

**DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**1100 DART Way – Des Moines, IA 50309
March 29, 2011**

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Bob Mahaffey, Gaye Johnson, Larry Hulse for Christine Hensley, Tom Gayman, Angela Connolly, Paula Dierenfeld for Steve Van Oort, Ted Boesen; Steve Peterson for Steve Brody

Commissioners Absent: Steve Brody, Skip Conkling, Christine Hensley, Steve Van Oort

Alternates Present: Steve Peterson, Larry Hulse, Paula Dierenfeld

Staff Present: Brad Miller, General Manager; Elizabeth Presutti, Chief Development Officer; Randy Ross, HR Director; Kirstin Baer-Harding, Advertising Manager; Jamie Schug, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Reynolds, Chief Operating Officer; Jim Tishim, Planning Director; Rebecca Lovig, RideShare Manager; Teresa Cashman, Scheduling Manager; Chet Bor, Paratransit Director; Debra Meyer, Capital Grants Manager; Randy McKern, Transportation Manager; P.J. Sass, Customer Service Manager; Gunnar Olson, Public Information Officer; Carmella Comito, Rish Manager; Suzanne Robinson, Clerk to the Commission;

Others Present: Dana Conn, TMA; Dylan Mullenix, MPO; Jeff Glaze, Des Moines Register; Alexander Grgurich, TRAC Committee; Alane Houck, citizen

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Angela Connolly at 5:02 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Notice of the meeting was duly published.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Connolly called for corrections to the February 22, 2011, meeting minutes. General Manager Brad Miller stated that minor corrections were made that did not change overall meaning. There being no further comments on the minutes, it was moved by Mr. Ted Boesen and seconded by Mr. Bob Mahaffey that the minutes be approved as corrected. The minutes were approved as corrected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS SECTION

None

TRAC UPDATE

Mr. Alexander Grgurich, the new Chair of the TRAC Committee, presented a summary of their recent meeting. He stated that the committee approved their previously compiled 2011 goals, discussed the 2035 Planning Study, looked into the placement of certain DART bus stops and had previews of e-mail management software. He said that their next meeting would include a presentation with the DART planning consultant.

CONSENT ITEMS

7A – Hoist Replacement Contract

7B – February 2011 Financial Reports

Chair Connolly announced that there would be a delay in approving the hoist contract, so it will not be voted on until a later commission meeting. Mr. Miller added that there was a protest of the award, and that DART legal counsel is currently reviewing it.

It was moved by Mr. Boesen and seconded by Ms. Johnson that the consent item 7B be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item 8A – Liability Settlement

Mr. Miller said that this settlement represents the last of the pedestrian accidents to be settled. He said that the settlement was arrived at through the mediation process, and that it is less than the amount projected. He stated that this settlement will use up the remaining bond funds. Mr. Miller added that the DART accident rate is down about 50% of what it was in 2009.

It was moved by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Mr. Peterson that the Commission approve a settlement agreement with Mr. Roger Christenson in an amount of \$350,000 to Mr. Christenson's conservatorship.

The motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 8B – Transit Hub Land Acquisition Resolution

Chair Connolly announced that the Polk County Board of Supervisors have approved the Transit Hub land acquisition at their last weekly meeting for a purchase price of \$1.00. Ms. Presutti added that Wells Fargo accepted the DART offer at the appraised value of \$650,000 for their parcel of land at the Transit Hub site, with a 60-day closing. Chair Connolly asked her if the 60-day time frame would be a problem. Ms. Presutti responded by saying that the FTA will allow DART to begin the project prior to the formal closing, so it won't impact the schedule.

It was moved by Mr. Boesen and seconded by Ms. Johnson that the Commission approve a purchase agreement with Polk County for \$1.00, and a purchase agreement with Wells Fargo Bank for the appraised value (\$650,000) of the property. Chair Connolly abstained from this vote. All other commissioners voted Aye. The Resolution passed.

Action Item 8C – Nationwide Performance Benchmarking Consortium Participation

Mr. Miller requested approval for DART to join a consortium, originally conceived through APTA, that would be comprised of mid-sized bus systems from around the U.S. such as DART. The consortium makes it possible to share data and processes that other systems use to improve performance. Mr. Miller explained that comparisons with other Iowa transit systems are not often valid, because of the big size differential, and that will make the outcomes that are presented to the consortium members especially worthwhile.

Mr. Miller said that DART will play an active part in the consortium, with the first meeting of the consortium, now numbering approximately 12-15 members, taking place in Rochester, New York. Funding for this project will come from the Federal Transit Administration's planning dollars, and thus within the DART budget.

It was moved by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Peterson that the Commission approve DART's participation in the new mid-sized Bus Performance Benchmarking Group at an annual cost not to exceed \$20,000.

The motion carried unanimously.

Action Item 8D – Political Activity Policy

Due to the upswing in political activity that is a part of the Iowa Caucus process, DART staff have fashioned a policy that is based on the one approved by the City of Des Moines to handle any requests from candidates about the use of the DART buses, logo, facilities, etc. for political purposes. While paid political advertisements on the DART buses are allowed by the DART Advertising Policy, including pictures, video or other images of DART buses or facilities in political advertisements or materials cannot be fairly allocated or governed, so the policy entirely prohibits this use.

Mr. Peterson asked about filming of news or ads where buses may be in the picture. Mr. Miller explained that a bus that is casually in the background in such film is not prohibited, since it is not "staged", and that such an event as a press conference held on the Walnut Street Transit Mall, with its incidental bus presence in the background, is also not prohibited. Mr. Hulse added that this policy has served the City of Des Moines well for the ten years it has been in effect.

It was moved by Mr. Mahaffey and seconded by Ms. Johnson that the commission adopt the Political Activity Policy.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

9A – Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)

Ms. P.J. Sass, DART's Customer Service Manager, presented a Power Point updating the commission on Title VI Civil Rights Act provisions and DART's LEP Program. Ms. Sass stated that the General Manager, management, and all employees share the responsibility for carrying out DART's commitment to Title VI by implementing the following:

- Completion of perform a service and fare equity analysis prior to each service change affecting 25% of ridership and all fare increases.

- Ensure communication with DART seeks to integrate the needs and views of all transit customers, especially those of minority, low-income and LEP populations—people who may have comparatively fewer resources to present their concerns about transit.
- Receive and thoroughly investigate Title VI complaints that come through the complaint procedures process

And also by continuing to work through implementation of the LEP plan by doing the following:

- Increase knowledge and comfort level of the non-English speaking rider on DART services.
- Set-up an account with a language service to allow for non-English speaking customers to access to schedule information.

Chair Connolly added that the MPO, with its Transit Roundtable, has also discussed these issues in regard to mobility topics, and that the topics do overlap in such a way that this resource can be used by DART as well.

Discussion Item 9B – DART Website Redesign

Mr. Miller said that several years ago, DART’s website design had received a ranking in a transit magazine as coming in approximately 80th out of 160 transit systems’ websites. Since then, DART’s Advertising Manager, Kirstin Baer-Harding, has been working to redesign the website to make it easier for DART’s customers to navigate the site, and to find answers to their questions. Ms. Baer-Harding presented a Power Point (attached) showing the new features, which include:

- A scalable System Map
- Updated RideShare Mapping
- Improved search engine
- Better site resolution
- Ability for customers to make text size changes
- Quick links
- Links to Social Media

Chair Connolly thanked Ms. Baer-Harding for her presentation, and advised commissioners and guests to visit the re-vamped website and use it frequently. www.ridedart.com

9C – DART Forward 2035 Guiding Principles

Ms. Presutti’s Power Point on the DART Forward 2035 Update (attached) highlighted the consultants’ findings from their review of the DART system. She briefly gave an overview of the current system, its strengths and weaknesses, and the guiding principles that will help the commission to focus on what decisions they need to make to update DART service for the coming years. She detailed the next steps in the process now that the data collection is completed and tabulated. She said that the consultants, with DART staff input, are working on their final report, and that the public input process is next on the calendar, with meetings scheduled for the public, DART staff, the MPO, TRAC and the Transportation Roundtable.

Mr. Hulse asked if the DART Forward Plan would include recommendations regarding land use linked to transit needs, and Ms. Presutti responded that while the DART Forward Consultants were certainly keeping land use patterns in mind as they made their recommendations, most of those recommendations would come out of the MPO’s Sustainable Transportation Plan funded by the Federal HUD. DART’s planning study is being carefully coordinated with the MPO’s efforts.

Ms. Presutti announced that the the plan will be discussed at greater detail, and the Commission's work will then begin on April 26, 2011, with a Retreat that starts at 11:00 a.m., followed by the regular Commission meeting which will start at 4:00 p.m. after the Retreat is over.

Ms. Presutti said that the timeline for the project after the conclusions reached at the Retreat begin with a draft of the final plan to be completed in late May or early June, and public input will be commenced in mid-July.

9D – Performance Reports

Ridership in February was down, due in part to one day less of school service, and a glut of bad weather which always depresses ridership. He also mentioned that express service ridership held up better than regular route. Mr. Mahaffey asked about the overall large decrease in ridership year-to-date, and Mr. Miller said it is due to the service cuts that were made last summer and fall.

Mr. Miller stated that after a review of the Customer Service department's processes, it was found that out of a month's 80 complaints received, investigation found that 70% of the complaints were invalid, a statistic that puts a different light on the monthly report's figures.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Miller thanked Chair Connolly for attending the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington DC during the month, and added that her input was invaluable in the discussions with the Congressional delegation. He also thanked Mr. Mahaffey and Mr. Conkling for attending the Iowa Public Transit Association breakfast at the Iowa Legislature.

COMMISSION ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

2011 Meeting Dates

Apr 26 Retreat at Noon and Commission meeting at 4:00 p.m., May 24, Jun 28, Jul 26,
No Commission Meeting in August, Sep 27, Oct 25, Nov 22, Dec 20

Date: _____

Chair: _____

Secretary: _____