

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, July 22, 2013

Committee Members Present: **Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair** **Steve Elkins**
 James Brimeyer **Jennifer Munt**
 Katie Rodriguez

Committee Members Absent: **Adam Duinck, Chair** **Edward Reynoso**
 Jon Commers **John Doan**

TAB Liaison: **Robert Lilligren – present**

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Acting Committee Chair Schreiber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. July 22, 2013. The chair requested that staff proceed with reports and information items while awaiting a quorum. A quorum was present following the reports and during the regular business of the Transportation Committee.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Brimeyer seconded by Munt to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

It was moved by Munt, seconded by Elkins to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2013 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

TAB LIAISON REPORT – Robert Lilligren

TAB Liaison Robert Lilligren reported that the TAB met on July 17 with an agenda consisting largely of information items. The board said goodbye to Kevin Roggenbuck, who is stepping down after serving for 13 years as the Council's TAB coordinator. There was also extensive discussion about the regional solicitation evaluation process, focusing on the opportunity to shift the evaluation process to more directly and immediately reflect regional priorities. Work will continue at least until the end of the year but needs to be completed before the solicitation package can be issued.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Mark Benedict, Director of Metro Transit Light Rail Systems Maintenance, introduced signal maintainer Terry Chacos, a member of the Signal/Comm Department since September, 2011. Mr. Chacos is being recognized for his leadership, technical competency and ability to work under pressure as demonstrated during a major weather event on June 21-22 which caused power outages to a number of LRT grade crossings and in neighborhoods adjacent to the Blue Line. Mr. Chacos took charge of the situation to mobilize his crew and successfully mitigate the impact of the storm on the LRT Systems by analyzing and prioritizing multiple system outages and orchestrating the emergency response. Chair Schreiber and GM Lamb offered their thanks and congratulations and presented Mr. Chacos with a certificate of achievement.

GENERAL MANAGER AND DIRECTOR REPORTS

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb reported the following:

Ridership on Metro Transit buses and trains continues to grow, particularly on the Northstar Commuter Rail line, where boardings are up 15 percent this year. For the first time since revenue service began, Northstar is averaging more than 3,000 daily passenger boardings. Ridership on buses also continues to grow, with express service ridership up almost 3 percent and local service ridership up 1 percent year to date. Ridership on the METRO Blue Line was up in June but is down slightly overall, a drop attributed primarily to fewer rides to special events. Average weekday ridership remains 30 percent above 2020 projections. Overall, there have

been nearly 40 million passenger boardings this year – an increase of more than 300,000 trips compared to the same period last year.

Transit played a major role in the recent Kenny Chesney concert, which drew a sell-out crowd of nearly 44,000 people to Target Field. With extra service around 1,000 fans traveled to the concert on the Northstar train. Another 5,000 fans used the METRO Blue Line to get to the show. Also notable is the fact that more than 500 customers purchased their Northstar tickets online ahead of time, which is the highest number of advance tickets sold to an event since Metro Transit began offering pre-sales in spring 2012.

The Minnesota State Fair begins August 22, but customers can already begin making their travel plans. Bus Bargain tickets went on sale online and at Metro Transit retail stores on Monday, July 22. A new feature this year is that the tickets can be printed or delivered directly to a customer's mobile phone. Advance-purchase tickets for two cost \$9 instead of \$10, and tickets for four cost \$15 instead of \$20. Metro Transit express buses will be running from 13 metro locations and service from the Fridley Northstar park-and-ride has been added for the first time this year.

As part of Metro Transit's ongoing effort to reduce its environmental impact, buses are beginning to run on biodiesel blends with higher soy content. Diesel-fueled buses typically use 5-percent blends as mandated by the state. This has been doubled at four Metro Transit garages, while buses at the Nicollet garage are now moving toward a 20-percent blend. Using higher-soy blends not only reduces emissions from buses but also saves money – in current market conditions about \$.13/gallon on 10-percent blends and \$.35/gallon on 20-percent blends. The savings for July alone amount to around \$21,000.

Metro Transit has hosted three Step Up interns this summer – Alan Gonzalez, Tria Lor and Cornell King. The students have rotated through a number of departments including bus maintenance, transit control, facilities and marketing. The Step Up program is designed to help young people gain the skills they need to enter the workforce and gain real-world experience to help further their careers.

METRO Blue Line crews been performing rail maintenance throughout July, including rail smoothing. The last rail smoothing work is scheduled to occur between the airport and Mall of America this weekend, coinciding with the construction of a new interchange at 34th Avenue and Interstate 494. All of this work has a payoff: smoother rails are providing customers with a quieter, gentler ride and reducing wear on light-rail vehicles. Thanks go to rail staff for their hard work and to bus operators for helping passengers get to their final destinations during this project.

There was no Director Report for this meeting.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

A motion was made by Elkins, seconded by Munt to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

2013-215: 2013 Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS) Small Bus Purchases

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a purchase agreement with Hogle Bus (MnDOT Contract 56190) for up to ten small buses in an amount not to exceed \$603,300.

2013-216: Designation of Metropolitan Council as FTA Section 5307 Recipient Resolution No. 2013-11

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve Resolution 2013-11 concurring with the Governor's designation of the Metropolitan Council as the recipient of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program funding for the Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN – WI urbanized area.

Non-Consent Items

2013-213: University of Minnesota U-Pass and Metropass Agreements

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented the item. Rodriguez asked how much of a discount these contracted fares represented. Petrie responded the discount averaged about 40 percent. Munt commented that she was very supportive of these programs and noted that a student having access to affordable transit and not having to own/maintain a car often meant the difference between being able to pay for college and not.

It was moved by Munt, seconded by Elkins that the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to:

- 1) Execute a renewal of a Upass Agreement with the University of Minnesota for student participants for the period of August 26, 2013 to August 28, 2016, with the option to extend up to two (one-year) contract extensions through August 26, 2018, and;
- 2) Execute a renewal of a Metropass Agreement with the University of Minnesota for staff and faculty participants for the period of October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2016, with the option to extend up to two (one-year) contract extensions through September 30, 2018.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Schreiber stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

2013-214: Northstar Corridor Funding Agreement with State of Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented the item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

It was moved by Elkins, seconded by Munt that the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to:

- 1) Enter into an Agreement with the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation for Calendar Year 2014 to provide funding for public commuter rail service in Sherburne County, Minnesota for an amount up to \$1.3 million.
- 2) Execute the Attached Resolution of the Governing Body (Metropolitan Council) to enter into an Agreement with the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation for Calendar Year 2014.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Schreiber stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

INFORMATION

1. 2014 Operating Budget

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb and MTS Assistant Director Gerri Sutton presented the proposed Transportation Operating Budget for 2013 and responded to general questions from committee members.

2. Twin Cities Metro Freight Study, Summary of Results

MTS Planning Analyst Steven Elmer presented the item, including an overview of the study, current freight system in the metro, impacts on the region's economy, key findings and recommendation and proposed next steps toward developing a regional freight strategy.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.