

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way
December 15, 2009**

ROLL CALL

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

Commissioners Absent:

Alternates Present: Ruth Randleman

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer; Randy Ross, HR Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; PJ Sass, Customer Service manager; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; Randy McKern, Transportation Assistant; Suzanne Robinson, Clerk to the Commission; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present: Lars Hulsebus, Des Moines Register; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Drivers/Supervisors Danny Townsend; Cheryl Wolf, Greg Schmitt, Sherrie Taha and Tim Moroney, and Dana Conn and Tom Kunstle with TMA, TRAC Chair Ginni Wolf, Dara Sinnard from Whitfiend & Eddy for Grimes; DART customer, John Halsband

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Angela Connolly 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 Connolly called for corrections to the November 17, 2009 minutes.

There being no comments on the minutes, it was moved by Ms. Christine Hensley and seconded by Mr. Tom Gayman that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION

DART driver Sherri Taha commented on some possible route changes (narrative attached) that she feels will enhance safety and better serve riders.

Mr. Skip Conkling asked if DART employees have met to offer suggestions for budget savings, and Mr. Miller said that they had – that the Runcut Committee has met, and the established Labor/Management group meets on a regular basis.

PUBLIC MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Connolly called to order the Public Meeting for comments on the Proposed FY2011 DART Fixed Route Budget, Fare Adjustment and Service Modifications. Mr. Miller gave a presentation (attached) about the scenarios possible for balancing the FY-2011 DART Fixed Route Budget, the possibilities for a fare adjustment and the possibility of service changes and cuts. He stated that the changes would need to go into effect in April, and would provide a \$78,000 savings in FY-2010. He explained the sacrifices that the Administrative staff would be facing, and explained some of the resources DART has been trying to tap for help in balancing the budget on a long term basis. He said that DART is investigating the possibility of issuing bonds, and that it appears that they would have to be taxable bonds. He said that they were in preliminary discussions with Polk County as well. He stated that the union has asked how many jobs would be saved if they voted in favor of the requested wage freeze, and that he was asked to have that number for the union by January 15th.

Mr. Miller said that DART will be deferring local match for capital purchases. He stated that DART can issue revenue bonds without changing the wording of the 28M Agreement, and that DART's consultant, John Bartosiewicz of McDonald Transit Associates, said that many transit systems around the country are doing this, but this only delays the reckoning. DART has cut and delayed most capital projects for one year, and this creates huge problems as the effects ripple through the succeeding years. He explained that DART is in a challenging low cash position and needs to build up the cash reserves. He showed that DART cannot draw down any further than has already been done.

Mr. Miller explained the funding structure for the Opportunities Through Transit (OTT) program, which partially funds bus passes for low-income job seekers. He stated that DART was not recommending the ending of this program as it provides about 5% of the DART ridership, or \$90,000 a year in fares. He said that DART was recommending a fare increase for a monthly OTT pass from \$17 to \$18 a month. Ms. Hensley remarked that the OTT funding that is provided by the City of Des Moines was coming before the Des Moines City Council at its next meeting, and that the city's funding will be phased out over a two or three year period. Mr. Miller remarked that in addition, the state's 10% across the board cut has affected Medicaid reimbursement rates for DART Paratransit trips, amounting to a cut of \$22,000 during the upcoming year, and it is feared that more cuts will be coming next year.

Mr. Miller said that DART's revenue from the tax levy would be \$50,000 less than projected since property tax rates did not rise. He said that Mitchellville has dropped to a Tier I city, meaning less from their levy, and there was a possibility that the City of Grimes will withdraw and DART will lose that funding as well.

Chair Connolly opened the Public Meeting to comments from the floor. DART rider John Halsband asked about how attendees at the evening public meetings could get home since they could arrive

by bus, but the meetings won't be over until service has ended for the evening. Mr. Miller guaranteed that anyone attending would be given a ride home if bus service has ended for the day. Ms. Presutti added that it would be publicized on the DART web site, on flyers and ads on the buses, and in all the media. The Chair thanked Mr. Halsband for his comments.

Mr. Miller announced the upcoming dates for all public meetings prior to the Public Hearing at DART at 5:05 p.m. on Tuesday January 26th, 2010.

Receiving no further comments from the floor, Chair Connolly closed the public meeting at 5:45 p.m.

TRAC Update

Ms. Ginni Wolf, TRAC Chair, informed the Commission that the TRAC meeting took action on the group's Bylaws, and heard a presentation from DART General Manager, Brad Miller, on possible service adjustments.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. 12 and 15 Passenger RideShare Van Contract Award
- B. DART MPO Appointments
- C. Diesel Engine Contract
- D. November 2009 Financial Report

It was moved by Mr. Skip Conkling and seconded by Mr. Ted Boesen that the Consent Items be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item 8A – New Liability Insurance Policy

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Boesen that this Action Item be deferred until the January 26, 2010 Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item 9A – City of Grimes' Request to Withdraw from DART

Chair Connolly announced that since this is a Discussion Item, the commission will not take action at the current meeting, but will vote at the next meeting on January 26, 2010.

Mr. Conkling opened discussion by stating his distress to see this request from Grimes to withdraw from the regional transit authority, and commented on the heavy workload and stress on the DART staff. He stated that he intends to make a motion at the January 26th meeting to accept Grimes' withdrawal. He stated that in these difficult budget times for the cities and for DART, that all entities need to pull together, and he is tired of DART and its staff being the whipping boy for the region. Chair Connolly said that the item will be on the January meeting agenda, and that DART

staff would check to see if it would be possible for Grimes to move to Tier I status (with no service) instead of withdrawing.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Mr. Miller said that November showed strong ridership figures. Mr. Mahaffey asked about a discrepancy in the OTT ridership. Ms. Presutti answered that due to the crash of DART's GFI statistical software, staff were not able to get all of the November ridership data, but that staff would use other methods to reconstruct ridership and a revision would be made when this work was finished.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Miller thanked Commissioner Brody for joining him in representing DART at a meeting with the West Des Moines City Council.

Mr. Miller said that we had planned a retirement tribute for Carol Pelfrey, DART's retiring Maintenance Director who is leaving after 26 years of service, but that Carol was unable to attend this meeting, and it will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

Ms. Hensley said she had received some complaints from a Sherman Hill resident regarding the beeping noise the buses now make when turning. She said that residents at Park Place were also unhappy with the noise. Mr. Miller said that DART staff were aware of the comments, and are looking into a cost estimate in putting switches for the drivers to turn the safety feature on and off. Commissioners discussed that the safety feature will be compromised if drivers turn it off and then don't re-engage it. Chair Connolly asked when DART will be installing GPS on the buses. Ms. Presutti answered that GPS is at least two years out, so that's not an option for monitoring drivers. Mr. Miller said many options had been considered, including installing 4-way flashers to be turned on when a bus is pulling into a bus stop, thus eliminating the beeping, but there is controversy in taking that road as well. He told the commission that further research and consideration will be done.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No discussion

COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Nominating Committee Appointment

Commissioner Tom Gayman stated that the committee had a lengthy discussion about the issues DART continues to deal with, and the fact that these issues will be ongoing throughout the coming year, the committee has asked Chair Connolly to return as Chair for 2010. He said that Mr. Mahaffe and Mr. Boesen have agreed to return as Vice Chair and Treasurer as well.

Mr. Conkling moved, and Ms. Hensley seconded that the slate as presented by the Nominating Committee be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

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

It was moved by Mr. Boesen and seconded by Mr. Conkling that the Commissioners of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority go into closed session to discuss strategy with counsel on a matter that is presently in litigation where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of Dart in that litigation.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Connolly recessed the meeting at 6:05 pm.

The closed session was adjourned at 6:18 pm.

The regular board meeting was resumed at 6:19 pm. The Chair stated for the record that no action was taken during the closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

2010 Meeting Dates

Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 30, Apr 27, May 25, Jun 29, Jul 27, no meeting in Aug, Sep 28, Oct 26, Nov 23, Dec 21

Date: _____

Chair: _____

Secretary: _____