

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

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

MINUTES

THURSDAY, September 24, 2015

PRESENT:

Board Members

Robert Garcia, Chairman
Keith King, Vice Chairman
Regina Streed
Dr. Trae Cotton
Dr. Jack Fleer
Ruth Carter

WSTA Staff

Art Barnes, General Manager
John Ashford, Assistant General Manager
Verylen Crawford
Tina Carson-Wilkins
Tikiha Alston
Erica Lowery
Teika Holloway

OTHERS:

Lee Garrity, City Manager
Toneq McCullough, Transportation Director
Dewey Williard, City Transport. Finance Manager
Wendy Miller, City Transportation Principal Planner

Kenneth Baker, City Transportation Project Planner
Amy Crum, City County Planning Board
Tina Taylor, TRAC Chairman
Christina Ware, TRAC Vice Chairman
Clair Stone, Transportation Advocate

ABSENT:

Pridgen Amos-Resigned from the Board due to professional and personal reasons.

Meeting Opened: 4:03 pm

The September 24, 2015 WSTA Board Meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Garcia.

Approval of the Minutes:

Board members were allowed a moment to review the minutes from the July 30, 2015 board meeting for approval.



A motion was made to accept the minutes by Ms. Regina Streed and seconded by Vice Chairman Keith King. The Board approved the minutes by common consent.

Election of Officers

Chairman-Chairman Garcia directed the Board Members to meeting packet inserts regarding resolutions passed in 2012 that established procedures to govern the election of Chair and Vice Chair of the WSTA Board of Directors.

After allowing Members a moment to review these resolutions, Chairman Garcia called for nominations for the position of Chair. Chairman Garcia reminded the Board of his self-nomination via email.

There was only one nomination (the self-nomination given by Chairman Garcia) and Dr. Fleer made a move that the nomination be accepted by acclamation. This was seconded by Ms. Streed and unanimously agreed upon by all members of the Board.

Chairman Garcia expressed how proud he is to serve for approximately 12 years on WSTA's Board of Directors and how equally proud he is to be Chairman of the Board. He looks forward to being a part of the forward movement of Winston-Salem Transit Authority.

Vice Chairman-Chairman Garcia called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Dr. Tre Cotton nominated Mr. Keith King and his nomination was seconded by Ms. Streed. The remaining Board members expressed their agreement with this nomination.

There was only one nomination for Vice Chairman (the nomination for Keith King). The Members of the Board unanimously agreed on Keith King continuing his service as Vice Chairman of WSTA's Board of Directors.

Vice-Chairman Keith King shared how he greatly appreciates serving on WSTA's Board of Directors. He said that the opportunity to work with a great group of people is a plus. Vice-Chairman King thanked God for allowing him to be in this area to not only see the people that utilize the transit system; but, speak with them and find out their concerns as well. It is for this reason Vice-Chairman King volunteers his time to serve on the Board.

Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Thirteen (35 ft.) Buses for Fixed-Route

- **Removed from the Agenda** (Additional funds need to be identified)

Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Six Paratransit Vehicles

Mr. Barnes issued a RFB and received a single bid from National Bus Sales. The bid is for one gas fueled vehicle (\$118,953) and five hybrid electric vehicles (\$173,618 per

unit). This is within the budget and Mr. Barnes recommended the Board move forward with the resolution to purchase six paratransit vehicles.

Ms. Streed made a move to pass the resolution approving the purchase of six paratransit vehicles. Her motion was seconded by Dr. Jack Fleer and the resolution was passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Major Component Parts

Mr. Barnes stated that the Purchasing Department has instructed WSTA to bring any purchases exceeding \$30,000 before the Board of Directors for approval.

Mr. Barnes explained that WSTA purchases a large amount of component parts; therefore, it would be almost impossible to bring every item needed before the Board prior to purchase. With that being said, WSTA is asking the Board to authorize the purchase of major components up to the amount of \$300,000 (The Board's authorizing limit). Once \$300,000 is reached or before it is exceeded, WSTA will come before the Board once again for further authorization.

Dr. Cotton asked if the Board would be giving authorization annually. Mr. Barnes responded that authorization would be requested from the Board as needed. Every time the \$300,000 limit is reached or is close to being reached, WSTA will come before Board for authorization. This could be once a year, twice a year, or maybe three times a year if needed.

Ms. Streed asked if this is something that was done in the past. Mr. Barnes replied that this is a directive issued by the Purchasing Department. Ms. Streed also asked if the Board would be given a list of major component parts to sign-off on. Mr. Barnes explained that WSTA would acquire a blanket purchase order from the Purchasing Department in the amount of \$300,000.

Dr. Cotton made a move to accept this resolution and his move was seconded by Mr. King. All Board members were in favor and the resolution authorizing the purchase of major component parts not to exceed \$300,000 was passed.

Resolution Authorizing the General Manager to Remove Vehicles from the Active Fleet

The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) requires a written record of vehicle dispositions; therefore, anytime a vehicle(s) exceeds its usefulness it is brought before the Board to obtain authorization. The list of vehicles to be disposed of can be found in the resolution.

Mr. King inquired about what happens to buses once they are removed from service. Mr. Barnes informed that the buses are auctioned off by the City. If the proceeds received exceed \$5,000, the monies go back to the FTA.

On a motion made by Dr. Cotton and seconded by Ms. Streed the resolution authorizing the General Manager to remove vehicles from the active fleet was passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing a Terminal Lease Agreement with Greyhound

After advertising in trade magazines, WSTA received one offer from Greyhound to lease office space and bays at the Clark Campbell Transportation Center. Mr. Barnes described the relationship between WSTA and Greyhound as being somewhat symbiotic. Without Greyhound, revenue will be lost; and Greyhound is the only bidder.

Mr. Barnes stated that Megabus is a potential bidder; however, they operate from the streets as opposed to terminals. By doing so, Megabus is avoiding a fixed expense and is able to keep their fees low.

The proposed lease agreement between WSTA and Greyhound is for five additional years and includes a 2% percent annual increase in leasing fees over the current amount which is \$28,957. In addition to being brought before the WSTA Board, this request for authorization to enter into a lease agreement with Greyhound will have to go before City Council for subsequent approval.

Mr. Garcia asked if Greyhound is in agreement with the 2% increase; to which, Mr. Barnes responded yes; the amount was negotiated.

Mr. Garcia also inquired about the relationship between WSTA and Greyhound. Mr. Barnes informed that the relationship between the two entities have been very good. Contrary to some opinions that the patrons attracted by Greyhound leave much to be desired; they have been as good as or better than WSTA's patrons. The management has always been very cooperative.

On a motion by Dr. Cotton that was seconded by Mr. King, the resolution was unanimously passed by WSTA Board giving authorization to the General Manager to enter into a terminal lease agreement with Greyhound Lines, Inc.

Public Comment:

- **No Public Comments** (Mr. Barnes did take a moment to recognize Tina Taylor and Christina Ware who serves on WST's Transit Rider Advisory Committee.)

Information Items:

Mr. Lee Garrity, City Manager- (The meeting agenda was edited to allow Mr. Lee Garrity to speak at the beginning of the meeting) Mr. Barnes gave a brief description of the administrative directive—issued by Mr. Lee Garrity, City Manager—limiting the WSTA Board’s authorization for procurements to \$300,000. Mr. Garrity and Chairman Garcia discussed this change and felt that it would be beneficial for Mr. Garrity to come and speak with the Board Members regarding this matter.

Mr. Garrity explained how the decision was made to limit the procurement authority of the WSTA Board. Limitless authority to enter into contracts was given to WSTA by a local act that dates back to 1972 (approximately). All other City Boards and Commissions, with exceptions to Utilities and Public Center Facilities, do not have the authority to do anything without going through City Council. When large contracts are received (for example \$300,000 or more for buses) the City Council would like to see them before they are finalized and executed.

According to the City Attorney, the legal reason for this change is that the contracts require the signature of the City Manager before execution; the City Manager needs to be sure that his council is in agreement before signing.

Mr. Garrity also mentioned that the City Council will be taking charge of the bus re-routing project on October 20. This is being done with hopes that the City Council can potentially come up with a way to initiate the project in a manner that will be a win for at least 90% of all parties involved.

Mr. Garrity expressed his appreciation for all the work that has been done on this project thus far.

Dr. Fleer asked if the contracts would be viewed by the Finance Committee. Mr. Garrity informed that all contracts go to the Finance Department a week prior to going to the City Council. He also shared that this approval process has worked well in the past.

Federal Transit Authority (FTA)\Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Audit-Mr. Barnes shared with the Board that the FTA conducted an ADA audit in July. The auditors examined WSTA’s operations with respect to providing transportation for our disabled community.

The major issue that was discussed during the exit review (the Board is already aware of this issue) is capacity with respect to meeting the demand for Trans-Aid. During the period of June 2014-June 2015 there was a 13% increase in ridership without an increase vehicles and manpower. Mr. Barnes shared that Trans-Aid trips are scheduled by computer based on time; the number of miles and hours associated with the trips. After the computer creates a schedule, the Trans-Aid dispatcher is left with 50-100 trips that are not scheduled. The dispatcher then has to handle the challenge of working the

unscheduled trips into the daily schedule generated by the computer. This is an issue that must be corrected.

A meeting was held on September 17, 2015 with the five dialysis agencies located in Winston-Salem. This meeting was scheduled for the purpose of coming up with a strategy to reduce dialysis agencies' demands. One thing that was proposed was to direct some of the demand to Fixed Route services. The successfulness of this strategic plan depends upon the dialysis agencies' ability to influence their patients to utilize Fixe Route. A second meeting with the dialysis agencies is scheduled for September 25, 2015.

An incentive for dialysis patients to use Fixed Route would be to allow them to ride for free. A plan for this incentive will be proposed at the next Board meeting. The average Trans-Aid trip is \$18 opposed to \$3 a trip for Fixed Route; therefore, it is sensible to offer this incentive to remove some of the burden from Trans-Aid. It is uncertain whether this incentive will work due to the fact that a lot of the dialysis patients are already riding for free and others only pay 50¢ max. For this reason it is imperative that dialysis agencies encourage their patients utilize Fixed Route.

Currently Trans-Aid has stopped accepting additional clients for transportation to dialysis centers.

In order to receive federal funds, FTA mandates that transportation be provided for clients that are certified ADA. Therefore Trans-Aid has to do whatever is necessary to meet this demand as it continues to increase every year. WSTA is currently increasing its paratransit fleet and Trans-Aid personnel to combat this high demand for transport.

The customer service representatives (CSRs) were also discussed during the exit conference. One of the issues with Customer Service is that callers have to wait an extremely long time to speak with a representative. Additional CSRs have been hired and they have completed their training; therefore, a decrease in wait time is expected.

WSTA has secured software that will provide telephone wait times; therefore, going forward, information will be included in the meeting packs to assist the Board with tracking WSTA's progress with wait times. Eventually WSTA will be able to get on board times (the time a passenger spends riding the bus) for Trans-Aid by installing MDTs in the vehicles. The process to procure software that will interface easily with the software currently being used (Trapeze™) has been initiated. Mr. Barnes explained this process in detail and shared hopes of having the MDTs installed within a few months.

Mr. Barnes reiterated that he will prepare a strategic plan in regards to addressing the Trans-Aid demand and present it at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Garcia brought up Medicaid's reimbursement to WSTA for Trans-Aid services. Mr. Barnes stated again that transportation must be provided for the certified ADA

population. Meeting this stipulation may result in jettison of the Medicaid contract. If the Medicaid contract is done away with, Medicaid recipients will simply apply for ADA certification. If certification is approved these clients will receive Trans-Aid services; but, WSTA will not receive the revenue generated by the Medicaid contract.

The Dialysis agencies are supposed to provide a list of their patients that are capable of riding Fixed Route to their locations. Based on this data, trippers (routes to cover dialysis agency locations) will be created. The bottom line is that the demand must be met and the dollar amount will decrease because of the per trip cost associated with both Trans-Aid and Fixed Route.

Dr. Cotton asked what does the ADA certification entail and who does the certification. Mr. Barnes informed that Ms. Tikiha Alston does the certification for ADA. Ms. Alston explained the certification process to the Board. Dr. Cotton asked if any applicants were denied based on certification guidelines; Tikiha responded yes.

Dr. Fleer wanted to know how the 13% increase during the year of June 2014-June 2015 compared to other recent years. Mr. Barnes stated that the last time he analyzed this data, on an average of 5-6 years, the increase was approximately 70% and he feels that this will continue for the foreseeable future. Dr. Cotton asked Mr. Barnes if he had any projections on future increase or any way to get projections. Mr. Barnes stated that there is no way that he knows of other than past history.

Dr. Cotton inquired if the increase in paratransit ridership is due to a correlation with the aging population. Mr. Barnes responded that the increase is due several factors across the board; not just the aging population.

Dr. Cotton stated that his inquiries were due his curiosity of whether or not a Foresight to the Future study would be beneficial in getting projections based on research stats. Mr. Barnes expressed that this type of study is something that can be looked into further.

Mr. Garcia stated that perhaps the dialysis agencies have projections that may be useful; they too are stretched to the max. Also, Mr. Garcia expressed he shares Dr. Cotton's interest in being proactive because he foresees capacity being an issue again in another 2 or 3 years; and, would like to take a look at how it can be solved now. Mr. Barnes confirmed Mr. Garcia's statement about the dialysis agencies being maxed out with clients due to the cap that has been placed on their trips. Mr. Barnes stated that the dialysis agencies are actively working with WSTA to find a solution.

Dr. Fleer asked Mr. Barnes if he has any idea as to whether this percentage of increase for this particular geographical area is consistent with what is going on nationally. Mr. Barnes responded he could not answer if the percentage is consistent nationally off the top of his head; but, he does know that the ADA population and paratransit trips are increasing nationally.

Dr. Fleer stated that the reason he asked this question is because he was wondering if this increase would lead to the need to improve funding across the board if this type of increase continues.

Dr. Cotton stated that an additional factor for the increase could be that ADA has expanded its reach to include persons that were not ADA eligible in the past. Ms. Alston confirmed that there have been some changes made to the medical guidelines that have made special need persons eligible for ADA that would not have been eligible in the past.

Comprehensive Operations Analysis Update-Mr. Barnes stated that this update is on the route modifications, and as Mr. Garrity indicated in his discussion, the routes proposal will have to go before City Council. Mr. Barnes also stated that a lot of time and effort is being spent on modifying the modifications that were made to the routes previously presented to the Board. These modifications are due to both public and City Council comments.

Sears-Although Sears was not on the agenda, Mr. Barnes shared that WSTA is currently working with a contractor to come up with a design and budget plan for the bus stop located at Sears. This information has been forwarded to Sears and WSTA is waiting to see where things will go from here. The bus stop proposed involves the removal of lots of shrubbery and trees. It also involves installing concrete, rocks, a shelter, an electronic passenger information system, and lighting. The budget is around \$30,000.

Dr. Fleer revisited the **Comprehensive Operations Analysis Update** when he asked for a projection date in regards to when the proposed new bus routes would take effect. Mr. Barnes stated that no one knows for sure. Mr. Barnes shared that he heard a City Councilman say that it could be five years before the proposed routes are in effect. Mr. Barnes explained that there are a lot of variables involved; one of which is that 2016 is an election year.

Operations Report- Mr. Garcia thanked Mr. Garrity for coming and speaking with the Board in regards to procurements \$300,000 and over. Mr. Garcia tabled a portion of the Operations Report due to time.

Financial Report-Mr. Garcia stated that in the interest of time, Mr. Barnes will give a quick overview of the financial report.

Mr. Barnes stated that this is not an audited report; but, he wanted to give the Board an idea of where WSTA stood financially at the end of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015.

Fare Box ticket sales, Park and Ride, and West End Trolley revenue came very close to revenue projections. WSTA received approximately \$5,000 over what was projected in

those 3 categories. Total revenues were short by \$120,689. Trans-Aid revenues were \$68,000 short after adjustments were made. The operating expenses for Fixed Route Transit were \$352,996 under budget. There were no adjustments made to this category. Trans-Aid expenses were over budget by \$59,000. The bottom line was \$105,000 to the good and basically, this was due to the operating expenses in Fixed Route. WSTA did make budget and came out a little ahead in the finance department.

Mr. Barnes gave a brief indication of what the Fixed Route ridership was June 30th of last year compared to this year. June 2014 ridership was 3,268,385 and June 2015 ridership was 3,248,003. This information was not provided in the handouts. Projections were off by 6/10 of 1%. As previously mentioned Ridership for Trans-Aid showed a 12.9% increase year to date (June 2014-June 2015).

Marketing Report-This topic was tabled until the next Board Meeting due to time.

Mr. Garcia encouraged everyone to read the Marketing report that was included in the meeting packet.

Mrs. Tina Carson Wilkins announced that WSTA would be sharing a table with the City Department this coming Saturday (September 26) at the annual Fiesta and invited all to come out if possible.

Mr. Garcia thanked everyone in attendance for coming out to the September 24, 2015 Board meeting. He also thanked his fellow board members for his and Mr. King's nominations and stated that they look forward to serving in their positions as Chair and Vice Chair for the next 3 years.

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Transcribed by: Teika Holloway
September 30, 2015