

## KALAMAZOO TRANSIT AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

Minutes of August 15, 2014

Members Present:	Chair Garrylee McCormick JJ Meddaugh Lynn North Zach Lassiter
Excused Members:	Jeremy Orr, Andy Havice
Unexcused Members:	E. Allen Hayes
City Commission Liaison Present:	None
Staff Members Present:	Sean McBride, Transportation Director Joan Melekian, Admin Office Specialist Alex Aebi, IT Tech
Others Present:	Leona Carter, Travel Trainer Disability Network John Start, KATS Monica Zehner, KATS

Chair Garrylee McCormick called the meeting of the Transit Authority Board of Directors to order at 8:17 a.m.

### **Introductions**

Introductions made by the Board as well as Sean McBride, Joan Melekian, Alex Aebi, John Start, Monica Zehner and Leona Carter.

### **Changes and Additions to the Agenda**

Sean McBride offered to have IT Tech, Alex Aebi discuss item VIII-J LED / Talking Bus Shelter Demonstration right after public comments.

### **Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

None

**LED/ Talking Bus Shelter Sign Demonstration** – Sean McBride introduced Alex Aebi, IT Tech for Metro Transit. Alex explained the time line for implementing the new talking bus shelter signs stating that the first one would be placed at KVCC and the second at Rose and Academy with intentions of having them in place by end of August with 6 more scheduled for implementation by this winter. He will keep the board updated on its usage and progress. At this time Alex went on to point out that the displays on the LED sign can indicate current time, the next scheduled bus and its scheduled arrival time. There is also a scrolling message feature that can be updated as needed or scheduled for delays or detours in bus routing.

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This feature would help to alert the riders of any traffic delays, accidents, construction, weather delays, etc. Although this scrolling message feature can be utilized for individual stops and locations, it is not readily available to be altered in real time at a moment's notice. Further updates on these Talking Bus Shelter Signs will be given at future TAB meetings.

### **Issues / Items for City Manager / City Commission**

Sean McBride noted there would be two issues brought to the Commission at Monday's meeting.

1) Changes to our master agreement with MDOT regarding our grant funding. There will be changes to our resolution including updated names that are authorized for approvals. 2)

Requesting authorization for new funding which apply to the purchase of new Metro County Connect vans. Further discussion will take place under Action Items below.

### **Action Items:**

a. Meeting minutes of June 27, 2014 – Motion for approval made by JJ Meddaugh to accept the minutes as presented, supported by Zach Lassiter. Motion carried.

b. Income and Expense Statement for June 2014 – Sean McBride commented that as we are now half way through the year, things seem to be on target as far as receivables and payables and no major changes that change or effect our financial outlook. Motion for approval made by JJ Meddaugh to accept the I & E Statement as presented, supported by Zach Lassiter. Motion carried.

c. Approval of Additional Grant Application Funding – Sean requested approval from the Board for authorization to access \$80,000 which is a result of the City of Portage not expending all their funds on a road construction project thereby opening up the option to have the funds accessible to us for application towards some Community Service Vans. The challenge is navigating the several levels of approval needed by this Board, the City Commission, MDOT, FTA and noting we already have approval by KATS (Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study) for amendments to the transportation improvement program. Typically, this process would take up to three months so trying to accomplish this goal in a six week timeline is a 50/50 percent chance of success but well worth the effort in the long run to utilize the \$80,000 dollars to improve our fleet. Motion to approve the authorization made by Zach Lassiter, supported by JJ Meddaugh. Motion carried.

d. Review Fiscal Year 2013 Financial Statements – Sean handed out copies of the 2013 Financial Statements which meets the City of Kalamazoo fiscal requirements as well federal and state governments. Sean pointed out that it is a board requirement that each board member receives a direct letter on the findings, and corresponding details if provided, in regards to any significant future issues. On a positive note, there were no additional findings to report for this year.

Sean referred to item IV of the handout which is a condensed summary of our net position and pointed out our 4.1 million unrestricted funds, basically our cash in reserves, which is at 29% and a positive number as a healthy range would be 25% - 50%. This report is viewed by MDOT for purposes of determining our funding, meaning we get reimbursed for all expenses from MDOT at an urban rate and a rural rate. (Urban Rate: 31% - Rural Rate: 36%). Every month throughout the year they reimburse us based on the budgeted amount of expenses. After a review of our audited expenses they make further adjustments the following year and, based on overages or shortages, we either write a check or receive a check.

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Often times these adjustments are less than anticipated which results in us writing a check for reimbursement for not meeting the allocations. These funds (last year being approximately \$300,000) was set aside in a reserve fund in anticipation of this reimbursement, meaning we are not meeting our budgeted expenses which were previously provided to the state.

Also audited are our service miles and service hours which are required to be sent to the FTA and helps them determine what our allocation level should be. This is an important document not only from a fiduciary and financial standpoint but also a guide for our funding agencies in determining how to best allocate our funding.

The board was asked to take their time to review this handout and ask any questions for further discussion at a later meeting or contact Sean directly.

Motion to review/accept and further discuss the report as presented made by JJ Meddaugh, supported by Lynn North. Motion carried.

#### **Discussion Items:**

a. *State / Federal Funding Update* – Sean stated that the Federal Funding appropriations was extend to May 31, 2015 and that we would be operating “status quo” for a few more months up to that deadline.

At the State Level – Sean referenced a funding formula which highlighted our reimbursement based on urban / rural rates for the upcoming year starting October 1, 2014. A letter was received recently adjusting these rates to reflect anticipated allocations to rural at a 29.9% reimbursement and urban at 36.4%. MPTA showed some optimism in that MDOT and/or the Legislature would be able to close up this gap either through new legislation to the ACT 51 Funding Formula or through reallocation of reserved funds from MDOT. With a 1% decrease the impact on the budget is yet to be seen. The staff is currently working on the 2015 budget that will be approved by the City Commission around the December/January timeframe.

b. *Diesel Fuel Update* – detailed report provided in the information packet.

c. *KTC Retail Space* – Approval was just received yesterday (Thursday, Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>) from our FTA liaison to proceed with leasing the space for the current market rate which is projected to be \$600 - \$900 range per month. We are currently working to contract with a realtor who should have it placed on the market in the upcoming months.

d. *Public Safety Update* – Sean reported that he had received some feedback requesting more of a public presence of our police officers walking the site both inside and out, specifically the boundaries of the KTC and not MLK Park or McDonald’s. Sean went on to report that he is currently working on a review of the contract between Bronson Hospital and KPS as a guide to better spelling out a KTC / KPS contract in the future. Board member Zach Lassiter asked Sean to see about getting a more detailed report from KPS outlining the areas and calls responded to by our current officers contracted to patrol the KTC.

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e. **Outreach** – Sean noted we would be participating in WMU Bronco Bash as well as Click Downtown for the upcoming college school year. Also in the works is the new pilot program set up with KVCC whereby semester bus passes will be available to purchase by students on site at KVCC manned by KTC and support staff. It is also beneficial to the students and staff to have mobile capability to do these passes at any location meaning other locations/facilities could be coming on board for the purchase of similar passes. Sean said we would be tracking numbers and have an update available at the September meeting.

f. **Regionalization** – At their last meeting on August 6, 2014, the County Board of Commissioners approved the Articles of Incorporation for the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) which was passed by a unanimous vote. Included in the boundaries of CCTA are the all the boundaries of the City of Kalamazoo, the Township of Kalamazoo, the Township of Oshtemo, the Township of Comstock, the City of Portage, one precinct in Texas Township (which serves KVCC), and one precinct in Pavilion Township. The next key steps are as follows:

- ✓ Appointing the new board to the CCTA (initial appointments to the board from the County Board of Commissioners at their first meeting in September). The eleven (11) member board will be comprised of recommendations from specific jurisdictions within the authority boundaries with the County Board as the final appointing board. There will be three (3) recommended members from the City of Kalamazoo, two (2) from the City of Portage, one (1) from Comstock, one (1) from Oshtemo, one (1) from Kalamazoo Township, two (2) at large members from rural areas (outside the authority's boundaries) and one (1) urban member (within the authority's boundaries). \* Sean noted that any interested TAB member should contact him via phone or e-mail so that he can inform the City Manager of their intent.
- ✓ Each jurisdiction will decide how they want to proceed with making their recommendations – which was not guided in the Articles of Incorporation – and then the County Board of Commissioners will figure out how they will proceed with the final appointment process.
- ✓ After the new board is appointed (partially or fully) their first action will be to send out a letter to all the jurisdictions within the boundaries of the new authority which provides those jurisdictions a thirty (30) day window to “opt out” of the new authority. They can opt out their whole jurisdiction or individual precincts of their community.

Board member JJ Meddaugh questioned if Texas and/or Pavilion Townships opted out of this new authority, what the ramifications would be as they pertain to KVCC and Pavilion Estates. Sean answered that although he assumed there would be ramifications, he will be part of the policy decision making committee on the new board, they would not be immediate because our current millage for serving those areas runs through 2016. JJ Meddaugh mentioned that perhaps some advocacy on the part of the authority take place in support of this inclusion in those areas leading up to that 2016 millage deadline. Zach Lassiter added that he had some concerns about Texas Township opting out and cutting service to KVCC because ridership shows there are additional riders in that area that require service beyond that of the school campus area. Sean restated that it was a point of concern to Texas Township as well as the authority board.

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g. *ATU Update* – Sean recapped that the contract is currently expired and that we will be going to arbitration based on wages only and there has been some difficulty in finding a mutually acceptable arbitrator to handle this. There is currently no date as to when this will take place but looking forward into mid or late October at the soonest.

h. *KATS Complete Streets Policy* – The next steps for approving this policy are firstly to have a Policy Committee Meeting in August to review a variety of questions as well as the next draft of the KATS Complete Streets Policy with a working group that has been making adjustments to the policy. Sean referenced the link to this draft in the board members packets for the most current version. It is anticipated that the KATS Policy Committee will be considering this policy in September 2014. Although there has been much debate on what the policy should be and what it will cover, the upside is that some conversation has been had with the City of Portage – which is very Complete Streets oriented – that they are continuing as planned with their summer road construction and currently working on a street project on Gladys that accesses the Crossroads Mall over to Dick’s Sporting Goods and a variety of apartment complexes to ensure ADA standards are upheld in anticipation of this policy being approved. John Start and Monica Zehner from KATS also indicated that there is an updated link to this policy on their website and Sean offered that Joan Melekian would e-mail the board the new link and updated draft policy after today’s meeting.

i. *DBE Breakdown Report 201 –2014* – Sean stated that at the last board meeting the DBE Policy was approved and one of the board member questions was “What has our DBE performance been over the last few years?” A DBE Breakdown Report was provided in the packets showing:

YEAR	GOAL	ALLOCATION
2011	2.8%	5.6%
2012	2.8%	3.7%
2013	2.8%	3.8%
2014	2.4%	currently on target for goal %

Sean offered that 2011 allocation was higher due in part to finalizing construction here at Metro Transit’s facility utilizing various contractors and sub-contractors which allowed for additional opportunities to meet our DBE goals.

Sean continued with a MCC contract with Apple Bus Company is expiring October 31, 2014 and an RFP (request for proposal) will be issued this week to solicit contractor bids for the MCC service including a bid from Apple Bus Company. The deadline for the RFP will be the last week in September and then the evaluation and approval process will begin with a new contract being in place by January 1, 2015.

**Information Items:**

**Ridership Report – June & July 2014** – Report provided in TAB packet. Sean stated that Ridership was up for the year by 3% with fixed route up 2% and demand response up 3% and ADA service is setting all time ridership records with Community Services Vans up to 10 in the current fleet and ridership up over 200% over last year.

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Route changes were made at the end of March to routes 4, 26 and 27 and with these changes we have seen an increase in ridership of 6% with overall ridership at 2%-3% indicating the changes were beneficial to the system. As is the norm in the summer months, ridership decreases with fewer students utilizing the bus system and then spiking again in September / October.

A request was made by board members JJ Meddaugh and Zach Lassiter to look closer at the data provided for ridership on the Lovell and Westnedge routes and whether or not the evening service was needed during the summer months. Lovell runs every 30 minutes with fewer passengers and Westnedge seems to run at capacity running every hour. Sean agreed to look into these numbers and see if times or routes could be better utilized to meet passenger demands during the summer months. Another point of discussion was the accessibility via either the Duke or Portage routes that best services the airport.

**Wheelchair Lift/Ramp Incident Report** – Report attached for your review. Sean commented that the new 3-wheeled mobility device straps for securing passengers was now in use and drivers report that they like them and seem to be working.

**WMU Student Ridership** – Report attached for your review.

**Demand/Response Monthly Summary Report** – Report attached for your review.

**Miscellaneous Comments made by the Board:**

Board member JJ Meddaugh asked if any updates were available in reference to the bus shelter project or the impending Google Transit application. Sean answered that he keeps hearing the Google Transit app should be in effect “any time” and the challenge that we are facing is the constant updates or changes to routing which forces Google to have to restart and make appropriate changes that reflect current routing or schedules. Further adjustments will need to take place once the fall semester starts up again. Once the feed file is in place and functioning, changes and corrections should begin to automatically update according to present schedule.

In reference to the bus shelter project, Sean stated that this project needs to be completed by September 30, 2014 to receive reimbursement from KATS and the state. Although disappointingly behind schedule, he is hopeful that it will be completed by the September deadline.

Board member JJ Meddaugh commented that he had attended a “Walkability Presentation” sponsored by Disability Network and during the public comment section of the meeting there were a few points made directly pertaining to Metro Transit. One such comment was the Metro Transit website stating it was confusing and saw it as a barrier to using the bus system. Sean stated that although an ongoing challenge to improve rider satisfaction, steps were being taken to make these improvements i.e. bus cleanliness, more frequent servicing and detailing of the coaches and certainly of the website and making it more user friendly. Suggestions were made to have a focus group to determine where improvements could be made by non-riders as well as frequent riders to get a better overall perspective.

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Board member Zach Lassiter commented that he would like to see improvement at the KTC on handling the mess left by birds and general cleanliness and offered suggestions to deter this in the future. Sean stated that in the past they have used laser / infrared system to solve the bird issue to no avail and have not implemented a "sound system" (replicating distress calls of pigeons) in hopes of solving the problem once and for all.

Also of concern was the policy for snow removal on the sidewalks in the various jurisdictions and siting that pedestrians often times had to walk in the roadways to have access to boarding buses. It is particularly difficult to find and use the bus shelters and bus stop signs when they are being impeded by large snowbanks. Zach also wanted to see some sort of enforcement of City Ordinances whereby business / homeowners were held responsible for sidewalks in front of their establishments with fines being imposed if not adhered to. Sean offered that although these policies should be fully enforced, the heavy winter snowfall of last year's magnitude makes utilizing the necessary manpower and tools a much bigger task.

Sean stated he would look into practices and policies for the City of Kalamazoo and Portage in reference to their snow removal practices with the hopes of having an update at the next TAB meeting.

Garrylee McCormick reported that the newly crafted display case for items received from our sister city of Pushkin, Russia was now being properly utilized at the KTC. He also went on to say that there would be a Russian Festival on October 15<sup>th</sup> with a small celebration of the return of the case and its pieces to the KTC on preceding Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Garrylee went on to personally thank Leona Carter of Disability Network for her hard work and diligence for her assistance with providing transportation information to Sister Marjorie Basset and her colleagues and that they were most appreciative of the cost savings and new opportunity to utilize our services.

#### **Public Comments:**

Leona Carter, Travel Trainer with Disability Network reported that she had conducted a presentation at Bronson Hospital for 47 of their case managers and social workers and felt she had great response and more patients signing up for MCC and looked for it to continue in the future. Leona also offered that she would be doing additional presentations in the near future and one in particular to the Meals on Wheels Program later this month anticipating an equally impressive turn out. The original goal was to come out of these meetings with 35 new riders on MCC and current totals have reached the 80 mark.

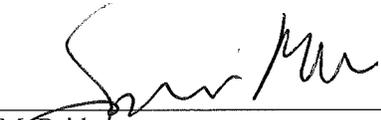
John Start from KATS commented that they occasionally receive phone calls from patrons regarding buses and routes and inquiring about MCC and admitted that even he had troubles navigating the website and getting concise information. John also pointed out that there seemed to be a lack of readily available information pertaining to alternate transportation to the fixed route system.

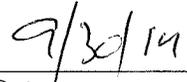
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**Adjournment** - TAB meeting was adjourned by Chair Garrylee McCormick at 9:43 a.m.

Minutes transcribed and presented by Joan M. Melekian

Reviewed and approved by:

  
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Sean McBride  
Transportation Director  
Metro Transit

  
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Date