

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
July 29, 2008**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Robert Parks, Ted Boesen, Steve Van Oort, Bob Mahaffey, Angela Connolly, Tom Gayman, Christine Hensley, Gaye Johnson, Skip Conkling

Alternates Present Ruth Randleman

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer, Sharon Scheip, Finance Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Carol Pelfrey, Maintenance Director; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; Randy Ross, Human Resources Director; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Planning; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present Gunnar Olson and Rox Laird, Des Moines Register; Paula Dierenfeld, Johnston Mayor; Gary Lorenz, Ankeny; Sherrie Taha, DART driver; Robert Jester, Jester Insurance; Dylan Mullenix, MPO

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Skip Conkling at 5:04 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 June 24, 2008 minutes.

There being none, it was moved by Ms. Chris Hensley and seconded by Mr. Bob Mahaffey that the minutes be approved.

The minutes were approved as written.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

Shari Taha, DART driver, spoke to the Commission in her capacity as representative of the drivers' union, ATU. She had some suggestions put forward by union members in a handout (attached to paper copies of these minutes and available upon request).

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. FEMA Coordinator Approval
- B. FY2010 ICAAP Grant Application Authorizing Resolution
- C. Trans-Iowa Taxicab Paratransit Contract
- D. LINK Shuttle Contract Renewal
- E. May & June Fixed Route Financial Reports
- F. May & June Paratransit Financial Reports
- G. May & June RideShare Financial Reports

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Ms. Gaye Johnson that the Consent Items be approved

The motion carried unanimously.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Item 7A – DART Funding Formula Preliminary Principles**

General Manager Brad Miller provided a summary and schedule for a workshop with consultant John Bartosiewicz of McDonald Transit Associates to formulate some guiding principles for deciding on a funding formula. He stated that once approved by the Commission, the principles would be mailed to the mayors and councils of all 19 DART member cities for their feedback. He announced that the workshop will be held on Tuesday August 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. Mr. Miller said that following this workshop there would still be time to inform city councils about the funding formula that best addressed the approved principles.

Mr. Steve Van Oort asked at what point the Commission would officially approve the principles. Mr. Miller responded that there was no intent to have the Commission give formal approval – that the principles were to be the guidelines for approving a formula. Mr. Van Oort disagreed with this approach and thought it important that the Commission formally vote on each principal. It was discussed and a consensus reached that an additional DART Commission meeting would be held on August 14<sup>th</sup> with the express purpose of approving the funding formula principles..

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Parks that the first two principles on the draft principles handout be approved.

Ms. Angela Connolly asked why the Commission was voting, since she understood that there was just going to be discussion on the principles. Mr. Miller confirmed that no formal action was to be taken on the principles. Legal Counsel Nolden Gentry confirmed that the motion and second could be rescinded and that general discussion could resume. Ms. Hensley and Mr.

Parks withdrew their motion and second. Discussion on the principles resumed and minor modifications of the wording of the principles ensued (a copy of the principles with changes is attached).

Mr. Gayman asked that a subcommittee of the Commission be appointed to bring issues to the full DART Commission. Chair Conkling stated that he didn't see a need for another subcommittee, and that any Commissioner was welcome to bring any issue before the Commission. There was discussion by Commissioners on how issues and information were introduced to Commission members, and how better to keep Commissioners informed. Ms. Connolly said that maybe DART should have a technical committee like the MPO, and perhaps an update on DART issues at the MAC meetings. Mr. Parks added that he didn't think DART needed a committee, because for those interested all the board packets and other information was readily available on the DART website, for those who were interested, particularly DART member cities, and for Commission members to review as well.

Ms. Hensley said she felt that the summary and the discussion had proved valuable. Chair Conkling stated that the revised principles would be given to all member cities for their review immediately. It was decided that there would be a stakeholders meeting and adoption of the principles on August 14<sup>th</sup>, and that Monday August 11<sup>th</sup> would be the deadline for comments from member cities.

#### **Action Item 7B – Operations/Payroll Software Purchase**

A summary of the details on this software purchase was introduced.

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Parks that the purchase of the software be approved.

The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Action Item 7C – Endorsement of Downtown Tram Feasibility Study**

Mr. Miller brought Commission members up to date on the status of the Downtown Des Moines Tram study. He told the Commission that it was remarkable that such a study would be funded by private funds from Nationwide Insurance. While the study is privately funded, he said it would be critically important for DART to maintain a significant role in the design process as the transit provider in the region. The Downtown Community Alliance (DCA) had produced an RFP for a consultant to complete the study and a selection of a firm should be made in August. He recommended the Commission should formally endorse the Tram Study as the City of Des Moines and DCA would be doing.

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Van Oort that the Commission endorse the Tram Feasibility Study.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **8A – Reductions to Bus Plus Program Geographic Coverage**

Mr. Miller noted that a recent letter received from a number of Mayors in the region had suggested that DART's ADA-mandated program, "Bus Plus" be limited to a strict interpretation of the ADA requirements. He said staff had investigated the status of the program and was prepared to clarify to the commission what the Mayor's suggestion would mean to DART's ridership. Ms. Elizabeth Presutti gave a PowerPoint presentation to show DART's service area for the Bus Plus program, and explained that DART is currently providing more service than federal regulations require. She gave options for reducing service to only meet the requirements and discussed the impact of each on the DART budget.

Ms. Hensley asked how many people would be affected if the reductions were made and Mr. Chet Bor said that approximately 2,800 annual trips would be affected but he was not certain how many different people those trips represented. Mr. Miller added that Paratransit provided about 180,000 annual trips, most of which are funded by Polk County. Mr. Van Oort suggested deferring a decision until the 2010 budget is done. Mr. Miller said that suggestion would be adequate and agreed to bring the issue back in coordination with future budget discussions.

### **8B – Actuarial Study**

Mr. Miller introduced Bob Jester of Jester Insurance who presented a recently completed Actuarial Study of DART's liability claim history to the Commission. Mr. Jester said that the study reviewed only vehicle accidents, with five years of data reported from 7-1-2003 to 7-1-2007. He noted that these years did not include the significant pedestrian accidents that occurred after this review period. He stated that the Commission had asked for the study to provide guidance about what policy level for DART's liability retention fund should be set. He talked about the difference between an average year dollar amount for claims paid by DART and a catastrophic year, and talked about the possible losses over the next four years. He recommended that the Commission change its practice of retaining just one "catch-all" fund but rather structure its reserves into three different reserve funds:

1. Fund #1 would be a "regular" liability fund set to the Actuarial Study level of \$548,943.
2. Fund #2 would be a "catastrophic" liability fund set at \$1 million dollars or ½ of DART's self-insured level of coverage.
3. Fund #3 would be a "FY2008 Major Accident" Fund to specifically fund claims made related to the major pedestrian accidents DART has incurred in the last year.

Mr. Miller explained that establishing all these funds in the upcoming budget cycle would be challenging given the other major drivers of cost increases facing DART, he did believe the Commission should approve this structure and work over time to build each fund up to its policy-stated level.

### **8D – Quarterly Safety Report**

Mr. Miller said that while total accidents were up, DART had a great 4<sup>th</sup> quarter due to new safety initiatives that have been instituted, providing the lowest total accidents for the quarter in years. He said that the extremely long and hard winter was in large part the reason for more accidents in total for the year.

Chair Conkling asked if there would be any changes in the way accident statistics are documented, since DART records more than FTA rules require. Mr. Miller said that DART would continue to record every accident, but that new procedures for keeping statistics would be able DART to show a breakdown by severity.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

Mr. Miller said that DART provided 4.6 million rides during the fiscal year – the highest total in 26 years.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Ms. Presutti brought the Commission up to date on current new members of DART's Unlimited Access program, stating that Mercy Medical Center, the Davis Brown law firm, the City of Des Moines, State of Iowa and Grandview College have all joined the program. Mr. Miller added that on the first day of sign up at the Statehouse to educate State employees on DART there were record numbers of interested employees waiting in line, and customer service was seeing hundreds of "trip planning" inquiries.

Mr. Miller highlighted a recent Polk County-sponsored survey of Paratransit users showed 95% considered the service to be "good or excellent". He commended Mr. Bor and his team for their dedication and hard work.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Chair Skip Conkling called for a motion to recess and reconvene in a closed session.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Boesen that the Commission meeting be recessed and reconvened in closed session pursuant to Section 21.5, Subsection 1, Paragraph C of the Iowa Code, to discuss as necessary strategy with counsel regarding litigation issues.

Roll Call: Parks yes, Boesen yes, Conkling yes, Connolly yes, Johnson yes, Van Oort yes, Mahaffey yes.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Conkling recessed the meeting at 7:20 pm.

The closed session was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

The regular board meeting was resumed at 7:38 pm. The Chair stated for the record that no action was taken during the closed session.

## **TRUSTEE ITEMS**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

**2008 Meeting Dates**

Sept 30

Oct 28

Nov 25

Dec 16 holiday lunch

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_\_