



**MASS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 23, 2009 BOARD MEETING**

PRESENT: John Northrup, Acting Chairman, Richard Abrams, Paul Luttenbacher, Ted Henry, Pastor Seon Thompson

STAFF: Robert Foy, Suzanne Shepherd, Ed Benning, Jerry Ragsdale, Steve Hamelin, Lynn McLean

GUEST: Glen Griffin, ASU Group, Richard McDonough, Chief Stewart Local 1223, Cathy Wright, Council 25 Secretary

ABSENT: Paul Newman, Sheldon Neeley, Gregory Eason, Maxine Murray, Mike Zelle

Acting Chairman Northrup called the meeting to order at 8:15 A.M. without a quorum being present.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Foy stated that with all of the effort that is going on with stimulus funding it has created a lot of uncertainty. At the Federal level both the House and Senate have passed appropriation bills for 2010, however they have not called a conference committee. They do not anticipate that they are going to call a conference committee. We may run into January before we actually have an appropriation. They are also working with the authorizing legislation, which expired on September 30th. They have had an extension on the authorizing legislation to take us up to December 18th. There are plans to have a six-month extension, but the real problem they are facing is whether they will be able to fund at the level they want to authorize. It affects us because with the continuing resolution we only receive funding at the level we had previously received. It will not allow for any of the grants to be processed. Many of the dollars associated with 2010, of which there are going to be a need for us to submit grant request for, are not defined and won't be defined until we get the authorization taken care of.

With the conditions that we have at the State, without the Federal appropriation the State can't agree to provide us funding, particularly for our work related transportation which is funding the regional transportation and part of the curb-to-curb service outside of the City of Flint. We have a lot at stake and a lot of exposure but as always our position is that we want to go ahead and provide the transportation to the public. Because we work with a lot of uncertainty, we don't want our passengers to be impacted with that uncertainty unless it is absolutely necessary.

We are moving forward very quickly with regard to our effort to convert to an alternative fuel. We anticipate that by the month of March we will be in a position where we will have the advanced engine for the diesel hybrid. At the same time we are also moving forward with the idea of getting the hydrogen-CNG facility built. We are working with the FTA in Chicago in that effort. We anticipate that our replacement vehicles for the Your Ride service are going to be CNG driven. We expect that within five years CNG will be the primary source of fuel that we will be using for the operation of our equipment. There is a piece of legislation that has been in place for the past five years but is now expiring on December 31st which provides a tax credit for alternative fuels at the rate of 50cents a gallon for any organization that uses either propane or CNG. We have asked Congressman Kildee to co-sponsor that bill because once we make that transition to CNG that is about \$600,000 to \$700,000 a year tax credit for us. We don't think there will be a lot of opposition to it because it is very important in meeting some of the goals that have been set nationally dealing with the reduction of green house gases.

With the Kerry-Boxer Bill that is currently being considered at the Federal level, which deals with green house gases, has a cap and trade program. The cap and trade program means that they will cap the amount of green house gases that can be provided through a given method. They will establish a cap at a very low level. Then they will sell the ability of an individual to exceed it. They are anticipating that that will be a significant revenue generator. 2.5% of the allowance that is going to be auctioned off will go to provide for transportation investment. We see that by 2012 public transit in the country could have as much as \$750 million additional that would be available for capital through this revenue source. It is important for us when we want to convert all of our Your Ride vehicles over to CNG and buy new vehicles to do that. In addition, we have to convert our current facilities to be CNG compatible. We also want to deal with the issue of the peak period vehicles. When we originally purchased those vehicles they were seven-year vehicles. We currently have had them for about ten years. Eventually we want to replace those vehicles with CNG hybrid vehicles.

Mr. Foy also stated that the Mass Transportation Authority received the honor by the Genesee Regional Chamber to be awarded with the 2009 Genesee County Community Beautification Award for the effort we have made in beautifying our buildings and for the Art in Transit program.

MTA is in the process of preparing for the Christmas season. The Mass Transportation Authority employees each year adopt 10-15 families and provide food for the Christmas holiday and donations for them to buy toys for the children in their family. We are very proud of this program. It has been very successful in the past.

Mr. Foy also reiterated on the issue that MTA has with the challenge facing us with non-payment of fares by passengers. This is a critical issue nationwide. Particularly in our para-transit service we are having over 300 persons a day that when we pick them up to give them a ride they are unable to pay. Some of these individuals are life-threatening situations such as dialysis patients who have to go to dialysis three times a week. The approximate amount at the present time of unpaid fares is running at a rate of about \$250,000 a year. We cannot allow for this to continue.

The driver is to tell the passenger the appropriate fare they are to pay and if the passenger elects not to pay the driver is to fill out a write-o-gram, which comes to Customer Service. If the passenger misses four payments in a row a letter is sent to the passenger stating that they have seven days to get back to us on why they are not paying. If they do not have the ability to pay, they will be turned over to the private non-profit agencies that can help them with a monthly pass. If the passenger doesn't respond to us in seven days, a second letter is sent giving them a date that they will no longer be able to schedule transportation. When an individual is barred from scheduling transportation there is an appeal process that they can go through. They must purchase a monthly pass in order to schedule transportation. This has gone through the Local Advisory Council and they have endorsed this procedure.

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

Comments of Board Members

Mr. Abrams stated that in our Articles of Incorporation we are called a Governing Committee not a Board. It says that at all meetings of the Governing Committee a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and any business transaction shall have the approval of a majority of those members appointed and serving. Which means if you have a bare quorum, at least to his thinking, and you try to pass any piece of business and one person descends, the action doesn't pass. We are always having a problem with getting a quorum and when we have a bare quorum you have to have the vote of every person there. Mr. Abrams thinks that maybe we should have our Attorney look at this language.

Mr. Northrup also stated that after a certain level of non-attendance by a member, that should be reported to the responsible body for that appointee.

Because we were unable to get a quorum it was decided that another Board meeting would be scheduled for Thursday December 3rd at 8:00 A.M. This meeting would entail the November and December Board Meeting together and therefore there would be no Board meeting on December 21st.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 A.M.

