

**DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way
April 22, 2008**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Skip Conkling, Ted Boesen, Steve Van Oort, Bob Mahaffey, Gaye Johnson, Angela Connolly, Bob Parks, Rick Clark Alternate for Chris Hensley

Alternate Present

Commissioners Chris Hensley

Absent:

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Brian Litchfield, Chief Development Officer; Sharon Scheip, Finance Director; Carol Pelfrey, Maintenance Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; Randy Ross, Human Resources Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; Debra Meyer, Capital Planning Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; PJ Sass, Joe Brick, Legal Counsel; John Hines, CPA

Others Present

Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Gunnar Olsen, Des Moines Register; Rick Clark, City of Des Moines; Angie Hunt, KCCI; Jesse Landott, KCCI; Rose Field, Around Des Moines.com; Jannay Tonne, WHO TV; Brian Fiser, WHO TV; Marlou Pieper, West Des Moines; Mark Liung, RNR Consulting; Tarak Chah, RNR Consulting; Sherrie Taha, DART; JP Golinvaux, IDOT

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skip Conkling called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Notice of the meeting was duly published.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Conkling called for corrections to the April 22, 2008 minutes.

Mr. Steve Van Oort moved, and Mr. Bob Mahaffey seconded that the March 25th minutes be approved as written.

The motion carried unanimously.

5 - PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION

No public comments.

The Chair asked if it would be acceptable to the commission if Discussion Item 8B could be presented prior to the rest of commission business to accommodate the television reporters deadlines. There were no objections.

Discussion Item 8B – Safety Initiatives

General Manager Brad Miller updated the commission on the initiatives that have been adopted at DART. He said that although DART's past safety training and methods and procedures meet all current guidelines, he said that due to the unfortunate accidents a comprehensive safety culture is being strongly promoted at DART. He told the board that the accidents have significantly affected the DART work force, and all employees were very motivated in doing anything possible in order to focus on safety issues.

Mr. Miller presented statistics on DART's safety record via a Power Point presentation (attached). He explained that DART's statistics, unlike most transit systems, includes all accidents from the smallest contact up. He said that if only reporting accidents deemed by the FTA to be above their guidelines for what needs to be reported, only 42 of the 626 accidents since January of 2005 would have been reportable. Of those 42, 19 were deemed to be preventable. 6 were injuries to passengers, and the four bus drivers responsible are no longer employed by DART. Only 9 accidents occurred with drivers who are still employed at DART.

Mr. Miller stated that while DART has accomplished some important objectives, John Bartosiewicz, the consultant from McDonald Transit Associates, has been asked to do a comprehensive analysis on safety issues for DART. Following are initiatives he listed that are currently being done:

- Mandatory pedestrian awareness training with an outside consultant.
- New accident policy for driver termination.
- Hiring a full-time Safety and Training Manager
- Signals on Walnut Street to be upgraded.
- Smith System Defensive Driving Training to be instituted.
- Beginning the Boss Recruitment Testing program for new applicants.
- Repairing all automatic mirror adjustment controls

He said that these are very tough standards that will make DART the best of the best in public transit safety initiatives.

Des Moines City Manager Rick Clark said that he thought Mr. Miller's presentation was excellent, and asked about the funding for the safety initiatives. Mr. Miller said that certain budget line items would be adjusted or postponed in order to institute the safety programs. Mr. Tom Gayman asked if DART buses could be equipped with an alarm to sound when buses were making left-hand turns through busy intersections. Mr. Miller said that DART had looked at technology, but that there were drawbacks to that type of alarm. Mr. Boesen said that a heightened risk management program would be good for the stability of the organization and the funds spent were a prudent investment in the long run. Mr. Clark asked if claims were monitored and expressed interest in seeing the claims history for the past five years. Mr. Miller stated that the DART Commission had approved an actuarial study last fall for future planning. He said that DART tracks all claims and reports quarterly to the commission on the status of outstanding claims. Chair Skip Conkling stated that safety has always been, and continues to be of primary importance at DART.

6 - CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Bob Parks asked that Consent Item 6C be removed from the list for further discussion.

Mr. Parks moved, and Ms. Angela Connolly seconded, that all Consent Items except Item 6C be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Item 6C – March Fixed Route Financial Report

Mr. Parks asked for an explanation of what the minus \$2,700 in the Employee Fund could be. Ms. Scheip said that she would check with Human Resources, who control that fund, and provide an explanation to the commission. Mr. Mahaffey asked about a discrepancy in the financial report. Ms. Scheip said that the final crashing of the accounting program, the figures were not correct in the detail, but that the summary sheet given to commission members had the accurate information on it.

Mr. Parks moved, and Mr. Boesen seconded that the Item 6C Fixed Route Financial Report be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item 7A – Budget Approval for Newspaper Publication

Action Item 7A – Opportunities Through Transit (OTT) Fare Price

Mr. Miller said that DART needs to fund the OTT program that provides discounted passes for those who can't afford them who meet certain guidelines. He said that currently the program costs \$250,000 a year, with DART funding \$210,000 and the City of Des Moines and Polk County funding the rest. He said that the fare increase that would increase the cost of the discounted pass from \$17 a month to \$21.00 would be a hardship for many clients to afford. He said that DART could continue to fund at the current level until the funding ran out, even if that means that some clients will have to be put on a waiting list to get passes.

City Manager Rick Clark questioned the fairness of this method and asked if some kind of allotment by need could be done. Mr. Litchfield said that all the clients are the most needy – there wouldn't be a way to pick and choose. Mr. Miller said that West Des Moines social services limits their transportation passes – that every qualified West Des Moines citizen gets an annual pass for free, but when the passes run out, no more qualified people will receive until the next year. Ms. Connolly asked if enough funds could be raised so that all qualified can ride. The Chair said it was unfortunate that those who need the service most might be denied. Mr. Clark suggested that the commission leave the cost at \$17 per month and that staff work on finding additional funding. Ms. Gaye Johnson asked how DART tracks users who don't use the passes, and if there might be a more efficient way to distribute the passes. Mr. Litchfield said that clients know they must use the passes or otherwise they are removed from the program. He said there is very little abuse of the program. Ms. Connolly asked if there might be an opportunity to get funding through a Prairie Meadows grant.

Mr. Gayman moved that DART maintain the current \$17 per monthly pass fee for the OTT program users and look over the next few months for alternative funding sources for the program. Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

The motion carried with eight commission members voting aye by voice vote, and one commission member, Skip Conkling, voting nay.

The motion carried by a vote of eight to one.

Action Item 7B – Endorsement of MPO's EPA Smart Growth Assistance Application

Mr. Miller said that the MPO had approved making application to the Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program at their April meeting. Deadline for the application is May 8. He said that the application would be for technical assistance support for the implementation of a Multimodal Transportation Oriented Development Plan for the region, and will identify key public transit improvements, and land use and development policies to support successful public transit.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Mahaffey that the DART Chair send a letter of support for the MPO's application, and that DART staff be allowed to actively participate in the Working Group should the application be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 7D – Line of Credit with Bankers Trust Company

Ms. Scheip explained the motivation for requiring a Line of Credit with Bankers Trust was to capitalize on purchasing large quantities of fuel when the price is right, for managing DART's cash flow requirements and to more easily meet its payment obligations. She assured commissioners that there will be no expense to DART due to the passing of this action item until DART invokes the line of credit.

It was moved by Ms. Connolly and seconded by Mr. Parks that the line of credit with Bankers Trust Company, N.A. be set up.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item 8A – City of Waukee's Resignation from DART membership

Mr. Miller discussed the history of Waukee's participation in DART to date. He said that he received a communication from the City of Waukee asking that they be removed from DART.

DART legal counsel Nolden Gentry explained that Waukee's status as a member is in question since they were not due to participate on the Commission until July 1, 2008. He stated that the 28M Agreement that established the regional transit authority did not describe the procedure for removing a community prior to their actual participation. He stated that the Waukee city council took their action withdrawing from DART without the knowledge or participation of DART legal counsel. He recommended discussing with appropriate participants and holding voting on an action to a future meeting. Mr. Miller went over the budget ramifications if Waukee and other communities withdraw from DART during a Power Point presentation. He stated that the argument some communities were making, that they want a formula that's value-based has pitfalls such as no community by itself can afford to expand service, and that service levels don't equate to service needs. He said that if decisions about DART are made by member city councils it compromises the integrity of the DART Commission. He said if all communities who have expressed that they may leave DART do so it would cause a budget shortfall of \$2.2 million in funding.

Mr. Van Oort stated that the City of Ankeny has had no discussions about leaving DART, either formally or informally. He announced that Ankeny ridership was up 27% this year. Ms. Connolly asked that the Waukee withdrawal action be postponed

until after the DART budget workshop on May 14th. She said that she realized that the city managers had sat down together numerous times during the past year and could not come up with a workable solution, but that there needs to be transportation options for the entire region now that fuel prices are approaching \$4 a gallon. She said that the big road earmarks of the past are not going to happen in the future, and that she believes that DART is the option the community needs. She said that she wants to find a solution that all communities can live with. Mr. Parks agreed. Chair Conkling asked what legally needed to be done. Mr. Gentry said that the DART Commission must act by June if there is going to be a disengagement from DART by one of its participants. Mr. Miller asked if Waukeewille could stay on as formerly approved while DART works with the Dallas County Assessor to delay the time at which the levy is made. Mr. Gentry said it might be possible to delay a year and give July 1, 2009 as the date for the agreement to be finalized by DART and the City of Waukeewille.

Mr. Clark said that regional cooperation is very important, and he would like more analysis city by city of what it would cost for them to provide their own bus service. He stated that the Des Moines city council is willing to stay open-minded and see what is brought up at the May 14th meeting.

Chair Conkling said that the discussion would continue at the May 14th meeting. He said that regarding Waukeewille, the DART commission will decide at its June meeting what to recommend; perhaps to accept Waukeewille's letter and then they can reapply at a later date. He said he will talk to Waukeewille's mayor and outline options.

Discussion Item 8C – Downtown Shuttle Update

Mr. Litchfield gave a presentation showing the route that the new Downtown shuttle, to be called the D Line, will take through downtown, and introduced the new trolleys to commission members. He said that there will be a press conference and ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday May 5th at 10 a.m. at the Brenton Skating Plaza.

8F – PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Mr. Litchfield said that ridership is up 15% from last year.

9 - MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Litchfield listed the companies that DART has signed to the Unlimited Access Program:

- Mercy Medical Center
- Davis Brown Law Firm

Ms. Connolly asked if any other hospitals have been approached. Mr. Litchfield said that he has been working on some new prospects.

Mr. Litchfield said that the changing out of the shelters and bus stops signs is proceeding, and that the process will speed up when more equipment will be made available for the contractor's use.

He announced that RideShare started up its 90th vanpool, and thanked Ms. Lovig and Ms. Woods for their hard work.

Mr. Miller begged for the assistance of the Commission Nominating Committee to help in getting mayors to appoint commissioners and alternates to the DART Commission.

10 - TRUSTEE ITEMS

Chair Conkling and General Manager Brad Miller acknowledged Brian Litchfield for his service to DART. Mr. Miller talked about the huge role that Brian played in all aspects of DART's functioning, and expressed his and staff's appreciation and best wishes for his success in his new position in North Carolina. Chair Conkling added the Commission's kudos. Mr. Litchfield was presented with some artifacts from DART's past as appreciation for his service.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

2008 Meeting Dates

June 3

June 24

July 29

No Board Meeting in August

September 23

October 28

November 25 (Tues before Thanksgiving)

December 16 11:00 a.m. meeting with holiday lunch to follow

Date: _____

Chair _____ Secretary _____