

**KALAMAZOO TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Minutes of September 3, 2004**

**Members Present:** Chairperson Atwell, Elizabeth Forest, Andy Havice, Reuben Richardson, and Donna Treloar

**Members Absent:** Tim Meek

**City Commission Liaison:** Hannah McKinney (absent)

**Technical Committee Member Present:** William Schomisch, Transportation Director

**City Administration Member Present:** Heather L. Stiver, Administrative Support Specialist

**Guests:** Elaine Luo, MDOT  
Michelle McGowen, RICC/TAG

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Atwell called the regular meeting of the Transit Authority Board of Directors to order at 8:19 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Atwell excused the absence of Mr. Meek.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Transportation Director Schomisch made special welcome to MDOT Project Manager for the southwest region of Michigan, Ms. Elaine Luo.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Chairperson Atwell indicated that action by the Board on Action Items D and E would be moved under Discussion Items and action would be deferred to a future meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

## **CITY COMMISSION/CITY MANAGER ITEMS**

### **City Manager Items**

**MDOT Grant Contract – 5311(f):** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the MDOT Grant Contract received was pending the securing of lease agreements with the inter-city carriers. He reported that the State was supportive of his efforts.

Chairperson Atwell asked what would happen when the clock ran out. Transportation Director Schomisch responded that Indian Trails had already threatened to move out, and one of the reasons preventing them from doing so would be because they would have to pay more elsewhere.

Ms. Forest asked what other options Indian Trails had if they moved. Transportation Director Schomisch responded that they were looking at some land by the airport and WMU.

**Transfer of ITC to KMT:** Transportation Director Schomisch reminded the Board that the ITC facility was an asset owned by the City, and that the request to move ownership to the System for eligibility of reimbursement for expenses was approved by the City Manager.

### **August 16 City Commission Meeting**

**JPI Contract Renewal:** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the service agreement with JPI had been renewed for one year with an increase of 10% (which mirrored the 10% increase that went into effect in April 2004) that would generate \$66,000 in revenue.

**MDOT Grant Contract Extension:** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the funds for this contract were programmed for landscaping and lightening at the ITC and had been rolled into the larger scope of the project for the ITC.

**Purchase of 2 ADA Vans:** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that three new vans would be purchased and received before the end of the year for the Metro Van service. He reported that the three new vehicles would replace three of the vans that were over six-years old.

**Maintenance Construction Project:** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the third and final phase of the Facility Expansion/Renovation Project that encompassed the renovation of the Maintenance Lounge, shower, and locker area would be completed by December 31, 2004, and that a contract with Maxwell and Associates had been approved.

**Millage Language on Ballot:** Transportation Director Schomisch confirmed that the ballot language that was approved by both the TAB and City Commission had been submitted to the County Clerk's Office.

**TAB Appointments:** Transportation Director Schomisch confirmed that the appointments of Mr. Havice and Mr. Richardson had been approved.

### **August 30 City Commission Meeting**

**Revised Bus Advertising Policy:** Transportation Director Schomisch reported that the City Commission made some minor changes to the revised policy that the TAB had approved and

requested City Commission concurrence. He reported that Commissioner Balkema had questioned whether it was appropriate to advertise a church and to ensure that the City was not promoting or endorsing religion and that the City Attorney indicated that would be fine to change. The other change made was the designee from the Transportation Director to the City Manager or his designee, as requested by Commissioner Balkema.

**Three MDOT Grant Contract Extensions for the DTC and ITC Projects:** Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the funds were extended for an additional two years.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2004**

The minutes of the Transit Authority Board of Directors Regular Meeting held on July 23, 2004, were presented to the Board for their consideration.

*Secretary/Treasurer Treloar made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with the noted corrections of the regular Board meeting held on July 23, 2004, and was supported by Ms. Forest. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Income and Expense Statement for July 2004**

Transportation Director Schomisch reported that operating expenses came in at \$78,166.67, which was an increase of \$18,400 or plus 30.79% when compared to July 2003. He stated that the increase in expenses was due to the additional service during the summer for WMU that had not been provided in 2003 as well as the ongoing increase of diesel fuel.

Transportation Director Schomisch reported that operating revenues came in at \$762,378.93, which was an increase of \$69,590.85 or plus 10.05% when compared to July 2003. He stated that there was an increase in the purchase of passes sales.

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the System Fund Balance continued to be spent as outlined in the 2004 Budget.

Chairperson Atwell again stressed the importance of keeping attention to the spend down of the System Fund Balance.

*Ms. Forest made a motion to accept the Income and Expense Statement for July 2004, and was supported by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Ridership Analysis Report for July 2004**

Transportation Director Schomisch reported there were 156,770 rides in July 2004, which was a decrease of 2.34% or minus 3,759 passengers when compared to the same month in 2003 due to one less service day in the month as well as one extra day of service on Saturday over 2003.

Transportation Director Schomisch reported the year-to-date ridership was at 1,722,387 passengers, which was an increase of 9.01% or plus 142,339 passengers when compared to the same period in 2003.

Transportation Director Schomisch reported productivity for July 2004 had decreased quite a bit due to Route #25 – Parkview only carrying 7.41 passengers per service hour. He reported that WMU would review the data to determine if such service would be provided in the summer of 2005.

Transportation Director Schomisch reported ridership in July 2004 for Metro Van continued to increase with 2,192 passengers, which was a decrease of 169 passengers over the same month in 2003. He reported that the productivity continued to remain under one passenger per service hour.

Mr. Havice questioned why ridership on Route #14 was down. Transportation Director Schomisch responded he did not have a good answer. He speculated that ridership increased on Routes #3 and #9 because maybe people were going to Walmart.

*Ms. Forest made a motion to accept the Ridership Analysis Report of July 2004, and was supported by Ms. Treloar. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Low-Income Fare Policy/Program**

Transportation Director Schomisch reported to the Board that there would be fare increases in the future, and based upon the feedback received from riders during the public hearings, staff was researching a program targeted for people of low income.

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that Ann Arbor had a program in place since the mid 70s that was established for people that were 150% below the poverty level as established by the HHS. He stated that this program also included the seniors and disabled during all hours of service.

Transportation Director Schomisch explained to the Board that there was a potential conflict with FTA regarding the Kalamazoo Metro Transit System offering such a program because during non-peak hours the seniors and disabled passengers only paid a half fare. He stated that he had checked with FTA and was informed that the proposed program would not be in conflict with current E & H program/rules. He informed the Board that this had now caused staff to rethink the punch-card system and to see what changes could be made.

Chairperson Atwell indicated that he had discussed the matter with the Director and emphasized how much he wanted to deal with the fare increase outside of budget discussion. He indicated he was ready to act on this matter and was getting frustrated, but also understood the Director's feeling of putting the cart before the horse.

Mr. Richardson stated that one of his concerns regarding the disabled punch pass was that there were times when they would be punched twice during non-peak times. Transportation Director Schomisch responded that was one of the problems and reasons why it needed to be addressed.

Ms. Forest asked about new fare boxes and if they could be computerized. Transportation Director Schomisch responded, yes to both of her questions. He explained that the new fare boxes would have the ability to read cards and there would not be a need to have the different colored cards, which stigmatized people. He stated that the new fare boxes were planned for purchase in 2005 and would replace the fareboxes that are currently 20 years old.

### **KMT Financial Policies – Retainage of System Fund Balance**

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that he was working with the City's Finance Director on establishing a policy that would deal with retaining a percentage of the System Fund Balance that has been referenced in the monthly Income and Expense Cover Report.

Transportation Director Schomisch reminded the Board that the development of such a policy would be used to ensure monies were available to cover expenses or emergencies over a 60-90 period. He stated that the parameters would be set to have a 12% to 15% retainage of the annual operating expenses.

Chairperson Atwell asked if that policy had been prepared. Transportation Director Schomisch responded the City Manager had not received the information to date, and had been requested to hold off on presenting to the Board for another month. He assured the Board that he did not expect any changes.

Chairperson Atwell stated emphasized the importance that the information presented to the City Commission is clear as they move forward on budget discussions.

### **2005 Budget Development Update**

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that staff was engaged in preparing the FY2005 Budget and that the City Administration hoped to have the proposed City Budget to the City Commission by November 1.

Transportation Director Schomisch stated that to date, Congress had not approved the proposed 2005 Transportation Budget, and that he did not know much money Kalamazoo Metro Transit would receive in operating assistance.

Chairperson Atwell asked how staff could provide a budget without knowing the amount of revenue that would be received even with a planned successful millage campaign. Transportation Director Schomisch responded staff used the worst case scenario by taking the previous year's amounts, which had happened times before.

### **Millage Campaign Efforts Update**

Chairperson Atwell reported to the Board that the Steering Committee had met and identified key resources. He informed the Board that they had reinstated the mission from the previous millage campaign, which was very successful, and stressed the importance of utilizing community resources and being creative with fundraising initiatives.

Chairperson Atwell stated that the Steering Committee would meet again before the next meeting.

### **Development of the Establishment/Justification of Fare Increases Policy Update**

Transportation Director Schomisch reminded the Board that staff was researching the possibility of tying a fare increase with the cost of living.

Transportation Director Schomisch emphasized to the Board that liability insurance was expected to increase in 2005, and that diesel fuel cost had increased from \$1.01/gallon to \$1.27/gallon. He acknowledged the successful renewal of the ATU Labor Agreement for three year with a wage freeze in 2005 and commended the Union for doing their part in contributing to savings.

Chairperson Atwell stressed the importance of keeping the public informed and not to catch people off guard, and referenced the public hearings on the fare increase in late 2003.

### **TAB Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee:** Chairperson Atwell reminded the Board the importance of sharing key information with citizens, the City Commission, and other stakeholders.

**Marketing Committee:** Secretary/Treasurer Treloar reported that the minutes included in the Board packet reflected the activity of the Committee.

**Nominating Committee:** Chairperson Atwell informed the Board that a meeting was being scheduled to interview Ms. Fricke. He stated that once the Board was back to full staff, he anticipated adjustments would be made to the memberships of the Committees, which would be the right thing to do.

### **Strategy for Outreach Efforts to Community**

Chairperson Atwell reminded the Board that this was an ongoing effort that rose out from the responses during the public hearings.

Transportation Director Schomisch reminded the Board that he and staff were prohibited from working on millage campaign during the work day and when he was acting as the Transportation Director, and that he served as a technical resource to the Committee

Chairperson Atwell stated that it would be appropriate to discuss the Millage Campaign after the meeting was adjourned because it was important to keep the functions separate.

Transportation Director Schomisch responded he would check with the City Attorney's Office to be sure.

### **Merging of Metro Transit/Care-A-Van Systems Update**

Transportation Director Schomisch reported that City staff had provided the County with a revised proposal the financial picture had changed (liability insurance, cost of diesel fuel, state funding, etc.) since the original proposal, and that the County was appreciative of that fact.

Chairperson Atwell asked if there had been a proposal from City to the County to assume administration and operation of the Care-A-Van, and if a County contribution was expected to continue serving its current ridership. Transportation Director Schomisch responded yes.

Ms. Forest commended Transportation Director Schomisch for his efforts and understood his frustration for over a year. She stated that she could not figure out why the County would not accept the proposal if they could save money.

Chairperson Atwell reminded the Board that the primary concern was that KATS was holding back funds as the incentive for both parties to work together. Transportation Director Schomisch responded it would be two years in October 2004.

### **Service Agreement Update with WMU**

Transportation Director Schomisch reported that an agreement had been reached with WMU on a new 3-year contract with service changes that were implemented on August 30.

Transportation Director Schomisch confirmed verbal approval had been provided for staff to move forward. He informed the Board that some of the changes resulted in some service reductions; i.e., Route #25 with students being left behind. He informed the Board that the problem was being addressed on the short-term with kickers being sent out and that he had spoken with Mr. Beam to discuss potential changes.

Secretary/Treasurer Treloar asked if WMU would pay for the additional service. Transportation Director Schomisch responded that Mr. Beam said "I want this to work".

### **DTC/ITC Project Update**

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that he had met with consultants to "tidy up" on the specifications for the construction phase as well as signage and colors to ensure consistency with the DKI's efforts.

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that the project was three months behind due to ongoing discussions with Indian Trails and Greyhound in securing a multi-year lease agreements. He also indicated the other reason for the delay was due to the plan for a snow-melt system, which would now cost up to \$40,000 annually to operate as well as the construction of a building off-site.

Secretary/Treasurer Treloar asked how much more it would cost to put the system in after the building was built. Transportation Director Schomisch responded it would cost substantially more; however, an option would be to install piping versus a boiler room that would be less expensive.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **WMU Ridership**

Transportation Director Schomisch highlighted the ridership during the 2003 – 2004 WMU school year with 1,261,000, which was an increase of 40% over 2003.

Transportation Director Schomisch reported that the first WMU Football Shuttle of the year carried 5,382 passengers on September 2.

### **Wheelchair Incident Report**

Chairperson Atwell stated that he was surprised to see that three coaches were responsible for more than half of the incidents.

Transportation Director Schomisch responded that he was surprised at the number of actual wheelchair activity, and that the number of incidents represented 5% of the 566. He stated that he was not happy that there were 29 incidents, and that there were no excuses.

Transportation Director Schomisch stated that the short-term fix was to send out vans to transport people, and that the long-term fix was the purchase of new buses equipped with a low-floor ramp versus the hydraulic lift mechanism.

Mr. Richardson expressed his appreciation to Transportation Director Schomisch for providing the information to the Board and also commended TAG for requesting the information.

Chairperson Atwell indicated that he was interested in a comparison with other systems on such incidents.

## **MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES/CONCERNS**

### **Appreciation**

Mr. Richardson thanked Chairperson Atwell and Transportation Director Schomisch for having him on the Board to represent the disabled community and that he was glad to serve.

### **Alternative Sources of Fuel**

Ms. Forest stated that after listening to the discussions that our costs continued to increase (insurance and gas) and about the cost for the snow-melt system at the DTC, she questioned if staff looked at alternative sources for fuel (i.e., bio-diesel, solar panels). She asked where they could be fit in as we built a state-of-the-art facility and what could make the System the cutting edge.

### **ADA Metro Van Service**

Chairperson Atwell noted the transition of the ADA service from the previous contractors went well and knew that the service provided to the constituents was very good. He stated that it was comforting to hear such positive feedback because he recalled the concerns at City Hall and how the riders would be affected. He commended staff, and especially ADA Coordinator Congdon, for staying on top of it.

Transportation Director Schomisch informed the Board that Pride Care was doing a much better job at combining trips, and that he was very pleased with seriousness of the Pride Care staff.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **MDOT**

MDOT Project Manager Luo expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to attend the meeting and receive updates.

### **Millage Renewal**

Ms. McGowen informed the Board that DRC had taken formal action to support the millage renewal and suggested that information be used to share. She shared with the Board that their newsletter indicated to readers to vote yes on the millage renewal.

### **Wheelchair Incident Report**

Ms. McGowen expressed her appreciation for the report and emphasized the importance of knowing that there were not only 29 people that were inconvenienced, but that other people on the buses who may have missed a transfer or were late for an appointment were as well.

### **Fare Increase**

Ms. McGowen suggested to the Board to not increase the fare payment for Metro Van. She stated that it was not mandatory that the Metro Van Fare be doubled, and that a person that received Social Security Disability income of \$800 used at least 10% of their income to use Metro Van twice a week for a month.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business presented before the Transit Authority Board of Directors at their formal meeting dated September 3, 2004, Chairperson Atwell motioned for adjournment and was supported by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

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Heather L. Stiver, Recording Secretary

Date: 24 September 2004