

CAC MEETING MINUTES

June 13, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Jones.

Members Present: BJ Carol, Doris Brevoort, Robin Gosney, Chris and Judy Jones, John Norman, Dick Phillips, Valerie Rose, Cheryl Willis, and Brad Windler.

We are pleased to have CEO Crystle Stidham present at this meeting.

There were no public comments.

It was moved by Dick and seconded by Chris the May minutes be approved as submitted. Motion carried.

The table staffing dates at Skagit Station are as follows:

Thursday morning, June 29, staffed by Robin Gosney and Chris Jones.

Thursday afternoon, July 13, staffed by Judy Jones, Robin Gosney, and BJ Carol.

Upon inquiry, there are no upcoming marketing opportunities appropriate for CAC member presentation and recruitment, although flyers will be present at the Dairy Berry event this month.

Crystle Stidham then gave a general overview of the upcoming agency rebranding and three studies to be conducted in the fall, and fielded questions from the CAC members.

Next, Brad and Cheryl offered the opportunity for CAC members to experience the new 101 Burlington route, having lunch and our July meeting at the Burlington Senior Center. All voted to cancel the July 11 meeting date, to be substituted by a meeting date to be determined, depending on the availability of the Senior Center. Tentative dates are July 17, with backup dates of July 27 or 28.

Under staff reporting, tagline status, Brad stated that due to the agency rebranding and upcoming studies in the fall, it is recommended the budgeted \$25,000.00 for taglines should be repurposed toward the Comprehensive Operations Analysis, as using taglines too early may only allow for limited use prior to the rebranding.

There were concerns that money would be going toward consulting that could be used toward transit services, but it was explained that grant monies are funding the studies.

The main take-away from the discussion is that the COA, regional study, and micro transit study will have more far-reaching effects than the strategic plan. The agency will be going through a “reset,” with the over-arching goal of getting people out of the vehicle and onto the bus.

Crystle then mentioned that the agency is in the information-gathering stage of looking at Uber as a prospective micro transit provider in our area. Uber is currently in partnership with other transit agencies providing micro transit services, and a meeting will be held June 30 to discuss the possibility of implementing a pilot program in Skagit County. The program would use volunteer, ambulatory rider participation, and rider scheduling and fares would be handled through Skagit Transit. The results of such programs seem to indicate lower fares and faster ride response, at the same time, acting as a “safety valve” to handle any paratransit overflow, due to future increase in ridership.

Brad also asked members to keep bus shelter styles recommendations in mind for future meeting discussion.

Next, grant funding has been obtained for the new position of Community Engagement Specialist, which is to be bilingual.

Brad reports strong gains in ridership over last year, especially with paratransit, with fixed route enjoying a 15% increase, while paratransit experienced a 27% increase..

Brad again mentioned the three studies that are to get underway in the fall, that are part of the rebranding process that will shape the future growth of Skagit Transit.

Region Awareness: The need for a more direct route from Skagit County to access the light rail was brought up, and will be a consideration in the studies this fall.

An issue of a late bus was reported on one of the inbound connector routes.

During the round table session, Robin suggested that when another service change takes place, the printed updated schedules should come out a week earlier than in the past, and also be placed on buses, as well as at the usual locations, in order for ridership to have more time to adjust their schedules.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Jones

CAC Chair