

WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Clark Campbell Transportation Conference Room
100 W. Fifth Street, Winston-Salem, NC

MINUTES

THURSDAY, February 23, 2017

PRESENT:

Board Members

Robert Garcia, Chairman
Keith King, Vice Chairman
Regina Streed
Mrs. Ruth Carter

WSTA Staff

Art Barnes, General Manager
John M. Ashford, Asst. General Manger
Verylen Crawford, Operations Director
Tina Carson-Wilkins, PR & Marketing
Tikiha Alston, ADA Coordinator &
Customer Service Manger
Teika Holloway, Admin. Assistant

Others

Toneq´ McCullough, Transportation
Director
Stephen M. Hawryluk, City Budget &
Evaluation Analyst
Brenda King, Transportation Finance Manager
Morgan, Simmons, City Planner
Clair Stone, CATS

Meeting Opened: 4:00 pm

Chairman Robert Garcia welcomed everyone to the February 23, 2017 WSTA Board Meeting. He extended a welcome to fellow Board Members, Staff, City Officials, and the public.

Chairman Garcia announced the meeting will be a short and brief; however, there are some very important things on the agenda to discuss.

Resolution Approving the Minutes for January 26, 2017 Board Meeting

Chairman Garcia stated the first order of business is approving the minutes from the prior meeting which was held January 26, 2017. He pointed out the minutes from the last meeting are quite lengthy; hopefully, the Board has had time to peruse them after receiving them via email. For anyone that had not had a chance, Chairman Garcia gave them a few minutes to do so.

Ms. Regina Streed motioned to approve the minutes and her motion was seconded by Vice-chairman Keith King. The minutes from WSTA's January 26, 2017 Board Meeting were approved unanimously.

Resolution Initiating a Rate Increase Process for Trans Aid Services

Chairman Garcia steered the Board to the next resolution on the agenda and was met with a request to hear a public comment prior to the resolution being presented. He responded to the request by stating public comments are not heard until after the resolutions have been addressed. After a brief exchange between Chairman Garcia and Ms. Clair Stone, the resolution was presented to the Board.

Chairman Garcia told the Board that they will see two (2) resolutions in the meeting packet regarding the one being presented and explained that one of them is the resolution passed by the City Council and the other is the one being discussed.

Mr. Barnes started by giving some background information about this resolution. He stated that this is a resolution that initiates a rate increase process for Trans-Aid services. This basically allows WSTA to go out into the public arena and take public comment on a rate increase for Trans-Aid. Ms. Streed asked for confirmation that the resolution was not to increase the rate but to allow public input on a rate increase. Mr. Barnes stated that City Council started this process in terms of the rate increase. The next step is to go out to the public and take public comment on it. Once that is completed it comes back to the Board and from the Board it goes back to City Council.

Mr. Barnes asked the Board to recall asking the Council—back on September 29, 2016—to consider actions necessary to enhance revenues and stabilize the mass transit tax fund. The City Council's action request form summarizes the particulars with respect to this whole process (included in the meeting packet). The following page in the meeting packet is the resolution from the City Council recommending an item to approve a rate increase for Trans-Aid services to be used in revenue enhancements. Chairman Garcia held up the document Mr. Barnes was referring to, to ensure the Board members were on the correct page. Mr. Barnes went on to direct the members to the last paragraph of the document and read it aloud.

Mr. Barnes explained that bringing this resolution before the Board is more of a formality than anything else. It is not a requirement—in the public participation process—to come before the Board for approval; however, Mr. Barnes feels that it is important to present this process to the Board so that everyone will be aware of what is going on. WSTA's staff will be going out to begin a series of meetings during the daytime and the evenings at the Transportation Center, at City Hall, and around the city in various wards. Mr. Barnes asked if there were any questions. There weren't any.

Chairman Garcia stated that discussion regarding this issue has been going on for quite some time now. Through public comment and so forth a light was shed on it and City Council began to take a hard look at this issue. When they began to examine Trans-Aid's revenues, the Mass Transit Fund, cutbacks in Federal monies, and so forth; the issue was brought to the forefront.

Chairman Garcia then asked the Board if they had any questions. Mr. Barnes added that WSTA will have to go out and advertise the public meetings for 30 days prior to holding them. Mrs. Tina Carson-Wilkins has put together a list of locations and times for the meetings. The list was just finalized today after securing a room at City Hall. The list will be publicized in the newspapers and in various media outlets.

Vice-chairman King asked if this would be one of those cases where if someone was riding Trans-Aid and wanted to ride Fixed Route, a discount would be given to them. Mr. Barnes said a discount is already given for Fixed Route; it is \$0.50. Mr. Barnes said what he thinks Vice-chairman King is referring to is something that was discussed previously in terms of a strategy to facilitate the movement from Trans-Aid to Fixed Route. There was discussion about allowing Trans-Aid passengers to ride Fixed Route for free. WSTA has not gone through this process yet.

Chairman Garcia asked Board Member Ms. Regina Streed if she had any questions. Ms. Streed responded by saying she would like to make sure she understands correctly and asked, "This process isn't saying whether we do or do not want to increase the fees?" Mr. Barnes replied that she is correct and went on to explain further. He said that only City Council has the authority to institute an increase in fares. Once they say that is what they want to do, WSTA goes to the public and get public comments. Ms. Streed then asked if this is the way to incorporate public comment into the process. Mr. Barnes said this authorizes staff to begin this process. Ms. Streed said yes; this is what she understood it to be.

Chairman Garcia asked Mrs. Ruth Carter if she had any questions. She did not. Ms. Streed then asked, "If the Board did not authorize this process, it would be done never-the-less?" Mr. Barnes stated that he wouldn't say that; neither would he make any assumptions like that. Ms. Streed then said she was just wondering.

Chairman Garcia asked, if there was a motion since there were not any further questions.

Vice-chairman King motioned to approve the Resolution Initiating a Rate Increase Process for Trans-Aid Services. His motion was seconded by Ms. Streed and the resolution was passed without opposition.

Resolution Authorizing the General Manager to Remove Vehicles from the Fleet

Chairman Garcia introduced the resolution and said it something that all members should be familiar with having served on the Board for so long.

Mr. Barnes stated that this is routine. WSTA is removing vehicles from the fleet and need the Board's permission to do so. All of the vehicles listed are buses with twelve (12) years of service. The list also includes two (2) trollies that have been leased to an organization. The trollies have already been removed from the premises; but, the buses remain. This is just to authorize WSTA to list them as surplus.

Ms. Streed made a move to pass the Resolution Authorizing the General Manager to Remove Vehicles from the Fleet that was seconded by Vice-chairman King. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

Ms. Clair Stone started by saying she wanted to make a formal complaint. She said that she would put it in writing; but, wanted it included in the minutes as well. Ms. Stone would like for the Board to take public comments on the things that will be voted on prior to the vote.

Ms. Stone addressed the Board by saying you people (Board Members that are present) and the two others (that are not present)—six (6) people—have the power to make recommendations to City Council even after you have made that recommendation to go ahead with the public meetings. You can suggest something else; you can come to these meetings, please, and have your voice heard too.

After addressing the Board Ms. Stone, begin reading a letter she prepared regarding the Resolution Initiating a Rate Increase Process for Trans-Aid Services. The letter was distributed to the Board and meeting attendees prior to the start of the Board Meeting. Ms. Stone stated her intention was to read her letter prior to the rate increase process resolution being presented to the Board. Her letter begins with her asking that a modification to the Trans-Aid fare increases that is being proposed by the Public Works Committee be approved today. Ms. Stone feels that \$1 per ride and the discontinuation of both the Medicaid card use and the Monthly Trans-Aid pass is too much too soon. She told the board members that they did not have to rubber stamp everything that came across the table. This statement was emphasized by Ms. Stone banging on the meeting table.

Ms. Stones suggests that cost per ride be \$0.75 and that monthly Trans-Aid pass continue to be sold; but, sold for \$18 instead of \$15. Her letter goes on continuing to plead her case and can be referred to for further details.

Chairman Garcia thanked Ms. Stone for her comments and asked that she note to record that her enthusiasm is appreciated. He went on to say WSTA has always respected her work and all that she does. He asked in return, thru her enthusiasm, that she remember to keep things respectful in regards to banging on the table. Ms. Stone stated that she would resist. Chairman Garcia stated that her comments would be submitted and they are appreciated. He asked that Ms. Stone please take in consideration the respect for set forth meetings moving forward and thanked her again.

Information Items:

Operations Report-Mr. Barnes stated there was a drop in **Fixed Route** ridership, as expected, due to the initiation of the new routes. It went from 215,000 riders last year this time to 178,000. As a transit professional, Mr. Branes stated that anytime a transit system reconfigures the

routes to the extent that WSTA did there will be a decrease in ridership. As people adjust, Mr. Barnes said that he expects the ridership to go up next month and the month following that. Year-to-date it is down about 8.8%. Preventable vehicle accidents are down year-to-date and preventable employee accidents are up.

Mr. Barnes directed everyone to the **Trans-Aid** Board Report and explained that data is now being collected electronically and the old way the data was collected has been deemed unreliable. This can be seen in the monthly and year-to-date comparisons being made. Some new categories have been added to the bottom of the table to report data that can now be tracked via the new software purchased. Chairman Garcia inquired about the timely services/on-time performance category. Mr. Barnes confirmed that 85% is what WSTA is averaging.

There is some positive information in the **Maintenance** report. Major Road Calls were zero Jan 2017 year-to-date and fifteen Jan 2016 year-to-date. Minor Road Calls were also down. In Jan 2017 there were 85 year-to-date and 193 in Jan 2016 year-to-date. Chairman Garcia and Mr. Barnes both agreed that the report showed very good numbers for Maintenance.

Mr. Barnes announced that WSTA's Staff has been authorized to pursue the purchase of 12 Trans-Aid vehicles—this still has to go through City Council. The Board approved this purchase back in September. Once the process is started it will be about four months before the vehicles are received. Mr. Barnes stated that this is a welcomed development. Mr. Barnes commended the Maintenance Department on keeping some very old vehicles with lots and lots of miles in service for so long.

Finance Report—Mr. Barnes directed the Board to the Transit Operating Revenues. Mr. Barnes made some adjustments; one being the Greyhound. Mr. Barnes subtracted \$17,000 (which was an over statement) from the bottom line actual. Also, the money WSTA is getting from the state is over stated at \$248,000. The projection once the allocation is divided into 12 periods should be a total of 108,000; therefore, \$139,000 was subtracted from the bottom line. There were other adjustments made making Operating Revenues **(\$144,000)**. The same types of adjustments were made to Trans-Aid's Operating Revenue making Trans-Aid Revenue **(\$57,000)**. Mr. Barnes reported that Transit Operating Expenses came under \$237,000 and Trans-Aid Expenses \$100,695. The bottom line to all of this is that WSTA is \$136,800 to the good year-to-date.

Marketing Report—Mrs. Tina Carson-Wilkins presented the Marketing report to the Board. The Try Transit Program transported Cook Elementary School students to have pancakes, compliments of the Kiwanis.

There were 110 kindergarteners and 12 adults from Smith Farm Elementary School that came to the Transportation Center to learn about public transportation and Safe Bus for Black History

month. Mrs. Carson-Wilkins stated that it was rather exciting having all those children lined up from one end of the hallway to the other end. Their visit lasted about an hour.

There were 3 news release/stories for the month of February—2 in the *Winston Salem Journal* and 1 in the *Winston Salem Chronicle*. Both of these agencies will be used to advertise public hearings and the locations of said hearings.

A Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) meeting was held a couple of days ago. Unfortunately there was not a meeting held in December neither January due to preparation being done for the route changes. The members had a bunch of questions regarding changes that were made. WSTA is looking forward to them participate and asking more questions we move forward.

Mrs. Carson-Wilkins was invited to participate in Cook Elementary School's Resource Fair. The free tax preparation program started earlier this month at the Transportation Center. There will be a fund raising Bowling Tournament held for Triad First in Families on Saturday, June 3rd. The Career Skills program for the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club starts tonight. For the next 12 weeks the students will get together to do a career exploration program.

WSTA is very excited to have used, for the first time, La Noticia for advertisement of employment opportunities. WQMG, *Winston Salem Chronicle*, *Winston Salem Journal*, and 1340 am will be used to advertise the public hearings WSTA will hold for the proposed Trans-Aid rate increase.

Chairman Garcia asked for a copy of the bowling tournament fund raiser so that he can pass that information on to his contacts in the Kernersville area.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Transcribed by: Teika Holloway

March 27, 2017