

**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. A PowerPoint regarding Trans-Aid operations and the outcome of WSTA’s responses to FTA’s ADA review.

The last slide of the presentation contains a comparison of WSTA to GTA. At a meeting prior to the City Council of Public Works Committee Meeting, WSTA was compared to Greensboro Transit Authority (GTA). It was implied that GTA’s operations were more efficient than WSTA’s. With that being said, Mr. Barnes along with a couple of his staff members put together a comparison chart (inserted below) that compares the following categories: Budget, Trips per Week, Fee/Fare, Number of Paratransit Vehicles, Type of Service (trips), and Service Area.

WSTA/GTA Comparison

Category	WSTA	GTA
Budget	\$3,268,980	\$6,448,045
Trips per week	3943 trips per week	4109 trips per week
Fee/Fare	Free using Medicaid card - \$.50 without card	\$1.50 per one way trip/\$3.00 round trip
Number of paratransit vehicles	37 Vehicles	50 Vehicles
Type of service (trips)	Provides services for ADA, Dialysis, Nutrition, Medicaid and Senior trips	Provides ADA services <i>only</i>
Service area	Maintains the ¼ mile policy set by FTA for ADA trips: provides trips in county for Medicaid and dialysis	Provides service to anyone who lives inside the Greensboro city limits which exceeds the ¼ requirement

Since the FTA review, WSTA has had a lot of contact with the consultants that conducted the review. The consultants have been quite helpful in terms of providing solutions.

Dr. Fler asked, “What is the explanation for the substantial budget difference?” Mr. Barnes responded by saying this is the operating budget. Both entities are managed by Transdev and the difference comes down to contract fees. The type of contract Transdev has with both WSTA and GTA is called an operating contract (This is a service contract vs. a management contract). An example of a service contract is a

management company such as Transdev will come and say they will operate an entity for \$10 in actuality they would have to do it for \$9 in order to make a profit. It is up to the management company to make a profit from the service they are providing. With that being said, when the bidding is done for the contract, the fees are probably substantial. Mr. Barnes stated that he knows what WSTA is paying for labor (the largest expense) and labor is what drives all the negotiating of fees and so forth. Basically all management costs are passed through Transdev. The only real Transdev employee is Mr. Barnes; although, technically all WSTA workers are Transdev employees. Some of the things included in the management fee are: Mr. Barnes's salary and benefits, maintenance, Safety Consulting, HR operations, and Maintenance. Mr. Barnes said he didn't know if all the information he shared answered Dr. Flear's inquiry; but the bottom line is there is a markup.

Chairman Garcia shared that the City Council meeting attended by him and Dr. Flear was quite interesting. He said that Mr. Barnes and his staff did a fine job of presenting and answering questions. Chairman Garcia shared that the presentation stimulated from questions that were asked by Mrs. Clair Stone. Enough questions were raised that the City Council became curious about what was going on. At the end of the presentation a Councilperson presented WSTA with a list of additional questions in which WSTA was given 90 days to respond (originally 30 days; WSTA requested 90.)

Mr. Barnes said that the recording would be produced for the Board and the video appears on the City's website. A report is being compiled by Dr. Linda Murphy; and in addition, WSTA has spoken to the consultants that did the review about compiling a report.

Chairman Garcia urges 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. Flear 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. Flear 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 it would be a worthwhile recommendation to consider making into a policy. Dr. Flear 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. It is hard information to determine; WSTA can only make some assumptions. Mr. Barnes shared that this idea came from the consultants. He then asked his staff if there were any other Transit Systems that had this policy already in place. No one knew. If passengers are shifted from Trans-Aid to Fixed Route, it would make a significant difference. Dr. Flear 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 wheel chairs.

Mr. Barnes stated that when the report is put together in the next couple of months, WSTA will be looking at all the things that compile the 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 up quite a bit of time to prepare. Mr. Barnes said that he must compliment his staff; for, they have been under the gun. WSTA knew going into this year that they would be because of the reconfiguring of Fixed Route and all that goes along with that. However, WSTA had not anticipated all the other things that came up.

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 the monies are available for 12 new vehicles. He stated that he is not looking to get rid of many of them because they can be used as replacements. The good news about the vans WSTA now have is that the motors 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 approximately.

Mr. Barnes explained that WSTA's strategy is to complete the training of the current class in 2-3 weeks. 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 does WSTA have and are all of them 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 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 ADA Review included 16 corrective items to be addressed. These items were covered in the PowerPoint presentation which outlined the impacts, requirements, and WSTA's responses. A copy of the presentation can be provided by request.

Selection of Engineering Firm (Sears Bus Stop Project)-An engineering firm has been selected for the Sears Bus Stop Project. WSTA will go into negotiations with them for a fee next week. This information will be presented to the Board as an information item.

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 ADA trips must be provided.

Mr. Barnes stated that as capacity increases, Medicaid trips can be reincorporated. Chairman Garcia inquired about how many people are allowed to ride Trans-Aid with a recipient. Mr. Barnes clarified by saying that a Primary Care Attendant can ride and ride for free. The friend(s) of the recipient can ride (provided there is 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 the 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 pretty even. 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