

**KALAMAZOO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Minutes of November 16, 2007**

Members Present: Vice Chair Donna Treloar, Andy Havice, Elizabeth Forest and Reuben Richardson

Members Absent: Chairperson Carol Fricke, Michael Gregor and Garrylee McCormick

City Commission Liaison: Bobby Hopewell, Mayor (Absent)

Technical Support Members Present: William Schomisch, Transportation Director

City Administration Member Present: Beth A. Sowles, Administrative Office Specialist
Richard Congdon, ADA Coordinator

Guests: Michelle McGowan, DRC, LAC Chairperson
Gretchen Lemmer, Friends of Transit

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Treloar called the regular meeting of the Transit Authority Board of Directors to order at 5:40 pm.

ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Treloar requested a motion to excuse the absence of Chairperson Carol Fricke.

Mr. Gregor made a motion to excuse the absence of Chairperson Carol Fricke and was supported by Mr. McCormick. Motion carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Board members introduced themselves to the guests in attendance.

CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Action Item #E – Addition to Metro Van Service Area

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

ISSUES/ITEMS FOR CITY MANAGER/CITY COMMISSION

None

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting Minutes of October 22, 2007

The minutes were accepted with no changes.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 22, 2007, and was supported by Ms. Forest. Motion carried unanimously.

Income and Expense Statement – October 2007

Mr. Schomisch highlighted the operating expense decreases for October and stated that revenues experienced a 21% increase. Mr. Schomisch also pointed out that budget is expended at 71% as compared to 74% at the same time last year.

Revenues for fares are substantially higher from a year ago. Advertising revenue was budgeted at \$18k and has been realized at \$58k. KTC operations have doubled the operating budget for KTC, however KTC

is paying for this through the commission revenues. One reason for this change is instead of leasing space to Indian Trails and Greyhound, Metro Transit became their agents and that changed the revenue from \$26k to over \$80k in revenue.

Ms. Forest made a motion to approve the October 2007 Income and Expense Statement and was supported by Mr. Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.

Ridership Report – September 2007

No discussion offered.

Mr. Richardson made a motion to approve the Ridership Analysis Report for September 2007 and was supported by Ms. Forest. Motion carried unanimously.

Ridership Report – October 2007

Ridership was down 3.5% due to the change in service offered at WMU. While there is a drop in ridership on fixed route due to WMU by approximately 10,000 trips, the ridership on other routes has greatly increased. Overall productivity is down slightly, but still at 28.83 rides per hour. The goal was 22 rides per hour, so Metro Transit is still ahead of the goal.

Mr. Richardson asked about the Gull Road route buses being full and still picking up passengers. Mr. Richardson asked if a larger bus could be dispatched on this route. Mr. Schomisch stated that Metro Transit would look into seeing how this issue can be resolved.

Mr. Havice asked if the ridership report indicates that Portage people do not ride the buses. Mr. Schomisch stated that ridership has increased slightly, with the less-used route being the Shaver Road route. The recommendation for new service is to operate for at least a year before making any changes. It is an expensive service with the ridership.

Mr. Schomisch stated the trolley service in Portage has fallen through.

Mr. Richardson asked about the timing of the Portage route. Portage is now the 2nd highest route being used. With the ridership increasing so dramatically, the route becomes off schedule.

Mr. Havice asked if a consideration had been given to rerouting the Portage buses to segments of the population that would use the bus. Mr. Havice stated that it is hard to move into an area where service is not needed.

Ms. Forest recommended marketing to the environment club groups in Portage and in the schools.

Mr. Schomisch stated that there is a group of churches and groups getting together for “Going Green” in Portage. Mr. Lambe from Friends of Transit and has a booth for an event on Sunday, November 18th that will be promoting the Portage routes.

Mr. Richardson also asked about the Route #9 – Gull Road going down on “H” Avenue. He stated that no passengers utilize the service on “H” Avenue and questioned why the bus traveled down that road. Mr. Schomisch stated that this issue would be given to the Route Committee.

Ms. Forest asked whether the routes that have high ridership could be considered for having two buses per hour instead of one. Mr. Schomisch stated that Alamo route is currently 15 minutes out and 15 minutes in.

Ms. Forest made a motion to approve the Ridership Analysis Reports for October 2007 and was supported by Mr. Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.

Recommendation for Metro Van Service Area Extension

The Local Advisory Committee has recommended Transit Authority Board approval of the recommendation to extend the Metro Van service area .3 of a mile beyond the east side of the service established by a fixed-route Route #14-West Main bus.

Mr. Congdon gave a brief background as to why this recommendation was being offered. An apartment complex has asked for service to their complex. Mr. Schomisch stated that this is the first time Metro Transit has recommended going beyond the service area. This will be non-precedent setting basis. The complex is also asking for fixed-route service, which is not a possibility at this point.

Mr. Havice stated he is in favor of providing transportation to those who ask. He also stated that he felt that Metro Transit should go to the widest limit and if anyone asks for transportation, they should receive it. Mr. Havice asked whether this falls under Care-A-Van and why wasn't that being utilized. Mr. Congdon explained that the hours of service being offered was the main reason.

Mr. Gregor asked if there have been any other similar requests. Mr. Schomisch stated that to remember that there is a cost to this service also. Several residents at this complex are already certified.

Mr. Richardson stated that he agrees that if individuals deserve a ride by law, they should be provided with a ride. Mr. Richardson recommends this because the disabled community is able to pick themselves up more to be independent. Benefit the disabled community to see more transportation

Mr. Havice made a motion to approve the Metro Van Area Extension and was supported by Ms. Forest. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

November 6 Millage Update

Mr. Schomisch stated that the vote was 72% to 28% in passing the millage renewal. One issue still to be dealt with is the need to collect revenues for the campaign, as the expenses were not fully covered. This was a low-key campaign, as is normal. The campaign consisted of a combination of printing flyers and insert for the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, for a total of \$2,500. The next millage vote in 2008 will be very important for the countywide transit millage. The last vote was 51% to 49% in passing. To get the next millage passed, it will be important to show the credibility of the Board. If the Board can build a level of comfort with the community, it should pass.

Ms. Forest asked if the KTCA has considered having some of their meetings in Portage and engage the Portage community. Meetings are being set up to meet with various agencies to explain what services are being offered so that they understand what the millage will provide.

Care-A-Van Update

Mr. Schomisch announced that the new buses have been delivered. These buses will be put in service on Monday, November 26th. Another six buses will be replaced in December 2008. Then an additional four buses will be replaced the following year.

Pride Care has contracted with a firm from New York for an assessment on the vehicles. The final report should be received very soon. Pride Care is using eight vehicles of their own on Metro Van and six vehicles for Care-A-Van service.

Ms. Forest asked if smaller vans would be utilized. Mr. Schomisch that Care-A-Van has always operated with the size of bus currently in service. Some different sized vehicles may be in use in the future.

City Manager requested a plan to take over Care-A-Van if he decides that the contract should be terminated. The contract has a clause that on the anniversary date either party can cancel without cause. Pride Care has indicated that they do not wish to cancel. City Manager asked to concentrate on vehicle maintenance and customer service. Metro Transit staff has started riding the buses to talk to passengers and Passenger Comment Cards will be available on all buses. If the contract is canceled by the City Manager service will be in-house on March 1. The timeline that was created makes this almost impossible to completed in time.

Ms. Forest asked if is possible for Metro Transit to take it over, but work with Pride Care to lease their services for one or two months. Mr. Schomisch stated that with the way the contract is written that isn't possible, but delaying taking the service over until June 1st has been discussed. It is an option and is being

looked at, but more than likely not possible. Mr. Schomisch stated that the preference is to run the contract to June 2009 and then it becomes under the governance of KCTA, who is actually paying for the service. The preference at this point is to allow Pride Care to continue providing service.

Ms. Forest stated that it is a public relations issue with Pride Care not handling the labor issues and it reflects on Metro Transit. Ms. Forest stated she is very concerned about the labor issues. Mr. Schomisch stated that there are negotiations between the Union and Pride Care. The Union has stated that they will not drive the buses. The Union will not come to the bargaining table. Pride Care has asked them to bargain and the Union is refusing.

Mr. Havice asked whether the current Care-A-Van drivers wouldn't just "follow the buses" to Metro Transit and eliminates the timeline. The practices to hire drivers would be the same as is currently followed. The Care-A-Van drivers are not, for the most part, able to pass the test. All interested drivers would be required to pass the test. Mr. Havice also asked would we do the service for the same price as Pride Care or would it cost more. The cost would be approximately \$500,000 more than the current contract costs. Mr. Havice asked whether the KCTA is willing to take on this expenditure. If Metro Transit assumed Care-A-Van would there be two disabled services. Metro Transit would have to hire 26 individuals to take over the Care-A-Van operation.

Ms. Forest asked if the problem is management or drivers with the difference between Care-A-Van and Metro Van. Mr. Schomisch stated that when drivers went from TMI to Pride Care, they received a cut in pay and decided to unionize. The Metro Van drivers decided not to unionize.

Mr. Havice asked if Metro Transit took over Care-A-Van would those drivers would be ATU drivers. Mr. Havice also wondered why there are problems with unions with Care-A-Van, but not Metro Van. Mr. Schomisch stated that these are not our employees and does not know why issues with Care-A-Van and not Metro Van.

Ms. Forest stated that when it comes to the Metro Transit name, the service and the reputation is on the line, these issues need to be examined. Ms. Forest stated that when Metro Transit has standards for our drivers to pass testing and the Care-A-Van drivers cannot pass the test, there are real concerns.

Mr. Schomisch stated that he does not mean to imply that the drivers that were working for Care-A-Van are bad drivers. He is stating that Metro Transit has standards by which to operate and he knows that individuals who have worked at Pride Care have not passed the pre-employment test that is used to determine if this person can handle the types of situations that occur on the bus.

Ms. Forest stated that the Board and KCTA should take the pre-employment test so they are aware of the standards that drivers are being asked to meet. Mr. Schomisch will speak to the Senior Operations Supervisor to see if it is feasible.

Mr. Gregor asked if the City Manager's decision would be known by the December meeting.

Diesel Fuel Update

Mr. Schomisch stated that diesel fuel was purchased at the highest price ever, \$2.81 a gallon. This line item is still under budget.

Trolley Services

Holly Jolly Trolley starts the Friday after Thanksgiving. The Portage Trolley effort fell apart with funding being withdrawn. KCTA was matching funds being raised. The return for the effort was not worth the expenditures. This service will again be looked at for 2008.

Mr. Gregor asked if public funding was being used for the Holly Jolly Trolley. Mr. Schomisch answered no.

Board is disappointed in the fall of the South Westnedge Holiday Express.

Safety Audit

Due to Mr. Gregor's request the report is provided to the Board. Mr. Schomisch stated that there are a couple of items that aren't quite right. The report says that there isn't a written procedure in Dispatch for accidents and there is. A new report will be completed soon.

Mr. Havice stated that drivers eating and using cell phones while driving is a real safety issue. Drivers are not allowed to drink on the bus, but are allowed at the end of the line.

Mr. Havice asked if changing signage at KTC would help keep people from walking around the buses and keeping people safe.

Mr. Richardson stated that drivers are using headsets for their cell phones. Complaints received about wheelchair tiedowns not being used. Mr. Richardson stated that drivers are not getting up to put the wheelchair rider in place. Mr. Schomisch stated that if this ever happens, to contact him immediately.

Mr. Richardson stated that would like to go back to the front seats being used for seniors. People are not moving back. Talking Bus is not being used and stops being called out.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Budget for 2008 has been developed and submitted for Technical Review. Finance Committee of TAB is Chairperson Fricke, Mr. Gregor and Ms. Treloar. A meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 17th at noon.

Mr. Havice asked if the meeting date for December had been changed. Mr. Schomisch stated that the meeting date for December had already been changed due to the Christmas holiday.

Ms. Forest stated that diesel fuel budget line item may need to be increased.

Mr. Richardson gave kudos to KTC staff. He stated that the facility was extremely full with individuals who had no business within the facility. Announcement was made that they need to leave the building or Public Safety would be contacted. Mr. Richardson asked if additional security is needed. Mr. Schomisch stated that Public Safety makes frequent trips through the facility. Announcement was made for no panhandling.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business presented before the Transit Authority Board of Directors at their formal meeting dated Friday, November 16, 2007, Vice Chair Treloar adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:44 am.

*Ms. Forest made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was supported by Mr. Richardson.
Motion carried unanimously.*

Beth A. Sowles, Recording Secretary

Date: November 16, 2007