

Transit Commission Meeting Minutes August 15, 2019

The Transit Commission meeting of Wednesday, August 15, 2019 was called to order by Vice Chairman Dustin Perceful. Other commissioners in attendance included Kathleen Cates, Melissa Woodall and Betty McSwain. Staff in attendance included Director Ken Savage, Angela Crase, Lori Carr, Jason Haley and Nancy Kain. Commissioner Caitlin Smithson was unable to attend. Citizens in attendance were; Keley Simpson, Jan Haver, Reese Brewer and Cody Schindler.

1. **Elect Officers:** Commissioner Cates made the motion to nominate Dustin Perceful as the Chairperson. Commissioner Woodall seconded the motion, all were in favor and none opposed. Chairman Perceful made the motion to nominate Kathleen Cates as the Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Woodall seconded the motion, all were in favor and none opposed.
2. **Discuss new state requirement to record commission meetings:** Several of the commissioners were excited to hear the minutes of the meeting would be taped and available to the public.
3. **Minutes of the February 13, 2019 meeting:** Before the minutes were discussed Director Savage first thanked the new commissioners for deciding to serve on the commission and secondly he thanked the outgoing commissioners for their dedication and all their hard work they invested in improving transit. Finally, he asked each of the new commissioners to introduce themselves. After the introductions were finished they briefly discussed the minutes. Chairman Perceful made the motion to accept the minutes as written. Commissioner Cates seconded the motion, all were in favor and none opposed.
4. **Discuss ADA Paratransit Plan revisions (open 30 day public hearing):** Director Savage gave a brief overview of the ADA Paratransit Plan. The paratransit plan is simply an outline of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) requirements as they relate to transportation services for persons with disabilities. Paratransit services must be available for qualifying applicants that experience difficulties accessing or navigating the fixed routes. FST provides both paratransit and demand response transportation services in addition to the fixed route network.

The intent of the plan is to include public participation, therefore staff is asking the commission to consider opening a public hearing (minimum 30 days) to solicit comments from the public. Comments received will be presented to the commission

during the next scheduled meeting at which time staff will ask the commission to consider approval of the plan.

Chairman Perceful made the motion to open a 30 day public hearing to accept comments from the public. Commissioner Woodall seconded the motion, all were in favor and none opposed.

5. **Discuss the Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM):** The Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan was introduced to transit agencies as part of the latest funding legislation Act called Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST Act. FST presented the department's first transit asset plan to the Fort Smith Board of Directors in 2018. The purpose of the plan is to create an accountability of each agency's equipment, facilities and rolling stock. The plan also establishes procedures for maintaining and/or replacing assets and provides transparency of investments.

Staff revised the TAM plan for currency and incorporated a projection or schedule of replacement vehicles for the Fort Smith Board of Directors to consider. Director Savage presented excerpts of the plan pertaining to the cumulative conditional scoring of assets maintained by the department.

Commissioner Cates asked about the rules for disposal of vehicles. Director Savage explained how all vehicles that were being replaced go to auction. If any vehicle sold for \$5,000 or more the money must be reinvested into a like kind vehicle.

Commissioner Woodall asked if we could scavenge vehicles from other departments. Director Savage replied that is how we get the majority of our non-revenue vehicles.

Commissioner Woodall asked if the drivers need the same type of license for the large buses as they do the smaller buses, and will getting the license make it more difficult to hire people. Director Savage said the large buses will require a Class B CDL license with passenger endorsement and the smaller buses that are currently being driven, require a Class C CDL license with passenger endorsement. It will be about the same regarding the hiring process. Director Savage said all but four (4) drivers have a class B or greater currently.

Chairman Perceful made the motion to accept the TAM Plan and present it to the Board of Directors for approval. Commissioner Cates seconded the motion, all were in favor and none opposed.

6. **Review Passenger Regulations:** The department's passenger regulations were last revised in 2016 and appear relevant today, however, it is staff's desire to begin discussing the regulations in a public setting to solicit input from the commissioners and public. Staff would like to ensure its policies are relevant to today's standard and inclusive of current events and applicable to current services.

7. **Other Business**

• **Transit Update**

- **Scheduling Software:** Lori Carr gave an update on the scheduling software project which is moving on track and staff continues to be involved in weekly meetings with the team at Route Match. Activities involve transferring data, establishing system settings and conveying priorities for the new software. Residents will soon be able to enjoy a smooth transition with many new added features.

Commissioner Woodall stated this is what we need to make us a modern city bus system.

- **Shelter Update:** Director Savage gave the update regarding the shelters. Staff has approximately ten shelters that are ready to be placed. The maintenance department is currently shorthanded and they have had to prioritize bus repairs over the placement of shelters. They are dedicated to getting them placed as soon as possible.

Director Savage informed the commission that First Presbyterian Church was responsible for donating more funds to leverage federal funds to place maple leaf shaped bicycle racks at the shelters. Staff included bicycle racks as a project in the 2020 budget.

- **CNG Fueling Station:** The target date for the CNG fueling station is by the end of November and hopefully sooner. They have been working hard to move gas lines and the equipment is modular and can be placed quickly once the area is prepared.

8. **Commissioners Forum:** None

9. **Citizens Forum:** Keley Simpson thanked transit and the commission for working with and for the community. She asked if the citizens are requesting anything different on the surveys that were given. Bigger buses and extended service hours are the two main requests.

Commissioner Woodall asked what staff is doing to relieve the shortage of drivers. Director Savage replied, staff is doing everything possible. They are working closely

with human resources and meeting with the truck driving schools to see if there were any graduates that needed at job. Staff is working hard to relieve the shortage.

Cody Schindler asked if staff had any plans to be able to implement cards on the buses. Director Savage spoke of a module that could be added to their departments scheduling software once installed. Staff's ultimate goal is to be able to accept debit and credit cards on every bus and in the office.

Reese Brewer thanked staff for the coordination efforts and working with them on all the projects.

After a brief discussion, the next meeting date was set for Wednesday, October 23rd.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.