

**WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

MINUTES

THURSDAY, March 31, 2016

PRESENT:

Board Members

Robert Garcia, Chairman
Keith King, Vice Chairman
Regina Streed
Dr. Jack Flear
Dr. Trae Cotton

WSTA Staff

Art Barnes, General Manager
John M. Ashford, Assistant General
Manger
Verylen Crawford, Operations Director
Robin Kirby
Tikiha Alston
Teika Holloway

OTHERS:

Toneq' McCullough, Transportation
Director

ABSENT:

Ruth Carter
Tina Carson-Wilkins
Erica Lowery

Meeting Opened: 4:05 pm

Chairman Robert Garcia welcomed everyone to the May 26, 2016 WSTA Board of Directors' Meeting.

Approval of the Minutes:

Board members were allowed a moment to review the minutes from the March 31, 2016 board meeting for approval.



A motion was made to accept the minutes by Dr. Jack Flear and seconded by Ms. Regina Streed. The Board approved the minutes by common consent.

Public Comment:

No public comments.

Information Items:

PowerPoint for the City Council Meeting-Mr. Barnes thanked Chairman Garcia and Dr. Fler for attending the City Council of Public Works Committee Meeting. The Board reviewed the PowerPoint presented at this meeting to City Council on Trans-Aid operations and its response to an FTA review of ADA operations.

Since the FTA review, WSTA has had contact with the consultants that conducted the review. The consultants have been quite helpful in terms of providing recommendations to WSTA staff.

Chairman Garcia shared that the City Council meeting attended by himself and Dr. Fler was quite interesting. He said that Mr. Barnes and his staff did a fine job of presenting and answering questions. At the end of the presentation a Councilmembers presented WSTA with a list of questions for be addressed at a subsequent Public Works Committee meeting.

Mr. Barnes said that a recording of the meeting would be available on the City website. A report is being compiled by Dr. Linda Murphy that categorizes council requests and in addition, WSTA has spoken to consultants regarding assistance in preparing a response.

Chairman Garcia urged everyone that was not at the meeting to view it online. This will allow the Board Members to hear some of the comments that were made by some of the Councilpersons. He said that he found them to be quite interesting. Judging from the things that were said and the questions that were asked during the meeting, charging a fee for Trans-Aid appears to be inevitable. Chairman Garcia said that he knows charging a fee will not solve all of paratransit's problems; however, it appears to be the route that needs to be taken for now (This comment was not formally stated in the City Council meeting).

In reviewing the minutes from the last Board meeting, Dr. Fler reminded everyone of a suggestion that was made by Mr. Barnes. It was previously proposed that disabled persons be allowed to ride Fixed Route for free and charge a fee for those that utilize Trans-Aid. Dr. Fler feels that this proposal is worth considering; although he is unclear as to the portion of riders this would cover. He feels that if it would cover a significant portion of the ridership; it would be a worthwhile recommendation to consider. Dr. Fler then asked if WSTA had any idea what portion of the disabled community that could be serviced by Fixed Route. Mr. Barnes responded that this information is not readily available and WSTA can only make assumptions. Mr. Barnes shared that this idea originated with consultants. He then asked his staff if there were any other Transit Systems that had this policy already in place. Staff was not aware of any transit systems that had this policy in place. Dr. Fler asked if Fixed Route vehicles have sufficient

capacity to handle the shift. Mr. Barnes responded that WSTA would need to look at how many of the Trans-Aid passengers are ambulatory vs. those that rely on wheelchairs.

Mr. Barnes stated that when the report is put together in the next couple of months, WSTA will be looking at big picture. He also stated that he imagines the report will be lengthy. The response to FTA's review was over one hundred pages and has taken quite a bit of time to prepare. Mr. Barnes said that he must compliment his staff; they have been under the gun. WSTA knew that this year would be challenging because of the fixed-route reconfiguration. However, WSTA did not anticipate all the other challenges that occurred this year.

Dr. Fler asked if there would be a timeline on the report that tells when the new vans that add capacity (not replacements) will be added to the Trans-Aid Fleet. Mr. Barnes responded that he believes that it will be around December before WSTA will take delivery on new vans. The good news about the vans WSTA now has is that the engines can be replaced for approximately \$5,000 (Mr. John Ashford confirmed this). This makes it easy to take the old vehicles and turn them into new vehicles in terms of components. In turn, this makes it easy to expand Trans-Aid's fleet capacity.

Dr. Fler stated that if it is conceivable and WSTA does move to charge (which he feels should happen) there will be reduced demand for Trans-Aid service to some extent. This will be because it is believed that some passengers utilize Trans-Aid because it is free and they are not going to do that if there is a charge. However, Dr. Fler stated, it is also conceivable that the demand is going to increase as the population gets over the fee for this type of service.

Dr. Fler said that he is also concerned about the timeline for bringing on new operators. He believes the minutes show that it takes 8 weeks (instead of the desired 6 weeks) to train. Mr. Barnes clarified that this is only training; recruitment is not included in the 8 weeks. Recruiting and testing is an additional 2 months.

WSTA is presently recruiting for the next class and the plan is to have them completely trained by the end of the year. This will allow them to start driving when the new route configurations go in effect. There has been significant conversation regarding this matter to insure this can be done within the time period.

Dr. Fler asked if a class consisted of 6-8 people. The current class has 8 trainees. Mr. Barnes said that there can be as many as 10; there are only two instructors and 10 is the maximum they can handle. Dr. Fler then asked Mr. Barnes how many additional vans WSTA will have and if they are all replacements. Mr. Barnes confirmed there are a total of 12 and; yes, they are all replacements. The type of van chosen can be kept in service longer which will increase capacity (replacement engines are \$5,000 as previously mentioned).

Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) Installation (Progress Report)-Because personnel levels are not sufficient to accurately compile the data for analysis, WSTA; WSSU; and

the Urban League are partnering to provide personnel charged with compiling the data. In the near future Mobile Data Terminals will provide WSTA with the data ADA requires.

MDTs are being purchased that will work with Trapeze software to automatically compile this data. This capability is estimated to be installed in September 2016.

Triennial Review Results (FTA)-The Triennial Review noted four items to be addressed. The Triennial Review resulted in a good report on WSTA operations.

Selection of Engineering Firm (Sears Bus Stop Project)-An engineering firm has been selected for the Sears Bus Stop Project. WSTA will begin negotiations regarding a fee for the services.

Operations Report- Fixed Route Trans-Aid Maintenance-There was a decrease in the number of trips on **Fixed Route**. Mr. Barnes reiterated that there is always a correlation between the number of trips and fuel prices. Preventable vehicle accidents are down significantly from 22 to 12. The number of complaints went up from 317 to 349. Chargeable complaints went from 21 to 32 year-to-date. **Trans-Aid's** ridership is up about 24% from last year. Preventable accidents are the same as last year. Complaints are up from 175 to 249; chargeable complaints are up from 17 to 19. There is an average of 1 minute phone time wait for telephone performance. The maximum is 19 minutes. There were 249 missed trips and 1,419 No Shows (when reservations are made and a pickup attempt was made; however, the passenger does not go.) Mr. Barnes asked that Ms. Tikiha double check the missed trip figure (1,419) for accuracy.

Mr. Garcia asked for the amount that Medicaid reimburses for Trans-Aid trips. Mr. Barnes responded that it is either \$21 or \$22; however, Medicaid trips have been decreasing. They use to bring in revenue of about \$400,000 per year. Now the amount of revenue is \$135,000 year-to-date. WSTA may end up with approximately \$150,000 in Medicaid revenue this year. This is because ADA trips have increased significantly; eliminating a lot of the Medicaid trips. A stipulation for receiving Federal funds is that demand for ADA trips must be addressed.

Mr. Barnes stated that as capacity is increases, Medicaid trips can be reincorporated. Chairman Garcia inquired about how many people are allowed to ride Trans-Aid with an attendant. Mr. Barnes said that a Primary Care Attendant can ride for free. The friend(s) of the recipient can ride (provided there room) and pay \$0.50.

Financial Report-The bottom line with the entire Financial Report is that after making the adjustments of the operating revenue and Trans-Aid revenue, WSTA is running very close to budget. The good news is that there is only one month left in the fiscal year. Mr. Barnes feels that the budget will close favorably. This is the way the budget has looked all year.

Marketing Report-The Marketing Report was included in the meeting packet. Mrs. Tina Carson-Wilkins was not in attendance due to a previously scheduled vacation. Mr. Barnes allowed the Board Member to review the report at their leisure.

- ❖ **One of the new WSTA buses was brought to the meeting for the Board Members to see.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Transcribed by: Teika Holloway

June 3, 2016