

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
September 30, 2008**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent: None

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; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; 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; Frank Strong, CICIL; Marjorie Shade; Don Sandor, Pleasant Hill; Bob Layton, Urbandale; Rick Clark, Des Moines City Manager; Scott Sanders, City of WDM; Cheryl Wolf, ATU #441; Sherrie Taha, DART driver; Dylan Mullenix, MPO

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Skip Conkling at 5:03 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 July 29, 2008 minutes.

There being none, it was moved by Mr. Robert Parks and seconded by Ms. Christine Hensley that the minutes be approved.

The minutes were approved as written.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF SPECIAL APTA GRANT AWARD TO CICIL**

Mr. Frank Strong of the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living (CICIL) was introduced to the Commission and announced that the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has awarded a grant for CICIL to work with DART to provide bus training and promote public transit in the community. He said that special training sessions were scheduled to be held at the Downtown Library. Mr. Strong also thanked the Commission for keeping the fares for the Opportunities Through Transit (OTT) passes at the same level even though all other fares were increased over the summer. Chair Skip Conkling thanked Mr. Strong and CICIL for their support of public transit.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

Ms. Marjorie Shade, 1201 Laurel Street, asked that the #5 bus be re-routed to its original route (Day Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street to University) prior to the I-235 freeway bridge construction detour (the bus goes all the way to University via 9<sup>th</sup> Street). It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Ms. Angela Connolly that the Commission receive and file with DART staff the information for research on the merits of re-routing the #5 bus.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS REGARDING DEBT ISSUANCE**

- A. Public Hearing #1: \$2.5 Million Line of Credit
- B. Public Hearing #2: \$800,000 Lease

Chair Conkling opened Public Hearing #1 at 5:12 p.m. and asked if any members in the audience wished to speak to the Commission. Hearing no one in the audience respond, he then asked General Manager Brad Miller if he had received any written communications regarding the issue. Mr. Miller responded that he had received none. Chair Conkling stated that hearing no further discussion on the issue, that the General Manager's recommendation for the Commission to approve a line of credit with Bankers Trust Company (\$600,000 for cash flow management and \$1,900,000 for fuel purchases) renewable annually with a maturity of December 31, 2008 be approved.

It was moved by Mr. Ted Boesen and seconded by Mr. Parks that the \$2.5 million line of credit be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Conkling opened Public Hearing #2 at 5:15 p.m. and asked if any members in the audience wished to speak to the Commission. Hearing no one in the audience respond, he then asked General Manager Brad Miller if he had received any written communications regarding the issue. Mr. Miller responded that he had received none. Chair Conkling stated that hearing no further discussion on the issue, that General Manager Brad Miller's recommendation that the Commission approve the execution of a five-year lease with Bank of the West for \$800,000 to finance the replacement of DART's antiquated Management Information System be approved.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Bob Mahaffey that the lease be approved.

The motion carried with all voting Aye with the exception of Ms. Hensley who abstained on this vote.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. McDonald Transit Associates Contract
- B. Karl Chevrolet Van Purchase
- C. July and August Fixed Route Financial Reports
- D. July and August Paratransit Financial Reports
- E. July and August RideShare Financial Reports

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Ms. Angela Connolly that the Consent Items be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Item 9A – Transmittal of New Tax Levy Formula to Participating Communities**

Mr. Miller announced that a consensus was reached earlier in the day by members of the Service and Budget Committee on a new funding formula. He stated that the Commission will vote to approve the new formula at the October Commission meeting following presentations to DART member city councils and mayors to explain the formula. Mr. Miller brought the Commission up-to-date on the events since the last Commission meeting culminating in the Service and Budget Committee's consensus in the funding formula being presented this evening. He said there were three components that were included in the formula:

1. Maintenance of Effort: Each community will pay a part of the DART subsidy. The first \$4.7 million of the formula is to be paid every year. The City of Des Moines will pay 70% with the other 30% paid by all the rest. The remainder will be paid through property taxes.
2. The City of Des Moines parking revenues will buy down the Des Moines subsidy only.
3. The City of Des Moines asked that the Downtown Shuttle costs be spread among all cities, rather than considered contract service.

Mr. Miller explained that the Service and Budget Committee agreed that the previously presented formula contained a "fatal flaw" in that the regional buy-in, which provided that the cities paid a yearly subsidy to make up for the fact that the City of Des Moines paid an unproportional extra rate for all the years of MTA's existence, meant that some communities would end up with a rate greater than the City of Des Moines. So Des Moines officials agreed to a regional cap on the buy-in. The assumption was also agreed upon that in every large suburban community property values would go up 6% annually, and in the small communities would grow 3% - with this growth meaning costs for the cities will go down over time.

Des Moines agreed, in exchange for the parking fees clause and the Downtown Shuttle costs being spread, to pay the original request by DART for \$800,000.

Des Moines City Manager Rick Clark was asked to explain the history of the parking revenue funds that are being paid to DART.

Urbandale City Manager Bob Layton explained how the consensus was reached by the Service and Budget Committee. Ms. Connolly thanked Mr. Layton for his diligence in getting a funding formula worked out that all cities could agree on, and which met most of the principles the Commission, with the help of John Bartosiewicz from McDonald Transit Associates, agreed on at an earlier Commission meeting. Ms. Hensley asked if there would be a transition period in implementing the formula, and Mr. Layton said that there would be no transition period.

Mr. Miller showed on the screen the new prospective formula and how it matched up with the principles. Ms. Hensley thanked all parties who worked on the formula, and stated that it would be a start in allowing DART to grow and improve without each city manager wondering how that growth would impact their part of the formula. She said that she would go back to the Des Moines City Council and ask for their support of this agreement. Ms. Connolly mentioned that Polk County government had also compromised, since the new formula did not include funding for Paratransit service, as was originally provided. She particularly thanked General Manager Brad Miller for all his hard work in finding a way to keep cooperation among member communities, and promoting further regional sharing by the success of this effort. Mr. Gayman thanked everyone who was involved in the long process of finding consensus on a formula. Commissioners discussed the wisdom of making sure one or more of them attended each presentation to member city councils by the General Manager. Mr. Miller reminded Commission members that the presentations to city councils were informational only, and that voted approval by member city councils was not necessary.

Mr. Parks moved, and Ms. Hensley seconded that the General Manager transmit the preferred new tax levy formula to DART member communities, and that a vote by the Commission on the new formula be set for DART's October 28, 2008 Commission meeting.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Action Item 9B – MPO Long-Range Plan Goals Submittal**

Mr. Miller summarized the background of the MPO's plan to update its federally required long-range transportation plan. He stated that the last long-range plan provided that 99% of anticipated funding would support road projects and 1% of the funds would support all non-road investments including transit, trails, rail, etc. Mr. Miller suggested that the new plan contain more transit-oriented goals. Chair Conkling stated that he attended that morning a meeting of the MPO's Growth Scenario Task Force, and that the task force went through the recommendations from DART and approved their presentation to the full MPO. Mr. Miller said that the goal of the MPO should be a reduction in road miles traveled instead of past steady increases supported by the plans. Ms. Hensley asked if the 10% reduction in travel on I-235 had been successful. Mr. Mullenix of the MPO said that his office was doing a study to see how successful that program has been.

Mr. Parks moved and Mr. Mahaffey seconded that DART submit comments and suggestions regarding transit-supportive goals to the MPO to include in their 2035 long-range transportation plan. The motion carried unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **10-A – Transit Riders Advisory Committee – Action Taken**

Mr. Miller introduced DART Chief Development Officer Elizabeth Presutti to present to the Commission the intent to form a Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC), with a vote by the Commission to approve to be held at the November Commission meeting. She explained that the committee would be made up of one representative from each of the seven DART regions, two at-large representatives appointed by the DART General Manager, one representative appointed by Central Iowa RideShare and one by Paratransit. She explained that a report will be presented at every Commission meeting on the committee's activities. Ms. Hensley said she thought this was an excellent idea. Mr. Miller said that it would also serve as a great staff development exercise.

Ms. Hensley moved and Mr. Boesen seconded to approve at the current Commission meeting the establishment of a Transit Riders Advisory Committee.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

Mr. Miller announced that DART had its highest ridership month since 1996.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Miller thanked DART staff for doing a great job planning the annual Safety Banquet. He said that he has received lots of positive comments. One component of the awards honored drivers and mechanics who have gone a full year with no violations. He said that DART experienced the lowest incidence of accidents for a three-month period in six years, and that lots of new safety initiatives were being implemented.

Mr. Miller updated the Commission on the status of new FTA rules concerning school service. He said that even with numerous comments by transit systems all over the country, the rules were not modified, and thus could mean the end of providing service to the Des Moines Public School system. He said that the goal in promulgating these new rules is so that schools will have to contract for service with private operators in their communities.

Ms. Hensley said she had heard numerous positive comments regarding the new Downtown Shuttle. Mr. Miller said that ridership was an amazing and unexpected 18,990 total for the month of July.

## **COMMISSIONER ITEMS – Change in Commission meeting date approved**

Mr. Van Oort reminded Commissioners that there will be a Transportation Roundtable with Congressman Boswell next Thursday.

Mr. Mullenix of the MPO informed Commissioners that a discussion regarding bus service between Ames and Des Moines took place at the MPO Transportation Roundtable meeting. He said that a follow-up meeting would be set.

There was discussion among Commissioners regarding their availability for the next Commission meeting scheduled during Thanksgiving week, culminating in voting to set the meeting date one week ahead, on November 18<sup>th</sup> 2008.

**It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Parks that the DART Commission meeting date be moved from November 25<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

The motion carried unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

### **2008 Meeting Dates**

Oct 28    Nov 18    Dec 16 holiday lunch

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

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