

Minutes of Meeting
Kootenai County Public Transportation Meeting
August 27, 2019
11:00 a.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Resource Management Office (RMO) Director Jody Bieze, RMO Senior Program Manager Kimberli Riley, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Jamila Holmes and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present was Kootenai County Resident Gary Nystrom.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

B3 Bus Stop Seltice and Huetter (Action)

Kootenai County Resident Gary Nystrom expressed his concern about the lack of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility at the B3 bus stop at Seltice and Huetter. He provided the Board with documents stating the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) ADA regulations. He commented that he had been observing bus stop accessibility issues for a number of years. He said he had questioned the placement of bus stops in the past, for example, when they were placed on grass, which would make wheelchair access more difficult.

He explained that the B3 bus stop came to his attention when Seltice Way was reconstructed because the accessibility improvements had not been completed. He said that, when he investigated, it seemed that the City, the Highway District and the County had not communicated effectively or coordinated their efforts properly. He also remarked that he felt no one had taken public responsibility for the error.

Coeur d'Alene City Councilman Dan Gookin entered the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Mr. Nystrom urged Kootenai County to review all bus stops and ensure that they were compliant with ADA standards, if the stops were in their permanent locations. He said he felt that the ongoing changes in routes and stops were preventing this from happening in a timely fashion. He stated he was waiting for a response to his communication to the FTA regarding the use of private driveways as a landing pad for wheelchairs. He indicated he was reluctant to sue the County, but was willing to do so if it became necessary. He reminded the Commissioners he had brought suit in the past for a similar situation.

Mr. Nystrom also remarked that he felt the stairs located at Riverstone Drive needed review. He cited a case in Lomita where a blind person had fallen due to a curb edge. Mr. Nystrom stated that these stairs could present a hazard to individuals who were visually

impaired. He also suggested that it might be better if all transportation issues were handled by the cities.

Chairman Fillios agreed that having one entity responsible for these projects would be preferable but, due to funding issues, the solution was not as simple as moving all the responsibility to the cities.

Resource Management Office (RMO) Director Jody Bieze said that she and Mr. Nystrom had been in frequent communication about these and other related issues. She noted that collaboration with the jurisdictions was a major focus at Kootenai County Public Transportation. She stated she was unable to speak to the B3 bus stop location because she had not participated in the discussion to move the stop. She said she felt comfortable with the level of pro-active collaboration normally exercised in these projects, but in this particular case, there had evidently been a miscommunication.

Mr. Nystrom indicated he was still not satisfied with the process that had been followed for correcting this bus stop; he felt blame for the error on the old bus stop should have been publically assigned. He also expressed concern on whether the federal government had been properly informed.

Ms. Bieze stated that the funds used to reconstruct Seltice Way were were not federal dollars; the money had come from Ignite CDA and had included the bus stops. She offered to share the minutes from the relevant meeting with Mr. Nystrom.

Mr. Nystrom insisted that the last three hundred feet from Huetter going east belonged to the Highway District. Ms. Bieze agreed, but pointed out the Highway District had worked in cooperation with Ignite CDA.

Ms. Bieze said that Kootenai County Public Transportation did have a collaborative relationship with the Post Falls Highway District, the City of Post Falls, the City of Coeur d'Alene and the City of Hayden. She expressed her appreciation for his input in bringing his concerns to their attention and said she felt there was now a solution in process for the problem at the B3 bus stop, which she confirmed would conform to ADA standards. She reminded Mr. Nystrom that the stop would also be moved about 300 feet.

Mr. Nystrom returned to the issue of the length of time that had been taken to correct the error, the question of responsibility for the initial error and whether the BOCC had known from the beginning that something was wrong. He said that if a sense of urgency had been shown, action could have been taken much more quickly. He commented that the problem could not be fixed this year, because it was now the end of the building season and there was no guarantee that it would be done next year, if the money were not available.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan asked where the work on the B3 stop was at this time. Ms. Bieze answered that they had made a grant application that had been accepted and once they received the funds, they would have a grant agreement to bring to the Board probably between December and January.

Commissioner Bill Brooks asked when construction would then begin. Ms. Bieze said that it would start as soon as possible after the grant agreement was signed. Commissioner Brooks noted that sometimes work like this could be done during the winter. Ms. Bieze stated that, once the grant was secured, if it were possible to begin construction in the winter months, it would be.

Ms. Bieze pointed out that the County did offer alternative transport. She said the fixed route had bus stops that many people relied upon, but the County also offered Paratransit and the Ring-a-Ride service that offered transport to those individuals who were disabled or unable to take the bus. She added that the fixed route service, Paratransit and Ring-a-Ride all worked together closely to serve the public's needs.

Commissioner Duncan acknowledged that it was unfortunate that something had been missed at B3, but she felt that this situation was now under control and the process would be improved in the future.

Chairman Fillios asked if RMO had to wait until the funds were secured before the project could be sent out to bid. Ms. Bieze said that was correct. Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Jamila Holmes confirmed this and stated that a term would then be set forth within which the project would have to be completed.

Commissioner Duncan asked if there was a five-year plan in place for the other bus stops. Ms. Bieze explained that there was an analysis of each bus stop, but first the service plan had to be finalized, confirming that the service routes would stay the same.

Mr. Nystrom asked why, at the stops where there was grass, further accommodations were not made for users. Ms. Bieze explained that a bus would not deploy its ramp on the grass because the wheelchair could not navigate it. She said that Paratransit would pick up the people who needed the additional assistance at those stops. She assured Mr. Nystrom that people would not be dropped off at any place that was not accessible for them to go from the bus stop to their destination.

- D. Public Comment (Discussion):** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County-related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There was no public comment.

Coeur d'Alene Councilman Dan Gookin confirmed that Mr. Nystrom's point about the last 300 feet of Seltice was correct.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
