MINUTES OF
INTERURBAN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
January 24, 2018

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: Charis Austin, David Bilardello, Gary Carey, Tracie Coffman, Andy Guy, Jack Hoffman, Mark Huizenga, Stephen Kepley (Chair), Robert Postema, Terry Schweitzer, Amna Seibold, Paul Troost, Michael Verhulst

Board Members Absent: Rosalynn Bliss, Randy Gelderloos

Staff Present: Michael Bulthuis, Steve Clapp, Robin Crothers, Judy DeVries, Meegan Joyce, Nick Monoyios, Brian Pouge, Liz Schelling, Peter Varga (CEO), Conrad Venema, Scott Walsh, Mike Wieringa, Kevin Wisselink

Others Present: Derron Hughes (ATU Local 836), Laurel Joseph (GVMC), Allan Klepadlo (MV Transportation), Asher Lockwood (Rapid Intern), Watchdog Miller, Chris Swank (GVSU)

Board Chair Stephen Kepley called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Watchdog Miller stated that he is a senior citizen and had to sit in the back of the room at the Rapid Board retreat. The Rapid is destroying riders’ hearing with the loud announcements on the buses. This could mean a lawsuit for The Rapid in the future and the municipalities involved. He missed half of what was going on because he was in the back of the room. He mentioned the 17% fare increase that was put into place 28 months ago and now adding another 56% by cutting the transfer time. In terms of the planned extension to 3 Mile and 60th and Patterson, these are corn field priorities gerrymandered, irresponsible land uses. Ten years ago he wrote Governor Granholm about a dozen corridors within our city that don’t have any Rapid service. This is because The Rapid overpays the drivers at $36 an hour and the CEO makes over $300,000 a year. Some of these corridors are Diamond, Valley, Richmond, Bristol, no service to West Catholic High School. Who are the stakeholders? On the $70 million Laker Line project The Rapid ignored constituencies like the Walker firehouse, senior center, Marsh Ridge, Shawmut Inn, the Family Fare, Oakleigh and Colindale NW and to the west.

2. MINUTES – 11/29/17 & 12/9/17 Board Meetings

Mayor Kepley asked for corrections to the minutes. None were offered. The minutes of the 11/29/17 and 12/9/17 Board meetings stand approved as written.
3. AGENDA ITEMS

a) FY 2018 Fixed Route Report Card Standards:

Mr. Wisselink stated that since FY 2015 The Rapid has been breaking out performance measures by service type – Fixed Route Service (Routes 1-44, Silver Line), Contracted Service (GVSU, DASH, GRCC, FSU and vanpool), and Total Service. Staff recommends maintaining this process. He reviewed the recommended standards for fixed route and total service for FY 2018. He noted that the standards recommended for FY 2018 are the same as FY 2017, except the productivity standard has been adjusted to reflect the goal of a ridership increase based on FY 2017 ridership and productivity. There are no standards for contracted service but staff will continue to monitor these services.

A motion was made by Schweitzer, supported by Huizenga, to approve the recommended report card standards for fixed route and total service for FY 2018. Motion passed unanimously.

b) FY 2018 Paratransit Report Card Standards:

Ms. Joyce reviewed the proposed FY 2018 paratransit report card standards. No changes are recommended from last year’s standards. Ridership and the ratio of paratransit to fixed route ridership do not have standards but are monitored and reported.

Mayor Seibold inquired about appointment times. Ms. Joyce responded that passengers have to notify The Rapid when they make their reservation for a ride that they have a specific appointment time.

Mayor Seibold asked how passengers per hour is determined when some passengers bring a caregiver along on the trip. She felt this would skew the numbers. Ms. Joyce noted that there aren’t many caregivers riding with passengers. She stated she would find out the number of caregivers/escorts.

Mr. Hoffman asked about how the ratio of paratransit passengers to fixed route passengers is determined. Ms. Joyce stated that the number of paratransit passengers is compared to all fixed route passengers.

A motion was made by Seibold, supported by Hoffman, to approve the recommended FY 2018 paratransit report card standards. Motion passenger unanimously.

c) Consumer Advisory Committee Appointments:

Ms. Joyce reported that Anne Larson, Stephen Burke, David Covey and Mary Kinnane are recommended for reappointment to the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) for two year terms ending 12/31/19. She reviewed the qualifications and backgrounds for these reappointments, noting that all four have been members in good standing.

Mr. Bilardello asked if David Covey was still the chair of the CAC. Ms. Joyce responded that there has not been an election or chair yet this year, but Mr. Covey is not interested in continuing as chair.
A motion was made by Seibold, supported by Hoffman, to approve the reappointment of Anne Larson, Stephen Burke, David Covey and Mary Kinnane to the Consumer Advisory Committee for two years terms ending 12/31/19. Motion passed unanimously.

d) FY 2018 FTA Grant Application:

Mr. Varga reviewed the FY 2018 FTA grant application. The Rapid submits a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) each year. The application requests $9,944,463 in Section 5307 formula funds and $406,680 in Section 5307 planning funds, $926,931 in Section 5339 Buses & Bus Facilities, and $1,670,000 in CMAQ. These funds are 80% federal and 20% state match.

Mr. Varga reviewed some of the capital items shown in Attachment B of the agenda item, noting a change in the amount of Preventive Maintenance funds. The City of Grand Rapids has initiated a Downtown Shelter Project that The Rapid has agreed to contribute $250,000 each year for two years. A third year has been added and $250,000 has been taken out of Preventive Maintenance funds bringing that number down to $750,000. He stated we would probably not spend the FY 2018 Preventive Maintenance funds due to prior years of accumulation.

He noted that we have included money for expansion vans for the vanpool program. An aggressive effort will be made to increase participation in the program.

Mr. Varga informed the Board that we need to make sure our capital needs can be met, especially fixed route buses and paratransit vehicles. He noted that we have money for Clean Air Action Days, but the amount of usage is different each year.

Discussion took place regarding the use of Preventive Maintenance funds for capital needs. Mr. Varga stated these are Section 5307 funds.

In response to a question from Mayor Kepley, Mr. Varga confirmed that we can purchase 50-foot buses instead of 40-foot buses if that is what the Board chooses to do. We can purchase any size bus.

Mr. Schweitzer asked about the status of the Grandville Transit Station. He mentioned that this program was initiated for safety reasons near the Grandville Library where buses layover. Mr. Varga commented that we are still resolving some easement issues with this project. We will also have to do a Section 106 review that is required to determine impacts related to historical properties.

A motion was made by Seibold, supported by Schweitzer, to approve the FY 2018 FTA Grant Application and to authorize execution of the grant contract. Motion passed unanimously.

e) FY 2019 MDOT Grant Application:

Mr. Varga stated that The Rapid submits a grant application to MDOT on an annual basis. MDOT requires an application well in advance which they use in estimating funding for state budgeting purposes. The MDOT application includes requests for the 20% state share for federal capital projects. Requested operating assistance ($22,600,000) is based on 50% of eligible operating expenses, the maximum amount eligible under Act 51, however, actual state match is anticipated to be approximately 32.9%. We are requesting $2,431,153 to match FTA Section 5307 Capital, $103,703 for
FTA Section 5307 Planning, $220,000 for CMAQ funds, and $236,409 for FTA Section 5339 funds.

A motion was made by Austin, supported by Hoffman, to approve the FY 2019 MDOT Grant Application and to authorize execution of the grant contract. Motion passed unanimously.

f) FY 2019 Specialized Services Grant Application:

Mr. Varga reported that the Specialized Services grant application is submitted annually. These funds are received from MDOT and are passed through to recipient agencies. This application is required a year in advance.

Specialized Services operating assistance is for senior and disabled transportation in Kent County that is beyond The Rapid’s service area and/or hours of operation. The Rapid’s role is to provide coordination for the various providers to prevent any duplication of services. There is a Specialized Services Coordination Committee that meets to determine funding level distribution recommendations to the Rapid Board.

The recipient agencies are Kent County (ACSET), Network 180, Hope Network and Senior Neighbors. For FY 2018 The Rapid received $463,289 for pass-through. This amount is expected again for FY 2019.

Mr. Schweitzer asked about the specialized services funding related to Wheels to Work. Mr. Varga stated that specialized services funds can only be used outside our service area and hours of operation. Mayor Huizenga mentioned that Wheels to Work stands on its own regarding funding.

Mr. Guy inquired about how the amount is determined. Ms. Joyce responded that the state sets the amount based on statistics from previous years. The agency amounts are determined by the Specialized Services Coordination Committee. Mr. Varga commented that the pot for specialized services funds is fixed and stays about the same every year.

Ms. Coffman stated that in the list of agencies receiving pass-through funds, she believed that ACSET should not be listed since they are now under Kent County. Ms. Joyce concurred that ACSET is now under Kent County and the County does handle the billings but including ACSET affirms that it is the same service program even though they are now part of Kent County.

In response to questions from Mr. Guy, Mr. Varga stated that the agencies report quarterly to The Rapid on ridership. The Rapid then reports this information to MDOT for reimbursement according to a set rate and number of trips. Mr. Varga also noted that The Rapid is not responsible for performance of service for the agencies funded with specialized services funds.

A motion was made by Austin, supported by Coffman, to approve the FY 2019 Specialized Services grant application and to authorize execution of a contract with MDOT for third party operating assistance with the four recipient agencies – Kent County (ACSET), Network 180, Hope Network and Senior Neighbors. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **STAFF REPORTS**

a) **Monthly Financials – October/November 2017:**

Mr. Walsh reviewed the October and November 2017 monthly financial statements. He noted this is early in the fiscal year and we have not had any three-pay months yet. There will be more activity to report over the next couple months.

In response to a question from Mayor Kepley, Mr. Walsh confirmed that fares shown in the statements are actual and tax receipts are divided by twelve and applied equally to each month.

Mr. Bilarcello asked about the adopted budget vs. amended budget shown in the statements. Mr. Walsh responded that we move money within line items but the bottom line doesn’t change. If the bottom line needs to change, then a formal budget amendment would come to the Board.

b) **Ridership & Productivity – October/November 2017:**

Mr. Venema reported on October and November ridership and productivity. Ridership was down 8% in October compared to last October, and November ridership decreased 7.3%. Average weekday ridership was down 8.2% and 6.7% respectively. He noted that decreasing ridership is a national trend. Economic factors such as low gas prices have an impact on transit ridership. Ridership on the Silver Line continues to increase.

c) **Paratransit Ridership – October/November 2017:**

Ms. Joyce stated that total monthly paratransit ridership increased 1.9% in October and decreased 0.7% in November. Average weekday ridership increased in both months. Average Saturday ridership decreased in both months and Sunday ridership showed increases. ADA ridership remained fairly steady with a 3.7% increase. Ridership increased in all other categories except for a continued decrease for Network 180.

Mr. Schweitzer inquired about the three-year pilot in Cascade Township. Mr. Pouget stated we are two years into the pilot.

In response to a question from Mr. Schweitzer, Ms. Joyce commented that Cascade Township is provided with information on fixed route and paratransit service ridership which has been good. The Township has some concerns regarding the cost of the service. Mr. Varga noted that Mr. Wisselink is working with Cascade on the cost issues and service beyond the three-year pilot.

d) **Balanced Scorecard – November 2017:**

Mr. Venema informed the Board that the Balanced Scorecard for November remained fairly consistent with the previous month. He commented that he is revisiting the measures being used in the scorecard to determine their effectiveness and to recommend any changes.

Mayor Kepley stated that the Board will review the committee charges that were recommended in the recent governance study. The Governance Committee charge included appointing Board members, which actually is the responsibility of the six mayors. At the retreat, he asked for volunteers to serve on a task force for development
of the committees. Once the committees are established, the Balanced Scorecard will be on the agenda for the appropriate committee for evaluation.

5. CEO’S REPORT

Mr. Varga congratulated Michael Verhulst on being the new chair of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Board.

The FY 2018 appropriations bill has been delayed again. Another Continuing Resolution (CR) has been approved by the Legislature until February 8, 2018. There are several issues that they were not able to come to agreement on, including an increase in the spending caps. Last year the appropriations bill was approved in September, the last month of the fiscal year and partial apportionments were provided after the first six months. The impacts on The Rapid are that we do not get our capital funds for planned projects. He is hopeful that Congress will start passing appropriations bills in a timely manner.

Mr. Varga mentioned that another reason he is anxious for the FY 2018 appropriations bill to get passed in that there is language in the bill that mandates that FY 2017 appropriate Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGA) be released. They have been holding appropriated FFGAs like our Laker Line project which was appropriated in FY 2017.

6. CHAIR’S REPORT

Mayor Kepley reported on the status of the work by the CEO Search Committee. Emails were sent out to 158 stakeholders to sign up for an interview with the consultant and/or fill out an online questionnaire regarding input on a new Rapid CEO. He noted that there were 32 interviews scheduled so far. The deadline for making an appointment for an interview and for filling out the questionnaire is February 1, 2018.

The Compensation Committee will meet for additional discussion based on information coming forward at the Board Retreat on January 22, 2018.

7. ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

a) Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC):

   No report

BOARD COMMENTS

Mayor Kepley asked for comments from Board members.

Mayor Huizenga asked Mr. Varga to comment on the conference call that was held earlier in the day with the Acting FTA Administrator regarding the Laker Line grant. Mr. Varga stated that there were several people included in the conference call, including representatives from Congressman Huizenga’s office, GVSU, the FTA Executive Director, FTA Region V, Mayor Huizenga and others. FTA has been getting pressure from Congressman Huizenga’s office about releasing the Laker Line grant. Concerns were expressed regarding construction and cost issues related to the delay. It was mentioned on the call that The Rapid’s Silver Line BRT came in on time and under budget. We also noted that it would be advantageous to get the approval by March since there are construction seasons in Michigan due to the winter weather and we don’t want to fall even further behind. FTA said they were reviewing the project but no commitment or specific date were noted on the call. Mr. Varga commented that he felt the call
went well and feels optimistic about receipt of the Laker Line grant. Senator Peters’ office and Congressman Huizenga’s office have assisted in this effort and will continue to do so.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mayor Kepley adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Crothers, Board Secretary