

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
March 3, 2009**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent

Alternates Present Ruth Randleman, Carlisle

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer, Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Carol Pelfrey, Maintenance Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; Randy Ross, Human Resources Director; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Planning; PJ Sass, Customer Service Manager; Carmella Comito, Risk Manager; Georgia Parkey, Paratransit; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present Cynthia Reynaud and Rox Laird, Des Moines Register; J.P. Golinvaux, DOT; Paula Dierenfeld, Johnston; Pete Stolze, Windstar Lines; Joann Tucker and Jerry Heinzler, Denman & Co. LLP; DART driver Sherrie Taha; Ken Munro, Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Angela Connolly at 5:02 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 January 20, 2008 minutes.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

None

## **PUBLIC HEARING – FY-2010 Budget and Tax Levy Rates**

Chair Connolly opened the Public Hearing on the FY-2010 DART budget and tax levy rates and asked for comments from the floor.

There were no requests by the public to speak to the commission, so the General Manager announced the timeline for the budget process to be completed. He gave a short presentation that included the computed levy rates and showed a chart incorporating all the DART funding sources. Mr. Skip Conkling asked if the prospective Northwest service improvements would be part of this budget, and Chair Connolly said that they would. The General Manager added that DART customer service received three e-mails about the budget and levy rates asking about the increase in Windsor Heights' rate compared to the City of Des Moines. The General Manager explained that the City of Des Moines had bought down their levy rate with revenues derived from its parking garages. Mr. Conkling expressed the reminder to commissioners and attendees that all cities had the option to buy down their levy, if they so desired. Chair Connolly added that Windsor Heights city officials had received the same explanation, and were satisfied with the situation. Mr. Steve van Oort stated that he had been instructed to vote no on the budget and levy by the cities in his district. He added that he felt he had not done a sufficient job in convincing his member-city officials of the importance of supporting the regional transit system. Chair Connolly asked for further comments, and hearing none, stated that the public hearing was adjourned.

### **Action Item – Approval of the FY-2010 Fixed Route Budget and Tax Levy Rates**

It was moved by Mr. Conkling and seconded by Ms. Gaye Johnson that the FY-2010 Fixed Route Budget and Tax Levy Rates be approved. Roll Call: Mahaffey yes; Johnson yes; Conkling yes; Parks yes; Van Oort No; Hensley yes; Boesen yes; Connolly yes; Gayman yes. The motion carried by a vote of eight to one.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

- 7A – FY2010 Grants
- 7B – AVL System Specification Development and Procurement Assistance
- 7C – January fixed route Financial Report
- 7D - January Paratransit Financial Report
- 7E – January RideShare Financial Report

It was moved by Mr. Van Oort and seconded by Mr. Parks that the Consent Items be approved. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Action Item 8A – FY-2008 Audit**

The Chair introduced Mr. Jerry Heinzler of Denman & Company, which performed the FY-2008 Audit. General Manager Brad Miller explained that the Audit Committee was briefed in detail at a meeting in February. Mr. Heinzler listed the audit findings, and said that a more detailed explanation was contained in the Audit Report given to each commissioner. Mr. Boesen added that due to the new accounting system being introduced to DART in the upcoming months, that when it was up and running smoothly the Audit Committee would scrutinize the new processes and report to the commission.

Ms. Hensley moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded that the DART Commission accept the FY-2008 Audit Report. The motion carried unanimously.

**Action Item 8B – Ames-Des Moines STA Grant Application Letter of Support**

Ms. Presutti explained that the MPO Transit Roundtable asked for an investigation of service options between Ames and Des Moines. She said that Ames transit system, Cy-Ride is preparing an STA grant application to fund the study, and that Cy-Ride would be the grant recipient of the funds, and has asked DART for a letter of support to include with the request.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Van Oort that a letter of support for the Ames to Des Moines Planning study STA grant application be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Action Item 8C – Comments Opposing Proposed Federal School Tripper Regulations**

Mr. Miller explained that the FTA guidelines for public transit agencies to provide school service have been changed, and the changes are not favorable to transit agencies providing school service. He said that DART has sent comments expressing why the new guidelines were bad policy, and so have many other school districts and transit agencies throughout the country. He said that DART has asked the FTA to review its new guidelines in light of all the efficiencies and savings for taxpayers that have occurred in the community by students use of public transit. Chair Connolly said that this FTA rule would be a topic of conversation with the Iowa Congressional delegation in talks in Washington DC during the APTA Legislative Conference in March. Mr. Miller added that a new FTA administrator would be appointed soon, and that transit agencies all over the country who provide service to students had hopes that the bad decision would be rescinded.

It was moved by Mr. Gayman and seconded by Mr. Parks that the General Manager submit comments to the FTA opposing the proposed new rule on school transportation by public transit agencies.

The motion carried unanimously.

*(Mr. Conkling leaves at 5:35 p.m.)*

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Discussion Item 9-A – Economic Stimulus Funding Update**

Mr. Miller said that DART is the only transit agency in Iowa that will be allowed to accept direct stimulus funding, tentatively set at approximately \$7.8 million. He said that we hoped that the addition of state and MPO funds would be added to this, but it appears that won't happen. He said that DART is obligated to spend half of the sum within 180 days, and the balance in one year. Due to this timeline, Plan B will be put in motion. DART will buy buses and pursue other priority projects:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Obligation Timing</b>
9 New Buses	\$3,413,000	30 Days
AVL Technology	\$3,000,000	100 Days
Transit Hub Final Design	\$ 900,000	60 Days
South Storage Barn Expand	\$ 400,000	180 Days
Rider Communication Imp.	\$ 75,000	180 Days
Concrete Repair @ DART	\$ 100,000	90 Days
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,880,000</b>	

He reminded commissioners that they have already voted to accept these projects when they were submitted to TIP and the State of Iowa. He said that there is a rigorous reporting requirement that is submitted every 45 days during implementation of the projects.

Mr. Miller stated that DART staff will be amending the presentation that will be made to the congressional delegation in March to reflect DART priority projects.

### **Discussion Item 9B – Maintenance Department Staffing**

Mr. Miller updated the commission on the report by the Parsons Brinkerhof consultants who did an audit of the DART maintenance department. He gave a power point presentation with study results (attached). The most striking report in the audit is that DART is very short staffed for the size of its bus fleet. The consultants recommended hiring 7 more mechanics and \_ more service people in order to be at a normal level of staffing. Mr. Miller said that the DART budget recommends hiring two more mechanics and one more service person – far fewer than the study recommendation.

### **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

Mr. Miller said that ridership in January was down 4 ½%, but there was one fewer work day in the month than the previous year, which accounts for all of the decrease. This means ridership is stable and new riders are not opting out even though gasoline prices have fallen.

### **QUARTERLY SAFETY REPORT**

Mr. Miller announced that accidents were down over one-half from one year ago, and that this is partially due to all the safety and training initiatives that DART has provided in the last year.

### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

No additional comments to the Monthly Reports in the packet.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Miller said that the next agenda would include a presentation by DART's legislative lobbyist, Bill Wimmer, and a report on the meetings to take place in Washington DC with the central Iowa congressional delegation.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

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

It was moved by Mr. Gayman 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 issues where discussion would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of DART.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Connolly recessed the meeting at 6:15 pm.

The closed session was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

The regular board meeting was resumed at 6:40 pm. The Chair stated for the record that no action was taken during the closed session.

**TRUSTEE ITEMS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

**2009 Meeting Dates**

Mar 31, Apr 28, May 19, Jun 30, Jul 28, No meeting in August, Sep 29, Oct 27, Nov 17, Dec 15 and holiday luncheon

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

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