



***MASS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE MAY 24, 2007 BOARD MEETING***

PRESENT: Mike Zelle, Chairman, Richard Abrams, Paul Newman, Paul Luttenbacher, Rose Bogardus, John Northrup (Arrived at 8:03 A.M.), Carolyn Sims (Arrived at 8:12 A.M.), Joe Conroy (Arrived at 8:15 A.M.)

STAFF: Robert Foy, Suzanne Shepherd, Ed Benning, Jerry Ragsdale, Terry Jurens, Charlene Kowalski

GUEST: Judy Alexander, LaShonda Essex

Chairman Zelle called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

Comments of the Public

Judy Alexander stated that she represents a group of individuals that have a concern regarding the tile mosaic that is proposed to be placed in the bathrooms at the Downtown Transportation Center with the civil rights theme. A number of community activists have brought their concerns to her. She has talked to a number of people and found that there is discontent about the idea of civil rights artwork being placed in the bathrooms. She also talked to the Greater Flint Arts Council to get more information and to Mr. Foy. The rationale was shared with her that there has been research done that if you put art in the bathrooms it decreases the vandalism.

Mr. Foy has arranged for her to meet with the taskforce who made the decision on the artwork but Ms. Alexander wanted to go on record with the Board to make them aware of what the concerns are. She has heard that this art needs to be out somewhere where everybody can see it. She has also heard concerns of why we are putting civil rights artwork in a place where it can be vandalized. If it was in a public place then the entire public could take ownership and make sure that the art was protected. In general folks just say that the bathrooms are not a respectful location to put civil rights artwork.

Ms. Alexander stated that they are very appreciative of the project, the fact that the terminal is being named after Rosa Parks, the civil rights theme. They don't want to take anything away from it. They are just trying to be proactive now and bring it to the Board's attention that there are folks who prefer that the civil rights theme not be represented in the bathrooms.

Ms. Alexander also stated that Mr. Foy had let her know that there was community input. He mentioned the NAACP, Concerned Pastors and that the Urban League was also involved. The

established organizations don't necessarily represent the grass roots. The folks she is in conversation with is not a formal organization but it is people who are very inclusive and who are concerned about what goes on in Flint. They do not have any desire to interfere with the artistic expression; they just are concerned about the location of the art.

Ms. Bogardus stated that she had asked Mr. Foy for some orientation and he and his staff spent hours walking her through our wonderful MTA system. One of the things she did was visit the downtown building. Ms. Bogardus was very excited to see that the entire building is dedicated to the issue of civil rights. She believes that the emphasis is on the wrong thing. It isn't that the civil rights issue is only in the bathrooms, it is the entire building. As far as the gender issue, it is not a big issue with her and usually she is very attuned to that. There is art in the ladies bathroom and art in the men's bathroom. Nobody is being deprived that they can't see it other than at the open house. Ms. Bogardus feels that they are looking at it in the wrong light. She thinks that it is an incident of a reporter looking at things wrong and misdirecting people. It is going to give people that use the bus a pleasant place to come in to.

Mr. Northrup stated that his original concern was not everybody would be able to see the art except at the open house but there are those who have been in places in the right time of life or wrong time of life who came abruptly to doors that said what color you had to be to use the bathroom. Public toilets were a huge part of the civil rights movement.

Mr. Newman stated that he wanted to make a comment in regard to the comment that the NAACP, Concern Pastors and Urban League don't necessarily represent grass roots people. He feels that is as far from the factual situation as anyone could be. If you were to talk with anyone from those respective organizations you would find that the majority of their clientele are people in the community that are grass roots individuals. Mr. Newman doesn't know of any other organization in this community that deals more with grass roots individuals, particularly in the African American community.

Chairman Zelle stated that Ms. Alexander asked if we were valuing the right thing. We value the citizens of Flint and Genesee County. We value the riders and that is one of the reasons MTA and Bob Foy went after this art to be respectful about our community and riders.

Mr. Foy stated that our business is transportation. That building is built for the purpose of providing transportation services to this community. When we are bringing the art into transit, we are using art as a way of enhancing the value of that building to the community. Public input is extremely important and we want to commend Ms. Alexander for coming forward. We have a taskforce who made the decisions and we want to give everyone the opportunity to speak to the taskforce, remembering that we are coming to the final closing of this issue because we are issuing contracts to artist based upon decisions that have been made. A tentative meeting has been established for Wednesday, May 30th at 9:00 A.M. between Ms. Alexander's group and the taskforce.

Mr. Conroy stated that the State of Michigan came out in favor of art in any public building that is being built. This Board very much supported that policy and as a policymaking Board we approved the policy in line with what the State policy has been.

Minutes of the April 19, 2007 Regular Board Meeting

Mr. Northrup moved, supported by Mr. Newman to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2007 Regular Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes of the April 17, 2007 Finance Committee Meeting

Mr. Luttenbacher moved, supported by Mr. Abrams to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2007 Finance Committee Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #07-44 to apply for financial assistance for fiscal year 2008 under Act 51 of the public acts of 1951, as amended and appoint Robert J. Foy, General Manager as the Transportation Coordinator, for all public transportation matters, who is authorized to provide such information as deemed necessary by the State Transportation Commission or department for its administration of Act 51 for 2008.

Mr. Foy stated that this is a routine resolution required under Act 51 of the public acts of 1951, which is the act that provides State funds for public transit. Each year we need to have a resolution by the Board authorizing the General Manager to act as the representative of the MTA in requesting and executing State funding.

Mr. Conroy moved, supported by Mr. Newman to approve Resolution #07-44. Motion passed unanimously.

Civic Park Route Detour

Mr. Foy stated that we are in the road building season. Third Avenue is going to be completely torn up from Saginaw St. to Chevrolet. This is one of the main arteries for our Civic Park route, which provides transportation for those people in Carriage Town and between Kettering University. We thought we would move over to Fifth Avenue and try to make the connection there, however Fifth Avenue at the Flushing Road point is also going to be completely torn up. Therefore, we would not be able to get out to Chevrolet on Fifth Avenue either. We are going to have to move the bus through some residential areas in order to get from Saginaw St. over to Chevrolet. There is no other way for us to serve that group of people and not get into residential areas with the large buses. It is not going to be an easy situation for the community and we just wanted to let the Board know that there will probably be some public backlash as a result of the large buses being in some residential areas in our effort to get from N. Saginaw to Chevrolet Avenue to be able to serve the Civic Park line.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Foy stated that things are very quiet because at the Federal level everything is focused on the Federal 2007 Supplemental Appropriation, which provides the increase funding for Iraq. From that standpoint everything else is at an absolute standstill until they can resolve that particular issue. It affects our capital program more than our operating program because our operating

program has very little Federal dollars associated with it. Our local millage is our primary source of operating revenue. The capital program is at a standstill because there is no action being taken until which time the supplemental appropriation is completed.

Rose Bogardus left the meeting at 8:40 A.M.

There is \$325 million in addition to another \$175 million that was in the appropriation for security for public transportation. We keep pushing for us to access some of that money and we think we are going to be able to get some, which will allow us to increase the amount of security we have throughout the system.

Mr. Abrams asked about the Swartz Creek Service Center.

Mr. Foy stated that we have the money but we are in a situation where they have not released our authorization to spend the money. It appears that things are being held up because of a cashflow problem and they are trying to hold back on all domestic spending.

Mr. Foy also stated that because of the supplemental appropriation, both in the House and the Senate, everything is focused on that and there have been no sub-committee hearings on the FY 2008 programs. There will not be any until after the supplemental appropriation is resolved for FY 2007.

At the State level, they still do not have a 2007 budget. The Governor has made the statement that if something isn't resolved by the 1st of June she is going to start cutting services. Everything is at a standstill until they can resolve the revenue shortfall issue here in the State of Michigan. Even with the issues involved, the MTA income and expense actuals reflects a very positive environment.

The construction of the downtown facility will be completed the second week of June. It will take another 6 months to a year to get all of the electronic equipment up and working. The Art in Transit will take almost a year to complete so the grand opening of that facility will probably be a year from now.

The Fenton facility, the last thing is the fueling system, should be completed within a few days.

Mr. Conroy stated that he thinks this Board should go on record with the Governor and the legislature on passing a program that resolves the financial problems in this State because it is going to affect local government dramatically at some point. We should have a resolution passed and sent to them. It can be generic in terms of local services.

Mr. Conroy so moved a resolution that has not been fully drafted that the staff can put together to support a resolve to the financial imbalances not only for this budget year but also for next year when the \$1.9 billion comes into place that was cut from the single business tax. Mr. Abrams supported.

Ms. Sims stated that perhaps this is something that the City of Flint should take on rather than the MTA Board. It would have a greater impact if the City sends the resolution.

Mr. Conroy stated that we should have an accumulation of everybody sending in a resolution.

Motion passed unanimously.

April, 2007 Income/Expense Statement

Jerry Ragsdale, MTA Assistant General Manager-Administration stated that in passenger fares fixed routes is starting to have a positive response to the fare increases. Demand response is down some but that is related to moving some peak hour service from demand response to the fixed routes. The regional staff is working on issues and adjustments on the routes to increase ridership.

The non-transportation revenue is moving into the positive. We still have some shortages due to the construction of the downtown facility. With it being completed in the middle of June we will start seeking vendors for the commercial areas of the facility.

The dedicated tax revenue has been brought up to date. We are almost \$3 million ahead of our original projection. We expect by the end of our fiscal year we will receive about \$10.5 million in tax revenue.

In Federal cash grants we had not received anything in Section 5311 grants. This week we received \$172,000 which is almost double what we had anticipated. All of the grants are being held up due to the supplemental appropriations. Total revenue is about \$630,000 ahead of projection.

In expenses we are almost \$700,000 under budget. We were expecting a net income of \$751,000 but because of the additional revenue, at this point we are about \$1.3 million ahead of our original projection.

Chairman Zelle ruled that the April, 2007 Income/Expense Statement be received and filed.

April, 2007 Ridership Statistic Report

Ed Benning, MTA Assistant General Manager-Services stated that the ridership for April was 433,986. Comparing that to a year ago we had no change. On the fixed route we had ridership of 345,641. There was no change from a year ago. If you go back to the beginning of this fiscal year, in October we were down about 2%. Some of that can be directly related to the construction. When you move up to November and we moved into the fare increase we started seeing a 5 to 6% reduction in ridership. In February we had a 12% reduction directly related to the weather being so cold. It appears now that we are going back on target and we are leveling off. With the fare increase, ridership has come back quicker than normal.

Peak period routes had a ridership of 19,364. There is a direct relationship between that increase this year and the reduction in curb-to-curb because it was necessary to move the students off the vans and put them on the larger buses. Curb-to-Curb service had a ridership of 54,290 for a 6% reduction. We are taking action at this time to get our ridership back up in that area.

On our regional service, even though it is down 4%, ridership is coming up quite quickly. We had a meeting this week with Delphi and they are taking seven of their locations and moving them into the University Drive location in the spring of 2008. It appears there is a large contingency in Genesee County that will require transportation.

Chairman Zelle ruled that the April, 2007 Ridership Statistic Report be received and filed.

April, 2007 Complaint Statistic Report

Mr. Benning stated that for the month of April we had 38 complaints. We are averaging about 9 complaints per 100,000 passengers. When we look at the breakdown we find the area that has been consistently high is driver conduct. We are taking action to not only retrain our drivers but also test our drivers and put out drivers through role-playing to see if we can't reduce these driver conduct complaints.

Chairman Zelle ruled that the April, 2007 Complaint Statistic Report be received and filed.

Comments of Board Members

Terry Jurens, MTA Assistant General Manager-Operations stated that she wanted the Board to be aware of the award that MTA received.

Mr. Foy stated that the Mass Transportation Authority was awarded the National Safety Award as the best system with the greatest safety record and greatest Safety Program throughout the United States for bus systems operating 4 million to 30 million passenger rides per year.

Chairman Zelle stated that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission will be holding a meeting in Flint on either June 25th or in August. They are going to focus on accessibility issues and hope that some of the Board can attend the meeting.

Mr. Abrams stated that he would like to congratulate Carolyn Sims on her success in fighting her recall.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:26 A.M.