

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

Advisory committee to the Mayor on public transit issues

Meeting Minutes

for the meeting on June 23, 2014

Members present:

Minnie Bell
Jean Crowe
Philip Jacobson
Greg Johnson
Erik Gaikowski
Megan Myers
Deb Nelson

Public in attendance:

Joe Dvorak
Ardell Fiedler
Kendra Gottsleben
Charlene Harbert
Terry Paulsen
Dawn Srstka
Lanny Stricherz
Deb VerSteege

Staff present:

Amber Gibson, Planner II, SECOG
Randy Hartman, Assistant GM
Tierza Lanham, Paratransit Manager
Bill McCarty, Maintenance Manager
Eric Meyerson, General Manager
Sam Trebilcock, Transportation Planner

Call to order

Deb Nelson, Chair, called the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. and made introductory comments.

1. Approval of April 28, 2014, PTAB Meeting Minutes

Minnie Bell made a motion to accept the April 28, 2014, PTAB meeting minutes. Megan Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Public input on non-agenda items:

Dawn Srstka notified the Board that passengers of the fixed route and paratransit systems felt that they were not being heard by management at the PTAB meetings and have therefore stopped attending the meetings. Sam Trebilcock stated that attendance has been up at the PTAB meetings and that the Transit Task Force has addressed many of the issues that have been brought up at the PTAB meetings and are included in the report to be presented during this meeting.

Dawn Srstka asked why the chimes had been silenced at the downtown bus terminal and southwest transfer station. She stated that without the chimes, it is harder to notice the stops. Randy Hartman stated that there had never been chimes for the southwest transfer station stop and that complaints had been received regarding the chimes at the downtown bus terminal. Sam Trebilcock stated that staff would look into this more.

Lanny Stricherz thanked the board for expanding route 19 with additional times and requested that inbound route 2 be expanded to go east on 51st St from Western Ave to West Ave and then North to 50th St and back west to Western Ave.

Lanny Stricherz stated that Sioux Falls is not a pedestrian friendly city due to the long wait times at crossings for the walk signals.

3. New Business:

a. Election of Officers

Minnie Bell nominated Deb Nelson to serve as Chair for the upcoming year. There were no other nominations. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the nomination of Deb Nelson to serve as Chair.

Deb Nelson nominated Jean Crowe to serve as Vice Chair for the upcoming year. There were no other nominations. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the nomination of Jean Crowe to serve as Vice Chair.

b. Transit Task Force Report

Sam Trebilcock reviewed the Transit Task Force Report. He stated that there was good participation including monthly Task Force meetings and multiple sub-group meetings. Sam reviewed the purpose, goals, recommendations, work actions and implementation plan included in the Report. The Report will be presented to City Council in July.

Deb VerSteege referenced item 3C of the Report and stated that it is difficult for riders to get to and from work and medical appointments outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area and that it seems that the City is making the budget balance to the detriment of those who can least afford it. She also stated that she thought it is good that the City will be contributing more money to the transit system. Sam Trebilcock stated that there has been consideration of bringing in another provider to provide service outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area.

Terry Paulsen commended Sam for his work on these issues and stated that he recently attended a meeting in Denver where similar issues were discussed. Terry stated that reduced barriers to accessing fixed route service is needed and that more people would be will to ride the fixed route if they could access it.

Lanny Stricherz added that the lack of shelters is a big part of not riding the fixed route due to the weather.

Charlene Harbert inquired as to whether there were any persons with disabilities on the Task Force and Sam stated that there were. Charlene added that the paratransit routes do not make sense.

Terry Paulsen asked if the City contracted with a separate provider to provide paratransit service as the use of fixed route service could be discouraged if that were the case. Sam stated that the City contracts with SAM to provide both the fixed route and paratransit service.

Greg Johnson made a motion to recommend approval of the Transit Task Force Report and Minnie Bell seconded the motion.

Philip Jacobson stated that Chad Powell had asked him to bring forward that he is having a difficult time with the online paratransit reservation system being eliminated.

Philip Jacobson also stated that the driver's names are frequently not posted in the buses.

Eric Meyerson stated that all that is needed to process a complaint is the route and time.

Megan Meyers encouraged doing everything possible to be user friendly and have good customer service during the transition.

Deb Nelson inquired as to whether there is an implementation plan. Sam stated that yes, he had handed one out.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business:

a. Bus Stop Sign Progress

Sam Trebilcock stated that installation of the new bus stops signs is on target to begin in June and be completed by August. This item was informational only.

b. Transit Coordination Activities

Amber Gibson reviewed the status of the 5310 grant program, volunteer driver program, and transportation services directory booklet. The 5310 application was posted on the MPO's website today and would be emailed out this afternoon. Pending funding, SECOG plans to hire a part-time staff person to run the volunteer driver recruitment and training program. The transportation services directory is almost ready to be printed. This item was informational only.

5. Reports:

a. April and May Operations Reports

Eric Meyerson provided a report on the ridership statistics of Sioux Area Metro for April and May. In April, fixed-route ridership was down 3.7%, and paratransit ridership was down 1.97%, compared to April 2013. In May, fixed-route ridership was down 4.84%, and paratransit ridership was down 4.87%, compared to May 2013. Eric noted that fixed route ridership is down to the continued loss of the school rides and reduced use by Lutheran Social Services clients in the English Immersion Program. Eric credited the decrease in paratransit ridership to Jean Crowe and the Lifescape staff for making adjustments to their clients' use of paratransit. This item was informational only.

b. Transit Marketing Committee

Randy Hartman informed the Board that the Marketing Committee did not meet this month. However, travel training was held for a group of thirty agencies earlier this month.

Deb Nelson asked whether SAM is doing the summer program for kids this year. Randy stated that yes, the Dog Days of Summer Pass is available for students during school vacation. This item was informational only.

6. Other Business:

Megan Meyers suggested that signage, or some other compromise, could be an alternative for the chimes at the downtown bus terminal.

Sam Trebilcock suggested that the July PTAB meeting be cancelled and the Board agreed. He stated that the budget would be presented in August.

Deb Nelson requested that an update be emailed out to the Board on the Transit Task Force Report after City Council considers it.

7. Adjournment

Greg Johnson made a motion to adjourn and Philip Jacobson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and Deb Nelson adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.