

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

AUGUST 27, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

Don Lawless, Chair
Charis Austin
Randy Gelderloos
Lisa Haynes
George Heartwell
Jack Hoffman
Barbara Holt
Rick Morris
Richard Root
Terry Schweitzer
Barbara VanDuren
Rob VerHeulen

Staff

Peter Varga, Executive Director
Robin Crothers
Alan Hartley
Meegan Joyce
Jennifer Kalczuk
Liz Schelling
Brian Pouget

Board Members Absent

Bing Goei
Steve Maas
Jim White

Others Present

Dan Fox, MV Transportation
Charles Gordon, Citizen
Watchdog Miller, Citizen
Sergeant Wayne Moore, The Rapid/Grand Rapids Police Department
Devin Norris, Citizen
Dean Peterson, MDOT
Christine Schumaker, ATU-Local 836
Terron Smith, Rapid Bus Operator
Rick Wilson, Grand Rapids Press

MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
AS RECORDED ON AUGUST 27, 2008

Commencing at 4:00p.m., Mr. Lawless called the regular meeting of the Interurban Transit Partnership Board to order.

Mr. Lawless asked for approval to add the item requesting a contract with the City of Grand Rapids for a Police Sergeant to the agenda.

A motion was made by Haynes, supported by Root, to add the contract with the City of Grand Rapids for a Police Sergeant to the agenda for approval. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – FY 2009 PROPOSED BUDGET

The public hearing on the FY 2009 proposed budget was opened at 4:02 p.m.

Watchdog Miller feels the fare increase is unnecessary. He believes that many of the proposed budget numbers are inflated and could be reduced. He also commented that funds spent on security are excessive.

Devin Norris supports a portion of the fare increase, however, believes senior citizen fares should be reduced. He recommends more service to the west side of Grand Rapids. He is pleased that Route 5 now has additional evening service, however, he would like to see less significant layovers for routes.

The public hearing was closed at 4:13 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Watchdog Miller commented that costs for security at Rapid Central Station are excessive and feels that the buses should line up downtown where the jobs are and not at Central Station.

Devin Norris inquired what the purpose is of employing a Sergeant at Central Station. Mr. Lawless replied that this issue would be discussed during the Board meeting.

1. Minutes of June 25, 2008 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Holt, to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2008 Board Meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Contract with the City of Grand Rapids for a Police Sergeant:

Mr. Varga reported that this item is included in the proposed budget and the City has already approved the contract. The authorization requested is pending legal review of the agreement by our attorneys at Miller Johnson.

Mr. Pouget explained that authorization is requested from the ITP Board to approve a contract with the City of Grand Rapids in an amount not to exceed \$94,000 for services of a full-time police sergeant to be housed at Rapid Central Station.

He reported that since opening Central Station in June 2004, *The Rapid* has contracted with private firms as well as the Grand Rapids Police Department for security services at Central Station. Currently DK Security provides services 24 hours per day, seven days per week to monitor security cameras as well as patrolling the building and outdoor platform that comprise Central Station. GRPD provides two patrol officers for two and one-half hours each day that Grand Rapids Public Schools are in session. While this approach has minimized incidents at Central Station, it is the belief of staff that the presence of a full-time sergeant will significantly enhance the security service at Central Station.

Mr. Pouget introduced Sergeant Wayne Moore who will serve as the police sergeant assigned to Central Station. Mr. Moore will schedule and supervise the patrol officers who work at Central Station on a daily basis, briefing them on duties, incidents, and other events that will help them perform at a higher level. Mr. Moore will coordinate closely with DK Security to maximize the effectiveness of the assigned security personnel on site. In addition, the sergeant will initiate outreach efforts with GRPS secondary school officials and security personnel. The goal is to ensure that the public transportation experience at Central Station is safe and enjoyable for all customers of *The Rapid*.

Mr. Varga feels Sergeant Moore will have a positive impact on the community and believes he is very dedicated to security efforts.

Mr. Morris questioned if we have explored the options of the City of Grand Rapids and GRPS providing funding assistance for the police sergeant.

Mr. Varga noted that the City does provide officers at peak times, however, what we need to ensure the safety of customers is more than security at peak times. He explained that funding assistance was not explored due to the support that we get from GRPD. We also have a cooperative relationship with GRPS on the management of student behavior so funding assistance is not required.

Mayor Heartwell noted that dedicating an officer to one location full-time is beyond the City budget. We can always bring officers in when needed.

A motion was made by Morris, supported by VanDuren, to approve the contract with the City of Grand Rapids for a police sergeant. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by VerHeulen, to approve consent agenda items 2-8. Motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

9. FY 2008 Third Quarter Rideshare Report:

Mr. Schweitzer noted that the RapidVan program increased to 26 vanpools, but two of the vanpools have ended due to early retirements. We anticipate further growth in the next quarter as we introduce the returned RapidVans and as the employment situation at the General Motors plant becomes more stable. We anticipate growing to 27 vanpools in the quarter, replacing the returned vanpools and adding one new vehicle that is ready for service.

In the third quarter, Greenride numbers of registered users increased dramatically by 50% to 2,590. This was due to a number of factors including rising fuel prices, an ad placed in the Earth Day section of the Grand Rapids Press and Amway and Haworth bringing their employer Greenride modules online.

Grand Valley State University and Grand Rapids Community College have also purchased employer Greenride modules, and we are currently working with Perrigo and Meijer about those companies possibly purchasing the program as well. As a result, we expect continued growth in the use of Greenride through the next quarter.

He mentioned that third quarter report cards for paratransit and linehaul service were very positive as well.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Holt, to approve the FY 2008 Third Quarter Rideshare Report. Motion passed unanimously.

10. FY 2009 Proposed Budget:

Mr. Varga reported that the proposed budget totals \$57,858,916. The budget consists of two components, operating and grants. The operating portion totals \$34,002,513. The grants portion totals \$23,856,403.

He noted that due to the unprecedented rise in the cost of diesel fuel, a fare increase is being proposed to be effective on October 1, 2008. The last fare increase was implemented in April 2003 when cash fare was increased from \$1.25 to \$1.30. In 2003, the cost of diesel fuel was approximately \$0.90 per gallon. The FY 2009 proposed

budget contemplates diesel fuel at \$4.10 per gallon. If approved, the fare increases are expected to generate an additional \$560,000 in revenue.

He commented that most of the passengers who attended the fare increase hearing understood the necessity of increasing fares.

Mr. Morris noted that Mr. Varga explained the necessity of the fare increase and gave a clear understanding of the finances to the public.

He noted that after an inquiry from a citizen at the public hearing we researched the \$1.50 fare on a national level. We found that \$1.50 fare is found in a variety of cities across the nation.

Mr. Varga thanked Mr. Hartley and staff for the work on the proposed budget.

Mr. Lawless thanked staff for the budget and requested that staff begin planning next year's budget now and the looking into any challenges we may face.

Mr. Schweitzer noted that many in attendance at the public hearing questioned when the fare increase will be implemented. He would like staff to work on getting the word out that the increase will be implemented on October 1, 2008, so that passengers are aware and can plan for the increase.

A motion was made by Hoffman, supported by Heartwell, to approve the FY 2009 Proposed Budget. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Report on the FY 2008 Priorities and Work Plan and CEO Performance Evaluation:

Mr. Lawless noted that the Governance Committee met for the purpose of reviewing the Report on the FY 2008 Priorities and Work Plan and to conduct the CEO's evaluation. He thanked Mr. Varga and staff for the Report and recognized Mr. Varga's exceptional leadership.

Mayor Heartwell noted that each year Mr. Varga produces a great work plan and has tremendous capacity for accomplishing the work.

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Haynes, to approve the Report on the FY 2008 Priorities and Work Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lawless noted a few of the FY 2008 accomplishments. We received \$32 million in FTA Small Starts funding for Bus Rapid Transit along South Division and we received a commitment from MDOT to provide the \$8 million match toward the BRT project. Mr. Varga received an appointment from Governor Granholm to the statewide Transportation Funding Task Force and he continues to serve as the chair of the Greater Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. We had a 9% ridership growth in FY 2008 and accomplished implementation of Phase II of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis.

Mr. Lawless noted that the Governance Committee recommends a 7% increase on Mr. Varga's current base salary of \$166,018 and elimination of the non-salaried bonus structure currently contained in his employment agreement with the partnership. This adjustment will bring Mr. Varga's annual salary to \$177,640, which the Governance Committee believes places Mr. Varga's salary at an appropriate level.

Mr. Varga noted that he is pleased with his evaluation and compensation level.

A motion was made by Morris, supported by Heartwell, to approve the CEO Performance Evaluation. Motion passed unanimously.

CEO'S REPORT

12. July and August 2008 Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga noted that the fourth meeting of the Transportation Funding Task Force was held on July 21, 2008. The major outcome of the meeting was the report by the Citizen's Advisory Committee to the Commission. This report indicated that there were severe deficiencies in the state's transportation Infrastructure.

He noted that the BRT project has been making significant progress. The State of Michigan has agreed to support the BRT project with state match funds of more than \$8 million over the next four years. He noted the tentative opening date of the BRT is August 11, 2012.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lawless noted a Grand Valley editorial and thanked GVSU for a great relationship. He also mentioned that we were recognized for a 35 year relationship with MDOT.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 8-6-08 Budget Meeting
- B. Minutes of 8-6-08 Governance Committee Meeting
- C. Minutes of 8-13-08 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- D. Minutes of 8-13-08 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- E. Communications

Board Member Comments

Mayor Heartwell mentioned a couple concerns he has received from the public. The first is the overcrowding on the GVSU route and the second is the need for buses to accommodate more bicycles.

Ms. Haynes noted that at the beginning of each school year GVSU sends a postcard to all students challenging them to use alternative options for getting to class. The first day of class recorded approximately 20,000 rides.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Devin Norris commented that he believes that additional evening service on some of the routes. He requested eliminating a 24 minute layover at Orchard Creek Apartments.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary

