

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

JUNE 24, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

Barb Holt, Vice-Chair
Charis Austin
Lisa Haynes
George Heartwell
Jack Hoffman
Richard Root
Terry Schweitzer
Rob VerHeulen

Staff

Peter Varga, CEO
Robin Crothers
Taiwo Jaiyeoba
Meegan Joyce
Jennifer Kalczuk
Brian Pouget
Liz Schelling
Conrad Venema

Board Members Absent

Randy Gelderloos
Ira Hart
Don Lawless
Steve Maas
Rick Morris
Barb VanDuren
James White

Others Present

Rob Carter, Citizen
Casey Dutmer, Consumers Advisory Committee
Sgt. Wayne Moore, GRPD/The Rapid
Watchdog Miller, Citizen
Dean Peterson, MDOT
Alan Schwartz, Miller Johnson

**MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
AS RECORDED ON JUNE 24, 2009**

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Watchdog Miller commented that we need routes that serve the west side of Grand Rapid traveling to the downtown area. He does not think Route 5-Giddings should be moved.

Ms. Holt mentioned that the Long Range Plan would be looking at route realignments with community forums allowing staff to absorb input from the public.

1. Minutes of the May 27, 2009 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by VerHeulen, supported by Root, to approve the May 27, 2009 Board meeting minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Austin, to approve items 2-6 as consent agenda items. Motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

Strategic Planning Committee

7. Route 5-Wealthy Realignment:

Mr. Hoffman explained that authorization is requested from the Board to approve the realignment of Route 5-Wealthy from Giddings Avenue to Fuller Avenue between Franklin Street and Hall Street pending a simple majority approval from passengers and residents.

A motion was made by Hoffman, supported by Austin, to approve using staff's discretion to realign Route 5 based on simple majority to determine the appropriate decision.

Mayor VerHeulen is concerned that we are setting a standard that changing routes is as easy as polling and counting the numbers. He believes that staff should evaluate rider input and survey results and form a recommendation based on that information for Board approval.

Mayor Root is also concerned with this process, as this is an operational issue. It is important to survey and talk to the riders, but we should not turn an operational question into a public voting issue.

Mayor Heartwell is concerned that changing this route would make the stop farther away for the residents at the Clark Retirement Home. He would like to have the Clark Home residents included in the survey. .

Mr. Venema explained that it is more than a simple majority decision. Staff will evaluate the results and comments and find out who is directly impacted. He mentioned that if we start targeting specific facilities and agencies we will not get accurate results.

Mayor Root suggested looking at the survey results and what the operational impact would be and then make a Board decision about changing the route.

Mr. Varga noted that it is a Board decision, however, there is not a Board meeting scheduled in July so staff recommends proceeding this way to accommodate the printing of schedules. He mentioned that Mr. Lawless would also prefer to have this be a Board decision. He commented that the Board has three choices regarding this issue: they could keep Route 5 as it is on Giddings, they could move Route 5 to Fuller, or ask staff to come back with all the information from the surveys and present a recommendation at the August Board meeting and go ahead with the printing of schedules.

Mayor VerHeulen suggested we change the language from “staff recommends that simple majority be used to determine the appropriate decision”, to “staff recommends that the results of the surveys be given significant weight in the decision”. We need to determine if this decision needs to be made now or if staff should continue with the survey and come back to the Board in August with a recommendation.

Mr. Hoffman inquired what the impact of waiting until August would be. Mr. Venema explained that it is a cost management issue. We try to consolidate changes at times when we do reprints of the schedules so that we have the correct information in the schedule books.

Mayor VerHeulen believes this would not set a standard because it is an exception to the normal process. We are delegating authority to staff due to the absence of a July Board meeting and the time constraint with printing the schedules.

Mayor Root noted that staff is here to advise the Board and not make decisions for them.

The motion made by Hoffman, supported by Austin, was amended to approve granting staff discretion to make the realignment to Route 5 based on the results of the survey of the neighborhood and the riders, and on other operational issues in order to make a decision that is in the best interest of the system as a whole. Hoffman and Austin voted yes and all others voted no. Motion failed.

Mr. Schweitzer inquired if the evaluation of routes in the Long Range Plan would include this much detail. Mr. Varga noted that the Long Range Plan process is to analyze what the public and the Board would like to see in terms of a 20-year vision. We could get this type of feedback in the public process.

Mr. Jaiyeoba commented that the Long Range Plan includes three major components for the consultant to address - the Comprehensive Operational Analysis, creating a fleet management plan with ways of how to manage it in the future and review of paratransit services and how we could improve.

Purchase of Kent County Recycling Center Property:

Ms. Holt reported that staff requested that the Purchase of the Kent County Recycling Center Property be added as a walk-on item to the agenda.

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Schweitzer, to approve adding the Purchase of the Kent County Recycling Center Property item to the regular agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Varga explained that the purchase of the Kent County Recycling Center will facilitate the expansion of ITP's Wealthy Operations Center. He noted that the Board is asked to approve the agreement with Kent County to purchase the property now occupied by Kent County Recycling at a cost of \$960,000. The County will have the option to continue in possession of the property under a lease with ITP until September 30, 2010. He mentioned that a \$5,000 down payment would be due upon signing the agreement; however, Mr. Schwartz will inform the County that we are unable to fulfill this due to federal regulations.

Mayor Heartwell inquired if demolition is our responsibility. Mr. Schwartz replied that demolition is our responsibility.

Ms. Holt inquired how we would handle the \$5,000 down payment issue. Mr. Schwartz commented that we could approve the agreement subject to further negotiations.

A motion was made by Root, supported by Haynes, to approve the purchase agreement at a cost of \$960,000 and the option for the County to lease the property from The Rapid for \$1.00 per month through September 30, 2010 to allow them time to relocate their facility to the new site. The agreement is subject to further negotiations regarding the \$5,000 down payment. Motion passed unanimously.

External Relations Committee – no items

Governance Committee – no items

CEO's REPORT

8. CEO Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga reported that we would be closely watching legislative issues within the next few months. There are major public transportation issues that need to be resolved on both the state and federal sides.

The Senate Subcommittee on Transportation Appropriations has issued their appropriations bill under a party line vote for the FY 2010 MDOT budget. The budget reduces funding to the CTF by \$11.5 million. The House Subcommittee on Transportation Appropriations is instead supporting the Governor's recommended budget. He noted that there would most likely be a conference with both committees to resolve the issues. He explained that he has instructed Mr. Hartley to anticipate further reductions in state operating assistance for the upcoming budget.

He explained that the cuts from the Senate allocations bring the operating program to a funding level of four years ago and leaves the capital program to be funded by bond dollars or toll revenue credits.

He noted that The Rapid's ARRA grant for the Wealthy Operations Center Expansion has been submitted and is almost ready to be approved. Under the provisions of that Act, we had to submit the grant application by July 1 and then had to "obligate" 50% of the \$10,603,305 that was received in stimulus formula funds by September 1, 2009. Obligation in this sense is an approved contract with the Federal Transit Administration. It is our plan to obligate 100% of the funds with a Board item related to construction activities in August.

He noted that as the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on September 30 draws near, Congress' ability to complete a new authorization bill prior to the pending deadline remains uncertain. The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure is diligently working to develop an initial draft of the authorization legislation. Before the bill can move to the full House of Representatives, however, the House Ways & Means Committee must develop a finance title, and it is unclear when that will be done. Additionally, the bill will need to be approved by four separate Senate committees. The Obama Administration is also expected to submit its recommendations for the bill in the near future. The Administration wants a continuing resolution for 18 months on the current authorization bill.

9. Report on FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan:

Mr. Varga noted that his Report on FY 2009 Priorities and Work Plan has been distributed and encourages members to contact him if they have any questions or need any clarification on the report.

10. Long Range Planning Effort:

Mr. Jaiyeoba noted that we would bring a recommendation for a consultant to the August Board meeting. The Long-Range Plan should be a ten-month process

and will include what the public wants transportation to look like in the six cities and beyond in the next 20 years. The plan details our policies and would explain to the community what capital projects we are looking at and define the extent of each project. We will have public workshops in each of the six cities to create a community driven effort.

He explained that because there is no Board meeting in July, we are recommending that one or two Board members serve on the consultant selection committee.

Mayor Heartwell suggested that the RFP encourage use of local firms in the public engagement portion of the process. He believes it would be beneficial to have some local investment in the process. Mr. Jaiyeoba noted that many consultants are willing to partner with local companies who are familiar with the area.

Mayor Heartwell inquired if we have the funds for the long range process. Mr. Jaiyeoba noted that we do have federal planning funds.

Mr. Varga noted that he would prefer that the Board members serving on the consultant selection committee be members of the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Hoffman volunteered to be on the Committee and Mr. Varga noted that he would check with Mr. Hart regarding his interest in being on the committee.

CHAIR'S REPORT

No report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Dutmer commented that the Woodland Mall issue has caused concern. At the June Consumer Advisory Committee meeting, a motion was made to draft a letter expressing concern and support to Mr. Varga regarding the Woodland Mall situation. He noted that there were four main points included in the letter. The first was that action needed to be taken due to the circumstances and the congestion at Woodland Mall. Secondly, a recommendation to include a pedestrian walkway from the adjacent property that The Rapid will lease. The location of the property requires crossing a parking lot and Committee members want to make sure that there is accessibility to the Mall from the adjacent property. The ability to pick up and drop off at the mall is the third point and the last point is that The Rapid should not have to condemn any property.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Watchdog Miller commented that he does not support the BRT. He noted that Chicago does not have a BRT system and believes that Grand Rapids does not need one either.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 6-10-09 Governance Committee Meeting
- B. Minutes of 6-17-09 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- C. Minutes of 6-17-09 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- D. Communications

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary