

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
March 31, 2009**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Robert Parks, Bob Mahaffey, Rick Clark Alternate for Christine Hensley, Ted Boesen, Gaye Johnson, Skip Conkling, Steve Van Oort, Angela Connolly

Commissioners Absent Chris Hensley and Tom Gayman

Alternates Present Rick Clark

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer, Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; 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; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present Cynthia Reynaud and Rox Laird, Des Moines Register; J.P. Golinvaux, DOT; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Bill Wimmer, Wasker, Dorr, Wimmer; DART driver Sherrie Taha; Matt Fleagle

**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 March 31, 2009 minutes.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

None

## **TRAC Update**

Ms. Orfield-Koranda stated that the TRAC members reviewed the proposed service changes, and approved them. The members advised that any new fare policy changes be implemented as incremental changes. The next TRAC meeting will be held on May 14, 2009.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

- 7A – RideShare Billing System
- 7B – February fixed route Financial Report
- 7C - February Paratransit Financial Report
- 7D – February RideShare Financial Report

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

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Item 8A – Authorize Public Hearing on FY-2010 RideShare Budget**

General Manager Brad Miller discussed the change that the auditors and DART legal counsel made in the way DART approves the budget. Formerly, the budget process separated out the fixed route, Paratransit and RideShare budgets and the commission voted to approve them at various times during the fiscal year. Even though the fixed route budget is the only one that is funded by the tax levy, the auditors and legal counsel advised that in the future the budgets should all be approved together, and the public hearing and posting process as followed by city governments. He said that as we finish up the current budget process we will hold a series of public hearings and will amend the DART fixed route FY-2010 budget to include Paratransit and RideShare, and this will bring us into compliance. In subsequent years the budgets will be presented together.

Mr. Miller said that the RideShare budget is proposed to increase substantially to \$1.16 million due to the allocation of overhead costs to the program that have been approved. He said the positive initiatives for the FY-2010 budget include purchasing 16 new vans and adding substantially to the number of vanpools on the roads in Central Iowa. He stated that RideShare was currently doing a major overhaul of its billing process. The Accounting Department handles more than 900 transactions every month for vanpool riders, who pay one month in advance, and every vanpool has a different payment structure. He said that this has all been done manually by our staff, and has been an incredibly labor-intensive process. The Accounting Director has instituted a payment by credit card operation which should simplify things for both the RideShare staff and accounting staff.

Mr. Parks moved, and Mr. Steve Van Oort seconded that a public hearing be scheduled for comments on the Central Iowa RideShare budget at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday April 28, 2009 in the DART Multipurpose Room, and that the fixed route budget that has already been approved be amended to add the FY-2010 RideShare budget to its narrative.

The motion carried unanimoosly.

### **Action Item 8B – Sustainable Transit Hub Design Contract**

Ms. Presutti explained that HDR Engineering and Substance Architecture joined together and were considered the top rated proposal for the design of the Sustainable Transit Hub, and after

negotiations on the work plan and fees are concluded, a contract will be drawn up. Ms. Presutti thanked the commission for their participation in providing the team to interview during the proposal process, and said that the timeline included getting the design underway as soon as possible in order to be ready to go next March. Mr. Parks asked about a contingency for an accelerated timeline, and Mr. Miller assured the commission that if the timeline were accelerated, the firm has indicated their willingness to accept the timeline. Mr. Rick Clark added that because of the prominent location of the building that appearance of the structure was very important, and that all issues of safety should be paramount in the design of the facility. Ms. Presutti said that the two firms had good plans, and had their attention on the pulse of the community, and that's one reason their proposal ranked highest.

Mr. Van Oort moved, and Mr. Skip Conkling seconded that staff be authorized to negotiate a contract with the Substance Architecture-led design team for final ratification at the Commission's April 28, 2009 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Action Item 8C – June 2009 Service Changes**

Mr. Miller showed a brief presentation that he previously gave to the Clive City Council, and showed at a number of public meetings, that summarized the proposed service improvements that will be implemented on June 7, 2009.

Ms. Presutti informed commissioners that DART had hosted 16 public meetings to solicit comments regarding the proposed improvements, and that public participation was more than anticipated. She said that almost all of the changes were greeted with approval, but that some Route 91 riders, who were previously on the route prior to its move, will now have to take the Route #4 bus instead of the Express. She explained that Route #4 service would be improved, and she said that this should eliminate some of the complaints. Mr. Clark asked why there were complaints since the Route #4 was available, and Ms. Presutti explained that the riders on the Northwest Express have become "family" in their many years of riding the express together, and they felt that they might not achieve this camaraderie when riding the regular bus. She stated that she hopes their fears are unfounded, and that they will maintain their friendships and make new ones on the Route #4 bus.

Mr. Clark asked about funding for the service improvements, and Chair Connolly explained that these improvements have been planned for and the budget includes funding for these service changes. Chair Connolly asked how we would measure the success of these service improvements, and Ms. Presutti answered that DART will look at ridership at the six month mark, even though it usually takes 12 months before a service improvement really sees its true ridership figures. She said that DART and the member communities really need to grow the service right away, and that we will be marketing it heavily in its first few months.

Mr. Conkling added that his concern was that in the fall DART will have to begin work on the FY-2011 budget, and wondered if there would be enough time to make it work before the member city councils make the decision whether or not to continue the service.

Mr. Miller described the new service and the route it will take through many member communities before heading to downtown Des Moines. He reminded the commission that under the previous funding formula DART would never have received permission and funding in all the communities in

which the route will now run, but because of regional funding, this route, which makes much more sense than the previous meandering route, will be allowed to succeed.

Mr. Parks moved and Mr. Boesen seconded that the commission approve proposed service improvements in the northwestern region of the DART service area, affecting routes #12, #91, #92 and #93.

The roll call vote carried unanimously with all voting Yes.

### **Action Item 8D – Letter to State Legislature Endorsing State Transit Funding**

Mr. Miller explained that the MPO Policy Committee recommended that the DART Commission draft a letter of support for increased state capital funding for public transit infrastructure, and that the MPO send a letter of support as well. Chair Connolly pointed out that at the series of transportation public hearings that the MPO held recently that almost all the public comments addressed the need for public transit improvements.

It was moved by Mr. Conkling and seconded by Mr. Van Oort that letters be drafted and sent to the governor and legislature, and that the MPO be asked to send similar letters of support prior to the end of the 2009 legislative session.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Discussion Item 9-A – Legislative Update**

Mr. Miller introduced Bill Wimmer, DART's legislative lobbyist, who said that it was a very busy year for DART during this legislative session. He said that DART's general manager was a frequent visitor during this session, and has been more active in DART's interests in transit issues than anyone in many years. He said that it is the first time the DART general manager has addressed a legislative subcommittee, and that Mr. Miller's speech was very well received. He listed the transit projects that have been introduced to the legislative process, and also talked about the initiatives that did not go far in the legislative process.

He explained that the D-Line was a success after an initial period of confusion, since its route expanded to include downtown and the East Village, and that he was hopeful that state funding for their portion of the costs would be approved, as well as funding for the Unlimited Access program for state employees.

After some discussion by commission members on legislative initiatives that died this year, Chair Connolly told the commission that her recent conference in Washington DC, and visits to our Congressional delegation and staffers was an eye-opener for her. She said that public transit in its various forms was the buzz all over Washington DC, and that local elected officials need to be educated for the future wellbeing of our communities.

Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Wimmer for his expertise and told commissioners how helpful his hard work and input were in this year's efforts. He stated that DART's visibility is much higher, and said that the fact that the governor gave his press conference on the future site of the DART transit hub bodes well for continued success in legislative efforts as Mr. Wimmer keeps us in the forefront of

our legislators' attentions. Mr. Wimmer thanked the commissioners and said that DART's customer service is making friends on the hill. He said that the chair of the Capital Planning Committee was waiting for the D-Line, and our supervisor stopped and picked him up in the van and took him to the Capitol door so that he didn't have to wait any longer in the cold. Mr. Wimmer said that the gentleman told everyone about DART's fantastic care and concern for its customers, and that's the kind of comments we want to keep coming.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

Mr. Miller shared that DART had a great month in ridership, especially on the D-Line. He said route #71 and the Jordan Creek route were both up as well. He announced that the fixed route drivers set a record of 24 straight days without any accidents.

Mr. Clark noted that the stat reports indicate that ridership went up when gas prices soared, and even though gas prices have gone down, DART has managed to sustain the ridership gains. He indicated he was surprised and impressed. Mr. Miller said that DART lost 400 riders a day when the LINK shuttle was discontinued by Principal, and their shuttle riders were given parking close to the Principal campus

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Ms. Presutti announced that DART will organize a "Rider Appreciation Day" on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, with free rides for all DART customers and "green" shopping bags to be handed out that will thank riders for using and supporting public transit.

Mr. Miller thanked Chair Connolly for all her hard work during the APTA conference in Washington DC. Ms. Connolly said that it was an excellent conference, with a huge public transit buzz in all of DC, and said that she discovered that Mr. Miller was very well known and liked in the national transit community. She thanked staff for the great job in issuing all the press releases that promote DART in the community

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

## **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. Parks that the Commission meeting be recessed and reconvened in closed session pursuant to **Section 21.5, Subparagraph J of the Iowa Code, to discuss the purchase of particular real estate where premature disclosure could be reasonably expected to increase the price that DART would have to pay for that property.**"

Roll Call vote was unanimous. All voted Yes.

Chair Connolly recessed the meeting at 6:25 pm.

The closed session was adjourned at 6:45 pm.

The regular board meeting was resumed at 6:46 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 6:48 p.m.

**2009 Meeting Dates**

Apr 28, May 26, Jun 30, Jul 28, No meeting in August, Sep 29, Oct 27, Nov 17, Dec 15 and holiday luncheon

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

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