

KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF December 05, 2023

Board of Commissioners Present:

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*

Erickson, Becky, Mayor, City of Poulsbo, **Chair**

Garrido, Charlotte, Kitsap County Commissioner

Mockler, Anna, Councilmember, City of Bremerton

Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard

Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner

Schneider, Leslie, Councilmember, City of Bainbridge Island

Stern, Ed, Councilmember, City of Poulsbo

Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner

Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton, **Vice Chair**

Staff Present:

Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director; Jackie Bidon, Interim Clerk of the Board, Public Records Officer; John Clauson, Executive Director; Cyndi Griffey, Worker/Driver Supervisor; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Director; Kathryn Jordan, Routed Operations Manager; Steffani Lillie, Service and Capital Development Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Raymond Scott, Marine Services Director; Paul Shinnors, Finance Director; Jeff Vinecourt, ACCESS Manager

Also Present: David Weibel, Legal Counsel and Kelly Lesoing, KPFF Project Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Erickson called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 8:30 AM.

2. AGENDA REVIEW

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Chairperson Erickson congratulated all the newly elected officials. She wished everyone happy holidays and reminded the Board this is the last meeting in 2023.

4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Executive Director Clauson shared that the Community Advisory Committee meeting was cancelled, so there was nothing to report.

5. CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS

- a. Warrants for October 2023
- b. Minutes of November 7, 2023, Board Meeting
- c. Resolution 23-75, Community Advisory Committee Member Renewal

Commissioner Rolfes moved and Commissioner Walters seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. FULL DISCUSSION /ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Presentation, Update on Ferry Maintenance Facility Siting Study

Executive Director Clauson shared that this process is required by Kitsap Transit to make sure that all potential sites are explored for property acquisition and development of the Marine Maintenance Facility. Clauson introduced Kitsap Transit Land Use Planner, Edward Coviello.

Edward Coviello introduced Kelly Lesoing of KPFF Consulting Engineers.

KPFF Project Manager Kelly Lesoing updated the Kitsap Transit Board on the progress of the Ferry Maintenance Facility Siting Study. She briefed the Board on the project background and preliminary site screening, evaluation of feasible sites, site alternatives and next steps.

KPFF progress to date:

- Established preliminary facility programmatic and operational needs.
- Identified site screening and evaluation criteria.
- Identified preliminary list of sites.
- May 2023, updated Kitsap Transit Board and began outreach to property owners.
- Site screening and evaluation identified three alternatives for further review.

Mayor Putaansuu asked if the property across the street from the Port of Bremerton was included in the analysis of the railway marina for vessel laydown.

Lesoing stated yes, but that the property was screened out because of the zoning on that side of the street. She added that she would verify that was the reason for screening out.

Mayor Putaansuu asked if the Port Orchard Railway Marina/Bar and Grill site is the site of the former Cheers site. He stated that it is currently under active construction for a three-story building; the permits have been obtained and are waiting on power pole relocation. He added that, at this point, the site would be extremely expensive to acquire.

Lesoing stated yes. She shared that the goal of the alternative site analysis was to find three alternative sites that would support a marine maintenance facility and that was one of the three.

Mayor Erickson asked if the Navy had been contacted for use or a lease of their facilities as a site for the maintenance facility.

Executive Director Clauson stated that, while not specifically regarding this need, Kitsap Transit is in communication with the Navy concerning other issues. He added that the Navy is looking for additional ground with the improvements planned for Naval Submarine Base Bangor and PSNS. Clauson shared that Kitsap Transit would ask the Navy about potential lease properties but we don't feel it's a viable option.

Mayor Erickson stated that the Keyport location is, in her mind, an underutilized waterfront with possible lease options for Kitsap Transit.

Lesoing concluded with KPFF's next steps:

- Update the Kitsap Transit Board and public with outreach/survey in early 2024.
- Alternatives evaluation: conceptual site layouts, environmental review, and routine operation maintenance (ROM) costs.
- Findings presentation, Kitsap Transit Board selects proposed preferred alternative site.
- Final report.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that she is not familiar with the marine industry and would like graphics or photos of other marine facilities around the country. She shared that, for public discussion, it would be good to have photos to visualize what the marine maintenance yard would look like.

Executive Director Clauson noted that we currently take our smaller vessels to Port Townsend. He explained a travel lift is used to remove the vessel from the water. It is a four-post lift with two straps that lifts the vessel out of the water and places it on blocks in the maintenance yard. He confirmed there are photos available.

Commissioner Rolfes asked if the Board has addressed the ongoing costs of a marine maintenance yard, or if that would be part two of the discussion.

Executive Director Clauson confirmed that would be part two of the discussion. He shared that the cost of acquisition and development would be estimated and developed with a preliminary design. The ongoing costs would include staff and maintenance of the facility. Kitsap Transit already has the staff; maintenance of the facility would then be figured into the cost.

Mayor Erickson asked if there is an opportunity to secure a long-term lease of an existing marine maintenance yard. She also asked if the maintenance yard needs to be in Kitsap County.

Executive Director Clauson shared that Kitsap Transit has looked at leasing and working with other facilities when maintenance needs to be done on a vessel. The availability of facilities that are willing to work with Kitsap Transit in this capacity is limited. He added that there are two facilities available for a non-emergency situation, but this is at the facility's availability not at Kitsap Transit's need. There is no option for emergency situations. Clauson stated that this is what is driving Kitsap Transit to have its own marine maintenance facility. The ability to maintain its vessels, work on

vessels in emergency situations, and have Kitsap Transit marine staff be able to repair issues that may arise during maintenance, thus saving a considerable amount of money.

Mayor Erickson stated that there is a lot of interest in small ferries throughout the Puget Sound area, King County Marine, the City of Des Moines, and here in Kitsap County. She shared that if there was an acceptable site in Kitsap County with no challenges, she would be all for it. Mayor Erickson requested that Kitsap Transit pursue some sort of partnership with King County Marine and the City of Des Moines for a joint marine maintenance facility or at least a long-term leased facility.

Executive Director Clauson shared that each operation has the same problem as Kitsap Transit, in that the availability of marine maintenance facilities is limited. He stated that the idea of sharing Kitsap Transit's facility with King County and the City of Des Moines has been plan. Clauson added that a benefit of having the maintenance facility in Kitsap County would be efficient use of staff time with less travel out of the area. Staff are currently traveling to remote locations to inspect and supervise the work being done, adding travel costs and time to work projects.

Mayor Putaasuu stated that it is important to recognize that this is a feasibility study and site selection process. He added whatever site is selected, there is still a public process that would need to be done and would ultimately come back before the Board. The project would need to make good business sense and should be considered a long-term investment. He stated that there is a business opportunity in sharing the expense with King County and others.

Councilmember Schneider asked what impact there is to the existing uses on and around the Kitsap property and the combined properties and would it be an integrated use or displace use.

Executive Director Clauson stated it would displace use. The residence at the location is interested in selling and has contacted Kitsap Transit, Suldan's Boat Works is also ready to go on the market and sell. Clauson shared that Kitsap Marine is the only property that has not contacted Kitsap Transit.

Commissioner Rolfes asked if there has been any discussion about making this an enterprise fund where Kitsap Transit could service ferries from other agencies.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit could make the maintenance facility available to other public agencies but would need to be sensitive to the fact that Kitsap Transit is a public agency. As a public agency, we cannot compete with private enterprises and would need to obtain federal funding. Federal funding has guidelines and obligations that Kitsap Transit must meet, but we could make the facility available to another public agency.

Commissioner Rolfes asked if the problem is that there are no private facilities available and that is why Kitsap Transit is exploring this.

Executive Director Clauson shared that there are dry docks and facilities, but Kitsap Transit must

wait its turn to use. There are facilities that could respond to other private use, but the demand is high. The Port of Port Townsend has a travel lift for smaller vessels; this is an opportunity for the smaller private vessels to be worked on. He added that dry docks are the only facilities for the larger vessels to be worked on.

Councilmember Mockler asked why Bainbridge Island was excluded from the site study?

Kelly Lesoing shared that KPFF eliminated the area because of the lack of ease and reliability of access for maintenance staff to reach the facility. KPFF found it would be challenging to reach the facility with the constrained access to the island by a bridge that is subject to traffic.

Councilmember Mockler asked what the process of elimination for the Annapolis, Southworth and Kingston sites were.

Kelly Lesoing stated that the criteria for elimination had been site zoning, shoreline designation, similar existing uses such as industrial that would give context for a maintenance facility, and size of the sites.

Councilmember Mockler asked if the ridership at Kingston and Southworth routes support the need for the larger vessels. She added that this seems to be the driving force behind the acquisition of a reliable, large vessel maintenance facility.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the size of the vessel is not determined by ridership. He shared that, in the case of Southworth, Kitsap Transit does not have a dock and the vessel used on that route was designed to pull into the car slip seamlessly. The Kingston vessel was a backup vessel for the Southworth route.

Councilmember Mockler asked if a vessel docks at Kingston and Southworth, does it need to be a larger vessel.

Executive Director Clauson stated yes, at Southworth.

Mockler asked if ridership is supporting the continued operation of that route.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the route could be supported using a smaller vessel. However, a smaller vessel would not be able to pull into the car slip at the locations and Kitsap Transit does not have any other facility in the Southworth area to bring a vessel into.

Councilmember Mockler asked if Kitsap Transit is duplicating what Washington State Ferries is doing.

Clauson replied no; Kitsap Transit developed a vessel that would take advantage of Washington State Ferries docks because Kitsap Transit doesn't have a dock.

Mockler stated that the Washington State Ferry operation from Southworth is not fulfilling the demand for passage.

Executive Director Clauson shared that it is a different route. Washington State Ferry in Southworth goes to Vashon and West Seattle, whereas Kitsap Transit's route is Southworth to Downtown Seattle.

Councilmember Mockler asked if Kitsap Transit needs a maintenance and repair facility for the 330-passenger vehicles.

Executive Director Clauson shared that Kitsap Transit needs a maintenance facility that will accommodate the 350-passenger vessels as well as the smaller vessels.

Mockler asked what the relation is between the entire fleet versus the fleet in use and is there redundancy.

Executive Director Clauson stated that there is redundancy in the sense that some of the vessels operating the Kingston and Southworth routes are interchangeable. He shared that if the primary vessel needs repair or maintenance, Kitsap Transit has a spare to use while the other vessel is being worked on. Clauson added that there is redundancy in the size of the three vessels that run from Bremerton, they are of a specific class because of the wake requirements through Rich Passage. He stated that the remainder of the fleet vessels between Port Orchard and Bremerton have similar capacity and similar speeds.

Mayor Wheeler suggested that the Board may need a presentation on what vessel maintenance looks like, scheduling maintenance, dry docks, and the importance of a planned maintenance schedule.

b. Resolution 23-76, *ACCESS* Bus Procurement

Executive Director Clauson shared that this resolution is requesting to purchase ten new, 22-foot *ACCESS* buses to replace ten older *ACCESS* buses that have met their useful life.

Discussion:

Councilmember Stern asked what the process is on retiring buses and how vehicle surplus and revenue are realized.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the retiring buses are placed in the competitive bid process through an auction firm and revenue from the sale is returned to Kitsap Transit's general fund. He shared that, with the adoption of the Procurement Policy, Kitsap Transit has access to two agencies that may have an interest in the retired buses.

Councilmember Schneider asked how Kitsap Transit sees going net zero or electric in the future and how many years will the buses be in service.

Executive Director Clauson shared that the manufacturer is just now starting to come out with electric vehicles of this size. He added that there is one company coming out with these vehicles, but the range is not where Kitsap Transit needs it to be for the services. Clauson stated that they anticipate more becoming available, but at this point the only option for a cleaner running vehicle is the Ultra Low NOx propane. He shared that these buses do not have the life span as heavy-duty coaches and requested input from Vehicle and Maintenance Director, Dennis Griffey.

Vehicle and Maintenance Director Dennis Griffey stated that the life of the Ultra Low NOx propane vehicles is five to seven years.

Commissioner Walters asked if the new buses would match up to the training simulator that Kitsap Transit recently purchased?

Executive Director Clauson shared that the cab of the vehicle will be more modernized, but the maneuverability will be the same.

Councilmember Mockler asked if there is any difference between the new buses and the retiring buses.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the vehicles are essentially identical. The vehicles are used in different capacities for varying needs and fit Kitsap Transit's program needs.

Mayor Wheeler moved and Councilmember Stern seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-76, approving staff to purchase ten (10) propane Ultra Low NOx ACCESS buses from Model 1 of Mukilteo, Washington in the combined amount of two million one hundred ten thousand dollars (\$2,110,000.00) plus applicable sales tax.

Motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution 23-77, ACCESS Small Bus Procurement

Executive Director Clauson shared that these buses are smaller vehicles and will be able to drive down long narrow driveways and remote locations that are challenging for the larger buses. He added that this size bus is not available in propane.

Discussion: None.

Commissioner Walters moved and Mayor Wheeler seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-77, approving staff to purchase nine (9) twenty-foot (20-foot) mini-ACCESS buses from Model 1 of Mukilteo, Washington in the combined amount of one million one hundred seventy-nine thousand dollars (\$1,179,000.00).

Motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution 23-78, Supervisor Vehicle Procurements

Executive Director Clauson shared that this resolution is requesting permission to purchase five all-wheel drive sport utility vehicles to be used by the Routed and *ACCESS* supervisors. He stated that the supervisors are assisting the operators with their day-to-day job duties and having all-wheel drive will aid the supervisors in inclement weather, have room to store needed tools, and get to locations timely.

Discussion:

Councilmember Mockler referred to the Legislative agenda item supporting the move to zero emissions. She stated that purchasing SUVs does not support the Legislative priority. Mockler asked why an SUV is needed if operations are all on pavement. She stated that there are options other than an off-road sport utility vehicle that has higher emissions than an on-road vehicle.

Executive Director Clauson stated that there is a supply chain issue with no availability of electric vehicles in this size and type. He shared that an SUV works best for the supervisor duties in that they are carrying larger tools and supplies as well as transporting passengers. He added the smaller vehicles would not be able to accommodate tools and supplies necessary for the supervisors to carry out their duties. Clauson stated he would like to be able to purchase electric vehicles for the supervisors, but the market is not there yet.

Mayor Putaansuu shared that the City of Port Orchard has been waiting for their electric vehicles for two years and still do not have them. He stated that with the procurement processes public agencies operate in, the electric vehicles are not as deliverable as they are for the public.

Mayor Putaansuu moved and Councilmember Schneider seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-78, approving staff to purchase five all-wheel drive vehicles from Bud Clay Ford in the combined amount of one hundred eighty-eightthousand six hundred seventy-five dollars (\$188,675.00).

Motion passed with 7 yay; and Councilmember Mockler opposed.

e. Resolution 23-79, Ruby Creek Sewer Lift ILA (City of Port Orchard)

Executive Director Clauson shared that this resolution is asking permission to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Port Orchard for the design development of the Ruby Creek Park and Ride lift station. He stated that a requirement of the project is to add a sewer lift station to the property to support the restroom facilities and the 3 building pads. Clauson shared that the City of Port Orchard would design the lift station and obtain required permits with Kitsap Transit

reimbursing the City for their work. He added that, upon design completion, Kitsap Transit will send the lift station project out for bid on the construction portion.

Discussion:

Mayor Putaasuu stated that there will be a late comer's agreement in place for Kitsap Transit to recoup the cost of the sewer lift station. Mayor Putaasuu recused himself from the voting on this resolution.

Mayor Wheeler moved and Commissioner Walters seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-79, where Kitsap Transit will enter into an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Port Orchard to design the Sewer Lift Improvements for the Ruby Creek Park and Ride in the amount of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,00.00).

Motion passed, with Mayor Putaasuu abstaining.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS

Executive Director Clauson updated the Board on the following topics:

- Update on the Bus Simulator invitation. Commissioner Walters, and Councilmember Mockler joined in testing it out.
- Board Work Study meeting on December 19, 2023, is cancelled.
- Thank you and appreciation to Mayor Erickson for her time serving as the 2023 Chair on the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners.

8. STAFF RECOGNITION / PROGRESS REPORTS

- a. Recognizing Drivers of the November 2023 (8:45am)

ACCESS Manager, Jeff Vinecourt, announced the October 2023 ACCESS Driver of the Month, ACCESS Operator and Mentor Damien Sabado. He has been with ACCESS since March 2011 and is being awarded his seventh Driver of the Month Award. Damien was also Driver of the Year in 2013 and 2019. He has competed in multiple Rodeo competitions, placing first place a few years ago and third place in the 2023 competition. Damien's most memorable moment was getting his first Driver of the Month Award, and the appreciation Kitsap Transit gives to their employees. His words of wisdom to his fellow drivers: "Always be a team player and a helping hand".

W/D Supervisor, Cyndi Griffey, announced October 2023 Worker/Driver of the Month, Daniel Trout. He began driving for Kitsap Transit in 2015 and is the Lead driver on the Tracyton route. Daniel works in the Calibration Lab, Bldg. 661 and is a Navy Veteran. He was featured with some of his fellow veterans at PSNS on the front page of The Salute and Facebook for Veteran's Day. Daniel's words of wisdom are "Be patient, there is no need to rush. It's all about customer service".

Routed Operations Manager, Kathryn Jordan, announced the October 2023 Routed Operator of the Month, Martin Henkle. He has been with Kitsap Transit since April 2017. Martin has been awarded eleven Way to Go Awards, one Team Top Notch Award, and has been on the Honor Roll fifty-two times in his career at Kitsap Transit. He earned his six-year Safe Driving Award in August 2023.

- b. November 2023 Report from KT Lobbyist
- c. Draft Financial Reports through October 2023
- d. 3rd Quarter 2023 Financial Report – Transit

Councilmember Mockler referenced the System Report, noting that the Routed average passenger per hour is 11. She stated that if the average is 11 passengers per hour, why does Kitsap Transit need so many large buses.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the average passenger per hour is an average. The average number comes from the number of passengers on all trips, large and small, divided by the number of trips.

Councilmember Mockler asked if the information is available elsewhere.

Service and Capital Development Director, Steffani Lillie, responded yes and no. She stated that the ridership data is not precise because Kitsap Transit has not fully installed the new automatic passenger counting system. She shared that the ridership data is primarily dependent on the fare payments. Director Lillie explained that it is easy to determine ridership from a block of trips; for instance, if a bus does five trips, they can figure the number of passengers in that block of trips, but they are not able to determine the passengers per route. She stated that Kitsap Transit is working with the consultant to get the automatic passenger counting system installed on the buses.

Councilmember Mockler stated that the bus drivers used to have a clicker to indicate when a passenger boarded and a separate clicker when a passenger alighted. She asked if Kitsap Transit has ever used that technology.

Executive Director Clauson stated that Kitsap Transit had, in the past, used the counter system for passengers boarding but not alighting. He shared that the clicker system was eliminated when Kitsap Transit installed the automatic passenger counter system which is now failing and being replaced with the new system.

- e. 3rd Quarter 2023 Financial Report – Ferry
- f. System Performance Report
- g. Capital Work in Progress
- h. Fuel Costs Report through the end of November 2023

Progress reports stand as reported.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Letter from Claire Murphy from Kingston, WA.

11. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Rolfes referred to the letter from Claire Murphy. Rolfes proposed that the Board look at regional routes as well as more ferry routes from Kingston to Seattle. She asked if that would be part of a Board Work Study?

Executive Director Clauson stated that the Board Work Study could include this topic, and it would be valuable to look at the regional routes and Kingston to Seattle ferry routes.

Mayor Wheeler stated that he agrees with the analysis but would like to have a full system analysis that would give a full picture of the system.

Mayor Erickson asked if there is a date when the new automatic passenger counting system would be completely installed and working.

Director Lillie stated that the preliminary design is completed and we are entering into the final design stage. She shared that the anticipated beta fleet completion date would be in mid-2024, running for three to four months for system testing, with full fleet deployment in late 2024. She added that it won't be fully closed out with the NTD certifications until mid-2025.

Commissioner Rolfes shared that in a recent town-hall-style meeting; there was interest expressed about the Dial-a-Ride and *ACCESS* services. Rolfes asked if, at 60 years of age, there is an income screening or are all seniors eligible for *ACCESS*? She stated that the website appears to present that if a person does not have a disability, then age is an assumed factor.

Executive Director Clauson shared that *ACCESS* was designed to meet the ADA requirements of the Federal Government, which is a disability that would prohibit a person from being able to ride on a Fixed Route bus. He stated that age can be a factor in Kitsap Transit's fare system, and seniors are eligible for a reduced fare, but not a guarantee into the *ACCESS* program. Clauson added that there are specific designated areas open to the Demand Responsive service, similar to the *ACCESS* program: they are Kingston Ride, SK Ride and BI Ride. He stated that, in the future, there is the possibility of expanding the Dial-a-Ride service to other areas.

Councilmember Schneider expressed her thanks to Mayor Erickson for her leadership in the past year as Board Chair. She shared that on 11/13/2023, the Seattle Times published an article titled "More Washington Towns Opting to End Bus Fares". Schneider stated that it would be interesting to follow the experiments and see how they are going.

Commissioner Walters noted that there was no fast ferry on Thanksgiving. She asked if it would make sense to add fast ferry service Christmas and New Years Day, and if there is a demand for service.

Executive Director Clauson stated that, on a regular basis, Kitsap Transit doesn't normally schedule routes on those holidays and reduced service is scheduled for Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. He shared that, in the past, ridership went down to almost nothing after 5:00 PM, there isn't a demand for service on those days.

Mayor Wheeler requested that Executive Director Clauson communicate to the Board if the new addition of fast ferry service to Seattle in the feasibility study exceeds the scope. He shared that this is important enough to do and if Kitsap Transit can afford it, they need to make it happen.

Executive Director Clauson shared that he would reach out to get an estimate on any additional cost and communicate that to the Board.

Councilmember Stern requested a date for the grand opening of the Silverdale Transportation Center.

Executive Director Clauson stated that the project is fairly construction-dependent and we are tentatively looking at March 2024 for the grand opening. He shared that he has requested Service and Capital Development to narrow down a date as close to the completion date as possible so that opening preparations can be made.

12. ADJOURN: At 9:56 AM, Chairperson Erickson adjourned the regular meeting.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 2nd day of January 2024.

Attest:

DocuSigned by:
Jackie Bidon
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Jackie Bidon, Interim Clerk of the Board

DocuSigned by:
Greg Wheeler
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Greg Wheeler, Chairperson