

**UNION GAP CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED MEETING**  
***Ahtanum Youth Park – Activities Building***  
***Union Gap, Washington***  
***July 8, 2008***

- Call to Order Mayor Pro Tem Olson called the Adjourned Meeting of the Union Gap City Council to order at 6:05 p.m.
- Council Members Present Council Members David Butler, Glenn Bateman, Roger Wentz, and Dave Matson were present.
- Staff Present Dennis Henne, Public Works Director and Kathryn Thompson, City Clerk were present.
- Audience Present Madelyn Carlson, Renee Biles, Diane Gaudette, Amy Neal, Lucille Humphrey, Doris Elliott, Karen Allen, Gary Pira, Ken Mehin, Wayne Parsley, Randy Ammerman, Wendy Pederson, Patty Perry, Bill Schroeder, Nancy Palmer, Helen Bradley, Tilly Bell, Grace Sexton, Lydia & Merle Warehime, Tony Reise, Fred Thomson, Debbie Matson, Charles Parsley, Corette Parsley, Drew Miller, Don Mayo, Sally Mayo, Janice Easter, Sarah Doyle, Rona Nelson, Chris Anderson, W.O. Brown, Isabelle Melville, Evonne Goeken, Marilynne Kendrick, Joe & Linda Jackson, Mike Haider, Cecil Aston, Jerry Baldoz, Chris Anderson, Wayne & Jan Parks, Lydia Bales, Darla Hatfield, Bill Smedley, Andrea Vasquez, Nancy Krause, Tom Hanson, Al Coyner, Ron Davis, John Hodgkinson, Erin Snelgrove, and others were present.
- Transit Company Presentations Mayor Pro Tem Olson announced that each transit company would be making a short presentation and following the presentations, there will be a time for questions from the audience and Council members. He informed the companies will present in alphabetical order, with the exception of Let's Go Transit, because they have withdrawn from the process.
- A & A Motorcoach/A + Transportation Randy Ammerman, A & A Motorcoach, informed A & A has been in business since 1990 and primarily provides charter bus services. A + Transportation is their Medicaid division and provides smaller vehicles as well as cars for Dial-a-Ride. He informed he has been in this business in the Yakima area for 30 years. He stated his company ran Route 3 for Yakima Transit for 3 years and he is familiar with tickets, passes, routes, etc. A & A Motorcoach and A + Transportation have been working together for 5 years and they are contracted with People for People for Dial-a-Ride. Their company also works with Ben Franklin Transit in the Tri Cities providing service to the Finley area. He informed their company would provide the City flexibility and the ability to grow if the City's needs change. He informed he is not a salesman, but their company's strong point is performance and they are a locally owned financially sound company with over 30 employees, they do business with local vendors, and they have their own maintenance shop.
- People For People Madelyn Carlson, People for People, informed they have been providing transportation services in Union Gap for over 26 years for persons with special needs. She stated customer service is their strong point and the staff is committed to quality service. She informed People for People also has experience operating a transit system because they operate the transit system in Grant County. She stated this is a great opportunity for Union Gap to build a transit system they want using a combination of large and small buses. She informed all of their vehicles are ADA accessible, they have the ability to secure federal and state funding, and they are familiar with the reporting requirements. She stated they currently coordinate with Yakima Transit as well as Aging and Long Term Care.
- Helen Bradley, Aging and Long Term Care, informed elderly people want to stay in their own homes as long as possible and their coordination with People for People provides transportation to medical appointments, nutrition, shopping, and adult day

care. She stated People for People has been a good provider for the elderly for 26 years.

Bill Schroeder, People for People driver, informed he has been with the company for 7 years and all the employees are very dedicated to providing good customer service. He stated all the drivers have checks run on their background, personal history, and driving records.

T C Transportation

Ron Davis, T C Transportation, informed their business started as Tri City Taxi about 38 years ago. In 1983 they contracted with Ben Franklin Transit to provide service for about 30 routes and substitute for Dial-a-Ride. He stated they have the same requirements for their drivers as Yakima Transit and People for People. He informed in 2006 they contracted with Yakima Transit to provide Dial-a-Ride service for Selah and Union Gap. He informed they have just as much experience as anyone else and they have brand new equipment. He explained they brought a bus with “Union Gap Transit” on it to show what the buses would look like if they were selected to be Union Gap’s provider. He informed he has been exploring the national transit website to see what the reporting requirements are, and they are quite capable of providing the necessary reporting. He stated they submitted the lowest cost to provide service, and questioned why anyone would want to spend more for the same service and suggested the extra money could be put in a reserve fund in case the economy falls off.

Yakima Transit

Ken Mehin, Yakima Transit, presented a Power Point presentation explaining the partnership between City of Yakima Transit and the City of Union Gap. He stated their hourly rate is \$64.50 with a fare and \$68.50 with no fare, and explained the extra \$4.00 will be applied to vehicle replacement. He informed Yakima Transit has been operating in the valley for over 40 years and they are second to none in the State. They are customer friendly, interested in the needs of the community, have security cameras on board the buses, are fully ADA accessible, and provide a full service ticket and information center. He explained they update the routes to meet the ridership needs about three times a year and they have grown 30 percent in ridership in the last 4 years. Dial-a-Ride has grown 50 percent in the last 3 years, and the vanpool has grown 35 percent in the last six months. He also informed they have an interactive website, provide reader boards on the buses, and offer temporary, permanent, and seasonal eligibility to Dial-a-Ride users.

Karen Allen, Yakima Transit, informed they have provided extensive marketing through television, radio, the newspaper, and press releases. They also featured Union Gap on the bus book and in some of the advertising.

Questions/Comments  
from the Audience

Jerry Baldoz, Yakima County Food Services, questioned how the companies will accommodate people that may not live within walking distance of the transit service and may not qualify for Dial-a-Ride, and also how they will accommodate those that are handicapped or poverty stricken and cannot afford Dial-a-Ride.

Lydia Warehime, Sr. Citizen Liaison, informed there are 3 or 4 citizens that cannot come to the Sr. Center for free lunch because they cannot afford \$1 each way. She stated the system should not be penalizing the elderly and low income. She also stated People for People already understands the reporting requirements so if they become the City’s provider, they will not be making mistakes.

Council Member Wentz informed when the City sought secondary proposals, a no fee service was proposed. He informed it is up to the entire Council, but the Transit Committee is in favor of no fare to ride the buses, and if there is no fare for the buses, there will be no charge for Dial-a-Ride.

Ron Davis, T C Transportation, informed they have a feeder service in an area in the Tri-Cities that does not support a full transit service. When people make reservations, they provide curb-to-curb service and take the people wherever the reservation is for.

Sally Mayo, Vice President of Council for the Blind, questioned how long people coming from Yakima Dial-a-Ride into Union Gap would have to wait.

Mr. Davis stated vehicles would be stationed at transfer points and the transfer points have not been established yet.

Mayor Pro Tem Olson clarified that there will be no immediate change in service, the bids were for a fixed route service, and any changes will come later.

Madelyn Carlson, People for People, informed as a local non-profit, they provide free Dial-a-Ride door-to-door service for people that qualify.

Bill Smedley, President of Council for the Blind, informed he fears people that operate with government grants because they can be gone in bad economy.

Andrea Vasquez questioned if state law requires Dial-a-Ride service.

Madelyn Carlson stated yes.

Sally Mayo stated Yakima Transit is providing Dial-a-Ride service now and a person can ride all the way to Selah.

Council Member Wentz informed Union Gap citizens will not be limited to the Union Gap City limits. Federal law says Dial-a-Ride can go 15 miles from the City limits and Union Gap plans to offer that service. He stated Yakima City Council passed an ordinance that Yakima Dial-a-Ride has to stay within Yakima City limits.

Sally Mayo commented the Health Department was promised Transit Service when they moved to Union Gap.

Council Member Wentz stated Union Gap did not promise the Health Department anything.

Karen Allen stated Yakima Transit's Dial-a-Ride program is seamless between Yakima, Union Gap, and Selah. She informed if the City of Union Gap chooses to change the perimeters of service, Yakima Transit will be more than happy to make those changes.

Cecil Aston questioned how long the contract with Yakima Transit is and why Union Gap has broken the contract.

Council Member Wentz stated the contract is for 2 years and it has not been broken.

Sally Mayo stated this meeting should have been held at a facility on the bus route and at a different time of day so bus users could ride the bus to the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Olson informed the Council would like the Youth Park and other places added to the bus route.

Cecil Aston stated Union Gap has a contract with Yakima Transit and Yakima Transit has said they will run whatever route Union Gap wants. He questioned why the people voted for Yakima Transit on the ballot and now the City is trying

to change what the people voted for.

Council Member Bateman stated the people were not voting for Yakima Transit, they were voting for bus service.

Council Member Wentz informed the driving force behind looking for other providers has not been the level of service; it has been the cost of service. He stated there is a significant price difference between the highest and lowest bidders for bus service.

Sally Mayo questioned if the Council has a disabled person on the Transit Committee.

Council Member Wentz stated no. He informed the City advertised in the newsletter for people willing to serve, but had no response.

Rona Nelson questioned if all the providers can accommodate a 3-wheel scooter. She informed she is a senior center volunteer and in the past when she tried to get transportation she was told they could not accommodate a 3-wheel scooter.

All of the providers agreed that being ADA compliant means they all take 3-wheel scooters in addition to wheelchairs.

Sally Mayo questioned what the route will be if someone other than Yakima Transit is selected.

Council Member Wentz explained the proposals were submitted based on the existing route.

Ms Mayo questioned if Union Gap will be able to take people to Yakima if a different provider is selected.

Council Member Wentz stated Yakima will not allow a different provider to use the transfer station, but people can be let out on the sidewalk outside the transfer station.

A gentleman asked if Union Gap buses would be able to utilize Yakima bus stops to drop passengers off along the way.

Council Member Wentz stated Yakima has said they will not allow Union Gap to drop passengers off at bus stops in Yakima.

Ms Mayo questioned if there would still be a bus from Union Gap to Selah.

Council Member Wentz stated there will not be a direct bus from Union Gap to Selah unless Yakima Transit keeps that route.

Ken Mehin informed the existing bus route was put together by the City of Union Gap, but if Union Gap wants to serve the Youth Park Yakima Transit can make that change.

Ms Mayo questioned how often Union Gap's bus would go to the transfer station, and how much it would cost a Yakima person to ride to the transfer station.

Council Member Wentz stated the committee's recommendation to the Council is that everyone rides Union Gap buses for free, and the buses would run at least every hour.

Fred Thomson questioned why Union Gap would want smaller buses on the main routes, because he believes shoppers will fill the buses up leaving no room

for others.

Council Member Wentz stated every company has agreed to use larger buses where needed.

Tony Reise questioned if Union Gap would be shooting themselves in the foot if they choose a different provider because Yakima Transit might choose to discontinue service to the Mall and the money for the bus system comes from sales tax revenue.

Council Member Wentz stated the City is interested in the most complete system for the least amount of money, and the Council has held several meetings on this issue.

Sally Mayo suggested the meetings be held in a place and at a time that bus riders can attend. She suggested getting the Activities Building in the daytime and asking Yakima Transit to provide a bus for the meeting. She also suggested the Council members ride the buses and see what other people go through.

Cecil Aston stated that when this was on the ballot the citizens knew how much Yakima Transit was charging and now someone has decided the voters did not know what they were voting on. He stated the citizens believed they were voting for the Yakima Transit system and their price and now it is unclear why Union Gap is breaking that contract.

Council Member Wentz encouraged everyone to fill out the green questionnaires and leave their comments.

Mr. Aston questioned why people are being asked to vote again.

Council Member Wentz informed these questionnaires are for comments, the contract with Yakima Transit is still in place, and the Council might choose to stay with Yakima Transit.

Mayor Pro Tem Olson informed the contract says either party may cancel with 120-day notice of cancellation.

Isabelle Melville commented that figures provided on the ballot are not cast in stone. She also suggested this type of meeting be held in a place with better acoustics because it is very difficult to hear.

Council Member Wentz commented the Council should look into purchasing a portable sound system for meetings outside of City Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Olson thanked everyone for attending, and encouraged everyone to fill out the green questionnaires.

Council Member Wentz commented the proposals received do not address if the providers will be taking care of the 6-year plan, annual reports to the State, etc. that Yakima Transit currently provides.

Ron Davis informed he included the reporting in his costs for service.

Randy Ammerman informed the proposals were very vague and the Council will probably need to negotiate the details with each company.

Madelyn Carlson informed People for People would be able to provide the same assistance Yakima Transit is providing.

Mr. Aston questioned what would happen if a different provider is selected and

Questions/Comments  
from the Council

then they raise their rate after 6 months.

Council Member Wentz stated once a company is selected, there will be a 2 or 3-year contract. He also informed the same thing could happen with Yakima Transit.

Sally Mayo informed forming a County-wide PTBA is the only way to get additional funds for a transit system.

Council Member Matson questioned what the providers would do if an elderly person boards the bus and wants to go to Fullbright Park.

Ron Davis said he would take them because a deviated route to Fullbright Park is not that tough.

Sally Mayo questioned if Mr. Davis has timed how long it would take to add Fullbright Park to the bus route.

Council Member Wentz commented the issue at this time is not to modify the route; modifications will be negotiated later.

Council Member Matson stated Yakima Transit will not make route changes without charging the City more money.

Ken Mehin informed Union Gap pays for two buses a day and there is no cost to deviate the route. He stated the issue becomes how often the buses run. If the City wants the buses to run every half hour the route must work for every half hour, otherwise the buses can run every hour. He stated it is up to what the City wants.

Bill Smedley questioned if the other providers have buses equipped with an audible voice system to announce street locations.

Madelyn Carlson informed People for People has no automated system, the drivers call out the bus stops on the fixed route systems.

Ron Davis informed Federal law requires the bus stops be called out on fixed route systems.

Mr. Aston questioned what provision is made for hearing impaired persons.

Lydia Warehime commented the senior center has people that cannot walk to bus stops and People for People has gone directly to their house and drivers have even shovelled snow for people so they could attend the senior center meals program.

Karen Allen informed Dial-a-Ride requires door-to-door service as long as people call in the day before.

Bill Smedley questioned who will be clearing snow from bus stops.

Council Member Wentz informed if an issue arises regarding snow removal in Union Gap people should notify the City because our Public Works crew is very responsive. He then invited the audience to browse the provider's booths and ask questions of the providers.

#### Adjournment

At 7:45 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Olson reminded the audience to fill out the questionnaires and adjourned the meeting.

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Jim Lemon, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Kathryn Thompson, CMC, City Clerk