

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way
January 20, 2009**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Robert Parks, Bob Mahaffey, Christine Hensley, Ted Boesen, Gaye Johnson, Skip Conkling, Steve Van Oort, alternate Ron Olson for Angela Connolly

Commissioners Absent: Angela Connolly, Tom Gayman

Alternates Present: Ron Olson for Angela Connolly

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; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Planning; PJ Sass, Customer Service Manager; Sharree Woods, Accounting; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present Cynthia Reynaud, Des Moines Register; Paula Dierenfeld, Johnston; DART driver Sherrie Taha; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Gini Wolf, TRAC; Greg Boeschen, rider; John Edwards, Clive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Bob Mahaffey, in the absence of Chair Angela Connolly at 5:04 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Notice of the meeting was duly published.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Mahaffey called for corrections to the December 16, 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

Mr. John Edwards, Clive City Council, stated that he believed that the City of Clive wanted to find a way to remain a member of DART, and he urged the DART Commission to do whatever necessary to keep Clive as a member, and not to accept Clive's withdrawal.

TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair of the newly formed TRAC, Gini Wolf, was introduced and named the committee's Vice Chair as ___. She mentioned two concerns that were brought up in the initial meeting of the committee:

- Notifications to riders and public notices not being as widely disseminated as is necessary.
- There is not currently sufficient notice for changes re: schedules, bus stop moves, etc.

General Manager Brad Miller informed the Commission that TRAC meetings would be held every other month, or as needed. He said that feedback from the committee would be shared with the Commission.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Signatory Authorization for DART Chair Angela Connolly
- B. December Fixed Route Financial Report
- C. December Paratransit Financial Report
- D. December RideShare Financial Report

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

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item 8A – Approve FY-2010 Budget and Levy Rates for Advertisement

General Manager Brad Miller went through a power point presentation (attached) for the Commission. He stated that the Service and Budget Committee meeting held on Friday consisted of twelve representatives from DART member cities, and that they were shown the same presentation. He said the S & B Committee discussed the new formula, and also talked about the way in which any new prospective members for the regional transit authority might be incorporated into DART. He presented a timeline and went over a chart showing funding mechanisms for DART.

The General Manager thanked Finance Officer Sharon Cramer for her hard work in finding areas in the budget in which to make some significant cuts. He explained the new levy formula, and also the buy-down option that the City of Des Moines used in order to lessen their levy obligation by \$680,000. Mr. Miller went through the reasons for the loss of state funds, and talked about some scenarios for federal funding. He also explained that liability claims will have an impact in the future, and recounted his meeting with the Polk County Board of Supervisors to ask their help in loaning funds in which to meet DART's claims. He said that the supervisors refused to make a decision on this issue at this time, and affirmed to the DART Commission that we will have to wait and see what happens when the time comes.

Mr. Miller went over a number of problems that are occurring within DART's Maintenance Department. He said that a consultant had studied the operations of the department, and that the conclusions were that:

- Level of manpower is too low.
- Problems have arisen this winter in having enough buses to start service in the mornings (called peak requirement).

Remedies include:

- Hiring two new supervisors to replace the two who recently left employment at DART.
- Hiring a temporary maintenance professional for 90 days to oversee and make recommendations.
- Installation of new work-order management software.
- Hiring additional mechanics/service people.
- Buying new buses.

New Service

Elizabeth Presutti announced that her staff accomplished a review of current service:

- Providing more trips on the Johnston Express.
- Alleviating the overcrowding on the Urbandale Express.
- Beefing up the service in Clive.

She said that adding new service on 86th Street in Clive will alleviate the overcrowding problem on the Urbandale Express, and also add to service in Clive and Johnston. She said that staff is going to start actively promoting RideShare in the central Iowa area, and also looking for long-term placement for park-and-ride locations.

The General Manager said that these kinds of service decisions are able to be made due to the regional structure of DART and prudent use of levy funds. He stated that this is only the beginning – that DART will be organizing more public meetings and will continue to process the ideas and suggestions of cities and riders. He also said that DART will continue to review the performance of all the routes for service improvements.

Mr. Miller went through the list of budget reductions that DART is planning:

- DART has locked in 90% of the fuel costs for 2010 at an average cost of \$2.75/gallon.
- Cost allocation plan shifting costs to appropriate budgets.
- Outsourcing DART's money counting operation.
- Reducing IT needs.
- Reduction of inventory.
- Savings in Workers Comp costs.
- Reducing operations staff.

Miss Hensley asked if the funding for the Downtown Shuttle was confirmed, and Mr. Miller explained that while the city and Downtown Alliance had a three-year commitment, the state legislature has to approve funding every year for its portion. Ms. Hensley said that opponents of members in the legislature who voted in favor of funding the shuttle were using the shuttle vote against them, and that she thought some kind of counteraction should be taken to the statehouse. Ms. Hensley asked about funding levy increases and Mr. Miller said that if Clive and Johnston left the Authority there would be a three-cent increase for everyone else. If Clive and Johnston stay in, there will be a one-cent increase compared to DART's rough estimate from last fall. Ms. Hensley asked if there would be cuts in service and Mr. Miller said there are no service cuts in the next budget. Mr. Conkling asked how soon Clive and Johnston would decide, so that DART will know how much to budget. Mr. Miller said that if the new service in that area begins in June, the cities know that they have to allow a measure of time for them to catch on, but if they see some progress they have said they will withdraw their withdrawal from the Authority.

Mr. Mahaffey said that there is a good chance to create additional ridership in the next few months.

Finance Officer Sharon Cramer explained the process for having the DART farebox contents counted by Bankers Trust instead of in house.

The General Manager talked about the federal economic recovery funds and the impending stimulus projects. He stated that the US House of Representatives leadership proposed a bill that will not earmark any funds, but distribute them based on the existing formulas. He said that DART may be able to get \$6.5 to \$7.5 million based on the current federal formula. He said the funds would go to the MPO for distribution. He also mentioned that Bill Wimmer is working at the statehouse for consideration for DART in the allocation of transportation funding. Mr. Miller told commission members that there are some extreme limitations on the funds which require being spent in 120 days. He explained that the timeframe is prohibitive for getting funding for the Transit Hub, which is DART's LEED-certified number one legislative priority. He said that DART would have to create the design RFP immediately, and award a contract in March. Since Iowa does not allow "Design/Build" (90% of states do allow this fast-start procedure), he said that DART would have to hire a designer and construction manager right away. Ms. Hensley asked if legislative action was needed in order to get Iowa designated as a "Design/Build" state. Mr. Miller said that he has already talked to Bill Wimmer about the chances of getting legislative action in this area. He said that county administrator Ron Olson was also working to get Iowa into the ranks of "Design/Build" states, as well as the League of Cities and others who are going to miss out on stimulus dollars because of Iowa's status.

Mr. Miller brought the commission up to date on the status of the Transit Hub site. He said that the Polk County Board of Supervisors were working on a Letter of Intent, and that Wells Fargo, which owns a part of the parcel, would be willing to give it up if approximately 35 parking places are found elsewhere. He said that the City of Des Moines has the easement.

In case it turns out to be not feasible for the Transit Hub project, Mr. Miller said there is a Plan B:

- \$4 million for new buses (10 buses), since DART now has 17 buses that have exceeded federal useful life guidelines.
- 8 expansion buses
- GPS technology for buses (half the transit buses in the US have GPS, but none are in Iowa).
- Concrete repair on the property (\$300,000).
- BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) project on the University Corridor.
- Communications improvements such as a website update.

Ms. Hensley asked what the timeframe for decisions will be. Mr. Miller said it would have to be prior to the March 4 commission meeting. Mr. Mahaffey expressed his support in the wisdom of having both Plan A and Plan B.

Ms. Hensley moved, and Mr. Boesen seconded that the commission authorize the publishing of the FY-2010 DART tax levies as presented, and that a public hearing be held on the FY-2010 fixed-route budget and published tax levies. And in addition, that DART work along with commissioners and Bill Wimmer to get legislative help to allow "Design/Build" on future projects.

The motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 8B – Paratransit Labor Agreement with the Teamsters

Mr. Miller said that negotiations have been completed with Teamsters Local 238 (Paratransit Operators), and he was pleased to announce that the agreement brings substantial improvement in a number of areas for Paratransit drivers:

- More parity with fixed-route drivers in starting wage.
- The agreement will be in effect for five years.
- Health insurance changes will allow Paratransit drivers more control over future cost escalations.
- The uniform allowance is now equal to that of fixed-route drivers.

Mr. Miller thanked Paratransit Director Chet Bor and consultant John Bartosiewicz of McDonald Transit Associates for their expertise and help in reaching the agreement. He said that Local 238 has delayed the vote by its membership until next Saturday.

Mr. Ron Olson asked if staff has looked at the likelihood of sustaining the contract provisions vis a vis Polk County's role in funding of some Paratransit rides. Mr. Miller said that the changes have been incorporated into the DART 2010 Paratransit budget, and that the increase follows in line with previous years' budgets. He said that he has met with Polk County social services representatives Lynn Farrell and Brian Boyer and has gone over the Agreement with Teamsters with them, and received their approval.

Mr. Parks mentioned that recruiting and retention of employees would be much improved with this agreement.

Mr. Conkling moved, and Ms. Hensley seconded that the Commission approve the five-year agreement with Teamsters Local 238.

The motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 8C – DART Public Comment Policy

Ms. Presutti explained that the FTA requires transit agencies that receive federal funding to have a written policy for soliciting and considering public comments before raising fares or reducing service. She said that in the past, DART has used the MPO's guidelines, but now needs to have its own policy. She said that at the first meeting of the Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) members of the committee asked that DART find better ways to notify customers of changes. She described the statutory differences between a "Public Meeting" and a "Public Hearing" and described the provisions of the policy.

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Boesen that the policy be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item 9-A – Northwest Service Area Public Meetings Input

Ms. Presutti said that there were 79 people in all who participated in this series of meetings, with 25 at the Johnston meeting being the largest group. She said that our customers love our service,

and want more service in general, and that Clive and Urbandale residents would like to have service on 86th Street.

She said that future meetings will consist of 13 during the months of January through March, and that DART will solicit input from residents of Johnston, Urbandale and Johnston. She said that DART will develop a three to five year plan of service improvements to address the issues.

Mr. Miller thanked Elizabeth and her staff for their hard work in organizing and staffing the meetings, and also thanked the commission members who have attended and participated in the meetings.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Mr. Miller said that December ridership was up 12% year to date compared to last year.

Ms. Hensley stated that she was thrilled to see D-Line ridership at 900 rides daily. Mr. Miller said that there have been some complaints from legislators and lobbyists, since the D-Line is not taking the route that last year's shuttle traversed, and that this has caused some confusion, but he said that DART staff were on-site for a few days to make sure people boarded at the right location, and statehouse visitors were being educated about the D-Line route.

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

Mr. Miller presented former Chair Skip Conkling with an award thanking him for his year of service as Commission Chair, and explaining how grateful DART commissioners and staff have been for his thoughtful advocacy of DART's agenda during a very trying time. Mr. Miller stated that Mr. Conkling's leadership during the year was very important to DART and its riders. Mr. Conkling thanked the commission and said that everyone gets credit for going above and beyond during the past year.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Miller said that the next agenda would include discussion of the Maintenance Manpower Study and a closed session to hear from legal counsel.

CLOSED SESSION

Acting Chair Bob Mahaffey called for a motion to recess and reconvene in a closed session.

It was moved by Mr. Parks 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, Conkling yes, Hensley yes, Olson yes, Johnson yes, Van Oort yes, Mahaffey yes.

The motion carried unanimously.

Acting Chair Mahaffey recessed the meeting at 6:43 pm.

The closed session was adjourned at 7:08 pm.

The regular board meeting was resumed at 7:09 pm. The Chair stated for the record that no action was taken during the closed session.

TRUSTEE ITEMS

Mr. Van Oort stated that in a discussion with the Ankeny City Council, it was determined that they would like to invite Chair Connolly and Mr. Miller to come to a work session with the council to discuss the future of DART in the Ankeny community. Mr. Van Oort assured DART commission members that most on the council were supportive of DART and its Ankeny ridership.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

2009 Meeting Dates

Mar 4, 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 _____