

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
November 18, 2008**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent: Ted Boesen

Alternates Present: Ben Champ for Ted Boesen

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

Others Present Gunnar Olson, Des Moines Register; Paula Dierenfeld, Johnston Mayor; DART driver Sherrie Taha; Dylan Mullenix, MPO, Andrew Schlumbohm, Goodwill Industries; Dylan Mullenix, MPO

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Skip Conkling 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 October 28, 2008 minutes.

There being no comments on the minutes, it was moved by Mr. Robert Parks and seconded by Mr. Bob Mahaffey that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved as written.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

No public comments were received.

**CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. State Lobbyist Contract
- B. October Fixed Route Financial Report
- C. October Paratransit Financial Report
- D. October RideShare Financial Report

Mr. Parks made a motion to remove the word “perhaps” from the last section of the consent item discussing the expansion of the Wimmer firm’s responsibilities to include federal lobbying efforts. Chair Conkling said that the motion is not necessary, since Mr. Wimmer has already approved that possibility. The motion was withdrawn by Mr. Parks.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Gayman that the Consent Items be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Item 7A – New contract with the City of Des Moines regarding park-and-ride funds**

General Manager Brad Miller explained the process, and also pointed out a typo and that the “Exhibit A” that is included in this packet under Action Item 7B was intended to be an Exhibit with the contract in this item 7A. He said that DART and the City of Des Moines had concluded their specific negotiations on the new contract and per the Commission’s directive, it was now being presented for approval. He noted that the Des Moines City Council will approve the transfer of \$400,000 in parking garage funds by December 31, 2008, and of another \$400,000 by January 31, 2009. Ms. Connolly stated that she had verified this information with Des Moines City Council members Christine Hensley and Bob Mahaffey. Legal Counsel Nolden Gentry confirmed that he has reviewed the contract and added “Buy-Down” language for the City of Des Moines in Paragraph 3 that is consistent with the proposed levy Buy-Down procedures to be approved in the next item, 7B. Mr. Parks asked if the vote was for all or nothing, since he was not in agreement with step 3 of approved DART funding formula shown in Exhibit A. Nolden Gentry explained that the DART Commission approved the new formula governing the allocation of funds at the Commission meeting on October 28, 2008, with a unanimous vote. Mr. Parks said he had no further questions.

Ms. Hensley moved, and Ms. Connolly seconded that the contract be approved.

**Roll Call: Champ yes, Conkling yes, Gayman yes, Connolly yes, Johnson yes, Mahaffey yes, Parks no, Van Oort yes, Hensley yes. The motion carried with 8 voting yes, and Mr. Parks voting no.**

### **Action Item 7B – Municipality Levy Buy-Down Procedures**

Mr. Miller explained that this procedure outlines a timeline for cities to follow if they choose, as the new formula allows, to reduce their DART Tax Levy by substituting alternative funds. A community would have to pay this alternative funding to DART in October and April and notify DART of their intention to do so by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year. Ms. Connolly made sure commission members were aware that any Buy-Down would only take place at the request of each community.

It was moved by Mr. Van Oort and seconded by Ms. Connolly that the procedures for communities to buy-down their individual levies be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Action Item 7C – Approval of Public Hearings for FY-2010 Service Adjustments**

Mr. Miller had handouts for the commission (attached).

He explained that because of the drop in fuel prices, adjustments were being made in the budget to set diesel fuel costs at \$3.25. He said that the focus on the budget would now be on driver overtime and maintenance expense for parts, which now look to combine for approximately \$150,000 over budget. He stated that the good news is that the estimated budget shortfall is \$200,000 instead of the \$400,000 that was estimated earlier. He said that there were a number of assumptions made:

- DART hopes to roll out any large liability payouts over a long term with a no interest loan.
- DART needs to readjust its contingency fund in order to free up \$200k to \$300k to help balance the budget. This would be done by temporarily waiving DART's adopted financial policy of retaining 1/12<sup>th</sup> or 8.25% of annual expenses in its contingency fund. The contingency fund would be lowered to 5%.
- DART assumes that property values in each community will rise by either 3% or 6% just as the assumptions during the Levy formula discussions assumed.

He presented a list of significant service reductions and modifications and noted that the list was far greater than the adjustments needed to close the \$200,000 shortfall. He said that public hearings needed to be scheduled to bring possible service cuts and changes to the attention of DART customers. Ms. Hensley asked if service changes and/or cuts would be based only on ridership figures. Mr. Miller said that DART staff is in the process of developing a number of performance measures, not just ridership so that commission members would have a somewhat level playing field in order to make decisions. He noted that DART had already arranged for an outside scheduling consultant to look at current service to see if there were any efficiencies that could be found. The consultant had completed his review and had reported that DART services are extremely efficient and well designed, pointing to no immediate efficiency opportunities. Mr. Miller, in an aside, thanked Transportation Director Jim Tishim, stating that service design is an art more than a science, and that DART has a premiere service scheduler in Mr. Tishim who had developed the schedule design over his 20-year career at DART.

Ms. Hensley asked what the impact of cutting service would be on DART's federal funding, since that funding is contingent on ridership. Mr. Miller said that there would be an impact, but that impact was not identified as it would not take effect until future years. He did agree however, that future year funding would drop if ridership and service were eliminated.

Ms. Hensley stated that she feels the most difficult change for the transit-dependent community would be to cut night and weekend service, and that this type of cut would fall much more heavily on the poorest in the community. Mr. Parks added that he thought a reduction in frequency on certain routes would be better than cutting service. Mr. Van Oort also noted it would be difficult for him to sell these adjustments within his Ankeny community.

Mr. Van Oort asked if there was a way to defer this action item, so that commission members could see performance measures and statistics first.

After some discussion, it was moved by Mr. Van Oort that this action item be deferred until commission members receive draft performance measures, and action taken at the December 16 commission meeting. Ms. Hensley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller asked that a committee of commissioners be appointed to look at performance measures and then bring their conclusions to the December commission meeting. Chair Conkling asked legal counsel if a motion to that effect would need to have been on the approved meeting agenda, and Mr.

Gentry replied that the motion could be made and voted on without that step. Mr. Van Oort moved that the Chair appoint a task force committee to study performance measures and bring recommendations to the full commission. Mr. Parks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Conkling asked for volunteers to join the committee and work over the next 30 days to find recommendations for service changes. Appointed to serve were:

- **Mr. Van Oort**
- **Mr. Boesen**
- **Ms. Hensley**

### **Action Item 7D – Nomination of TRAC Membership**

Ms. Presutti announced that the new Transit Riders Advisory Committee would meet for the first time at an orientation at DART on December 9<sup>th</sup>. She said that their first working meeting would be on Tuesday January 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:30 a.m. at DART. Mr. Miller thanked all the commissioners for taking time to appoint their TRAC representatives from the many applicants that expressed interest in being on the committee.

Ms. Connolly moved, and Mr. Parks seconded that those nominated to the TRAC committee be approved for membership. Chair Conkling read the list of names of the nominated committee members for the record. They are:

Conkling Nominee	- Linda Urias
Van Oort Nominee	- Gini Wolf
Hensley Nominee	- Paul Bice
Connolly Nominee	- Crystal Estabrook
Connolly Nominee	- Audra Zimmerman
Johnson Nominee	- Eileen Bradley
Johnson Nominee	- Mary McGee
Parks Nominee	- Helen Boles
Boesen Nominee	- Jill Clothier
Mahaffey Nominee	- Sarah Riley
Gayman Nominee	- Kelly Henry
GM Nominee	- Jade Howser
GM Nominee	- Jinsong Chen

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Action Item 7E – Approval to Negotiate Land Purchase**

Mr. Miller explained that this action item's approval will give DART authorization to submit an offer for the land purchase to Hubbell Realty. Legal Counsel Nolden Gentry said all the preliminary reviews have taken place and he is ready to submit the offer for the 1.47 acres of land, with three contingencies:

- The offer will be subject to the required environmental study and its outcome.
- The offer will be subject to confirmation that DART can build its expansion given the known easements from 10,800 to 15,000 square feet.

Mr. Miller reminded commission members that since DART will be using federal dollars for this purchase, DART must follow FTA procedures in the whole process. He said that DART has completed the environmental study and that the study has been sent to the FTA.

Mr. Parks moved and Ms. Connolly seconded that DART be given authorization by the commission to submit an offer for the land purchase.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Discussion Item 8-A – DART Human Resources Update**

Human Resources Director Randy Ross introduced his staff: Diana Duncan and Cindy Nelson. He listed a number of initiatives that DART's Human Resources Department was involved in implementing, including safety initiatives. He discussed the bus/pedestrian accidents and the procedures in place regarding the timeline of events for the driver who was dismissed from her position and the subsequent outcome in the unemployment hearing which was discussed in a Des Moines Register article.

He introduced Diana Duncan who shared a Power Point presentation with the commission on recruitment of drivers. Mr. Ross then explained some new initiatives developed to reduce DART's workers compensation claims, meet OSHA standards and introduce more stringent safety inspections. Ms. Hensley thanked Mr. Ross and his staff for an excellent presentation. Mr. Miller stated that Human Resources was doing a fantastic job in enhancing safety procedures and in recruitment at DART.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

Mr. Miller said that ridership is still up even though gasoline prices have declined. He stated that DART is not losing too many riders – that once they try the bus they are staying with us.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Miller thanked Chairman Conkling and Ms. Connolly for attending the Mass Transit Interim Committee meeting at the Statehouse recently. He also said that the governor's Climate Change Advisory Council voted to include transit as one of the 50 recommendations the group made at the urging of Mr. Miller and other transit supporters.

Chair Conkling asked Mr. Gentry to review the 28M Agreement and submit a document showing the duties of the commission at an upcoming meeting.

## **COMMISSIONER ITEMS – Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee consisting of the following members:

- Angela Connolly
- Bob Parks
- Bob Mahaffey

gave their recommendation to the Commission for officers for 2009:

Proposed Chair – Angela Connolly

Proposed Vice Chair – Bob Mahaffey

Proposed Sec./Treasurer – Ted Boesen

The slate will be voted on at the December 16 Commission meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

**2008 Meeting Dates**

Dec 16 holiday lunch – meeting starts at 11:00  
a.m.

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

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