Wolfe asked if there would be more information on what to expect with the electric buses. Clauson stated he would be sharing where KT is with electric buses.

Commissioner Erickson asked if KT has adequate electric infrastructure to support electric coaches in the Worker/Driver program and any associated costs with the changes. Clauson stated staff has begun to looking at this option, but we do not currently have the infrastructure to support a fleet that size. There are electrical upgrade changes coming at Charleston Base.

Commissioner Erickson expressed the need to get on board with electrical infrastructure as soon as possible.

Commissioner Daug's questioned whether associated costs and funding sources for fleet replacements would be discussed. Clauson stated the finance and funding will be discussed at next meeting.

Commissioner Schneider noted the rebuilding of a bus costs a fourth or less of what it would for a new bus. Schneider asked whether there is information on upgrading to hydrogen or electric and are there choices to be made in preparation before the next bus purchases. Clauson stated he is not certain KT is set up to refurbish in-house nor is he certain KT could do electric; however there are companies that could. Schneider asked about the planning process for electric or hydrogen and the supporting infrastructure. Clauson stated he will touch on battery-electric and hydrogen fuel cell a little later in the presentation.

- Marine Services. Clauson shared the variety of vessels in the fleet. The Admiral Pete will need to be replaced with a boat similar to the Waterman but a battery-electric rather than a hybrid.

Alternative Fuels

Clauson shared there is funding available through a Low or No Emission (LoNo) grant to purchase alternative fuel vehicles.

- Battery-Electric. Proterra was the first electric coach KT purchased; the Gillig is the most recent coach purchased and is preferred by operators over the Proterra coach. The challenge in purchasing electric coaches is the lack of [battery] storage capacity on the bus to operate a full day. There are two ways to charge: overnight (slow charge) or charging in-route when it reaches a transit center. There are two types of in-route charging: overhead

or inductive. In-route charging requires fewer batteries on the bus, making it lighter. Link Transit in Wenatchee developed a video explaining how it works and the experience. This is a direction KT can move toward, installing the inductive chargers at the Bremerton Transportation Center (BTC), Wheaton Way Transit Center (WWTC), Silverdale Transit Center (STC), and North Viking Transit Center (NVTC).

Commissioner Wolfe asked when KT's fleets would be all-electric. Clauson stated it will depend on the financial discussion at our next Board meeting. If we follow the current replacement schedule with no additional funding, it could be a minimum of five years to get the majority of the fleet switched over. The diesel buses just recently purchased will be in our fleet for approximately fifteen years.

- Hydrogen fuel cell. The interest in hydrogen fuel cells is gaining quickly. The challenge to hydrogen fuel relates to the source with the need to either have it delivered or generated on-site. There are three manufacturing sites in the United States. The closest delivery company is in Sacramento, CA. To deliver a truckload of hydrogen, travelling 1,500 miles is not out of the norm; however, transporting hydrogen comes with its own set of regulations. Trucks transporting hydrogen cannot use snow chains, making winter delivery over the mountains a challenge. There has been discussion on building hydrogen generation sites, making on-site generation an option, but it's expensive. The estimated cost would be \$7 million for a transit system the size of KT. Electric infrastructure would also be necessary to generate the hydrogen. Staff has created a proposed conceptual site plan for hydrogen production at the West Bremerton Transit Center (WBTC).

Commissioner Erickson stated there is huge electrical demand for hydrolyzers with electrical demands with either option. Erickson questioned the advantage of hydrogen over electric. Clauson explained a fuel cell bus has added range on a single charge. Erickson noted the need to address insurance and safety issues. Clauson agreed more homework is necessary before moving forward, including understanding the economic side of hydrogen use.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested the need for liability insurance not only for KT but for the City of Bremerton as well as the most likely location for on-site generation. Wheeler suggested looking at the maintenance costs for this type of operation.

Base Siting Study

The Study looked at needs and alternatives, zeroing in on two locations: Gateway Center and National Avenue. Clauson provided an overview of the project, property acquisition (commercial and residential) and cost for both site alternatives.

Commissioner Daug's asked when a decision would need to be made. Clauson explained it would take much more conversation and is not sure Kitsap Transit will be in a [financial] position to consider this for some time.

Park & Rides

Clauson shared a snapshot of the park & rides with average occupancy pre-COVID and current data. There are four park & ride sites on the drawing board: Sidney/Sedgwick, Hwy 3/Kitsap Mall Boulevard, Hwy 104/Bond Road, and Hwy 305/Noll Road.

Transit Centers

- Bainbridge Island – crowded, especially during peak hours.
- Poulsbo – moving forward with grant request for new heavy duty maintenance facility.
- Silverdale – moving forward with hope to be out to bid by end of year for construction.
- West Bremerton (old bowling alley) – possible location of hydrogen fuel station development.
- Wheaton Way – transit center and park & ride.
- Port Orchard – one lane next to dock supporting the Port Orchard operation.

Docks

- Seattle. Work continues to find a location for a long term regional passenger-only facility in Seattle. The Bremerton route has been moved to the Argosy pier, but there is still additional room needed for docking. The alternatives analysis for the Seattle Fast-Ferry Terminal Siting Study is currently under development.
- Harper Pier. Initial discussions with the Port of Bremerton have occurred to purchase the dock and add infrastructure to tie up the Southworth fast ferries, which would be closer saving trips to Bremerton through Rich Passage.
- Shipyard. Would include a travel lift between two finger piers for vessel repairs, not a dry dock.

June 1st Board Meeting will include:

- COVID funding
- Sales tax
- Reserve levels
- Transit funding vs. ferry funding
- Mid-year Capital budget adjustment

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No additional public comments were received.

6. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Schneider stated she is looking forward to going to EXPO, but is concerned about movement from California to Florida and whether political pressures for the voting rights issues would affect the conference.

Commissioner Wheeler remarked on the decommissioning ceremony of the USS Bremerton at 1:00pm today.

7. ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 10:03 AM.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioner of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 1st day of June, 2021.



Robert Putaansuu, Chairperson



Jill A. Boltz, MMC
Clerk of the Board