



**MASS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2007 BOARD MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Mike Zelle, Chairman, Paul Newman, John Northrup, Paul Luttenbacher, Richard Abrams, Carolyn Sims, Joe Conroy

**STAFF:** Robert Foy, Suzanne Shepherd, Terry Jurrens, Ed Benning, Charlene Kowalski

**GUEST:** Michael Joliat, Attorney, Warren Franklin, Chief Stewart Local 3437, Robert Welch, Charlyn Arnot, MTA Bus Operators, Judy Alexander, Erin Onweller

**ABSENT:** Rose Bogardus

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

**Comments of the Public**

Robert Welch, an MTA employee stated that he has been employed by the MTA since 2001. He started as a route inspector, moved into part time and has now been full time for eight months. He is here because he has been refused his full time benefits. He has never missed a day of work and never been late. Right now he is doing everything that a full time driver does and is working over 40 hours a week. He is tired of being a “victim of circumstances” and would like an answer on why he is being refused full time benefits.

Erin Onweller, a resident of Flint for the past 6.5 years is a recent graduate with high academic honors from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor’s Degree in fine art, specializing in printmaking and drawing. She is here today as a respected community artist and as a Flint resident to represent the interests of the disenfranchised citizens of Flint who have a concern regarding the art proposed for the downtown transfer center. The process of the art selection has come under significant fire because the citizens that this terminal has been built to serve have been met with hostility, reactionism and dismissal when voicing their opinions regarding the selection of art.

Ms. Onweller feels that the process for selecting the art has been in clear and direct violation of the guidelines set forth by the Federal Transit Administration to govern the process of art selection. The mandate to comprise the Selection Committee of those who have expertise in the areas of art and design, with a following option to include community members, is clearly being ignored in the MTA public art selection process. The guideline clearly states that the community surrounding the facility must participate in the selection process. This community is weary of

inuring, power-protective and exclusive practices that determine the direction of development and revitalization efforts like this one that ultimately affects them the most. Ms Onweller wanted to make sure that this is known to the Board. The process should be restructured as a model of excellence for public art processes that will undoubtedly follow in the future as Flint continues its revitalization.

Judy Alexander, a Flint resident stated they are trying to be proactive by bringing their concerns about the art being displayed in the bathrooms early enough so that we can do something about it. The taskforce stated that they would meet with representatives of the community to dialogue. We have not heard this dialogue. We attended a meeting last night and the way the committee was received at the meeting is represented in the anger and passion that you heard from Erin today. You can say that your having community input, but saying doesn't make it so. The community would like the committee to sit back and say that we could do this better and involve the community in the selection process. The committee is using the Human Relations Committee, which is another government entity, not the community.

Ms. Alexander also wanted to know if a plaque was going to be displayed explaining the role of Rosa Parks and they would also like an answer to the suggestion of putting the mosaic art on the wall at the entrance to the terminal.

Mr. Foy stated that the process established by the Board was to enter into a contract with the Greater Flint Arts Council to provide the direction and expertise as to how art should be incorporated into the downtown transfer center. The Greater Flint Arts Council established as the project manager, Greg Fiedler. At that point, Mr. Fiedler established an art selection taskforce made up of a combination of people from the community, members of the local art community, members of the staff and members of the Board. There are about 10-12 members. The taskforce has been selecting the art that will go into the building. They went out for proposals and the artists came in and gave their proposals. The art selection committee has awarded contracts to the artist selected to provide each of the art pieces. One of the areas that is still left and has not been designated is the 14 stained glass windows. Each window is to reflect about an event that is significant in civil rights in this country.

It was decided by the art selection committee that we needed additional outside assistance. The project director went to the Flint Human Relations Commission and asked for their assistance in determining those key events that should be depicted on the windows. They agreed to give us their recommendations. The Human Relations Commission then determined that they did not have all the expertise on the commission that they needed so they went out to the public to bring in some individuals who they felt would add to the process of selecting what the key events are that have occurred that should be identified. That is when it started to get difficult. The input beyond the Human Relations Commission is now involving individuals who would like to see the process changed. It was not intended that the selection process would be changed. The public input is done through the art selection group. We are waiting for the recommendations to come back from the Human Relations Commission on what those key events are that should be addressed.

There has been discussion that they want to say what is going to be depicted. Not the event but how that event is going to be depicted. As one member of the art selection committee, Mr. Foy strongly disagrees with that. The artists are the ones that should be telling us how the event is going to be depicted. Part of what the discussion was, was the location of the art. It has gone far beyond what Greg Fiedler had intended when he went to the Human Relations Commission for assistance in determining the events that are significant in civil rights.

Ms. Sims stated that when this first came up she thought we were talking about the art in the bathroom. Now it sounds like it's the entire selection of the artwork along with the theme. The public has made comments. Is it about the bathroom? Do we stop the bathroom art? It has now escalated and we need to do something about it. Make a public statement of where we are going to go from here because it sounds like it is not going to end. How do we put everybody on the same page?

Mr. Foy stated that we commissioned the Greater Flint Arts Council to do that work for us. They established an art selection taskforce and they are doing their business in a professional way. They have individuals from a broad section of the community as representatives. We have input, but it doesn't mean that we necessarily are going to change everything. We have already signed the contracts for the art in the bathrooms and the artist are already in the process of developing the art.

Mr. Conroy stated that the theme of Rosa Parks is a great idea and we supported that as a Board to go forward. That is something we should not fiddle around with. The rest of this is something, with good intentions, was delegated to the arts council. The themes are important and the group should let the ideas that the community suggests be considered.

Mr. Newman stated that the Board considered this project more than a year ago and the taskforce has been working on this for a year. Why are we at this time having all of these concerns raised?

Mr. Foy stated that the Flint Journal, after asking them to defer until the project was complete, wrote an article regarding the art in the transfer center. From that article came people who said they wanted to be part of the selection process. The process was clearly defined with the group that was established through our contract with the Greater Flint Arts Council.

Mr. Newman stated that whether it's civil rights or any other issue, everyone has a different perception. If we had significant parts of this community or individuals who were directly impacted by certain civil right events, Mr. Newman may be stopping and asking the question of whether we should proceed. He has not heard the NAACP, Concerned Pastors, the Urban League of Flint or the people out of the African American community in Genesee County coming to raise a lot of concern about this project or how it is being conducted. Mr. Newman feels that a lot of this so called concern or comment has surfaced as a result of the Flint Journal article.

Chairman Zellely stated that the point is that the project needs to be inclusive and voices heard. There has been a strong effort to do that and we are at a point where people want to have their voices heard and he feels they need to be heard. He encourages that the selection committee have input from the folks that are asking for input in a welcoming way.

Mr. Foy stated that when they left the meeting last night there was a general understanding that the art selection committee would make the final decision but that they were very open to any recommendations that would come from the Human Relations Commission.

**Minutes of the May 24, 2007 Regular Board Meeting**

Mr. Newman moved, supported by Mr. Abrams to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2007 Regular Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution #07-46 approving the Flint Mass Transportation Authority's revised Revenue and Expense Budget for FY 2007.**

Mr. Abrams stated that Finance Committee reviewed the revised Revenue and Expense Budget for FY 2007 and recommends approval by the full Board, therefore Mr. Abrams moved Resolution #07-46. Mr. Northrup supported.

Mr. Foy stated that the revenue was important because we have identified additional revenue that will be coming into the MTA for this year. We have made some changes in levels of service that are being provided in terms of our ability to increase the expense budget. Also the price of fuel was put into the budget at \$2.80 a gallon and we have been fortunate enough that we have been paying significantly less than that. We felt it was absolutely essential that we revise the budget so that the fund managers inside the organization have the goals that more actually reflect where things will end up. We had originally anticipated that the income would exceed the expenses this year by \$751,000. We are now saying the revenue for this year will increase and exceed the expenses by \$1.5 million.

Motion passed unanimously.

**FY 2007 Performance Indicators**

Mr. Foy stated that we will provide performance indicators each quarter. We have established targets in terms of passengers per hour, operating cost per vehicle hour etc. What we consider to be key elements of performance that we should be measured. Of significance is the cost per passenger. On our fixed routes we are at \$1.45 as our target and our cost is at \$1.42, so we are slightly better than our target. Demand response is costing us \$6.54 for each passenger and our goal was to get to \$7.00 so we are in better shape than we anticipated.

Chairman Zellely ruled that the FY 2007 Second Quarter Performance Indicators be received and filed.

**General Manager's Report**

Mr. Foy stated that in the interest of time he would let the report sit as written.

Chairman Zelle ruled that the General Manager's Report be received and filed.

**May, 2007 Income/Expense Statement**

Mr. Foy stated that this reflects the old budget and shows that the revenue is at \$15,851,000. The expenses to date are \$15,078,000 so our revenue is exceeding our expenses by \$772,000.

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

**May, 2007 Ridership Statistic Report**

Ed Benning, MTA Assistant General Manager-Services stated that the ridership for the month of May was 481,388 for an increase of 5%. On the fixed routes the ridership was up 5% for the month. From the time that the fare increase was implemented we saw a decrease through April. It has now come back and we should be in good shape for the year. On the curb-to-curb service we were down 4% for the month with 65,414 passengers. We are taking action at this time to expand the service to provide for additional trips that are being requested.

Mr. Foy stated that the county, as a result of the senior millage, has decided that they are putting out a request for proposals to provide transportation services that will be paid for through that senior millage. The specification in the request for proposals wants service that goes far beyond public transportation. They want us to be able to go into the apartments and give assistance to individuals. We will be responding to the proposal. If we get the transportation we will have to bring on aides who have medical training to be able to deal with medical emergencies and assist individuals getting on the vehicles. This is far beyond the scope of normal public transportation but that's what the specifications are asking for.

Our concern is that we will not tolerate, from a business point of view, having a competing organization providing public funded transportation to citizens in this community. The RFP could lead to competing organizations coming in trying to take a piece of the public transportation responsibility.

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

**Executive Session**

Attorney Michael Joliat advised the Board that an Executive Session was necessary to discuss a matter pending litigation in Genesee County Circuit Court involving the Mass Transportation Authority. Discussion in open session may jeopardize MTA's position.

Mr. Conroy moved, supported by Mr. Newman to move into Executive Session for the purpose as stated by the Attorney.

***Roll Call Vote:*** Mike Zelle, John Northrup, Richard Abrams, Paul Luttenbacher, Paul Newman, Carolyn Sims, Joe Conroy voted in the affirmative.

Regular session of the MTA Board was suspended at 9:00 A.M.

Mr. Conroy moved, supported by Mr. Northrup to go out of Executive Session.

Regular session of the MTA Board reconvened at 9:08 A.M.

Mr. Conroy moved, supported by Mr. Northrup to accept the recommendation of Council relative to Arthur Griswold, III vs. Mass Transportation Authority and Tanisha Turner. Motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:09 A.M.

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