

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

April 26, 2021

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

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Reva Chamblis, Molly Cummings, Christopher Ferguson, Kris Fredson, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent: Francisco Gonzalez

TAB Liaison Present: Peter Dugan

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at: 4:02 p.m. on Monday, April 26, 2021.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Cummings to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2021 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Ferguson, Gonzalez

TAB REPORT

Dugan reported that TAB discussed the second round of COVID relief funds. Dugan shared reports from the agencies as well as a summary of the equity presentation the TAB received.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

MVST

The Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) quarterly report was issued recently. MVST is one of the key funding sources for our transit operations. In the first quarter of 2021, the report was very positive. MVST receipts were 112% of what was forecast in November 2020. It is the November forecast that the Council bases its annual budget on, so this source is trending positive for the year.

Legislature

Both the House and Senate passed their Omnibus transportation bills since we last met. The two bills differ significantly. Conference committees are expected to be named soon to begin the process towards agreement.

COVID

The Contractor workforce had 3 positive occurrences of COVID since we last met, and a total of 155 since the beginning. Of the 155, 151 have returned to work.

For service, Metro Mobility ridership growth is accelerating, and is now above 60% of pre-COVID levels for first time, and Health Care essential worker trips remain at about 50% of peak levels. Transit Link has not experienced the same growth as Metro Mobility, with its ridership basically unchanged since early January at 50% of pre-COVID levels. Along with Metro Transit, we will be offering free rides to Metro Mobility customers who are signed up to receive the COVID vaccine at the new MN State Fair FEMA vaccine that opens this week. This past Friday the state expanded eligibility to all Metro area residents with disabilities and we will provide the trip for free for any Metro Mobility customers or Transit Link. At the State Fair location, the customer on Metro Mobility receives their shot on the bus to make it as convenient as possible.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Gold Line Engineering

Since our last meeting, the FTA approved Gold Line to move into the engineering phase of the New Starts program. Congratulations to the BRT staff as well as Ramsey and Washington Counties for reaching this milestone. There are a couple of Gold Line business items on the agenda today. And we are planning a “Gold Line Update” information item for an upcoming Transportation Committee meeting.

COVID Cases at Metro Transit

Metro Transit has had a total of 413 employees who have tested positive for COVID since the start of the pandemic. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on April 12, we have had 12 employees test positive for COVID. We continue to monitor cases by location, and we are not seeing any hotspots or patterns. And we are not experiencing any operational impacts due to employees having COVID or needing to quarantine.

COVID Vaccination Efforts

The mobile vaccination buses were highlighted by the Governor’s office last week during a press event that Chair Zelle participated in. The mobile vaccination buses are a partnership with MDH to reach communities that are underserved and face barriers to other vaccination options. The first buses are already in service. We are working to expand the fleet and the reach of this effort. We will have six buses by later next month. Metro Transit bus operators and supervisors have stepped up to work these assignments.

Participation in Operation Safety Net

As we all know, the Chauvin trial concluded with three guilty verdicts last Tuesday. Metro Transit Police and Operations were prepared for any outcome. Prior to the verdict and out of an abundance of caution, Metro Transit relocated the Nicollet Bus Garage operations to our South Garage facility given its proximity to the MPD 5th Precinct. Metro Transit staff were present in the unified command center 24/7 to ensure that our employees and customers had the latest information for more than 10 days leading up to the verdict. Thanks to all this preparation and planning, full bus and train operations were maintained during the entire trial and there were no major issues to report from our role in Operation Safety Net.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

There were no items on the consent agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2021-87 SW:** Travel Behavior Inventory – 2021 Transit On-Board Survey Notice of Award Metropolitan Transportation Services Travel Modeling and Research Manager Jonathan Ehrlich presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council Members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to:

- Enter into negotiations and to execute a Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) funding the Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) Transit On-Board Survey for an amount not to exceed \$1,140,000 and
- To enter into negotiations and to execute a contract with ETC Institute to conduct the Transit On-Board Survey for an amount not to exceed \$2,100,000.

Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

2. **2021-98:** Blue Line Enhancements Phase IIA Special Trackwork, Contract 20P315
Metro Transit Engineer Ryan Heath presented this item.

Cummings asked for insight about the gap between bids received. Heath said staff consulted with Procurement and feel confident that the bidder is responsible and responsive. Contracts and Procurement Assistant Director Laura Vedder said this discrepancy has been more common lately with the volatility of the market. Vedder added that staff is actively exploring how to advertise bids more widely. Zeran brought up the volatility of the steel market. Ferguson asked how the bids can be adjusted to account for the market volatility.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Ferguson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contract 20P315 with Progress Rail Services Corporation, for production of special trackwork for the Blue Line Enhancements Phase IIA project in the amount not to exceed \$777,690.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

3. **2021-100:** Gold Line Contract #20P073 Property Acquisition Legal Services
Metro Transit BRT Projects Director Charles Carlson and Planner Joe Klein presented this item.

Cummings asked about the DBE goal and if the amount of bids were as many as expected. Klein said they worked to set a DBE goal that was achievable and met Council expectations.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute two contracts for Legal Services for the METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit Project (Gold Line), in a total amount not to exceed \$971,556.30 and allocated as follows:

- Levander, Gillen and Miller – not to exceed \$685,222.45
- J. Selmer Law – not to exceed \$286,333.85

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 1 Gonzalez

INFORMATION

1. TMA Certification Review Findings

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented this item.

Chamblis brought up disaggregated data. Cummings voiced appreciation for the Met Council replying to those who participated in a survey.

2. Service Equity Evaluation

Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington Service Development Assistant Director Kristin Thompson and Strategy and Performance Manager Rachel Dungca presented this item.

Chamblis mentioned the importance of evaluations. Barber asked about travel time. Dungca said on-time performance is the industry standard but other ways are being looked at as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary