

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way  
October 27, 2009**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent: Steve Van Oort

Alternates Present: Paula Dierenfeld

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Carol Pelfrey, Maintenance Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; PJ Sass, Customer Service manager; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Program Development Manager; Georgia Parkey, Paratransit Operations Manager; Carmella Comito, Rish Manager; Mike Kaiser, Safety Manager; Suzanne Robinson, Clerk to the Commission; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present: Cynthia Renaud, Des Moines Register; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Drivers/Supervisors Danny Townsend; Cheryl Wolf; 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 September 29, 2009 minutes.

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

None

## **TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Orfield-Koranda explained the subjects that were discussed at the previous TRAC meeting.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. Three-year RideShare minivan contract and FY2010 minivan purchase**
- B. Liability Settlement**
- C. September 2009 Financial Reports**

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

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Action Item 7A – DART vote on Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

General Manager Brad Miller said that all MPOs created after 1982's federal ISTEA authorization are required to have the principal transit provider as a voting member. However since the Des Moines Area MPO was created before 1982, DART has been a non-voting member. Since DART's entire Capital program is federally funded, every project needs to be included in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as the state's TIP, so it has been proposed that DART receive a vote on the MPO Policy Committee. He added that the MPO's attorney (the Davis Brown Firm) had proposed a list of questions/potential problems regarding DART's being given a vote on the committee, and that all questions have been responded to in a document that will be sent to the MPO after the DART commission approval. Mr. Miller suggested that one of the commission members who was not currently on the MPO Policy Committee representing a local community be appointed. Ms. Hensley asked why Mr. Miller would not be representing DART on the committee, and Mr. Miller said that he felt a commission member could represent DART in a more neutral fashion.

Mr. Conkling said that another argument against DART's becoming a voting member is that other advisory members such as the airport will want to be made voting members also, and Mr. Miller said that was unlikely. Mr. Tom Gayman asked why there was opposition, and Chair Connolly said that since the federal government recommends that MPOs have the local transit system as a voting member, she didn't think opposition would persist. Chair Connolly recommended sending the letter, and said that the MPO Executive Committee has recommended that the DART voting status be approved. Mr. Miller said that it would be a clear message to the region that public transportation had a seat at the table.

Ms. Hensley moved and Ms. Gaye Johnson seconded that the action resolution for DART to be a voting member of the MPO Policy Committee be approved, and that it be sent to the MPO prior to its

November meeting along with the responses to the questions the MPO's legal counsel has identified. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Action Item 7B – 2010 Federal and State Legislative Priorities**

Mr. Miller listed the recommended priorities for DART to pursue during the upcoming 2010 state and federal legislative sessions. Staff will submit them to the Greater Des Moines Partnership and MPO for their inclusion to community priorities. Mr. Miller made some additional remarks on some of the priorities. He stated the the D-Line was in danger of having state funding cut, which would jeopardize its route and "free fare" status. He said that Senator McCoy was intending to reconvene the Mass Transit Committee in the State Senate, and that legislation was pending to make assaults on bus drivers a more serious offense. He said that priorities were due to the MPO tomorrow, and that the highest priorities will be the Transit Hub and funding for expansion buses. He added that the American Public Transportation Association recommendations for the Reauthorization of the transportation bill were approved by DART. Mr. Steve Brody asked about what opportunities there were in the new legislation regarding climate change for transit funding. Mr. Miller said that the Senate bill had much better options than the House bill in this regard, including cap and trade 10% revenues for transit. Mr. Boesen asked if the DART commission should do some specific advocacy for this version of the bill, and Mr. Miller stated that a letter has been sent to all of DART's congressional delegation and that we have also contacted the transportation staffers in our delegations offices. Mr. Brody said that perhaps IPTA should be making some overtures as well. Chair Connolly said that the commission would be kept in the loop about the status of this legislation.

It was moved by Mr. Boesen and seconded by Ms. Hensley that the Commission approve the State and Federal DART Legislative Priorities. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Discussion Item 8A – FY2011 Draft Budget Presentation**

Mr. Miller presented the issues in a power point presentation (attached). He asked that the Commission establish a subcommittee and bring in DART consultant John Bartosiewicz (McDonald Transit Associates) as well as Jerry Heinzler of Denman and Co (DART auditors) and two commissioners. Mr. Miller said that he felt that with Mr. Bartosiewicz' help, the committee may be able to find some temporary revenue streams, and come up with other advice regarding DART's financial situation.

Ms. Hensley asked if the Service and Budget Committee (city managers) would be involved in the process. Chair Connolly said that DART is in a crisis situation and needs to make plans quickly to get through the issues. Mr. Miller said that DART was looking at more insurance options to get a better policy that the \$2 million umbrella that DART is currently under. He told the commission that DART ridership was down, and thus revenue, partly because of many layoffs in the downtown area and also due to many downtown employers signing up for Unlimited Access for their employees so that now they ride free. Mr. Bob Mahaffey asked if DART has any more companies in the pipeline to join Unlimited Access. Mr. Miller said that DART was in preliminary discussions with a few employers, so had some meager prospects. He also said that revenue will be down significantly from the state tax on new car sales that adds funding. He added that if the state cuts D-Line funding, DART will eliminate one bus and begin ending the route in the East Village instead of going onto the Statehouse grounds. He said that it is very probably that city budgets will see lower increases in funding due to smaller increases in property values.

To close the budget gap, it will be proposed that:

- DART will have no service enhancements.
- There will be no upgrades to the Maintenance Department that were formerly planned.
- There may be wage freezes for administrative employees, and the unions will be approached for a dialogue on salary increases.
- Benefit reductions likely.
- Other stopgap measures until the economy and the liability situation are better.

Ms. Hensley asked that the commission needed to see the numbers regarding a fare increase. Mr. Brody asked if capital funds and local match were going to be used to fund the Transit Hub, and Mr. Miller said that no capital funds for local match would be used for the Hub. That local match funds are for bus replacement and other capital projects needed by DART. He added that DART's retained earnings have now dropped to only \$95,000, and that DART has deferred buying two new buses. Chair Connolly asked if DART was filling vacancies, and Mr. Miller responded that unlike some other employers, DART was required to hire drivers to continue to service the current DART routes.

Mr. Miller announced the tentative schedule for the budget process:

- John Bartosiewicz will be in town November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Public hearings (round 1) will take place for possible fare increase and service reductions.
- Public hearing on DART tax levies will be set at the January Commission Meeting.
- Public hearing and approval of the FY2010 Budget at the February DART Commission Meeting.

Chair Connolly named the appointees to the new DART Subcommittee:

- Ted Boesen
- Bob Mahaffey
- Brad Miller
- Jerry Heinzler
- John Bartosiewicz

Mr. Brody suggested that the Service and Budget Committee meet prior to the DART Subcommittee. Mr. Gayman asked about Mr. Bartosiewicz' knowledge of the DART situation, and Ms. Hensley assured him that Mr. Bartosiewicz was highly regarded in the public transit industry. Mr. Gayman asked for information on the participation of downtown businesses in the Unlimited Access program, and if there were a significant revenue stream from this source. Mr. Miller said that the program did not significantly increase revenue, but did increase ridership significantly. Mr. Gayman asked about other input from communities, and Mr. Miller said that he and the Chair met a group of mayors from the DART communities in August, and at that meeting talked about strategies to deal with DART's liability issues, and did get some good suggestions.

### **Discussion Item 8B – Quarterly Safety Report**

Mr. Miller announced that accidents were occurring at a much lower rate again this quarter.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

There was no discussion on Performance Report statistics this month.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Miller announced to the Commission that long-time Maintenance Department head Carol Pelfrey was retiring, and would be leaving DART in December. He said that it would be a challenging job to try to replace her, and that Carol has been an invaluable resource to the DART team through the years. He said that there would be a recognition ceremony announced at the November DART Commission Meeting.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No discussion

## **COMMISSIONER ITEMS**

### **Nominating Committee Appointment**

The Nominating Committee was appointed by Chair Connolly and consists of:

- Bob Mahaffey
- Ted Boesen
- Tom Gayman

She said that commissioners would vote on the slate the committee brings to the December meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

### **2009 Meeting Date**

Nov 17, Dec 15

### **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: \_\_\_\_\_