

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

December 14, 2020

LOCATION: Due to COVID-19 this meeting was held electronically.

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Reva Chamblis, Christopher Ferguson, Kris Fredson, Francisco Gonzalez, Phillip Sterner

Committee Members Absent: Molly Cummings, Raymond Zeran

TAAC Liaison Present: David Fenley

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:00p.m. on Monday, December 14, 2020.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Fredson to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 5 Chamblis, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Cummings, Ferguson, Zeran

TAAC REPORT

There was no report, as the December meeting was canceled.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee

The Committee concluded its work last Monday. At the final meeting they discussed recommendations on the three items the Governor asked for input on Council Structure and services. The final report is being produced by the Council staff and will be transmitted to the Governor shortly and shared with the Council members.

TAB

TAB will be voting this Wednesday on the final action to recommend the slate of Regional Solicitation projects to this Committee. This marks the end of a two-year cycle for TAB. Staff will present the projects and action before Transportation Committee in January.

Operations

The METRO Red Line was successfully transferred from the MTS division to Metro Transit for operations on December 5th.

COVID Update

After several weeks of no positive tests, there were 8 positives last week and 8 positives the week before among drivers. To date there have been 95 positive tests among contracted staff and 22 currently active cases.

Metro Mobility

Ridership remains stable at what it has been for the past month, though it's expected to see some declines with the holidays and rapid rise in COVID cases. The essential service Health Care transit is seeing demand stronger than ever, with last Wednesday setting a new high with 1598 trips for Health Care Workers.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID Update

A total of 317 employees tested positive for COVID from the start of the pandemic through this weekend. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting there has been an additional 84 cases but there was a drop in reported cases last week compared to the week before. Looking at the past couple of months: October – 56 cases, November – 120 cases, December – 38 cases. There are currently no active hotspots or clusters. Metro Transit is continuously monitoring the potential for operational impacts due to employees having COVID or needing to quarantine because they have been exposed to COVID and continues to conduct thorough contact tracing when an employee tests positive. A new pick started on December 5th, which is about 80% of normal operations on bus. Metro Transit has a Plan B prepared (which equates to about 65% of normal operations) if staff levels are down. Metro Transit started providing voluntary on-site saliva COVID testing for asymptomatic essential workers on December 1st. COVID testing for asymptomatic employees is still available at the Heywood Well at Work clinic and employees continue to have access to the drive-up test sites.

“Masks are a Must” Campaign Update

Metro Transit continues to communicate to customers that masks or other facial coverings are required while on transit. The marketing department reports that all the marketing tactics that were planned have now been implemented – which includes:

- Onboard vehicle – LRT and bus – audio message about mask requirement
- Onboard vehicle scrolling message
- New Fleet sticker on windows with Mask and Social distance message
- Added sticker to the farebox on buses
- New Rail station kiosk and bus shelter posters are up
- Digital video screens at LRT stations and BRT stations

MTPD continues to monitor compliance and hand out masks as needed. Currently, MTPD is observing approximately 76% compliance rate on LRT.

Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance

Metro Transit is working with Siemens to inspect light rail vehicle capacitors and removing vehicles from service for repairs as needed. This is an issue Siemens has been experiencing in other transit properties as well and is resulting in Metro Transit pulling 22 LRV cars out of the system. Because of this work, LRT will be running mostly 2-car trains on both Green Line and Blue Line instead of the usual 3-car trains for the next couple of weeks as the necessary repairs are completed.

Gonzalez asked if when the COVID vaccines become more available, if the Council is going to require or mandate that employees be vaccinated. Kooistra responded that there hasn't been a final decision but that the approach with the State will be that vaccines are voluntary but strongly encouraged and supported. Gonzalez asked about updates to the new seats on LRT. Metro Transit Chief Operations Officer Vince Pellegrin responded that staff have begun to install the plastic seats and that we have received about 16 trains worth of materials in stock.

Chamblis asked where in line were Transit workers for priority on the vaccine list. Kooistra responded that there have been conversations with the state entity that is managing priority lists and have been encouraging that Transit essential workers receive priority in the 2nd tier but not certain the decision has been made at a state level. Chamblis asked if there was a report about how the MTPD HAT support of the homeless is going. Kooistra responded he'd gather and provide that information.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

1. There are no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2020-288:** Amendment to the Travel Behavior Inventory Contracts, Resolution 2020-31
Metropolitan Transportation Services Technical Service Manager Jonathan Ehrlich presented this item. Chamblis expressed appreciation for the update and the goals to do better with the representativeness of the survey. Sterner asked if the survey would look at just the 7 counties or if it would include outliers. Ehrlich responded that the survey itself covers all 7 counties and neighboring counties as well but that some of the efforts to increase representativeness will be focused on specific communities.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to:

- Enter into negotiations and to execute an amendment to the Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) funding the Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) Household Travel Survey for an amount not to exceed \$3,778,400,
- Adopt the attached resolution (resolution 2020-31) approving the agreement with MnDOT, and
- To enter into negotiations and to execute an amendment with the contract with RSG to conduct the TBI Household Surveys for an amount not to exceed \$4,723,000

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Fredson, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Cummings, Zeran

2. **2020-342:** Metro Mobility Gasoline Fuel Supply-2020, Contract 20P031

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Project Administrator Greg Schuck presented this item. Sterner asked what the savings are when we do a contract like this versus having the buses go to retail store in the area. Schuck answered the bid went to local and national providers and that there is a steep discount for buying the fuel in bulk. Chamblis questioned if all the bidders were providing the same type of wholesale items. Schuck responded that the bid went out for an X amount of gallons for a price, so the vendors came back with their price for the X amount of gallons. Fredson asked if we have negotiated for a contract that includes other divisions – such as MTPD vehicles. Schuck answered that he was unaware of that type contract as Metro Mobility goes through a large amount of fuel and the providers receive a full tanker at a time. Chair Barber stated staff can get back to Fredson regarding what Metro Transit is currently doing in regard to fuel.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes award and execution of contract 20P031 with World Fuel Services, Inc., in the amount of \$30,801,811.93 to supply gasoline in accordance with Council specifications for a three-year term.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Fredson, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 2 Cummings, Zeran

2020-295: 2021 Operating Grant Agreements with the Funding Transitway Counties
Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute operating grant agreements for the calendar year 2021 with the Funding Transitway Counties of Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey to receive funds in 2021.

- METRO Blue Line LRT \$13,896,218
 - Hennepin County - \$13,896,218
- METRO Green Line LRT \$14,393,393
 - Hennepin County – \$8,636,036
 - Ramsey County – \$5,757,357
- Northstar Commuter Rail \$3,760,810
 - Anoka County – \$3,061,531
 - Hennepin County – \$699,279

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Fredson, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 2 Cummings, Zeran

2020-325: Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) Procurement-2020, Contract 20P226
Metro Transit Warranty, Contract and Analysis Manager Abel Mumbi presented this item. Chamblis asked how much of effect does the fluid have on reducing emissions. Mumbi responded that as the engine runs it burns the exhaust downstream in a catalyst, so it reduces the exhaust emissions which helps control the pollution. Chamblis questioned how often the Council’s Underutilized Business list was updated. Ferguson (who is the Chair of the Management Committee) responded that the list is self-reported, therefore it’s hard to know if there is a business that goes out business. Ferguson continued that businesses are contacted on an annual basis to reconfirm their status and products/services offered but if responses are not received, we wouldn’t automatically pull them off the list.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Ferguson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes award and execution of contract 20P226 with Lube Tech and Partners, LLC, in the amount of \$507,386 to supply Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) in accordance with Council specifications for a three-year term.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Fredson, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0
Absent: 2 Cummings, Zeran

INFORMATION

1. Commuter Express Service and Park and Ride Update

Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington and Metro Transit Planning and Urban Design Manager Anna Flintoff presented this item. Sterner asked if MTPD HAT team was helping the closure of 28th Ave. Flintoff responded that MTPD, HAT and facilities are working together to coordinate that effort and provide support to the unsheltered. Chamblis commented that this survey means a lot with all the changes in ridership and tracking this will help plan for future changes to ridership and parking as customers go to flex schedules or back into offices. Harrington added that talking with downtown Minneapolis businesses, most are not bringing employees back before the May/June timeframe and that flex schedules will be a part of that. Chamblis asked if we are putting suggested spacing stickers on buses. Harrington replied that is primarily an operations decision but that it isn't currently be contemplated to designate that in the vehicle. Chair Barber asked at what point would we look at reopening the closed park and rides. Harrington responded that it'd really depends on service and when the downtown employers start to bring employees back to the office.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:11p.m.

Becky Gorell
Recording Secretary