

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

**1100 DART Way – Des Moines, IA 50309  
January 26, 2010**

**ROLL CALL**

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

Commissioners Absent:

Alternates Present: Steve Peterson

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Sharon Cramer, Finance Director; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer; Randy Ross, HR Director; Scott Reed, Maintenance Dept; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; Jim Tishim, Transportation Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; PJ Sass, Customer Service manager; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; Randy McKern, Transportation Manager; Gunnar Olson, Public Information Officer; Suzanne Robinson, Clerk to the Commission; Nolden Gentry, Legal Counsel

Others Present: Cynthia Reynaud, Des Moines Register; Katie Ward, KCCI; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Dana Conn, TMA; Steve Gaer, WDM Mayor; Scott Sanders, City of WDM; Rick Clark, Des Moines City Manager; Drivers/Supervisors Corey Schmitt, Cheryl Wolfe, Greg Schmitt, Sherrie Taha and Tim Moroney, DART customer John Halsband

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by 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**

Chair Connolly called for corrections to the December 15, 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.

It was moved by Mr. Conkling and seconded by Mr. Mahaffey that Discussion Item 10A would be moved on the Agenda to be discussed after the Closed Session item. The motion carried unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION**

There were no comments.

## **PUBLIC MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Connolly called to order the Public Hearing on the FY-2011 Budget (Service Adjustments, Fare Increase and Tax Levy). Chair Connolly asked General Manager Brad Miller to give his presentation (attached). He announced that the Commission would be asked to approve a Public Hearing on the DART fixed route budget and also approve the tax levies at the February 23, 2010 Commission Meeting in order to meet the statutory deadline of March 15, 2010. He said that the final item that would determine the budget and service adjustments is the Amalgamated Transit Union's vote to approve or vote down the prospective wage freeze. Mr. Miller explained that even though all cities in Iowa that have public transit operations have higher tax levies than the DART member cities, city managers and mayors have announced that there will be no increase in the transit tax levy for FY-2011, unless the cities of Mitchellville and Grimes move to Tier I status.

Mr. Miller explained that DART staff has managed to whittle down the budget shortfall from \$2 million to \$800,000, but that there were no more savings at this point to squeeze out of DART except for the union wage freeze. He described some of the things that DART has done to decrease the budget deficit, such as deferring capital expenditures, and mentioned some of the ways that the deficit could be made up, such as the issuance of revenue bonds, or a levy adjustment of .041 cents, and the possibility that further stimulus dollars may become available. He explained that since DART needs \$2 million as monthly cash reserves, that money cannot be used to make up the budget deficit.

Mr. Miller thanked DART staff, and especially Ms. Presutti, for all the hard work in organizing the 10 public meetings that have been held in various commission regions over the past few weeks. He said that about 120 people attended, and that DART had received over 60 letters and e-mails with more coming in every day from DART customers who do not want service cuts. He expressed a number of issues for commissioners to think about, including:

- Retaining DART community membership.
- Maximizing DART ridership and farebox revenue.
- Providing alternatives for customers who are dependent on public transportation.
- Favor reducing the frequency of buses on the routes rather than eliminating all service.

Mr. Miller also talked about the fact that service cuts would mostly affect the DART riders who have no other means of transportation available to them.

Chair Connolly commended Mr. Miller for his work in the past weeks in planning for all contingencies, and for being available at all public meetings. She said she was surprised at the heavy turnout even in the terrible weather of the past month, but it was because people were so concerned about losing their transportation.

Commissioners all made statements about the tough decisions ahead and talked about the need to increase rather than reduce service region wide, and each spoke about the need to continue service in their region. Meeting attendees then approached the podium to speak:

- Cynthia Qloud: Route #5 riders wrote a letter that 80 riders signed requesting that DART not cut service.
- Rick Clark, Des Moines City Manager: Thanked DART staff for their hard work. Stated that since Urbandale cuts only affect 4,300 riders, and cuts to the West Des Moines/Fairgrounds route would affect 45,000 riders saving the same amount of money, that it was obvious where the cuts should be made in the interests of equity. He also mentioned that the #3 University route affected 65,000 riders, and also served the poorest neighborhoods.
- AJ Johnson, Urbandale City Manager: Wants DART to provide service to the western business parks and provide North/South suburb-to-suburb service in his area.
- Mary Roth: Rides the #4 bus and works at Nationwide. She said she is a “choice” rider and could drive, but thinks it is very important to support public transportation. She said that while she has other options, so many DART riders must depend on bus service.
- Kayla Schmidt: Asked why Wells Fargo and Aviva don’t have membership in DART.
- Jerry Patton: Asked that DART keep all service and not make cuts.
- Mohisha Parker: Just moved here from Chicago and takes the #11 bus, and doesn’t think it’s right to have to wait a full hour for bus service in the midday. She goes to school at night, and needs night service to stay in school.
- Steve Gaer, West Des Moines Mayor: Says there are 53,000 jobs in West Des Moines, and needs bus service for continued economic development.
- Leroy Williams: Wants DART to increase service. He said he had to take 3 different buses to get to the commission meeting tonight.
- Bob Parks: Speaking as a retired senior citizen he asks the union to take the wage freeze so that jobs can be preserved and service cuts minimized.

Receiving no further comments from the floor, Chair Connolly closed the public meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Commissioners discussed options still open to them to close the budget gap, and came to the consensus that the only one left, other than the union voting on the proposed wage freeze, would be adding a 4.1 cent additional levy throughout the DART community. Discussion to defer the decision were cut off by the General Manager’s reminder that the deadline for publishing the levies was February 15, 2010. Commission members agreed that if they added additional tax to the levies, they could remove it, but they could not add to it after February 15, 2010. Chair Connolly reminded commission members that the levy lists were distributed to them in December, and all options were discussed at that time. She added that she had gone over with DART staff every possible option, and that there was an understanding that there would be no increase to the levy, thus she would not be voting for a tax increase. All commissioners agreed that they would not be in favor of a tax increase either. The General Manager stated that he apologized if the notices and information that DART distributed at the November and December commission meetings were not clear enough that the final decision on the levies would be made on this date, and the commission Chair said that she thought there was sufficient notice.

#### **Action Item 7B – FY-2011 Fixed Route Budget**

Mr. Brody moved, and Mr. Boesen seconded that the commission authorize the publishing of the FY-2011 DART tax levies as presented, and that the commission approve a public hearing on the FY-

2011 budget and published tax levies to be held prior to the February 23, 2010 Commission meeting.

The motion was approved unanimously.

### **TRAC Update**

The TRAC meeting in January was cancelled due to a snow storm.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

#### **A. State Lobbyist Contract**

#### **B. December 2009 Financial Report**

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

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Action Item 9A – New Liability Insurance Policy**

The General Manager asked that this item be deferred to the February 23, 2010 DART Commission meeting.

#### **Action Item 9B – Debt issuance Approval**

Mr. Miller asked that the commission authorize DART to proceed in search of an option to issue \$3 million in bonds.

It was moved by Mr. Conkling and seconded by Mr. Mahaffey that the commission approve DART's solicitation for bond counsel, financial advisor and/or underwriter services and other resources to either:

- Issue \$3 million in DART revenue bonds.
- Develop the necessary agreements with Polk County to allow Polk County to issue \$3 million in bonds on behalf of DART to be paid for entirely by DART.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Discussion Item 10A – City of Grimes' Request to Withdraw from DART**

Mr. Conkling stated that he would not make a motion on the status of Grimes' membership in DART at this time, but said that he wanted to reiterate that as the entire community grows, so will services provided by DART. The Chair deferred action on this item to the February 23, 2010 meeting.

### **10-B - Quarterly Safety Report**

Mr. Mahaffey noted an error in column 2, and the item was changed to read \$81,173.

### **10-C - Performance Report**

Mr. Miller said that ridership suffered in December due to the bad weather. He noted that DART had to suspend service for the first time in at least 25 years during the blizzard. He said that between that loss and the school vacation over the holidays, plus the snow days for the public schools, there was a big hit in ridership.

### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Mr. Miller introduced the new Public Information Officer, Gunnar Olson, to the commission and audience. He said that Gunnar has come to DART from his position as a reporter for the Des Moines Register, so he would be able to jump right in and do great things for DART.

Chair Connolly announced that DART has begun discussions with Aviva regarding their membership in the Unlimited Access program. Mr. Boesen asked about the timeline to get them signed up, and Ms. Presutti said that they are asking for door-to-door service, which will cost them more, so negotiations were on hold at this time.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Mr. Boesen and seconded by Mr. Conkling that the Commissioners of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority go into closed session to discuss strategy with counsel on a matter that is presently in litigation where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of DART in that litigation.

Roll Call: Brody yes, Boesen yes, Connolly yes, Johnson yes, Van Oort yes, Mahaffey yes, Gayman yes, Conkling yes. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Connolly recessed the meeting at 6:55 pm. The closed session was adjourned at 7:15 pm. The regular Commission meeting was resumed at 7:16pm. The Chair stated for the record that no action was taken during the closed session.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No discussion

### **COMMISSIONER ITEMS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

2010 Meeting Dates

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: \_\_\_\_\_