

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

**Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority - 1100 DART Way
September 29, 2009**

ROLL CALL

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Alternates Present: Paula Dierenfeld

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Carol Pelfrey, Maintenance Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; Randy Ross, Human Resources Manager; PJ Sass, Customer Service manager; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; Michelle Orfield-Koranda, Program Development Manager; Mike Kaiser, Safety Manager; Heidi Culbertson, Staff Accountant; Suzanne Robinson, Clerk to the Commission; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present: Cynthia Renaud, Des Moines Register; Jade Howser, TRAC; Drivers/Supervisors Sherrie Taha, Greg Schmitt, Cheryl Wolf; DART Customer, John Halsband

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 July 28, 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.

Chair Connolly called for corrections to the September 3, 2009 minutes.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION

None

PUBLIC HEARING – Consolidated FY2010 Budget Amendment

Chair Connolly called the public hearing to order at 5:05 p.m. General Manager Brad Miller stated that DART was just combining the three DART departments budgets into one (Fixed Route, Paratransit and RideShare) as called for in the 2005 legislation providing for the establishment of the regional transit authority. He explained that in the new combined budget there would still be a breakout of each department's information.

There being no comments from the floor, Chair Connolly brought the public hearing to a close.

Action Item A – Approve the Amended FY2010 DART Budget

It was moved by Ms. Hensley and seconded by Mr. Boesen that the Amendment be approved and the DART budgets be consolidated. The motion carried unanimously

TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Jade Howser will now chair the TRAC committee after the resignation of ____. She explained a list of items that were covered in discussion at the previous TRAC meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. FY2011 State Infrastructure Grant Applications**
- B. FY2014 STP Grant Application**
- C. July and August, 2009, Financial Reports**

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

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item 10A – Tram Study Acceptance

The General Manager presented the study to the commission and reminded commission members that Nationwide had funded the study, which was coordinated by the Partnership's Downtown Community Alliance and included DART as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee. Ms. Hensley said that the biggest issue to be addressed before going forward is how to fund ongoing operations.

It was moved by Mr. Conkling and seconded by Mr. Boesen that the study be accepted and filed. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Item 11A – Walnut Street Transit Mall Maintenance

Chair Connolly stated that Mr. Mahaffey has asked for a deferral on this discussion item, since the Des Moines City Council had discussed the issue and has asked for more information. Ms. Hensley asked that DART set up a committee to make recommendations to bring back to the City of Des Moines and the DART Commission. Mr. Miller said that the current agreement was instituted in 1992, and needs to be updated. He said that the payment structure for maintenance of the Transit Mall is a separate issue.

Chair Connolly expressed concerns about the cost (\$50,000) to DART if the responsibility for funding is passed back from the DCA. Ms. Hensley said that the Traffic Management Association (TMA) funding also needs to be looked at, and both issues should be discussed. Mr. Brody asked why this issue surfaced at this time, and Mr. Miller explained that there had been a claim filed against the DCA, City of Des Moines and DART regarding an accident on the Transit Mall, and the DCA saw a potential liability and wanted the issue reviewed. Ms. Hensley said that the TMA funding needs to be re-evaluated, especially since it was not meant to be a permanent agency, but was just supposed to operate during I-35 reconstruction. Mr. Miller said that DART's share of the funding was \$15,000 per year for the TMA. Mr. Miller expressed concern about getting recommendations from any committee review prior to finalization of the DART budget. Chair Connolly said that the committee will be formed and recommendations brought to the commission at the October commission meeting.

Discussion Item 11-B – FY2011 Budget Planning

Mr. Miller raised issues that are still open regarding the budget:

- He said that the City of Johnston was still in the process of making a decision about staying in DART, and had announced that a decision would be made at the city council's first meeting in December. He said that if Johnston leaves it will make a big hole in the DART budget, and that DART would have to adjust the levy rate in all cities if Johnston leaves.
- A Financial Consultant should be hired for long-range planning, since the five-year loan for liability payouts is only a stop gap measure, and DART needs a plan to put it on a more sturdy footing. To fund this consultant, DART will suspend payments to the current operations consultant, but when able will call again on current consultant. Ms. Hensley asked if DART would be putting out an RFP for this consultant, and Mr. Miller said that Denman & Co were reviewing the issue and will make a recommendation on how to proceed. Ms. Hensley said that DART may want to go to other accounting firms as well, particularly ones that may have public transportation experience. Mr. Conkling asked if

McDonald Associates has the necessary experience to fill this role, and Mr. Miller said that it wasn't their forte, and that we are looking for transit experts who have been able to help other cities and systems do some creative things. Mr. Gayman recommended checking with DART's current insurer, AIG, which might have resources to help.

Chair Connolly said that the goal is to have all decisions made by the November commission meeting.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Mr. Miller explained the new and easier to read format for the Performance Reports. He said that ridership is down 10% this month, but reminded commissioners that last year July and August were when gas prices were at their highest. He said this year's ridership is not a record, but ridership is still up 5%, even with lower gas prices. Also State Fair ridership was down this year due to the weather. Mr. Gayman said he liked the new report's easier readability. Mr. Conkling said he did an informal survey, and found out that Altoona's ridership was down mostly due to layoffs. Ms. Hensley said that ridership to the airport business park was suffering for the same reason. Mr. Miller asked commissioners to note that the August accident rate was down to a record-breaking 1.21%.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Ms. Presutti said that the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the bus garage addition was scheduled for October 8 at 3 pm, and invited all commissioners and staff and guests to attend. Mr. Miller asked commissioners to note the new advertising terms and conditions with the new rates. He also noted that at the commission meeting in July, the Safety and Technical Committee was formed and met at DART for the first time on September 10. The committee members are:

- Sheila Mason, DSM Public Schools
- Mark Stewart, Iowa Dept of Public Safety
- Gary Fox, City of DSM
- AJ Mumm, Polk County
- Tom Kane, MPO
- Steve Gent, DOT
- Sgt. Jack Beardsley, Des Moines Police Dept
- Matt Skembo, Ruan Trucking
- Carl Voss, Trails and Greenways Advisory Committee

Mr. Miller said that the committee will make recommendations that he will bring back to the Commission . Another meeting will be scheduled after the FTA consultants come to DART to perform a Safety Audit this month, and a group of transit professionals visit DART for two days to make recommendations. Also, a public outreach initiative will be instituted with the help of downtown businesses and the Greater Des Moines Partnership. Ms. Connolly added that AJ Mumm had been voted Chair of the DART Safety and Technical Committee.

Mr. Boesen asked for an update on the status of the IJOBS program. Mr. Miller said he and Ms. Connolly met with the governor's staff and were now waiting to hear if there will be a good response.

Mr. Miller updated the commissioners on the DOT Transit Study, and said the consultant's study has been completed and the result is that about 5,000 rides a day in central Iowa are going unmet because of lack of public transit service, and that to provide service will cost up to \$100 million. Ms. Connolly stated that at every public meeting regarding transportation needs in the region 95% of the attendees plead for more and better transit options, not roads. Ms. Hensley said that the difficulty is in getting a movement going to shift funds from roads to transit. Mr. Van Oort said that at the MPO meeting he and other DART commissioners didn't get the formulas changed, but did get capital funds approved for DART and included in the long-range study for the first time. Mr. Miller pointed out that was true, but all the road projects in the study are funded, and DART's projects aren't.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No discussion

COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Ms. Hensley said that there had been a change in insurance requirement in the city's cab ordinance, and Mr. Miller said that it was noted and included in the new agreement with Trans Iowa.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

2009 Meeting Dates

Oct 27, Nov 17, Dec 15 and holiday luncheon

Date: _____

Chair: _____

Secretary: _____