

## **KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF November 04, 2025**

### **Board of Commissioners Present:**

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*  
Erickson, Becky, Mayor, City of Poulsbo – *Virtual, Exited 11:31 AM*  
Mockler, Anna, Councilmember, City of Bremerton  
Moriwaki, Clarence, Councilmember, City of Bainbridge Island  
Put aansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard, **Chair**  
Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner  
Root, Oran, Kitsap County Commissioner  
Rosapepe, Jay, Councilmember, City of Port Orchard  
Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner, **Vice Chair**  
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton

### **Staff Present:**

Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director; Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board, Public Records Officer; Michael Bozarth, Operations Director; John Clauson, Executive Director; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Director; Ellen Gustafson, Acting Marine Services Director; Steffani Lillie, Service and Capital Development Director; Mary Pauly, Human Resources Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Paul Shinnors, Finance Director

**Also Present:** David Weibel, Legal Counsel

Select the video Zoom address below or copy and paste into your browser address field to hear the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners discussion of a specific topic, or the complete meeting. Note the video time stamp beside the topic.

[https://kitsaptransit.zoom.us/rec/share/PAm\\_JHERvb-ifa9k94cKpMEKdz9R\\_NN1FovXXwoighGfpsVPKc65uxwcnTk5rHkG.PuYU1Qglu3iuXBGf](https://kitsaptransit.zoom.us/rec/share/PAm_JHERvb-ifa9k94cKpMEKdz9R_NN1FovXXwoighGfpsVPKc65uxwcnTk5rHkG.PuYU1Qglu3iuXBGf)  
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**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Put aansuu called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 10:30 AM.

### **2. AGENDA REVIEW**

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

### **3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS**

Mayor Put aansuu expressed his appreciation for the visit to Champaign/Urbana, Illinois to observe the electrolyzer process and for the valuable opportunity to strengthen connections with fellow Board members.

#### 4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

0:01:49, Acting Marine Services Director Ellen Gustafson provided a brief recap from the Community Advisory Committee meeting. Members discussed ongoing coordination challenges, which the Operations Department is actively addressing. Members requested additional flashers for use during dark weather periods. Orders have been placed, and distribution will occur upon arrival. Members reiterated their request for a second card reader to expedite boarding on the Southworth Fast Ferry, particularly in light of delayed departures caused by Washington State Ferries. The committee received updates on the 2026 Budget and World Cup. Members expressed enthusiasm for the planned electronic reader boards, noting they would be a valuable addition to Kitsap Transit. Ms. Gustafson provided details regarding current vessel shortages and their impact on service. The CAC agreed to combine the November and December meetings with the coordinated session to be held in early December.

#### 5. CONSENT / ACTION ITEM:

- a. Warrants for September 2025
  - Warrant numbers transit fund 174345 to 174645 of \$2,275,279
  - Warrant numbers ferry fund 609578 to 609683 of \$2,163,367
  - Payroll Account disbursements of \$3,763,488
  - ACH clearing account payments of \$51,710
  - Travel Account Disbursements of \$3,285
  - Purchasing Card Disbursements of \$66,630
- b. Minutes of October 7, 2025
- c. Minutes of October 21, 2025

0:03:55, **Commissioner Walters moved and Councilmember Moriwaki seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**

#### Discussion:

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

#### 6. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- a. 2026 Operating and Capital Budget Presentation
  - Resolution No. 25-73, Approve 2026 Operating and Capital Budget

0:08:43, Executive Director Clauson provided the Board with an overview of the 2026 Budget, noting that it includes planned personnel additions as well as adjustments to existing positions.

0:11:30, Finance Director Paul Shinnars presented the budget details, emphasizing the agency's reliance on sales tax revenue and the importance of monitoring financial trends. The Board was advised that current reserves remain strong, supported by COVID relief funds and recent sales tax

performance. However, future deficits may necessitate adjustments to the scope of planned capital projects. Mr. Shinnars provided separate updates on the transit and ferry funds, including a five-year financial outlook for each. He noted that significant changes at this stage of the budget process are uncommon prior to Board review and approval. The primary adjustment involves biennial funding under the Climate Commitment Act. Kitsap Transit's previous award totaled \$10.5 million, shared between transit and ferry operations. The upcoming biennial award will be \$8.8 million, also to be allocated between both divisions.

0:34:54, Commissioner Rolfes observed that bus fares account for approximately 5% of transit revenue, while ferry fares contribute about 25%. She noted that if Kitsap Transit is required to reduce expenditures, a short-term slowdown in capital spending may be necessary to preserve service levels.

0:36:04, Mr. Shinnars shared that this may be a discussion for a work study meeting.

0:37:58, Mayor Erickson sought clarification regarding the assumptions underlying the RAISE grant, asking whether Kitsap Transit anticipates receiving the federal funding. She also requested information on any assurances related to the WSDOT funds.

0:38:29, Service and Capital Development Director Steffani Lillie reported that Kitsap Transit's RAISE grant application is currently in final review with the new administration. She noted that adjustments may be required; however, the extent of any changes will not be known until official feedback is received from OST. She confirmed that WSDOT funding has been secured and a formal grant agreement is in place.

0:40:26, Executive Director Clauson reported that Kitsap Transit has received notice of an award for funding to construct a new ferry for the Kingston route, which is currently under review.

0:41:13, Councilmember Mockler inquired how many bus stop shelters could be constructed with an allocation of \$100,000.

0:41:56, Steffani Lillie reported that new Access Board guidelines require modifications to all newly installed bus stops throughout the county. She noted that many aspects of the guidelines remain unclear and staff are actively working through them. While the associated funding is limited, a scope of work will be developed for on-call services to address ADA improvements at individual bus stops. Ms. Lillie added that the total number of affected stops is not yet known, though current estimates suggest approximately ten to twelve may be impacted.

0:47:03, Paul Shinnars continued his briefing to the Board on the ferry fund portion of the proposed 2026 Budget. His presentation addressed staffing needs, upcoming projects, vessel maintenance, and plans for vessel replacement.

0:57:12, Commissioner Walters requested clarification on whether the Bremerton routes will be discontinued once the state supplement concludes following the World Cup.

0:57:29, Executive Director Clauson explained that the current budget anticipates service reductions once state funding is exhausted. He clarified that Kitsap Transit will maintain service between Bremerton and Seattle, with only the supplemental runs added to support the Washington State Ferries schedule being discontinued.

**Councilmember Moriwaki moved and Commissioner Rolfes seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-73, approving the 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Transit Fund and Ferry Fund, the structure and staffing chart, and the non-represented salary schedule for Kitsap Transit as presented in Exhibits A through D.**

**Discussion:**

0:59:36, Commissioner Rolfes expressed her support for Councilmember Mockler's remarks regarding the importance of safe and weather-protected bus stops. She emphasized her desire to prioritize this initiative in 2026 and noted that a budget amendment later in the year may be considered to advance the effort.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- b. Resolution No. 25-74, Approve Purchase of Fixed Route Buses

1:01:12, Executive Director Clauson introduced a resolution to purchase fixed route buses, emphasizing the importance of advancing operations and maintaining a modern, up-to-date fleet.

**Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Councilmember Moriwaki seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-74, authorizing staff to purchase up to four (4) heavy duty electric and seven (7) thirty-foot ultra clean diesel buses at the estimated cost of twelve million six hundred thousand dollars (\$12,600,000).**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- c. Resolution No. 25-75, Approve PSE Expenditures at Charleston Base

1:03:53, Executive Director Clauson explained that the resolution authorizes the installation of additional charging units at Charleston Base. He noted that Kitsap Transit will coordinate directly with Puget Sound Energy to secure the necessary transformers, cables, and related infrastructure to provide power to the site.

**Mayor Wheeler moved and Commissioner Root seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 25-75, authorizing the expenditure of funds in the amount of three hundred twenty thousand nine hundred fourteen dollars (\$320,914) for the necessary electrical infrastructure improvements at Kitsap Transit's Charleston Base.**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS**

*1:05:51*, Executive Director Clauson provided highlights from a recent trip to Champaign/Urbana at Mass Transit District (MTD) in Illinois, accompanied by Commissioner Root, Councilmember Moriwaki, Commissioner Walters, and Mayor Putaansuu. The delegation toured the MTD facility and was given a presentation on their comprehensive conversion to hydrogen fuel cell technology. The site features hydrogen-powered vehicles, on-site hydrogen production, and a solar array that generates surplus energy beyond what is required for hydrogen production.

*1:14:53*, Executive Director Clauson provided an update on the ORCA Smart Card system and the implementation of the open payment platform. He noted that a soft launch is planned for later this year, with full implementation anticipated by February 2026. The objective is to ensure the system is fully operational in advance of the World Cup.

*1:15:50*, Mayor Putaansuu reflected on the Illinois trip, noting his prior experience with other fueling facilities but emphasizing that this site represented a true "cradle-to-grave" operation. He expressed enthusiasm at witnessing the process in which electricity and water are used to produce hydrogen, and how, in turn, the buses reverse the process, converting hydrogen back into electricity to power the electric motor, with water as the only byproduct.

*1:16:41*, Commissioner Walters observed that the facility is located in a college town and expressed admiration for its ability to collaborate with the university, leveraging shared knowledge to advance the development of green energy.

*1:18:40*, Commissioner Root echoed the "cradle-to-grave" observation, emphasizing the impressive independence of the process which generates power, converts it, and applies it directly to the buses. He noted that the approach is both highly efficient and a responsible use of taxpayer funds.

**8. STAFF RECOGNITION / PROGRESS REPORTS**

- a. Recognizing Drivers of the Month for September 2025 (10:45am)

0:04:37, Thomas Gilbert, Routed Manager, recognized the Routed Driver of the Month for September 2025, Bryant Johnson.

0:06:47, Jeff Vinecourt, ACCESS Manager, recognized the ACCESS Driver of the Month for September 2025, Tim Stewart.

0:07:43, Cyndi Griffey, Worker/Driver Manager recognized the Worker/Driver of the Month for September 2025, Robert Vollmuth.

- b. November 2025 Report from KT Lobbyist
- c. Draft Financial Reports through September 2025
- d. Capital Work in Progress September 2025
- e. Fuel Costs Report through the end of November 2025
- f. 2025 Goals Progress 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

## 9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1:21:54, Heidi Fenton of Port Orchard spoke regarding the reopening of the Annapolis Dock, advocating for access beyond commute hours and ensuring availability to all taxpayers.

1:27:28, Steve Hutchins of Port Orchard requested transparency regarding the reasons the Annapolis Dock in Port Orchard remains closed to the general public.

## 10. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

1:27:39, Councilmember Mockler requested that bus stop shelters be included as an agenda item for the January meeting.

1:27:50, Mayor Putaansuu suggested that January may be too early to address the topic, noting that mid-year would be a more appropriate timeframe.

**11. ADJOURN:** At 11:58 AM, Mayor Putaansuu adjourned the regular meeting.

**ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 2025.

Attest:

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*Jackie Bidon*  
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Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board

Signed by:  
*Rob Putaansuu*  
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Rob Putaansuu, Chairperson