

**Regional Transit Authority
March 17, 1995**

Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m. in the Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 South 35th Street, Tacoma, Washington by Vice Chairman Paul Miller. The Board Administrator called the roll and the following members were present:

Vice Chairs:

Dave Earling, Edmonds Councilmember
Paul Miller, Tacoma Deputy Mayor

King County:

Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor
Norm Rice, Seattle Mayor

Pierce County:

Sharon Boekelman, Bonney Lake Councilmember
Ken Madsen, Pierce County Councilmember
Doug Sutherland, Pierce County Executive

Snohomish County:

Ed Hansen, Everett Mayor

Washington State Department of Transportation:

Sid Morrison, Secretary

The following Board members arrived after roll call:

King County:

Mary Gates, Federal Way Mayor
Gary Locke, King County Executive
Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember

Mr. Miller:

Mr. Laing is ill and is not attending today's meeting. In referring to items on today's agenda, please refer to the revised agenda distributed here.

The Board Administrator indicated that a quorum of the Board was not yet present.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Miller:

Mr. Laing asked that legal counsel give the Board advice about the statutory requirements and where we will go from here. You should have before you copies of a memorandum from Mr. Bob Gunter (copy on file).

Mr. Gunter:

Due to the failure of the RTA measure on the March 14, 1995 ballot, the Board has broader powers to revisit and revise the package than it had before the election. I hope this memo lays out the answers to the obvious questions.

The RTA has met the statutory requirement to place a proposition on the ballot within two years. The next step is to have a successful vote within two years. If this does not occur, the Board can do things to itself, such as, it can dissolve or reconstitute as a single county RTA.

(Board member Gates arrived at this time.)

There is no sun setting provision for the RTA. The RTA could continue to exist indefinitely. We have met the threshold of the two-year requirement. The statute does allow very broad and flexible powers to the RTA. The RTA may change its boundaries and make corresponding changes to the composition of the Board based on this revised constituency; or the RTA may submit the same or a revised proposition to the voters the next time around.

The next page of the memo raises some less obvious issues. If we change the boundaries we have to pay more careful attention to the population. The initial composition of the Board was based on 145,000 residents per Board member. The Board composition, in the future, would be more closely tracked on a population basis. The area of the RTA could change. There may be some inconsistencies in the statute depending on the boundaries, if you shrink to the north or south there will be fewer Board members which may not be possible to comply with all the provisions that local governments be included in the RTA. My suggestion is, if there are those inconsistencies the RTA should utilize RCW 81.112.030(9), which deals with post election results and is most on point. This language concludes you can do what is best. There may be some questions if you decide what you want to do about boundaries.

Another point not addressed here is, if we change the boundaries we still have to have two counties and the statute contemplates the participation of two counties in RTA.

Mr. Miller:

Page two of the memorandum indicates that the initial boundary for the RTA is to include the largest population urban growth area designated by each county. Is that initial requirement continued in the subsequent revisions to the boundaries?

Mr. Gunter:

That is a good question. The language begins with the word "initial." I think an argument could be made with regard to this language. It may not be possible to meet that requirement if the Board shrinks the RTA boundary.

Mr. Morrison:

I just left a legislative meeting and I bring a willingness of the legislators to meet with RTA Board members if there are any statutory modifications that are needed.

Mr. Sutherland:

Would the legislators be willing to meet with us to discuss the RTA's role and responsibility?

Mr. Morrison:

I think you would find a high level of interest in the total activities of the RTA and the legislators' desire to see the RTA work, as expressed in their legislation. They have ideas on how to make it work and one way to reach a conclusion is to spend some time with them.

Ms. Gates:

I would like to hear the legislators' ideas. I think we need to move forward to have such a meeting which would be in the spirit of moving forward to serve the region.

Mr. Morrison:

The RTA has two options: 1) grow larger; and 2) grow smaller.

Mr. Miller:

I have other comments I would like to make; I will do so under the report of the Rules Committee.

Public Comment

Mr. Roger Pence:

I am a registered voter and transit supporter. I want to offer my comments on the results of this last Tuesday, and some of the actions that lead up to that vote.

I am a long-time transit supporter. I was a transit planner at Metro and was involved in the 1972 campaign that put Metro in the transit business. I am also a political activist in my party. I was in some panic a week before the election to find that even though I am a grassroots person, no one had contacted me to work on this campaign. I made a few random calls and found that no one else had been contacted either. The people running the RTA campaign did not utilize a grassroots component. I think that was a grievous error. I believe one quarter of the funds should have been used for door bell ringing, phone banks, yard signs, coffee hours, etc. This proposition could have passed with a vote of 53% in favor and 47% opposed.

I would urge you to consider that and when you tinker with the proposition, don't tinker too much, but encourage those on the campaign to reach out to the grassroots level. If the people get the message, they will vote for this proposition.

(Board member Nickels arrived at this time.)

I urge you to put this on the ballot again with the September primary. I and others will be happy to work with the campaign committee. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Dublin:

I live in Ballard.

I had some of the same thoughts as Mr. Pence, for the same reasons, about the level of involvement in the regional transit vote. I assumed I was not contacted because I come to so many RTA meetings that I am not considered part of the "grassroots" any longer.

I have this long preference and prejudice being that I am a transit coach operator and I have been working hands-on with an existing regional transit system for a long time. I don't consider regional transit as something we voted on last Tuesday. We are 10 years and several billion dollars into a regional transit system that is not anywhere near its capacity. We were asking for an addition to that system. We would get approval for this addition if we made better use of what we currently have.

I know everyone would like to take a break. I still have energy. If it were up to me, I would be pointing to things we could do right now. For instance, you currently have the authority to issue an all day pass good throughout the region. This could be made good on the state ferries as well. You could do that immediately. You could also

complete the downtown tunnel. It was not finished. Development came to a halt five years ago. We need a reliable fleet of dual powered coaches. Our maintenance people say the 236 dual powered coaches could be made reliable with an investment of money. The propulsion package could be changed and be made to work better. This would cost less than purchasing new vehicles. The pavement in the tunnel is rough. The trolley coach overhead operates at 10 miles per hour at junctions between the International District and Pioneer Square, causing problems with service during rush hour. This is a terrible waste. The tunnel routes could be reconfigured so the coach does not provide van service in the Renton Highlands. I-90, a billion dollar investment, should have a two-way entrance to the tunnel so that even on Friday afternoons, we can get in and out. We could have 10 minute service from Bellevue Square right to the tunnel and back. With regard to the airport, you could start the terminal Mr. Venturato talked about for light rail in the parking garage. This is one place people could wait for vehicles. You could have express bus service from the airport to Bellevue on 15 minute or 30 minute service. You could do this now.

This is an outline of possibilities. I will refine it and submit it to the public media. I am willing to fight for this. All of this leads to light rail, but you will need this in the first years. I am trying to get us moving now. I will not wait any longer. I am almost 50 years old. I don't intend to leave this area uglier and more polluted than I found it.

I am willing to cut short my vacation next week if I am invited to the workshop. I am that serious about this situation.

Mr. Earling:

Over six months ago Community Transit (CT) went through an extensive search throughout the United States to hire a new Executive Director. They had the good fortune to have an application from Ms. Joyce Olson, who was brought on board. She would like to address the Board today to indicate CT's willingness to work with the RTA as we move forward.

Ms. Olson:

I have met most of you in my position as Executive Director of CT. When I came, you already had three alternatives on the table and I did not feel it was my place to get involved. If you are going to revise the proposition, I would be willing to offer my, and my staff's, assistance. We need to have a regional solution. I am supportive of regional transit. Thank you very much.

Minutes of February 10 and February 24, 1995

It was moved by Mr. Sutherland, seconded by Mr. Rice and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that the minutes of February 10, 1995 be approved as presented.

It was moved by Mr. Sutherland, seconded by Ms. Gates and carried by the unanimous vote of all Board members present that the minutes of February 24, 1995 be approved as presented.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Matoff:

The TRY RAIL demonstration project was completed this week. We will compile a final report which will summarize all of the information relating to the project and provide it to Board members next month.

The only other issue is to advise you that staff and the consultants are standing by to provide any information you need to facilitate your deliberations. We are going to put on hold any ongoing work pending the deliberations and direction from the Board.

Rules Committee

Mr. Miller:

Mr. Laing reported on an agreement on the scope of work in the University District. This was agreed to by the RTA and the City of Seattle. That work is on hold pending further decision by the Board.

The Rules Committee's agenda included action to be taken on Resolutions No. 61 and 62; both of those actions were held over.

There was an issue regarding travel by the RTA Board Chair and Mr. Matoff to Washington, D.C. to talk to our legislative representatives to assure our position for federal dollars. The Rules Committee did authorize that trip, but it is being postponed until the first part of April.

The next issue was that the Rules Committee looked at the calendar before us and tried to advise the direction the Board will take. I think it is incumbent to take a pause before the Board identifies the path it needs to take. There are many opportunities and all are on the table at this time. There are many to choose from and none should be ruled out. We have an obligation to take a step back and listen to not only what the public says, but what the proponents and opponents have identified our role to be. The RTA is a little more narrow than people would like us to be. There are state agencies that are charged with the entire transportation package for the state and region. Our role remains that of identifying a regional transit alternative for the Puget Sound area. I think we need to be as broad in our interpretation of what that may include or what we will endorse.

The Rules Committee is recommending that the meeting scheduled for March 24 be changed to a workshop and that it include a number of items for discussion. That is an opportunity for the Board to discuss among itself what options we will have before us, to discuss any viewpoints from the election and to discuss the timetable and what steps we will be taking to keep the process moving forward. There is a recommendation to hold a workshop on March 31, presumably at a less formal location. This will be when we can sit down and meet with our opponents, our legislative representatives in the transportation arena, our proponents, to get proposals out before the public and to get as much input and feedback as we can.

I think it is incumbent to have as much input as possible before making future decisions. Before we go back out or revamp the boundaries, we should open the discussion on those dates. Board members may wish to request information from the staff.

Mr. Rice:

What time would the workshop begin on March 31?

Mr. Miller:

The workshop would begin at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Sutherland:

It may be advantageous to have the leadership of the House and Senate Transportation Committees available on March 24 and 31. Not knowing how their calendars look, would it be possible for us to explore with them the opportunity to have them join us some time on either of those two days? This would allow us to discuss this relationship, what we can do, what they can do and how to meld the two together. We were not successful at the polls because the public thought we were solving the whole transportation problem when we were really only dealing with one small part of it. The plans of the state and the RTA have to be put together and be more comprehensive. I think it would be important to have an opportunity to talk with those folks and see how they feel these two interrelationships work.

Mr. Miller:

I very much agree. I did ask Mr. Metcalf to contact our state legislators and arrange a meeting for the 24th or 31st. The intent is to have a dialogue among ourselves on March 24. Then, on March 31 we would have more open discussions with fewer comments among ourselves and we would be listening to those before us.

Mr. Earling:

I would ask that the meeting on March 31 include an invitation to the three county councils. I think they may have perspective they may like to bring and contribute.

Mr. Miller:

That is a very valid point. We have informed the Board Administrator about groups to be invited to that meeting and we will see that your suggestion is included.

Mr. Morrison:

With regard to the legislators, you almost have to meet at their location. They are truly working night and day, and I don't think we could expect them to attend a meeting elsewhere.

Mr. Miller:

If it turns out we are unable to get the legislators to attend a meeting on either date, we might see if we could arrange for the Board, or a delegation of the Board, to travel to Olympia for a meeting. My first preference would be to have them address the entire Board.

Mr. Rice:

At a minimum, the Legislative Committee should travel to a meeting in Olympia, if required.

Mr. Davidson:

Could the Board travel to Olympia for a meeting with legislators?

Mr. Miller:

This is a valid suggestion.

Mr. Morrison:

The information that would be helpful to me would be precinct-by-precinct election results.

Mr. Matoff:

That information is being prepared.

Mr. Miller:

There are two items the Rules Committee requested for the meeting on March 24: a precinct-by-precinct analysis (anything regarding demographics) and a discussion about how best do we reach out and find out from the electorate what the message is they are sending. There are as many messages as there are dissenting votes and it would be helpful to know that in addressing a solution.

Mr. Hansen:

I have a trip out of state next week so I cannot attend the March 24 meeting. I will be available for the workshop on March 31.

Legislative Task Force

Mr. Madsen:

The Legislative Task Force had a meeting this morning and there was a decision we should push the federal grant strategy forward until we figure out what to do. I will ask Mr. Jack Metcalf to go over the issues before the legislature as they relate to transportation and transportation funding. I think we have to approach this with good intelligence.

Mr. Metcalf:

The most significant development in the legislature is the unveiling yesterday by Representative Schmidt of the proposed 1995-97 transportation budget. This is historically a very unique document and she is proposing a very unique approach to making a decision about transportation funding in the next two years. She has crafted a proposed revenue package, which is contained in a bill, along with a budget in the same bill, and the entire bill is proposed to be referred to the people in November 1995 for a vote. The budget would be effective January 1, 1996 if there were a favorable vote in November 1995. This leaves a six month gap in terms of legal authority to spend money between July 1, 1995 and January 1, 1996. I understand that next week she intends to refer a current law budget which will be a status quo continuation of programs through January. The legislature will return in January 1996 and make a decision, depending on the vote of the people, as to where they want to go. This is an extremely interesting strategy. It is not known at this time what the Senate's attitude about this is. The Chair was quite circumspect in his comments and didn't indicate rejection or approval at this time. The attitude of the administration is not known; Mr. Morrison may know more about that.

The revenue proposal is a combination of a gas tax increase and a small increase in use fees and license fees. It is aimed primarily at providing additional funding for completing areas of expenditure started in the 1990 revenue package and proceeding with the purchase of additional passenger-only ferries and increasing the number of state troopers and giving them a significant salary increase. It also provides additional funds for Highway 18. The gas tax is divided with 2-3/4 cents going to the state, one-quarter cent going to the ferries and one-quarter cent going to special categories, such as Highway 18 and three-quarters of a cent going to a new fund to be mentioned by the Transportation Improvement Board. Those funds are to be provided for projects of regional transportation significance.

I think it is fair to characterize this as a traditional transportation budget. There are no new initiatives in other modes in contrast to the proposal made by State Transportation Commission late last fall. This is much more conservative and traditional in its approach. There are no new initiatives. The inner-city rail program is continued and there is funding proposed for two trains between Vancouver BC and Portland. The HCT account is completely appropriated for \$12.9 million. There are two bills working their way through the legislature and expected to pass dealing with boards and commissions to deal with the oversight of that account from the multi-modal committee and the department itself in consultation with the recipient of those funds.

Representative Schmidt, in her comments, said she would hope there would be potentially some funds available to do more HOV construction than is currently possible. We have been trying to ferret that out today. It is still fuzzy. With the exception of the HOV lanes and possibly the passenger-only ferries, there are no new initiatives in her transit or high capacity transit and it can be characterized as a keep-even, conservative approach. This budget is before the committee this afternoon for action. It should be on the floor of the House early next week and pass to the Senate where they begin putting their stamp on it.

Mr. Madsen:

With regard to inner-city rail, it is my understanding the Department requested a \$90 million appropriation. What is in the budget?

Mr. Metcalf:

The Transportation Committee budget has \$90 million; the agency request was \$52 million. Included in the budget is \$32 million.

Mr. Madsen:

Does that include the purchase of two trains?

Mr. Metcalf:

Yes.

Mr. Morrison:

There are two projects listed specifically and gasohol would pay for those. That is the nature of the current action. There is a hearing scheduled on March 28 and I think it will be backed up by a bond issue. I think the rest of the implications are somewhat oblique. The three-quarters of a cent devoted to the Transportation Improvement Board is for things of regional significance. We don't know if that was intended to include HOV lanes. The 2-3/4 cents has a well rounded deal related to do it in the press release including HOV, but every penny is spent on projects. Any amount of gas tax increase that goes into capacity improvements moves the HOV projects farther into the scale of the doable. It does not bring us to a 10 year program, but it improves the outlook for the \$1.2 billion projects to be in the 20 year horizon.

Mr. Madsen:

I suggest you get a serious briefing on this level of service bill going through the legislature now. It will have an effect on us. Lastly, can you indicate if the private/public partnership bill that is sliding through now includes local governments or local municipal entities?

Mr. Morrison:

It currently does have authorization for local governments. There is an amendment to HB 1006 authorizing the department to enter into public/private partnerships with six pilot projects.

Mr. Madsen:

The public/private partnership is clearly an option we can look at. I don't know how good it is, but if we choose to try that, we need to get some language hung on that bill pretty quick.

Mr. Morrison:

Representative Bob Oke has introduced legislation that would extend this to local governmental units. I am not sure the legislature will do that although my challenge is to see if we can demonstrate the concept. People have not realized the gas tax goes downhill and unless there is a different cut on taxes there will be no projects until we have a mechanism for how to pay for them. I concur. Even in the town hall meetings I am targeted by the people responding that if this is the only way to pay for it, let's go forward. We are at an awkward stage of financing anything.

Mr. Miller:

Please clarify the restrictions on what they term the Regional Transportation Fund.

Mr. Metcalf:

If the project is in the regional transportation plan, it is eligible for these funds. It is gas tax money and it is limited to roads.

Mr. Morrison:

I think that three-quarters of a cent, while regional in nature, is an effort to realize there is some conflict as we go through the growth management plan and the state highway going through neighborhoods when you establish two levels of service on those. The attempt was to provide some funding because there is a feeling that state will charge local governments for improvements to the state facilities. I sense Mr. Miller is saying the state brought enough to include it in decisions of this committee. The answer may be yes on HOV lanes and access to those lanes.

Mr. Sutherland:

We have with us today Mr. John Horsley, Deputy Assistant for the United States Department of Transportation. In matters dealing with transportation he is very knowledgeable and very important. I would like to introduce him.

Mr. Horsley:

I was out last night talking to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). I wanted to come by and express our interest and encouragement for the important work you are doing. When I left Washington, D.C. yesterday, I picked up a copy of the Washington Post and it reported the results of your Tuesday election. In the story was an identification that the Puget Sound region suffers as the fourth worst most congested urban area in the country. I want to encourage your work because what you are grappling with is an important component of a solution to solve the problem.

(Board member Locke arrived at this time.)

I talked with the Transit Administration before I came out to get a feel of what you could count on after reaching agreement with the voters. Over the last year we were proud of the fact that, along with Secretary Pena, we have approved 11 new starts with \$3.4 billion nationally. If the Seattle region gets its act together soon, what can they count on? They indicated that what we have remaining in dollars that have been identified is \$1.4 billion nationally. Others are beginning to line up for these funds. The FTA leadership wanted me to say timing and momentum are important in being able to compete with the others lining up for this \$1.4 billion. We are interested in your work and see it as vital. We are looking forward to seeing you next week or whenever to see how we can be supportive.

Public Involvement Committee

Mr. Earling:

The Public Involvement Committee met in the past week and had several items for discussion. It all comes back to one point, which is the subsequent meetings that will take place over the next several weeks. The Committee stands ready to carry out a public information program for a new work program.

Finance Committee

Mr. Nickels:

The Finance Committee met Thursday and spent time reviewing the grant applications and the cash flow for the next two years. We went from there to a discussion of the briefly adopted six month budget and how we would modify that and take care of the second half of 1995. We will be reviewing on April 6 a draft of a revised budget. That process is going to have to track closely with the Board's discussions. We are assuming there will be next steps. I certainly expect there to be further work by this Authority, leading to another request of the voters. Our budget will have to provide technical expertise and significant resources for the Public Involvement Committee to elevate that message that we are trying to get from the Tuesday vote.

Personally, I would like to express to all members of the Board, my respect and to say what an honor it has been to work with this group. The results Tuesday are not what we had hoped for, but it is the first time the region has voted on a mass transit plan in 25 years. The fact that 47% voted yes is a strong indication of support in this region. The 53% in opposition is an indication that we have more work to do. I believe strongly that as I did last week, that mass transit has to be part of this region's future in order to have a economic future. I look forward to continuing to work with each of you. I think we should hold our heads up high.

Other Business

Ms. Gates:

As we prepare for a workshop on March 24, I haven't heard many requests for technical information. As Board members think of these requests, would it be all right to contact staff? The staff has been helpful in our technical analysis. I am reluctant to "punt" at this time. Is there a process through which to make these requests of staff?

Mr. Matoff:

As always, if you have any requests for technical information, I would urge you to call my office. If I am not available, you may speak to Mr. Matsuoka or Mr. Baker.

Mr. Miller:

The Board has scheduled a meeting on March 24 in which it may talk among itself to discuss time lines, election results and next steps. I encourage you to reach out to the staff to respond to any information we think would be helpful. The March 24 meeting is scheduled from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Ms. Walker:

The March 24 meeting has been scheduled in the sixth floor conference room of the PSRC offices at 1011 Western Avenue in Seattle.

Mr. Miller:

The Board will hold a workshop on March 31 and invite as many individuals as possible, including legislators. If there is anyone specific Board members would like to invite, please let staff know.

Mr. Rice:

Will Board members receive prior information on how that workshop will be structured?

Mr. Miller:

I will meet with Mr. Laing and Mr. Earling to discuss this format. This should be determined by the time of the March 24 meeting. We may bring forward a suggestion for a retreat for Saturday, April 8. This seems to be a lot of meetings in a short period of time, but I think we need to move aggressively.

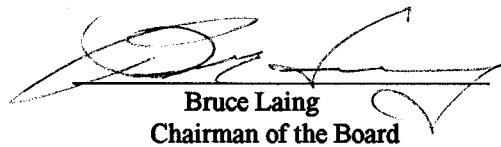
Mr. Locke:

The Rules Committee asked staff to prepare a precinct map. I ask that we overlay routes on a color-coded basis. This would be easier to understand.

Mr. Matoff:

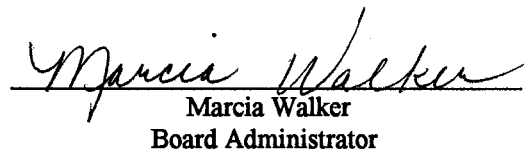
This information is being prepared as requested by Mr. Locke.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.



Bruce Laing
Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator