

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

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

Staff

Kathy Anderson
Robin Crothers
Alan Hartley
Taiwo Jaiyeoba
Jennifer Kalczuk
Brian Pouget
Liz Schelling
Peter Varga, CEO
Kevin Wisselink

Board Members Absent

Lisa Haynes
Steve Maas
Barb VanDuren
James White

Others Present

Jeff Ammon, Miller Johnson
Rob Carter, Passenger
Casey Dutmer, CAC
Gwen DenBreens, Student
Michael Koole, ITT Technical Institute
Watchdog Miller, Citizen
St. Wayne Moore, The Rapid/GRPD
Jordan Squires, Student

**MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
AS RECORDED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Watchdog Miller feels that representatives on the Mobile Metro 2030 Task Force should be appointed by the mayors of the six cities and the number of representatives from each city should be based on the city's population. He believes that improving the quality of bus seats would increase ridership.

1. Minutes of the August 26, 2009 Board Meeting:

Mr. Lawless noted a correction to page 6 of the minutes. His comment was that it is a traffic-calming problem not a traffic-zoning problem as written.

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Holt, to approve the August 24, 2009 Board meeting minutes, as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by VerHeulen, supported by Hart, to approve Consent Agenda items 2-9. Motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

Performance Oversight Committee

10. Spectrum Health Employee Bus Pass Program Renewal:

Mr. Schweitzer commented that the Performance Oversight Committee offered this item to the full Board to highlight a successful program.

ITP has been running a successful employee pass program for Spectrum Health since August 2007. Over the last year, average ridership has risen from just under 4,000 rides per month to 4,900 rides per month.

He explained that authorization is requested from the ITP Board to renew a contract with Spectrum Health for the 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 2010, and will be revisited annually with rate adjustments based on usage and The Rapid's average fare.

This type of program has the potential to be extended to other employers once the final phase of the ITS package is in place.

Mayor Heartwell questioned if Spectrum Health employees can ride anywhere in the system including off campus Spectrum Health locations. Mr. Varga replied that it is any trip by any Spectrum Health employee at any time.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Heartwell, to approve contract renewal for the Spectrum Health Employee Bus Pass Program through September 2010. Motion passed unanimously.

External Relations Committee

11. Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Partnership:

Mr. Lawless explained that the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce is working to finalize a program that will focus the business community on voluntary actions to improve sustainability and increased economic competitiveness. We have been asked to be a founding partner, since The Rapid's commitment to sustainable practices is well known.

He noted that there are a number of benefits to joining, including access to a carbon footprint calculator and technical assistance in assessing and reducing climate change impacts. Partners are expected to assess their carbon footprint and then develop a plan to reduce the overall impact.

He noted that one advantage of joining is the potential to develop partnerships with other businesses. Another advantage is that this will help us maintain our sustainability practices. He mentioned that the plan is not mandatory or binding however by joining we are making a commitment to establish goals and take action steps. This will require a staff member be assigned to these duties in order to keep the plan updated.

Mayor Heartwell commends the initiative of the Chamber for developing this partnership. He believes that with this tool we will be able to identify areas where we can improve our performance.

A motion was made by Morris, supported by VerHeulen, to approve The Rapid's participation in the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Partnership. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Mobile Metro 2030 Task Force:

Mr. Lawless explained that the Board is asked to approve the appointment of the listed individuals to represent stakeholder groups. He noted an addendum that was passed out at the beginning of the meeting.

He commented that Bob Roth has agreed to chair the committee and that the mayors of the six cities will appoint one mayor to represent them on the committee.

Mayor Heartwell questioned what efforts were made to have minority representation. Mr. Varga noted that we are still waiting for a commitment from a few members who would represent the minority population.

A motion was made by Morris, supported by Holt, to approve the appointees to the Mobile Metro 2030 Task Force. Motion passed unanimously.

CEO's REPORT

13. CEO Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga reported that The Rapid will receive a Department of Energy grant in the amount of \$600,000 that will provide 50% match to our Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant for the purchase of buses. This will allow The Rapid to purchase two (2) electric vehicles. We anticipate that these buses will be purchased from a Michigan based company and will still have to undergo testing in Altoona to meet Federal standards for buses and meet FTA procurement requirements.

He mentioned that the Michigan Department of Transportation applied for a discretionary grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act TIGER Discretionary Grant program. This is a \$2 billion dollar program from which MDOT is requesting \$25,692,500 to purchase an initial fleet of 35 ultra lightweight hybrid electric buses. The proposal is to purchase the buses from Fisher Coach Works as a means of starting up a Michigan corporation and stimulating the development of a new kind of "green" bus that is primarily all electric. In cooperation with ten Michigan transit agencies, The Rapid will procure these vehicles under a special exemption from the Federal Transit Administration that allows transit agencies to exceed their fleet spare ratios with ARRA procured vehicles if the acquisition will "green" the agency's fleet.

Mr. Varga commended Brian Pouget for his efforts on these two projects.

Mr. Lawless questioned if this would affect our bus purchase plan. Mr. Varga replied that it would not alter our capital plan.

Mr. Varga noted that the Federal Transportation Appropriations Bill has not been passed and should be passed sometime in October. The Senate has secured a \$2 million earmark for the Wealthy Operations Expansion Plan. The House has allocated an earmark for \$330,000 for additional streetcar analysis. We will have to await a conference report to see what we will be able to receive in a transportation bill. We have been in contact with both offices so that we can benefit from both of these allocations.

He noted that Jennifer Kalczuk has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Michigan Public Transit Association.

Mr. Lawless inquired if there is a meeting scheduled with the community for follow-up on the BRT route changes. Mr. Jaiyeoba noted that we do have two community meetings scheduled, but the Heritage Hill follow-up committee would

be sometime in October. Mr. Lawless noted that he would like to be informed of when this meeting is scheduled.

14. Wellness Program Update:

No discussion.

15. FY 2010 Priorities & Work Plan:

Mr. Varga noted that any amendments or addendums to the FY 2010 Priorities & Work Plan would be discussed through the committee process. He encourages the Board to adopt this as a draft, so staff has a working document. This will be brought back to the Board as a final document based on any changes from Board members.

A motion was made by Heartwell, supported by Austin, to approve the FY 2010 Priorities & Work Plan as a draft, subject to further discussion from committees in October. Motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lawless acknowledged the efforts of staff's participation with Art Prize.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Dutmer thanked Mr. Varga for attending the last Consumer Advisory Committee meeting and giving the committee ideas in areas that they could help. He noted that because of the success of the committee and the relationship the committee has established with the ITP Board they are looked at as an example throughout the state on how advisory committee's should operate.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Rob Carter thanked The Rapid for advances in technology, but feels that the kiosk at Central Station is not user friendly. It does not always work and he offered a real time system or a real time phone system as an alternative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 9-09-09 Governance Committee Meeting
- B. Minutes of 9-16-09 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- C. Minutes of 9-16-09 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- D. Minutes of 9-17-09 External Relations Committee Meeting
- E. Communications

The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary

