

**KALAMAZOO TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Minutes of September 24, 2004**

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

**Members Absent:** None

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

**Technical Committee Member Present:** William Schomisch, Transportation Director (absent)  
Carmine Lewis, Administration & Planning Manager

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

**Guests:** Carol Fricke, LKF Marketing  
Michelle McGowen, RICC/TAG  
Curtis Morris

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Atwell called the regular meeting of the Transit Authority Board of Directors to order at 8:15 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Atwell informed the Board that Ms. Forest had indicated that she would be late in attending the meeting.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Chairperson Atwell introduced Ms. Fricke to the Board. He informed the Board that she had applied to serve on the Board.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**

There were none.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

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

### **City Manager Items**

**FY2005 Transportation to Work (Project Zero) MDOT Grant Contract:** Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that this grant provided \$25,000 to run the partnered Transportation to Work Project Zero service with Michigan Works! and Goodwill and to continue the use of the ServicePoint Software to schedule rides. The agencies that use the software pay a user fee.

**FTA 5309 Capital Grant Award:** Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that word was received from Chicago that \$3,765,000 had been awarded for the DTC Project and Bus Replacement Program for FY2005. An official announcement was still pending.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

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

The minutes of the Transit Authority Board of Directors Regular Meeting held on September 3, 2004, were presented to the Board for their consideration.

*Secretary/Treasurer Treloar made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the regular Board meeting held on September 3, 2004, and was supported by Mr. Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.*

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

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported that operating expenses came in at \$772,421, which was an increase of \$14,204 or plus 1.87% when compared to August 2003. She stated that the increase in expenses were below normal levels due to WMU services resuming later in the month during 2004.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported that operating revenues came in at \$126,928, which was an increase of \$30,462 or plus 19.35% when compared to August 2003. She stated that there continued to be an increase in the purchase of pass sales.

Chairperson Atwell again highlighted the System Fund Balance line item and reminded the Board that the spend down of those funds could not continue the way it was currently set up.

*Secretary/Treasurer Treloar made a motion to accept the Income and Expense Statement for August 2004, and was supported by Vice Chairperson Meek. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Ridership Analysis Report for August 2004**

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported there were 162,742 rides in August 2004, which was a decrease of 8.70% or minus 15,508 passengers when compared to the same month in 2003. She indicated the elasticity model was now being proven.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported the year-to-date ridership was at 1,885,125 passengers, which was an increase of 7.21% or plus 126,830 passengers when compared to the same period in 2003.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported productivity for August 2004 had decreased slightly to 17.12 passengers per service hour. However, she reported that the year-to-date productivity continued to meet the goal of over 21 passengers per service hour.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported ridership in August 2004 for Metro Van continued to increase with 2,445 passengers, which was an increase of 268 passengers over the same month in 2003.

Mr. Richardson asked why during the summer season the ridership was lower. Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that productivity was still up for the year, but that ridership was starting to even out as a result of the fare increase.

Vice Chairperson Meek asked why Route #14 – West Main ridership was down. Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that once the September data had been reviewed, an explanation would be provided. However, she reminded the Board that the service was changed from 15-minute service to Drake to 30-minute service to Meijers and the high school.

*Vice Chairperson Meek made a motion to accept the Ridership Analysis Report of August 2004, and was supported by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **TAB Appointment Recommendation to the City Commission**

Chairperson Atwell informed the Board that the Nominating Committee had interviewed Ms. Fricke and found that she would be an asset to the Board.

*Vice Chairperson Meek made a motion to approve the recommendation to the City Commission to appoint Ms. Fricke for a partial term to expire on December 31, 2006, and was supported by Mr. Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **“Communities in Motion Day” Resolution and Activity**

Chairperson Atwell read the resolution.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reminded the Board that in the past “Free Fare Days” were provided during Communities in Motion Day along with other selected dates; however, due to the abuse by members of the public, the Board authorized the elimination of “Free Fare Days”.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that staff wanted to take a different approach to the celebration of “Communities in Motion Day” with the exchange of food goods for a ride on the bus. She stated that the donated items would be given to both the Gospel Mission and Ministry with Community, and emphasized it would be a “win-win” opportunity because the community would see it as an opportunity to help others.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis stated that the event would be well marketed with press releases and a list of items would be provided for collection. She indicated that an insert would be included in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, which would generate awareness of the event, and would put focus on the true meaning of “Communities in Motion”, especially in light of the food pantries collections being so low this year.

Vice Chairperson Meek indicated he would share this information at the next WSA Meeting.

Chairperson Atwell informed the Board that a Viewpoint Article would be in the paper by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar. He expressed concern for the drivers and the burden that would be placed on them, but indicated he had been assured by staff that it would not be so.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that staff would be assisting that day and encouraged Board members to assist if able.

***Vice Chairperson Meek approved the “Communities in Motion Day” Resolution and activity planned for October 7, 2004, and was supported by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **ISAAC Forum held on September 16, 2004**

Chairperson Atwell asked members of the Board that attended the meeting on September 16, to share their thoughts.

Mr. Richardson stated that the breakout session involved discussions on keeping the fares low.

Chairperson Atwell reported that there was opportunity to brainstorm on what it would take to get you, your friends, and/or your neighbors to ride the bus; what would make public transportation more appealing, accessible, and affordable; with the goal to have an extensive, safe, affordable, reliable, convenient, and well-maintained public transit system serving the community. He emphasized that the comments made were not confrontational. He shared with the Board that he was disturbed by the comment made by Mr. Urban that “Kalamazoo Metro Transit is nothing to be ashamed of”, which he viewed as a negative view because he is very proud of what the Kalamazoo Metro Transit System does for community, and that it is productive and well managed given the financial constraints.

Chairperson Atwell requested Ms. McGowen to provide her feedback.

Ms. McGowen stated that she was pleased to see the range of people present, especially officials from outside of the city of Kalamazoo. She emphasized how public transportation is very important and not wanting to have services decreased.

Ms. McGowen stated that she thought Mr. Urban's comment was more positive. Chairperson Atwell responded that staff and the Board had worked so hard for so long and were very proud and using the word "shame" never enters one's mind. He stated that he felt the Kalamazoo Metro Transit System was very well operated and a good System.

### **2005 Budget Development Update**

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that the proposed CY2005 Operating and Capital Budget had been prepared and submitted.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis confirmed that the proposed Budget included a fare increase versus service cuts, and that staff expects there will be some discussion on the fare increase proposal, especially if the fare increase is not approved. She reported that there were increases in the line items of diesel fuel at 40% and that insurance costs doubled (liability and fleet insurance) for 2005.

Chairperson Atwell emphasized that the development of the FY2005 Budget reflected the passage of the one-mil renewal.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reminded the Board of the ATU – Local 1093 contribution in opting not to receive a wage increase in 2005. She reported that KMEA was currently under contract negotiations and that the NBU staff would receive no wage increase.

### **Millage Campaign Efforts Update**

Chairperson Atwell informed the Board that the Millage Campaign Steering Committee met to continue discussions on fundraising opportunities and development and circulation of pro-campaign information. He reported that they received a copy of the proposed ballot and that the millage renewal question was last.

### **KMT Policies/Programs Update**

**Low-Income Fare Policy/Program:** Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that staff continued to work with the City Finance Director and that it may involve the use of funding from the Board line item to make the program happen.

**Retainage of the System Fund Balance Policy (12% - 15%):** Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported to the Board that discussions continued and staff would continue to stress the Board's support and relentless desire to approve such a policy to protect the System.

**Establishment/Justification of Fare Increases Policy:** Administration and Planning Manager

Lewis informed the Board that adoption of such a policy would protect the System and its riders from the surprise that occurred in 2003 when a fare increase was proposed. She stated that the policy would create benchmarks based on economic indicators.

### **TAB Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee:** Chairperson Atwell indicated that there was nothing new to report.

**Marketing Committee:** Chairperson Atwell, in absence of the members of the Committee, indicated that there was nothing new to report.

**Nominating Committee:** Chairperson Atwell reminded the Board that they had taken action to recommend the appointment of Ms. Fricke to the City Commission for concurrence.

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

Chairperson Atwell reminded the Board that this was an ongoing effort and that this area was in line with the responsibility of the Marketing Committee.

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

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis reported that discussions continued between the City and County about the merging of the two transit systems. She indicated that there was still no final decision reached and that budget situations at both levels were driving the discussions to ensure efficiency, but she assured the Board that KMT staff was ready to take over the management of the Care-A-Van service whenever the County decided to hand it over.

Chairperson Atwell stated that the current impact was that funds were still being withheld by KATS until some measurable, which was still unclear, results were proven.

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

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that approval had been secured by WMU and that the City Commission would be taking action on accepting the new three-year service agreement at their meeting on October 4. She reminded the Board that the contract would be retroactive to the first day of service, which had already been implemented. She conveyed that the contract had been amended for the provision of additional service on Route #25, which was implemented on September 20 with the approval of WMU.

Chairperson Atwell asked if staff had worked with WMU on the additional service to Route #25. Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded staff had met with WMU Administration.

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

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis informed the Board that discussions continued with Indian Trails and Greyhound relating to the securement of multi-year leases. She reported that MDOT was now more involved in the discussions as well.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Wheelchair Incident Report**

Mr. Richardson asked what the goal was in providing the monthly report. Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that having the information in front of staff would help drive the goal of reducing the number of incidents to an acceptable level.

Ms. McGowen indicated that there was a 3% lift failure rate in July, and indicated that there needed to be more data to compare on whether it was considered acceptable.

Chairperson Atwell stated that obtaining the statistics was a first step. He indicated that it would be very important, at a later date, to obtain data and benchmarks from other systems in similar climates to see how our System stacked up.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that it could be difficult because it was not a required reporting statistic at any level that she was aware of.

Chairperson Atwell stated that he had talked with folks in Grand Rapids and acknowledged that the incidents that occur at the KMT System occurred at other Systems in the Midwest.

Ms. McGowen emphasized that the report was due to a lift or ramp failure, not a wheelchair failure.

## **MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES/CONCERNS**

### **DTC Project Delay**

Mr. Havice questioned the delay to the DTC Project. Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that the availability of money to proceed with construction phase of the project was pending the securement of lease agreements. She reported that the project was three months behind the original schedule, but still within boundaries of good management for a project of \$12 million.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **Appreciation of Service**

Mr. Morris indicated he rode Routes #14 and #23 often and expressed his appreciation for the bus service and hoped that there would be no serious cut backs because that would result in a lot of walking for him.

Mr. Morris informed the Board that it is was cheaper for him to use Metro Transit versus Care-A-van and that the majority of riders and drivers are pleasant. He stated that without public transportation he would be lost in a severe way and that he would lose his connection to world.

Chairperson Atwell thanked Mr. Morris for his comment and asked if he was able to schedule rides with Care-A-Van successfully. Mr. Morris responded sometimes and that there were times when he used Care-A-Van that there were many empty seats.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis asked why he chose Care-a-Van over Metro Transit. Mr. Morris responded that due to his anxiety disorder, it was difficult for him to get on the bus, and

then he was approved to use Metro Van.

**Fare Increase**

Ms. McGowen indicated that the cost of living increases do not have a logical connection to increase bus fares (i.e., minimum wage does not increase) and that it did not make sense because incomes do not always increase.

**Low-Income Fare**

Ms. McGowen stated that hopefully whatever policy/procedure was placed, that staff would also keep in mind that monitoring the program will be costly. She stated that the budget would not be ahead if things are not followed-through.

**Marketing Suggestion**

Ms. McGowen suggested advertising at a “park and ride” about riding the bus for events held during the summer. She indicated that she lived on the Westside and she would park her vehicle at Maple Hill Mall to ride the bus to an event.

Administration and Planning Manager Lewis responded that effort was part of the Rideshare Program.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business presented before the Transit Authority Board of Directors at their formal meeting dated September 24, 2004, Chairperson Atwell motioned for adjournment and was supported by Secretary/Treasurer Treloar.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

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Heather L. Stiver, Recording Secretary

Date: 22 October 2004