MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
As Recorded on January 25, 2017

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: Charis Austin, Rosalynn Bliss, Dave Bulkowski, Tim Cochran, Barbara Holt (Chair), Mark Huizenga, Stephen Kepley, Terry Schweitzer, Amna Seibold, Paul Troost, Michael Verhulst

Board Members Absent: David Bilardello, Gary Carey, Randy Gelderloos, Jack Hoffman

Staff Present: Kathy Anderson, Michael Bulthuis, Robin Crothers, Rod Ghearing, Meegan Joyce, Jennifer Kalczuk, Brian Pouget, Liz Schelling, Peter Varga (CEO), Conrad Venema, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

Others Present: Blake Huizenga, Asher Lockwood, Watchdog Miller

Ms. Holt called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Watchdog Miller commented about the 31-day pass and that it is not durable. His pass nearly disintegrated and The Rapid should make them better and they should be prosecuted and fined. He said that ridership has crashed on the Route 19 since it’s realignment. Ridership is down 70% and The Rapid should put the routing back where it was. Fr. Mark should be on a list for excommunication since he was speaking under false pretenses in The Rapid’s video. There has never been bus service to St. Anthony’s Catholic Church. Dave Bulkowski should resign all three positions that he holds, including the Disability Advocates. Bulkowski is a pocket stuffer and he needs to stop his bullying. The seats on The Rapid buses are smaller to accommodate wheelchairs. Nine seats are taken out because of wheelchairs.

MINUTES

1. Minutes of December 14, 2017 Board Meeting:

   Ms. Holt asked for corrections to the minutes. None were offered. The minutes stand approved as written.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were placed on the Board’s Consent Agenda by the Performance Oversight and Strategic Planning Committees at their January meetings.
A motion was made by Seibold, supported by Huizenga, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed with 10 in favor and 1 abstention. Mr. Bulkowski abstained from this vote due to a conflict of interest with item 5.

REGULAR AGENDA

10. **FY 2017 Fixed Route Report Card Standards:**

Mr. Schweitzer stated that the report cards were developed to measure the effectiveness of the services provided by The Rapid. Standards are reviewed on an annual basis and include standards for Productivity, Preventable Accidents, Customer Service, On-Time Performance, and Cost-Effectiveness. The recommendation from staff was to maintain the FY 2016 standards for FY 2017, except for Cost-Effectiveness. For Fixed Route, the FY 2017 cost per passenger standard is recommended at $3.54 and 1.80 passengers per mile. For Total Service, the cost per passenger is recommended at $3.14 and 2.02 passengers per mile.

Discussion took place regarding ridership. Mr. Schweitzer noted that ridership has been declining locally and nationally. He indicated that we will need ridership greater than 0% growth to get a green light, which was the standard for last year.

At their January meeting, the Performance Oversight Committee asked that the quarterly and annual report cards be shared with all Rapid employees.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Bulkowski, to approve the FY 2017 Fixed Route Report Card Standards as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

11. **FY 2017 Paratransit Report Card Standards:**

Mr. Schweitzer reported that standards are developed for paratransit service and are reviewed on an annual basis. The categories are Productivity, Preventable Accidents, Customer Service, On-Time Performance, Cost-Effectiveness and Ratio of Paratransit to Fixed Route Ridership. The FY 2016 standards are recommended for FY 2017, except for On-Time Performance which is recommended to go from 94.5% to 95.0%. He noted that MV Transportation has been working on providing training which has improved the service and they have new management.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Bulkowski, to approve the FY 2017 Paratransit Report Card Standards as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
CEO REPORT

12. CEO Monthly Report:

Mr. Varga provided a handout showing The Rapid’s service history from 2000-2016. This chart was displayed at the Board retreat held earlier in the week. Mr. Varga noted that he would have this information prepared in a smaller version that would be easier for Board members to use.

Mr. Varga stated that Al Vanderberg, retreat facilitator, is compiling the results of the Board retreat session which should be available soon. Many of the issues raised during the session are in the FY 2017 work plan and items will come to the Board as necessary, such as smart cards/e-fare and shared mobility. These issues will be handled at Board meetings. There will be an item in February requesting authorization to go to public hearing regarding the fare structure change required for smart cards/e-fare.

We received a letter from the Region 5 office of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Categorical Exclusion (CE) Analysis and Environmental Review for the Laker Line has been successfully concluded. The project now moves to Washington DC with assignment of a Project Management Oversight Consultant (PMOC). Meanwhile, the process is moving forward toward getting the grant. We can go beyond 60% design at this point.

Mr. Varga mentioned that we will do our own legislative work including staff and the Board. He noted that Mayor Huizenga has reached out to Congressman Bill Huizenga in this effort. He encouraged Board members to talk with legislators about the Laker Line if that opportunity arises. Materials will be provided as needed.

These recent events are good news for the Laker Line project. He thanked The Rapid’s Planning Department staff, especially Nick Monoyios, for their hard work getting us to this point.

In response to a question from Ms. Holt, Mr. Varga stated that we work with the PMOC via phone conference or they come here. There will be a lot of questions and information that we will need to provide. Already having done a BRT does not cause this second one to be less work. It is a different PMOC and the leadership at FTA will change with the new Administration.

Mayor Kepley asked about the status of this environmental work for the Laker Line with the new Administration. Mr. Varga responded that the Laker Line project will not be adversely affected. There is existing law that governs the process.

Communication Campaign:

Ms. Kalczuk distributed a hand-out showing a summary of our “More to the Ride” campaign and what was done last fall. We haven’t done as much during the holidays, but are starting to build the campaign again. A new video has been produced regarding Fr. Mark from St. Anthony’s Catholic Church.

She noted that this campaign is paid advertising, while we also use social media, speak at meetings and events, etc.

Mr. Bulkowski asked about the metrics for the campaign – how do we know if this campaign is doing what we want it to do? Ms. Kalczuk stated that we do surveys to gauge awareness and to get other information. The surveys have been very positive and we get good feedback from many sources.
Mayor Seibold inquired about what the campaign is supposed to do, i.e. increase ridership, create a more positive image, awareness related to the millage?

Ms. Kalczuk responded that this campaign is considered brand advertising. It is intended to educate people who don’t know much about The Rapid and help to understand the people who ride.

Discussion was held regarding The Rapid’s current advertising effort, its purpose and expected outcomes, and how the surveys are used to obtain information that is consistently tracked or to get more targeted responses.

Mr. Varga noted that we have done some smaller focus groups, which was very helpful.

In response to a question from Ms. Holt, Ms. Kalczuk stated that The Rapid maintains a certain percentage of the fleet for its own bus advertising.

The new video with Fr. Mark was shown to the Board. Ms. Kalczuk mentioned that these videos are 30 seconds for TV spots and we have longer versions of up to about 2 minutes for other purposes.

Mr. Schweitzer suggested that we create videos regarding other services such as paratransit. Mr. Kalczuk stated that they are working on a video now with an individual who uses paratransit and fixed route services. These are all unique stories about real people who ride our service. We will start showing the new videos/TV spots and will add more over time.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Ms. Holt stated that she felt the Board retreat on Monday, January 23, 2017, went well. There was a lot of information communicated by the Board and she is looking forward to the final report. She commented that she appreciated the staff being there and felt it was a good opportunity for all involved. She noted that this will be a busy year.

She reminded the Board that the governance survey is due soon and asked Board members to fill it out and send it in.

Ms. Holt commented that The Rapid is looking at a millage in November 2017. We will begin talking about this at the February committee meetings. Our attorney has provided a timeline on all of the necessary filings and deadlines.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

The new chair of the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) was not able to be at the Board meeting today, but he will be here next month to give an update.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Collective Bargaining

There is no need for an Executive Session on collective bargaining.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Cochran reported that there will be a community building event on February 27, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at the Wyoming Senior Center. There will be someone from HUD to talk about land
use decisions and other issues. Invitees are key city staff and elected officials and this event is by reservation only. He asked anyone who is interested in attending to contact him.

Mayor Kepley noted that he will not be able to attend the event being hosted by the City of Wyoming because that same day is the 50th birthday of the City of Kentwood. There will be a special city commission meeting, announcements, awards and activities.

Related to a hand-out from Watchdog Miller, Mayor Kepley suggested that perhaps the problem with the 31-day pass is a software issue.

Mr. Bulkowski thanked the Board for the warm welcome. He stated that he looks forward to working with the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, Board Secretary