

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

Charis Austin
Jack Hoffman
Barbara Holt
Don Lawless, Chair
Steve Maas
Rick Morris
Richard Root
Terry Schweitzer
Barbara VanDuren
Rob VerHeulen
James White

Staff

Robin Crothers
Mark Fedorowicz
Alan Hartley
Meegan Joyce
Jennifer Kalczuk
Brian Pouget
Liz Schelling
Peter Varga, CEO

Board Members Absent

Randy Gelderloos
Bing Goei
Lisa Haynes
George Heartwell

Others Present

Jeff Ammon, Miller Johnson
Anne Bond-Emrich, Grand Rapids Business Journal
Rob Carter, Passenger
Watchdog Miller
Devin Norris, Passenger
Dean Peterson, MDOT
Christine Schumaker, ATU-Local 836

MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
AS RECORDED ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Miller stated that he is putting in a formal request for open bidding on the environmental work for the BRT project and would like us to look into bus conditions and lasting ability. He also commented that if fuel costs continue to stay down he would like to see the recent fare increase adjusted appropriately.

Devin Norris commented that he supports the Spectrum Health employee bus pass program and feels schedule books are not where passengers get information.

1. Minutes of August 27, 2008 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by VerHeulen, supported by Morris, to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2008 Board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

REGULAR AGENDA

Performance Oversight Committee

9. Spectrum Health Employee Bus Pass Program:

Mr. Schweitzer commented that authorization is requested to renew a contract with Spectrum Health for an Employee Bus Pass Program. Under the contract, Spectrum Health will be charged a fixed monthly fee that will allow Spectrum Health employees to ride on Rapid fixed route buses for free. The contract will run through September 2009, and will be revisited annually with rate adjustments based on usage and *The Rapid's* average fare.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by White, to approve the Spectrum Health Employee Bus Pass program. Motion passed unanimously.

10. Amendment to DMJM Harris Contract:

Mr. Schweitzer reported that staff is requesting authorization to execute a change order with DMJM Harris for the purpose of completing the Documented Categorical Exclusion process for the proposed South Division BRT line. The CE process is a low level environmental analysis of the BRT corridor and is a requirement for funding.

He explained that DMJM Harris was hired in January 2003 to complete the work for the major corridor study. That project was competitively procured through an RFP process, with DMJM Harris being judged to be the most qualified. When the specification was written, language was included that would allow the winning proposer to conduct whatever level of environmental analysis was necessary should the project be selected for FTA New Starts funding. As our approval to go into project development as a Very Small Starts project is under the New Starts umbrella, we are proceeding with FTA's understanding regarding a change order to DMJM Harris.

Purchasing staff has reviewed the change request from DMJM to conduct the categorical exclusion work. Based on the information provided by DMJM, Purchasing was able to perform some analysis to determine if the additional costs are justified. First, staff reviewed the original work plan to determine if the new costs should have been provided under the original scope. Language in the original specification clearly allows for the winning proposer to conduct any required environmental analysis should the project advance sufficiently to qualify for federal funding.

Staff also reviewed the overall hours in comparison to the original contract. Since the last amendment was executed three years ago, costs for key positions increased only 2% per year or less. Staff contacted another transit agency, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, that has a similar overall sized project and work program to our own. They confirmed that the price to complete the environmental work on their project was very comparable to the cost DMJM is proposing for the ITP. Staff believes that the prices submitted by DMJM are fair and reasonable given the added scope required by the FTA.

Mayor VerHeulen questioned why we need to amend the contract if the original contract specified that this would need to be done.

Mr. Varga noted that years ago when we started this project we were advised by the FTA to stipulate in the RFP, that if approved, the original consultant would do the environmental work. The original RFP includes that this work would be done by the consultant, however, you do not get a bid for the actual additional work because it is so many years away. Now that we are approved, they issue a cost proposal and we do a cost analysis.

Mr. Lawless inquired if by doing the categorical exclusion the FTA agrees that we will not need an extended environmental impact study. Mr. Varga noted that the only time you are required to do an environmental impact statement is when you find issues that require one. We will not know for certain until we start the process if an environmental impact study is necessary, however, we do not anticipate any issues of this type with the project.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Morris, to approve the amendment to the DMJM Harris contract. Motion passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning Committee

11. FY 2009 FTA Grant Application:

Mayor VerHeulen noted that staff is requesting approval of the FY 2009 Federal Transit Administration grant application.

Mr. Varga explained that each year *The Rapid* presents an annual grant application for Federal Section 5307 capital and planning assistance, Section 5309 Discretionary, Rural Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds to the ITP Board for approval.

Mr. White thanked staff for the hard work on procuring grant funds. Mr. Varga noted that we are grateful to legislators that support transit and help secure funds.

A motion was made Austin, supported by Maas, to approve the FY 2009 FTA grant application. Motion passed unanimously.

Governance Committee

12. FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan:

Mr. Lawless noted that Board members received a revised copy of the FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan after the Governance Committee's discussion. He thanked staff and Mr. Varga for all the hard work that went into the FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan.

A motion was made by Morris, supported by Holt, to approve the FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

CEO REPORT

13. September 2008 Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga reported that to-date the Transportation Task Force has had six all-day meetings. The last one was held in Lansing. The task force remains focused on looking at all sorts of revenue options for maintaining a transportation investment at a "good" level in Michigan. The current investment for transportation of approximately \$4 billion

would have to be almost doubled to achieve a “good” scenario. The task force will provide an initial report to the Governor and Legislature in October.

He commented that there has been very little activity in the legislature related to public transportation. The Conference Committee on HB 5808, the Appropriations Bill, had a meeting on September 16. He reported that there has been a flurry of bills introduced on the House side that may benefit public transit. He continues to track all the bills.

He noted that he met with MDOT Director Kirk Steudle on September 8 while attending the TF2 Meeting. He reported that he provided an update on the BRT project and discussed the crisis with the federal transportation funding due to the hold up in the Senate of HR 6532, the bill that would fix the \$8 billion shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund. Director Steudle asked for his assistance in contacting our U.S. Senators. He contacted the offices of Senators Levin and Stabenow on the following day with positive responses back from both Senators. The Senate did pass HR 6532 by Friday once the President indicated he would not veto the bill and three U.S. Senators stopped their block on the bill. He noted the positive relationship we have with MDOT. He also mentioned that he and Congressman Vernon Ehlers attended a session at the International Council of Shopping Centers. Although the group represents the development of retail shopping centers, the audience was quite mixed, with realtors, architects, builders, attorneys, activists, developers, engineers, city and DDA staff. Our messages were mutually supportive; that development is undergoing change in the United States and that a lot of retail development is more urbanized and much more focused on transit oriented development.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Mr. Lawless mentioned an article in the Grand Rapids Press featuring Mr. Varga’s life. He noted that the State Public Transportation Task Force is scheduled to meet on September 25.

Ms. VanDuren noted a BRT planning meeting at Grace Lutheran Church scheduled for the evening of September 24.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

No report.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 9-10-08 Governance Committee Meeting
- B. Minutes of 9-17-08 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- C. Communications

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Rob Carter is concerned that Route 9 is consistently late. He supports Route 9 interlining with Route 5, however, he would like to see more township service.

Devin Norris would like to see Route 9 interline with Route 5 all day long. He feels Route 2 also has issues and believes interlining would help.

Watchdog Miller feels that the ridership numbers presented by *The Rapid* are not accurate.

Board Member Comments

No comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary