

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way
June 3, 2008**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Skip Conkling, Steve Van Oort, Bob Mahaffey, Gaye Johnson, Angela Connolly, Bob Parks, Chris Hensley (via Phone), Tom Gayman

Alternate Present

Commissioners Ted Boesen

Absent:

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; 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; Randy McKern, Transportation Manager; Debra Meyer, Capital Planning Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Peg Hadley, Customer Service Supervisor; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Program Development Manager; Sharree Woods, Staff Accountant; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present Gunnar Olson, Des Moines Register; Rox Laird, Des Moines Register; Sherrie Taha, DART Driver; Cheryl Wolfe, DART Driver; Donita Snook, Urbandale Chamber of Commerce; 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 any corrections to the previous month's Minutes. Mr. Gayman asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that he was, in

fact, present at that meeting; he had not been listed at all. It was moved and seconded to accept the Minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cheryl Taha, a DART driver, asked to address the Commission with several concerns and comments regarding safety issues from a driver's perspective, along with her suggestions for improving working conditions and service. She read her statement verbatim (Commissioners should all have a copy).

Mr. Parks commented that the Commission and staff have been working with the union. Ms. Taha responded that the 38% turnover rate would negate union negotiations. Mr. Parks continued, addressing her suggestion for the need for more Commission members by saying that the Commissioners are elected and represent their communities and/or the persons within their regions so he saw no need for additional representation. He concluded by saying that he believes this Commission can and will work on the issues she brought up in her presentation.

Mr. Conkling added that the Commission is looking at safety issues, especially in the past 6-12 months, and took issue that she alluded that the Commission was not interested in the issues Ms. Taha brought up. Mr. Conkling asked if there were any other person(s) wishing to speak. There were none. He thanked Ms. Taha for her comments.

CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Conkling then asked if there was any discussion needed regarding the three consent items: A) April Fixed Route Financial Reports; B) April Paratransit Financial Reports; C) April RideShare Financial Reports. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve. Mr. Parks moved, and Ms. Connelly seconded. The motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Cancellation of Waukee's DART Participation

Mr. Conkling stated that he has talked to Waukee representatives and encouraged them to at least maintain Tier Two membership (which is membership in DART with once a week On-Call service similar to Bondurant, Carlisle, etc.). He said he would like to give them until the close of business June 16, 2008, to rescind their letter of intent to cancel membership in DART and either decide to become a full member again, or

accept Tier Two membership. Otherwise, their membership would be terminated completely.

Ms. Hensley inquired about DART providing Paratransit service to Waukee should they opt out. The reply was if they opted out they would have HIRTA Paratransit service only.

Mr. Miller said that the adopted budget included Waukee as a full participant and although no new bus service was proposed in FY2009 for Waukee, the budget had assumed approximately \$15,000 in tax revenue from the 5% portion of the current DART formula that is assessed to all communities.

Much discussion followed on the tax levy structure, etc. Then Mr. Conkling called for a motion to give Waukee until June 16, 2008 to respond, which would give us three days to notify the county tax assessor of their decision. Ms. Connolly moved, and Mr. Parks seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Gayman inquired if we needed to notify Waukee representatives of this decision by DART. Mr. Conkling will let them know that they have until close of business June 16, 2008.

Mr. Parks asked if there was a possible option of putting them in a new category called "Admitted (to DART) with no service at this time". Ms. Hensley commented that this seemed to be more trouble than it was worth. Mr. Conkling asked legal counsel his opinion. Counsel replied that nothing in the 28M Agreement covers "Admitted", so advised not creating a new category.

Mr. Parks then inquired if their withdrawal will create budget problems. Mr. Miller replied that the \$15,000 loss was relatively minor.

B. FY2009 DART Paratransit Budget

Mr. Miller explained that this was basically the same budget as passed in February 2008 with just a few changes; primarily fuel costs. There was discussion on where the money would come from to cover the rising fuel costs. Mr. Miller said that DART is proposing an additional \$0.75 surcharge per trip over and above the per trip rate proposed in February 2008. Ms. Johnson asked if the surcharge would be dropped if fuel prices decrease dramatically. Mr. Miller responded affirmatively.

Mr. Miller also explained that the other significant increase in the Paratransit Budget compared to a year ago was the inclusion for the first

time, of a \$250,000 contribution by the Paratransit program to the DART Liability Reserve fund. Previously only the Fixed Route budget (supported by the DART Tax Levy) funded the Liability Reserve fund but over the years, significant claims have been incurred due to service funded in the Paratransit Budget. Mr. Gayman asked if the \$250,000 liability was for all of DART's operations or just Paratransit. Mr. Miller explained that DART already has \$750,000 in Fixed Route liability reserve; the \$250,000 would be an additional contribution towards a single DART liability pool.

Mr. Van Oort moved, and Mr. Parks seconded to approve Action Item B. Motion carried.

C. FY2009 Des Moines Public Schools Contract

Mr. Miller went through the written proposal and asked if there were any questions. Mr. Parks commented that he has spoken with some DMPS employees and they are very happy with the current service they are receiving through this year's contract.

Mr. Parks then moved, and Ms. Connolly seconded, to approve Action Item C. Motion carried. Mr. Conkling added that we should take some time to review the school contract to be sure we are not losing any revenue.

D. FTA Proposed School Bus Service Policy Changes: Revise Legislative Priorities

Mr. Miller highlighted changes in the FTA's policy regarding DART providing service to public schools. Mr. Parks said persons attending the conference in Washington, DC, should take the opportunity to talk to Representatives and Senators about this policy.

Ms. Hensley motioned, and Mr. Parks seconded to approve Action Item D. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Proposed Action Plan for DART Levy Formula Consideration

Suzanne Robinson, Mr. Miller's assistant, will be asked to contact all Commissioners to set up a meeting to discuss the levy formula and come to a consensus on how to obtain funding for the needs of DART.

Discussion that followed focused on the use of an independent consultant, Mr. John Bartosiewicz from McDonald Transit Associates during the upcoming levy and formula discussions: Mr. Conkling indicated he preferred to use the consultant in a support role. Mr. Gayman thinks we need to use Mr. Bartosiewicz (the consultant from McDonald Transit Associates) as a resource to collectively come together and agree on the basic principles. Ms. Connolly agreed, stating Mr. Bartosiewicz is needed for strategic planning. Mr. Gayman said that we need to establish principles to move forward with the plan to present to the communities. Mr. Parks noted that we need to arrive at a funding formula to accommodate service(s) provided and also agrees that Mr. Bartosiewicz is an essential part of the planning process.

Mr. Conkling stressed the need to resolve the levy issue. Ms. Hensley thinks that Mr. Bartosiewicz needs to be brought in as well to get some feedback from him on how best to proceed.

It was suggested that Mr. Conkling, Ms. Connelly, and Ms. Hensley meet with Mr. Bartosiewicz prior to the full meeting to prepare for the discussion with the full Commission. Mr. Miller will work with Mr. Bartosiewicz to be sure this meeting occurs. Mr. Miller and Mr. Bartosiewicz will facilitate the discussion.

Ms. Hensley had to leave the meeting at 6:17 p.m. due to another commitment, but before she hung up she said it was imperative to get moving on the funding issues.

B. Performance Reports

There was some brief discussion on budget issues. Otherwise, there were no comments regarding any of the Performance Reports.

OTHER

Mr. Miller then introduced our two newest administrative employees: Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Program Development Manager; and Sharree Woods, Staff Accountant.

Ms. Connelly asked questions regarding DART's OTT (Opportunities Through Transit) Program: Is there a waiting list to be admitted to the program and had we identified any additional City of Des Moines funds to help keep the OTT fares down? Mr. Miller replied that a waiting list remained but was being better managed by staff to weed out participants that are not actively riding DART. He added that, for now, we were keeping

the cost of a monthly OTT Pass at \$17.00 and are looking for other funding to be able to keep the cost down for these very low-income customers. He noted Polk County's offer to provide additional funds so long as the City of Des Moines provided matching assistance.

Mr. Conkling then took a moment to thank his fellow Commissioners for all their hard work, time, and dedication to DART and its mission to provide public transportation.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Gayman moved, and Mr. Parks seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.