



ANDERSON ISLAND CITIZENS' ADVISORY BOARD

AICAB Quarterly Meeting

January 12, 2007 7:30 p.m.

Community Clubhouse Anderson Island, Washington

The meeting was chaired by Peter Seto, and was called to order at 7:31 p.m.. Peter welcomed attendees, saying he knew it was a difficult to travel here tonight in the snow and ice, and thanked everyone for coming.

Members present: Peter Seto, Marshel Ivie, Anthony Tognazzini (Treasurer), Randy Anderson, David McGoldrick, Chuck Hinds, Debbie Lowe (Chair), Sunny Pepin.

Absent: Erik Hodge (Vice President/Secretary) and Phyllis Zander

Guests: Dick Muri, Councilman and Leslie Swalley from Pierce County Council Offices

JoAnn Boring, Principal Planner, and Steve Paternik from Pierce Transit.

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Randy and seconded by Chuck that the proposed agenda be adopted. Passed unanimously.

Approval of December Meeting Minutes

It was moved by David and seconded by Chuck that the December meeting minutes be approved as read. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Anthony Tognazzini distributed a detailed financial summary and reported a checking account balance of \$511 as of today, and the store account at approximately \$20. He reported that in 2005 AICAB spent \$2,300, and in 2006, \$2479. Bank balance as of January 1, 2007, was \$9.94.

County News - Councilman Dick Muri

Dick Muri reported that the County had passed the 2007 budget. He mentioned County property taxes were 1.52 for 2005; 1.33 for 2006, and 1.10 for 2007—adjusted because they are limited to 1% increase per year and valuations have gone up 16%. Our next tax bills will be higher due to several initiatives which were passed by voters during the last 12 months.

Neighborhood patrol deputy. The county is having difficulty filling all their positions. There are 100 vacancies for various positions that they have not been able to fill, largely due to local industries being financially able to offer more incentives for qualified personnel.

Dick also reported that in 2008 we will have an elected sheriff, which is the norm across the State. Dick is drafting an amendment that provides that candidates for sheriff not compete on the basis of a political party. There are other elected County positions that he feels should not be filled on the basis of their political affiliation either (such as assessor, auditor, and treasurer), and he will draft legislation on those and hopes he can get the required vote of 5 councilmen to approve it. He mentioned that the prosecuting attorney position is governed by State law so nothing can be done about that at the County level.

He mentioned the new ferry and the opportunity he had to direct District Six's road fund allocation of \$350,000 from the sale of the 9th Street Pit to the ferry capital improvement fund, which will lower capital funding requirements.

Dick commended the communication and coordination between the Island and his office via AICAB.

Regarding how payment is made for budgeted items, Dick restated the allocation of funds as reported in December:

\$10,000	Historical Society
5,000	Community Club
16,000	Crime Task Force
15,000	Youth Violence Prevention (Youth Enhancement Fund)
3,000	AICAB operating expenses

In answer to a question from the floor, Dick said that these funds are available as of January 1, 2007. The process for reimbursement is that the funds are first expended and then receipts are forwarded to the County by the applicable organizations. The County prefers not to process checks for less than \$10,000 and in the past has disbursed these funds through AICAB in amounts of \$10,000 or more. AICAB, in turn, writes a check to the organizations for the designated amounts. Since some of these organizations do not have the money to pay up-front for the work, Jim Singer suggested that perhaps some seed money could be advanced for paying the bills, enabling them to submit receipts and receive payment from the County. AICAB will work with Leslie to determine a process that will comply with County regulations and still provide the needed funds to the various organizations, some of whom have unique financial situations.

Dick talked about the youth violence prevention budget of \$1.6M per year and one request made at the end of 2006 for \$15,000 in 2007. Normally, people go through a long paper process and hopefully that will work out on paper.

Dick also advised that with the County so understaffed administratively, we should try valiantly to submit all our requests for reimbursement by September 1, 2007.

Old Business

Coordination of ferry schedule with Pierce Transit schedule

JoAnn Boring gave some background on Pierce Transit, saying they are a municipal business, NOT part of Pierce County at all (although because of their name many people believe they are a department within the County). Their Board is comprised of representatives from cities which allot 0.6% sales tax monies to help subsidize their routes (Anderson Island not being one of these, but nevertheless they want to serve Islander riders). Peter pointed out that Anderson Island residents also pay the sales tax since most all purchases are made off-Island. JoAnn explained they have inter-county buses going to Seattle, Olympia, and Federal Way. Pierce Transit was formed in 1979 and has a service area of 414 miles.

JoAnn spoke about Pierce Transit's efforts to coordinate the 212 bus schedule with the ferry schedule 2 or 3 times per day. This has been on the table for 10 years and they are earnestly seeking a solution. There is need for Islanders to get to Pierce College for the Jump Start program (and some are electing to walk there from the ferry dock.), trips to the airport, and in-town errands. David pointed out that the Island population is growing and there was a large increase of space for walk-on passengers on the new ferry but no increase in the number of cars. The reason the bus is so badly needed now is that there is no additional parking available in Steilacoom, which will increase the number of people who walk on and need to use the buses. He added that ferry rates will continue to rise, which will also make riding the bus an increasingly attractive option.

She is working with Chuck and is aware that ferry riders watch each morning as the bus pulls away just as the ferry is docking. While it seems simple to just leave a few minutes later, Bus 212 also goes to Pierce College, and the distance it travels makes it impossible to wait because it must return to Lakewood for all riders to connect with buses going to other destinations. The delay would be a complete meltdown of their system, so they are looking at alternatives, one of them being a different bus which won't stop at Pierce College. They are uncertain that enough riders will come on the ferry to make this cost effective.

Peter will provide JoAnn numbers of students who need to commute to/from Pierce College on a daily basis. AICAB members believe that if there were such a bus, the riders will be there although not necessarily on Day 1 or Week 1. David pledged that if a bus would be available to certain ferry runs, AICAB would get the word out and publicize its availability on the Island. Runs to/from three times a day would be ideal. AICAB members also expressed concerns about any Pierce Transit efforts to petition the County to change the ferry schedule, even in a small way, warning that we would have an enormous outpouring of both Ketron and Anderson Islander objections.

There was a long discussion of different scenarios, different equipment (van pool, hybrid "bus plus," pre-arranged shuttles) that could be scheduled rather than a standard bus. JoAnn would need to know how many people and where they

would all be going for scheduling special transportation. She made notes throughout the discussion.

JoAnn confirmed Chuck's December report about moving to the new Sounder Station sometime in the future, but no exact date has been set.

Bus schedules are changed quarterly based on data and research with their customers. The next date for change is June 2007. Chuck and JoAnn will continue to work together to find a solution.

Ferry Fare Surcharge

Chuck Hinds asked Ed Stephenson to present the four options recommended by the Ferry Committee. Option 1 and Option 2 were as presented by Ed at the December AICAB meeting. Option 3 dealt with an alternate senior option which kept senior passengers at the same rate that the County had proposed. Option 4 was to accept the $\approx 3.59\%$ increase across the board (rounded up and down for even numbers) as proposed by the County.

Ed also explained the inputs that the committee has received from Islanders, and how they correlate with the committee's four recommendations. He showed a chart that compared AI Ferry proposed rates with Vashon Island State ferry rates. Ed also showed the chart from the December meeting that compared the 20% and 25% peak fare rates. Dick Muri suggested that the committee consider the 25% peak fare increase, rather than 20% increase, since it is more advantageous to Islanders. A 25% increase is also in line with State ferry peak rate increases. Dick stated we have his support in alleviating the impact on full-time Island residents and putting more of the burden on those whose use of the ferry during the peak period typically comes out of their discretionary income and not the necessity of commuting to their jobs and connecting with the mainland for family needs.

Ed showed a chart that listed the increase of each rider category of the 3.59% applied across the board. Although these amounts were small, even for 5 trips per week for one year, the point was made that the January 2008 increase of 13%, if again applied across the board after the surcharge rate increase, will continue to skew the numbers contrary to what our Island population has expressed as their sense of fairness.

David said that he would like us to look at the bigger picture. David would like to see us accept the County-recommended 3.59% surcharge across the board with the proviso that AICAB pro-actively calculate and recommend 2008-09 fares based on financial requirements set by the County and commensurate with fairness concerns expressed by Islanders. AICAB would need at least the following information as soon as possible:

- 2006 ridership actuals
- Fare Box revenues Jan-Dec 2006
- County-projected ridership numbers for 2008-09
- 2008-09 line-item budgets for ferry operation and maintenance

Motion: Chuck moved that we let the 3.59% surcharge, effective 1 April, County proposal stand (the Committee's Option 4) and that we initiate a proposal to the County for the 2008-09 rate increase based on County-developed ridership data and revenue requirements for that period. Seconded by David.

Discussion:

Marshel expressed concern that the large vehicles are not paying their share of costs of required fuel and the space they occupy on the ferries. He stated that after these storms, some property owners are clear-cutting their property and that we will experience higher volumes of logging trucks throughout the peak period.

The vote was 7 for, and 1 against.

Debbie will let Toby know what was decided.

Motion: David moved that AICAB authorize the Ferry Committee to write a letter to the County requesting the information needed to make a proposal for 2008-09 rates, and asking that the information (2006 ridership actuals, Fare Box revenues Jan-Dec 2006, County-projected ridership numbers for 2008-09, and 2008-09 line-item budgets [administrative, fuel, etc.] for ferry operation and maintenance) be provided within 30 days.

Randy seconded.

Passed unanimously.

Debbie thanked Ed for his excellent presentation.

Further discussion about ferry:

County data accuracy and timeliness - From the floor, concern was expressed about getting detailed accurate data that is needed from the County. When the County first proposed a 9% surcharge effective January 1, 2007, and AICAB requested supporting information, there were weeks of delay in getting the data, and then there were several subsequent revisions that required re-working AICAB analysis and calculations. We need a timely, accurate, and thorough response to our request for information. Also, AICAB members need to look carefully at data that is distributed to them, ask clarifying questions and give their own input as to their conversations with Islanders or concerns, and come to the meeting where the vote will be taken, knowledgeably prepared.

Regarding suggestions about having youth commuter tickets, Ed said that this has come up repeatedly and the County does not want to add additional categories. We are near the electronic ticketing implementation, which has already been set up with the present categories.

Regarding using the \$350,000 to defray some of the fare increases, it was pointed out these monies are not even available yet, but once they are, they are designated to go into a capital expense fund.

It was mentioned from both the committee and the floor that this exercise in analyzing ferry fares and getting Islander input has not been a wasted effort. We are better prepared for making a proposal for the 2008-09 fares.

NEW BUSINESS

Inclusion of phrase in by-laws stating that meetings are open to the public per RCW 42.30. This phrase was deleted when the by-laws were revised at the December 8, 2006, meeting by a vote of 8 to 2. The eight believed it to be redundant since RCW 42.30 states that all County meetings are open to the public and AICAB meetings are County meetings. The two dissenting members asked that Debbie check with the County to be sure it was not required that it be stated in the by-laws. Peter and Debbie read portions of a message from Susan Long of the County, stating that it is *not* specifically required. Anthony and Marshel envision the possibility that everyone does not know RCW 42.30 and thus may not know all County meetings are open to the public.

Motion: Anthony moved that under ARTICLE V, Meetings, paragraph 1, add at the end of this paragraph the following phrase: "*with all meetings open to the public pursuant to RCW 42.30.*" Marshel seconded.

Vote was 7 for, 1 against.

Issues from the Floor

It was expressed that the ferry funding issues are very complex and at some future meeting when Dick Muri is attending, we might want to go into more detail about this and, in particular, the sinking fund and how this affects the bottom lines. The sinking fund pays no interest and is loaned to other County departments. Over 50 years, interest on \$10M is a lot! With the addition of the new ferry, fuel costs have increased, administrative costs have increased, insurance has increased, and sinking funds payments have increased. The cost of the new ramp was higher than anticipated. Targets for funding Operations and Maintenance costs of the ferry continue to move upward (the County wants to increase the amount recovered from 60% to 64% beginning in 2008). Some people are worried that unless there is some agreed-to final target in the foreseeable future no one will be able to afford to ride the ferry!

Adjournment

It was moved by Anthony and seconded by Debbie that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.