

INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

February 23, 2011

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present

Charis Austin
Tim Cochran
Ira Hart
Lisa Haynes
George Heartwell
Jack Hoffman
Tammy Hopman
Don Lawless
Richard Root
Terry Schweitzer
Jim White

Staff

Kathy Anderson	Brian Pouget
Robin Crothers	Liz Schelling
Alan Hartley	Steve Schipper
Taiwo Jaiyeoba	Peter Varga
Meegan Joyce	Conrad Venema
Jennifer Kalczuk	Carl Woodson
Bill Kirk	

Board Members Absent

Barbara Holt
Steve Kauffman
Rick Morris
Rob VerHeulen

Others Present

Rae Bower, DAKC Board
David Bulkowski, DAKC
Bruce DeVoogd, Citizen
Casey Dutmer, CAC
Dan Fox, MV Transportation
Matt Hill, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Gopal Ji, CCIT
Richard Jackson, ATU Local 836

Kyla King, Grand Rapids Press
Denise McGeen, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Watchdog Miller, Passenger
Sgt. Wayne Moore, GRPD/The Rapid
Jackie O'Conner, Area Agency on Aging
Steve Ott, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Steve Redmond, MDOT
Douglas Wright, Passenger

MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

AS RECORDED ON FEBRUARY 23, 2011

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

David Bulkowski thanked the Board for their continued confidence in the ability of Disability Advocates to provide paratransit eligibility reviewer services. He hopes that the Board will support the RideLink recommendation and is pleased that we have found funds to keep the service going while we find a permanent solution. The millage campaign has started and he invited Board members to participate. He noted that there will be a kick-off event in March.

Watchdog Miller commented that over a year ago we put in new service to GRCC and there was never any public scrutiny on it. He said that he submitted a FOIA on it and it was ignored. This route needs a stop to pick up the south side routes. There is a proposal that tax payers should pay to extend the Route 50 Allendale express over to your bus depot. This is frivolous because we are involved in some class cutting scheme. During the week Monday thru Friday, if you expect voters to support it, this route should run east on Fulton to Division to Pearl, over South Division and back east so that these kids have access to the intern jobs downtown and the west siders will have an opportunity to finally have one route that goes downtown with access to tower town jobs. Otherwise it is just another route to nowhere.

Jackie O'Conner, with the Area Agency on Aging, hopes the Board will support the recommendation for supplemental funding for the RideLink program. She stated that it is a great program and would be happy to answer any questions about it.

Casey Dutmer commented that the RideLink recommendation was supported by the Consumer Advisory Committee and he believes it is a very useful service.

1. Public Hearing: Bus Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment:

Mr. Jaiyeoba gave some background information and summarized the results of the Environmental Assessment.

Mr. Lawless opened the public hearing to receive comments on the Bus Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment at 4:15 pm. Comments were entered and the hearing was closed at 4:18 pm.

2. Minutes of the January 26, 2011 Board Meeting:

A motion was made by White, supported by Haynes, to approve the January 26, 2011 Board meeting minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Root, supported by Heartwell, to approve Consent Agenda items 3-9. Motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

Performance Oversight Committee

10. FY 2011 First Quarter Report Card-Fixed Route:

Mr. Schweitzer reported that this is the first evaluation we have had using the new standards that were approved at the January 2011 Board meeting. He reminded the Board that we adjusted standards for safety, customer service and cost effectiveness. He reported that safety received a red light for the first quarter. There was one significant accident and all the others were minor incidents. Staff will continue with safety training. Customer service had over 4 complaints per 100,000 passengers which receives a yellow light and on time performance also received a yellow light. We will continue monitoring the effectiveness and the efficiency of the system.

Mayor Root suggested an enhancement to the safety report by including any statistics regarding personal injuries along with the preventable accidents. He questioned if this creates any type of risk or position for us. Mr. Varga recommends we pursue this with the committee.

Mr. Lawless commented that he sees the review process as evidence to why we have this structure and why it works.

Mr. Hoffman commented that we continue to have an increase in fixed route ridership and cost effectiveness numbers are positive.

A motion was made by Austin, supported by Root, to approve the FY 2011 Fixed Route First Quarter Report Card. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Termination of DASH Lot lease Agreement:

Mr. Schweitzer reported that staff is requesting approval to terminate the existing lease agreement with the City of Grand Rapids for the parking lots that house DASH Area 6.

He noted that Phase 4 of the Rapid Central Station Project involves the relocation of the Amtrak station to DASH Area 6. We have passed significant milestones in securing this project in terms of federal funding, acquisition of property and funding from the DDA. It is anticipated that project construction will begin in April 2012.

He explained that the lease agreement for DASH Area 6 has a provision allowing either party to terminate the agreement for any reason with 12 months written notice. We have previously notified the director of Grand Rapids Parking Services of the plans to proceed with the Amtrak relocation, and it is our intention to provide written notice of termination no later than April 1, 2011.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Heartwell, to provide notification to the City of Grand Rapids of the termination of the DASH Lot Lease Agreement effective April 1, 2012. Motion passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning Committee

12. RideLink Recommendation:

Mr. Hoffman reported that RideLink has been funded by the Kent County Senior Millage and the Kent County Health Department. In September 2010, the Kent County Health Department let The Rapid know that it was no longer going to fund RideLink.

The funding from Kent County Senior Millage only funds part of the cost to The Rapid for hosting the call center. The total cost to The Rapid is \$32,004 per year, which includes salary and benefits for part-time RideLink coordinator, cost of maintaining a toll free phone line, cost of maintaining an on-line registration form and additional staff time needed to answer the phone, go to meetings, take and investigate complaints and the other things necessary to maintain the service. Based on that amount the shortfall for FY 2011 to maintain the call center is \$11,708.

He explained that in reviewing the nature of the RideLink program, the demand for the services and the funding constraints associated with its operations, staff is recommending to the ITP Board to authorize The Rapid to provide additional funding in the amount of \$11,708 for RideLink to enable the program to continue through 2011. This will

stabilize the program to allow additional resources to be identified, and for goals to be identified and reached.

Mr. Schweitzer commented that 75% of the clients who use this service are residents of the six cities. He noted that this funding is not guaranteed to continue after this year but is intended to allow us to try and identify alternative funding solutions for the program.

Mr. Varga commented that since 75% of the clients are within the six-city region this can be characterized as a genuine partnership between us and the Area Agency on Aging on providing senior transportation services. The intention is to work with the members of the Essential Needs Task Force to strategize a long term plan for the program.

A motion was made by Hoffman, supported by Austin, to approve the allocation of \$11,708 for the RideLink program for FY 2011. Motion passed unanimously.

CEO's REPORT

13. CEO Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga reported that the FY 2011 federal budget is still not resolved and is under a Continuing Resolution until March 4.

He explained that there were funds that were not expended in the federal budget and that there will be an attempt to cut these funds out. This means that there is very little discretionary room for the Federal Transit Administration to give out any grant funds. He noted that we do not currently have any earmarks or requests that are pending.

The President issued his FY 2012 budget and it requests \$556 billion over six years to be spent for highway, transit, and rail programs and a new National Infrastructure Bank.

He commented that he does not expect a reauthorization bill within any reasonable time due to funding issues. Decisions have to be made about how the Transportation Authorization Bill will be funded. At this point, they have been using general funds rather than the highway trust fund to fund the highway portion and mass transit funds to fund the transit portion. Once the funds are depleted they will have to start thinking about using general funds. He mentioned that both highway and transit portions of the federal budget are protected by designated trust funds and are not part of the general fund.

He reported that he went to Washington DC with Don Lawless and Taiwo Jaiyeoba to get a sense of what is happening in the federal environment. He noted that they attended many meetings and were able to update legislators about our issues.

He reported that he went to the APTA CEO Seminar to present on the Wealthy Operations Center project as a showcase for how you can design a facility that has aesthetic design, architectural function but can also work very well as a facility and is built on LEED principles.

He noted that the winners of the annual employee of the year awards are included in his report.

On February 2 we had a heavy snow day and our employees responded very well. All routes were put into service and we had 29,000 trips. Many people could not get out of their driveways and chose to ride the bus. This is a positive trend that is occurring.

Mr. Lawless noted an email that he sent out on behalf of Board members expressing appreciation for the extraordinary effort from all The Rapid employees during the snow day. He congratulated the employee of the year award winners.

Mayor Root noted that it is expected by the community that service will run even in inclement weather. This proves that we have created a dependable bus system and shows the quality of The Rapid staff.

14. Presentation on Wealthy Project – Phase 2

Mr. Varga stated that a copy of the latest Construction Management report was distributed to Board members. The project is proceeding and appears to be on time and under budget.

Zach Bosma with Christman gave a presentation on Phase 2 of the Wealthy expansion project.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lawless commented that his trip to Washington DC gave us a chance to engage legislators about what we are doing and was very worthwhile.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Casey Dutmer thanked the Board for supporting the RideLink recommendation. He noted that the CAC is starting the sessions that they have every year with MV Transportation. He complimented staff for their hard work with the scheduling software. The CAC is promoting the millage.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

There was no discussion on the following information items.

- A. Minutes of 2-16-11 Performance Oversight Committee Meeting
- B. Minutes of 2-16-11 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- C. Minutes of 2-17-11 External Relations Committee Meeting
- D. Communications

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, ITP Board Secretary