



**MASS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 21, 2008 BOARD MEETING**

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

**STAFF:** Robert Foy, Suzanne Shepherd, Jerry Ragsdale, Charlene Kowalski, Lynn McLean

**GUEST:** Penny Roberts, E & D Advisory Council

**ABSENT:** Rose Bogardus, Darryl Buchanan

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

**Comments of the Public**

Ms. Penny Roberts, E & D Advisory Council stated that she is interested in the run development program to establish a Crosstown South Route to go down Hill Road to Meijers and Gateway Center. If the MTA could establish that run on a trial basis to see how many people would ride, it would be a great service to the public.

Ms. Roberts also stated that the MTA has some very good bus drivers but she has a problem with the drivers allowing young girls to stand right behind them talking to them.

**Minutes of the July 24, 2008 Regular Board Meeting**

Mr. Zelle moved, supported by Ms. Sims to approve the Minutes of the July 24, 2008 Regular Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes of the July 22, 2008 Finance Committee Meeting**

Mr. Luttenbacher moved, supported by Mr. Zelle to approve the Minutes of the July 22, 2008 Finance Committee Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution #08-49 by the Board of Directors to the Flint Mass Transportation Authority to endorse the concept of the Business for Better Transportation (BBT) and authorize membership in the BBT on behalf of the Flint Mass Transportation Authority.**

Mr. Foy stated that Robert Morris, who is a long standing transportation advocate came to us as a representative of the Business for Better Transportation, which is a private effort to pass legislation that will give more options to funding transportation throughout the State of

Michigan. Mr. Morris gave the Board a presentation at the last meeting and at that time it was a question of whether we would endorse the concept presented by the Business for Better Transportation and whether we would allow our name to be added to those that are supporters of the concept.

Ms. Sims asked if there was a financial cost to us?

Mr. Foy stated that there is no cost. They just want our endorsement.

Mr. Zelle moved, supported by Mr. Northrup to approve Resolution #08-49 with discussion.

Mr. Zelle asked that if this becomes law and would give the option to localities to take advantage of developing a tax, would it require the State to authorize and then the county and city?

Mr. Foy stated that the legislation has been introduced but basically what would happen is that each community would have the ability to tax themselves. It would be the county or counties who would put through the tax.

After further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

**Resolution #08-50 by the Board of Directors of the Flint Mass Transportation Authority to adopt the updated, attached, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy Statement.**

Mr. Foy stated that recently we had a civil rights suit levied against the Mass Transportation Authority for sexual harassment. We have a Board approved sexual harassment policy. Involved in that policy was also an issue of employment opportunity. When the administrator came to discuss this with us and the party that submitted the complaint, there was discussion on whether that was the appropriate vehicle to use in terms of the policy in trying to deal with the specific issue that the individual had, which was feeling that they had been discriminated against in terms of employment. When the final decision was made, a resolution was reached in regard to the complaint but they would like us to separate out the Equal Employment Opportunity issue and have a separate policy statement. This is a policy statement for Board approval dealing with Equal Employment Opportunity. Out of that will come a procedure to insure that we can implement and enforce it within the operation of the employees.

Ms. Sims moved, supported by Mr. Zelle to approve resolution #08-50.

Ms. Sims stated that she thought this was great because she was able to attend one of the luncheons that Mr. Foy held with employees and that this was the major complaint from some of the women. She is glad to see this in writing and hopes that the Union will have access to this and can share it with the employees. Ms. Sims stated that she liked the fact that Mr. Foy has been proactive when these issues have come up.

Motion passed unanimously.

**General Manager's Report**

Mr. Foy stated that we included in the Board packet a copy of the Flint Journal Editorial with regard to the millage recently passed. We had about a 70% approval rating. We have the process that we go through in each of our millages of taking surveys. Our final survey gave us the indication that it would pass between 65 to 75 percent. It actually ended up passing by 70% so the surveys are very accurate.

As stated in the General Manager's written report, the Congress has not yet voted on the appropriation bills for FY 2009, which starts the first of October. This basically means that we will not have an appropriation that will even be considered until after the November election. If there is a change of administration at election time, that won't come into being until the last of January so we do not feel there will be any kind of effort on an appropriation bill until sometime in the March, April timeframe of next year. By the time it gets distributed we probably won't be looking at any Federal financial assistance until May, June or July of next year. The upside to that is that it gives us a little more time to work the effort. We have Congressman Kildee coming in sometime in October to spend some time with us. After the election in November we will have Senator Levin come in to spend some time with us. A lot of it is about the new efforts we are dealing with in terms of technology. We would like to get additional financing to be able to start converting our fleet from clean diesel to the hybrid and now we are looking at a hybrid, natural gas combination.

In addition, we have several other things we are working on that deserve real consideration. There is a company, Fisher Coachworks, which is the grandson of the Fisher that created Fisher Body. We are meeting with him to be able to deal with the issue of reducing the weight of our vehicles. We hope to be able to operate our vehicles at significantly improved efficiency in terms of the fuel it would take. We are also meeting with individuals who are talking about natural gas. We want to talk about converting from diesel to natural gas. We have several things going on which are very important in addition to the technology that we are bringing in. From our standpoint we think the delay is going to work in our favor because it will give us more time to be able to work the process for 2009.

Mr. Zellely asked how the meeting went with the people from China.

Mr. Foy stated that the meeting went very well. We wanted to make sure that we retained a very strong relationship with the regional chamber. They are in the commercialization business. We want the technology to improve the efficiency of the organization. If that technology that we develop has some commercial value that will help build jobs in Genesee County then we are willing to work with people up to the point that we would have to bring it to the Board. We got very specific direction from Kettering and the regional chamber that until they have a signed agreement, not to tell the Chinese too much. We kept it at this level and talked in generalities. They have invited us to go to China. We have told the chamber that we would be very glad to be part of the team but the chamber would have to take the lead.

Mr. Foy also stated that we have been meeting with the City Economic Development Department on the transition of waste matter and extracting the natural gas. We are going to be the recipient of the natural gas when they make the conversion. The city will have the plant and they will do the conversion and we will be the market for the natural gas.

Ms. Sims asked that we have a representative from Economic Development come to the next Board meeting to give a presentation.

Mr. Foy also stated that at the next meeting we would have the 40ft hybrid bus here for the Board members to take a ride on.

The small hybrid buses have been a disaster. We are having a meeting with our Attorney and Kettering on whether we want to pull the contract. Kettering is absolutely convinced that they can make the conversion and things that have to be done at a fraction of what ISE is doing it for. Kettering's feeling is that ISE hasn't put the resources or the talent to making the conversion. They are the cutting edge leading innovator in hybrid technology in the United States but it has all been for 40ft vehicles.

Mr. Foy stated that he wanted to talk to the Board about a concept. We are having a significant request for transportation for people in Genesee County who need to go extensive distance from Genesee County to go to work. We have 55 individuals that are working with GM. They live in Genesee County but they work in Warren. They would like to enter into an agreement with us to provide transportation between Genesee County and Warren. That is too far for us to have a driver going back and forth. There is an idea that we have been thinking about. We could buy a used MCI bus, we would train one to three of the 55 people to drive and be a full fledge fully certified driver of the vehicle. We would have a commitment from those 55 people that they would buy monthly passes at \$65.00 a month. They would have the vehicle Monday through Friday, take it from here to Warren and let it sit there all day and then drive back here at night. Our involvement would be that we would be getting about \$3500 to \$4000 a month in terms of revenue. Our expenses would be about \$3500 a month. We would then be able to get an additional 30% of the cost from the formula so we would have a positive cash flow of about \$1,000 a month. On the weekends we would do all the preventive maintenance. This would be a new way for us to help people in Genesee County to take care of their transportation need.

Mr. Zellely stated that he had issues about liability, emergencies, reciprocal agreements with other authorities and the fact that we might get criticism that this is stepping into the private sector.

Chairman Newman recommended that we involve an appropriate committee of the Board or have a couple representatives of the Board explore this option with Mr. Foy further.

Mr. Abrams, Mr. Zellely and Mr. Newman volunteered to meet on this subject.

Chairman Newman asked if General Motors is going to have any reaction to MTA having one of their employees be trained to drive a group of employees to their place of employment in Warren? If an accident happens, General Motors is not going to be left out of the litigation. General Motors is probably going to have something to say along the line. This is why we need to explore this thoroughly before we enter into any pilot program of this transportation.

Mr. Foy also stated that the Swartz Creek Service Center is coming along very well and it looks like we will be able to move in there in September.

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

Mr. Northrup left the meeting at 8:50 A.M.

**July, 2008 Income/Expense Statement**

Jerry Ragsdale, MTA Assistant General Manager-Administration stated that under passenger fares fixed route and regional are exceeding our original projection and demand response is increasing but not at the rate we had anticipated.

In non-transportation revenue we are about \$3700 above projections. In the dedicated tax revenue we are \$1.8 million ahead. Our anticipated revenue now appears to be about \$10.2 million to \$10.3 million by the end of the year. State cash grants are about \$88,000 over projection and that is in our operating assistance-urban. Total revenue through the end of July is about \$1.8 million ahead of our original projection.

In expenses we have some issues in labor, fringe benefits and material/supplies, which is primarily the fuel. Again the fluctuation is incredible. We have been up to \$4.10 a gallon, this week it was \$3.33 a gallon and two weeks ago it was \$3.27 a gallon. We estimated \$3.80 a gallon so if we can maintain the price we should be able to reduce part of the budget deficit.

In net income through the month of July we are ahead by \$1.2 million.

Chairman Newman ruled that the July 2008 Income/Expense Statement be received and filed.

**July, 2008 Ridership Statistic Report**

Mr. Foy stated that our ridership for July was up about 25% from where it was a year ago. Year-to-date ridership is up 16%. When you look at the individual areas we are up 24% in fixed route, 48% in regional transportation and up 27% in curb-to-curb transportation. We are continuing to have increases in ridership and we are having a significant increase in the amount of transportation being requested for the transportation of students. It is going to get to the point where we will not have the equipment to support the increase growth. The Charter Schools are moving in the direction of providing the passes directly to the children involved. That means that rather than us dealing directly with the parents in selling passes, we will sell them to the Charter Schools and they will then distribute them to the students.

Chairman Newman ruled that the July 2008 Ridership Statistic Report be received and filed.

**July, 2008 Complaint Statistic Report**

Mr. Foy stated we had 45 complaints out of the 471,893 passengers carried. That means we had about one complaint for every 10,000 passenger. Most of the complaints are dealing with individuals who would like to have either service beyond what we provide or they deal with the issue of not being ready. They want the driver to sit there and wait for them if they're not ready to go. For the seniors we now have the specialized service where they can call back and we can send someone back. For others they do not have the ability to call back. We have to just try and reschedule them at a later time during the day.

**Comments of Board Members**           None

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 A.M.

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