

REGULAR BOARD MEETING - BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CORPORATION (BPTC) April 19, 2022 5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Chair Mclary convened the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bloomington Public Transportation Corporation. The meeting was held with some members attending in-person and some via a virtual electronic means.

Join Zoom Meeting at the following link:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/82017179984?pwd=WU9sNmVuMWVwTEZlNWktSIF0Y0ljdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 1717 9984

Passcode: 752909

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ROLL CALL

Board Members and staff present: Secretary Nancy Obermeyer, Board Member Marilyn Hartman, Board Member Doug Horn and Vice Chair Kent McDaniel. Also present were General Manager, John Connell, Controller, Christa Browning, Planning and Special Projects Manager, Zac Huneck, Human Resource Administrator/Marketing Director, Brenda Underwood.

Members of the Public: Dave Askins, B Square Beacon, Natalia Galvin and Andrew Guenther

The following additional persons were also present via Zoom. Chair, Jim McLary, Andrew Coomer.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Connell stated the FLIXBUS contract has been modeled off the existing contract we have with Miller Transportation. Mr. Connell noted the contract was forwarded to FLIXBUS. He said in the ~~beginning they were going to use the facility for one trip per day, and one departure per day.~~ Mr. Connell stated he put in the contract up to 2 departures per day just to give them a little lead way. He said we negotiated on that one departure per day at \$15,000 for the calendar year. Mr. Connell noted that when the contract was returned he received an email request to increase it to 4 departures per day before any additional fees would kick in. Mr. Connell stated that Miller Transportation is paying \$30,000 a year, and he can't justify allowing FLIXBUS as much use if not more and paying half of what Miller Transportation pays. Mr. Connell said that FLIXBUS wants to remove a couple of federal clauses, one is the DBE clause and the Fly America clause. Mr. Connell noted that these issues will have to be discussed with the FTA. Mr. Connell said given this new information that came in, he recommends we postpone taking any action until we sort these issues out.

Board Member Hartman made a motion to table Resolution 22-06; a resolution approving a contract with FLIXBUS for use of the Downtown Transfer Facility. Secretary Obermeyer seconded it. The Board approved to table this resolution unanimously.

Mr. Connell stated we received proposals for the Strategic Plan from RLS, the firm that recently completed the Monroe County Rural Transit Optimization Study, and a proposal from Four Square ITP, the firm that conducted the BT Route Optimization project. He noted he emailed the electronic versions of the submissions and have provided links. Mr. Connell said the staff recommends scheduling interviews with each firm to discuss project specifics, clarifications and budgets. Mr. Connell noted the recommendation for award would be scheduled for the May Board meeting, following the interviews with each firm.

Mr. Connell recommended that Staff and two Board Members conduct the meetings with RLS and Four Square ITP.

Board Member Hartman made a motion for Chair McClary and Vice Chair McDaniels to conduct the meetings with Staff on the Proposals for the Strategic Plan from RLS and Four Square ITP. Secretary Obermeyer seconded it. The Board approved unanimously.

MINUTES

The minutes for the March 15, 2022 meeting were presented for approval by Board Member Horn and seconded by Vice Chair McDaniel. The minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS-ACTION ITEMS

Board Member Hartman made a motion to open a Public Hearing to receive comment on the calendar year 2022 Program of Projects. Board Member Horn seconded it. The board approved unanimously.

No Comments from the Public.

~~Board Member Hartman made a motion to close the Public Hearing, Vice Chair McDaniel seconded it. The board approved unanimously.~~

Board Member Horn made a motion to approve Resolution 22-07, a resolution adopting CY 2022 Program of Projects and authorizing the BPTC Chair to file and execute grant assurances and grant contracts. Vice Chair McDaniel seconded it. The Board approved unanimously.

Mr. Connell stated that our employee health insurance plan runs from May 1 to April 30 each year. He said we recently received a briefing from SIHO, our third party administrator, on our claims experience and some possible strategies to address the increasing amount of our health insurance reserves.

Mr. Connell noted our employee health insurance is partially self-funded by BPTC. He said we currently pay the first \$40,000 of claims for each enrolled employee within the framework of benefits that we've established, relative to deductibles, co-pays, and out of pocket expenses. He said we purchase reinsurance on employees that covers all costs over the \$40,000 level on any individual employee. He noted sometimes employees with serious ongoing medical conditions are lased at higher reinsurance levels given the higher risks. Mr. Connell said this year we elected to opt for the \$110,000 corridor which takes the place of having lased members. He said this will require a higher specific for 2 members. He said we also have aggregate reinsurance that protects BPTC if total claims costs, reinsurance costs for covering any costs that exceed the \$40,000 specific stop loss and/or the aggregate group costs, and third party administration costs to SIHO.

Board Member Hartman noted that we haven't done any kind of solicitation for services for third party administration or reinsurance with a company other than SIHO.

Human Resource administrator/Marketing Director, Brenda Underwood stated that next year we plan on looking at different proposals for third party administration and insurance.

Secretary Obermeyer made a motion to approve Resolution 22-08, a resolution authorizing the following: continued partial self-funding of group health insurance for BPTC employees; the purchase of third party administrative services from SIHO. Vice Chair McDaniel seconded it. The board approved unanimously.

Planning and Special Projects Manager Zac Huneck gave an overview of the proposed service changes, reducing evening hours of service on poor performing routes and replacing them with a contracted micro-transit approach. This is being proposed to improve efficiency and reduce the burden placed on our operators who have been working in excess of 40 hours per week for over a year. Zac noted we had 3 formal input sessions for the public. He said in terms of replacing late evening hours with the Transportation Network Company pilot partnership with Uber and Lyft, the responses were mostly favorable if some other conditions could be met. One example of a condition, is to ensure those that use wheelchairs, or who do not have smartphones are still able to use this service.

Chair McLary questioned what would be the effect if we did same day late night service for BT Access? Chair McLary said he guessing it would be a very small demand. He said he is thinking it would provide equal service as to the able-bodied people. Planning and Special Products Manager, Zac Huneck said he agreed that the demand would probably be relatively small. General Manager Connell said we struggled with this idea, if the micro transits replacing the fixed route service, this is an extension of the fixed route service. He said currently individuals that have the special needs have that requirement scheduling the trip the prior day. Mr. Connell said he agrees with Chair McLary that the demand would probably not be very high, but the labor expense would be high, because we'd have to have a person on standby for the 3 hours each evening and they may make one trip or they may make zero trips, but we will still be paying the labor. Mr. Connell said we were going to do a wait and see if those trips started to become frequent then it could be something we could transition to, but it's at the pleasure of the board.

Chair McLary stated that his opinion is, that we absorb the cost and give same day access to people with wheelchairs that can't use Uber or Lyft. He said it would take away one of the conditional objections.

Vice Chair McDaniel said that if we are experimenting with a new model, he thinks we should invest in this level of service during the experiment. He said then we can pull back if our data shows that the investment is not required to service the community.

Planning and Special Projects Manager, Zac Huneck noted that some of the unfavorable trends are the availability of drivers in the evening can be unreliable. Zac said the issue was voiced from a lot of riders who have been trying to use Uber and Lyft in town during those hours. Zac said what happens is when driver availability is low, then the trips are subject to a search pricing which effectively pushes these trip costs out of sight of the bounds of what we consider the average trip, which is about \$15 for everyone.

Board Member Hartman questioned what drives the surge price. Mr. Connell said demand drives the prices. Mr. Connell noted there is a lot for us to learn from this process and that's why we are calling it a pilot program. He stated that if we did not offer this, then the alternative most likely would be no service at all. He said we have to restructure the schedules to provide PTO for the drivers that haven't been able to get it in the last ten months. Chair McLary questioned Mr. Connell on how long he proposes we run the demonstration. Mr. Connell said he wants to run it through the end of the year. Mr. Connell said one of the key metrics is, if the customer is satisfied with the level of service? He said after we know the customer satisfaction level, then we will look at the economics of it. Mr. Connell stated, he thinks this will be a good opportunity for us to gain some experience, terms of what to expect and identify the deficiencies.

Vice Chair McDaniel stated he has not been a big fan of this concept from the beginning and he has a lot of concerns. Mr. Connell said he agrees with Vice Chair McDaniel, there are a lot of questions and it's less than ideal. Mr. Connell said he thinks we owe it to the public to try something, instead of just cutting services off at 9:00p.m.

Board Member Hartman made a motion to approve Resolution 22-09, a resolution approving a service change to the evening hours of underperforming fixed routes, replacing fixed route service with contracted on-demand service operated by Uber and Lyft, with the following modifications: Subsidy be changed from \$14 to \$19 per trip with a passenger fare of \$1.00 per trip, any amount of fare in excess of \$20 per trip paid by the user, add same day schedules, Board Member Horn seconded it. The Board approved unanimously.

MANAGER AND STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Connell gave an overview of the RATP DEV Technology Assessment. He stated the technology assessment project continues. He said NMontentum personnel were onsite March 29th-March 31st to conduct in person interviews with BT Staff, evaluate BT's use of current technologies and software programs, and to solicit input from the staff on what is working, and what BT is lacking and to get a sense of where BT wants to go in terms of advanced transit related technology. NMontentum also met with the City's IT department to assess the current structure of the IT contract. Mr. Connell said in his opinion the meeting with the City was candid and insightful. Mr. Connell noted the entire process to date has been thorough and productive. He said he believes the outcome of this comprehensive analysis will complement our strategic planning process. He said they are preparing their list of recommendations and are hoping to be back on-sight in May for the Board meeting.

Mr. Connell stated WSP has completed the modeling portion of the Alternative Fuel and Infrastructure study. He said none of the three alternative fuels under consideration had initial fatal flaws so each fuel source is still considered a viable option.

Mr. Connell stated on Tuesday April 5th, BT Operations staff participated in two table top security training exercises conducted by US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, TSA. He said the event, held at the Grimes Lane facility involved two separate training scenarios. The first, a suspicious person on the premises placing a suspicious backpack on a bus. The second, coordinated active shooters on two buses at different bus stops.

Mr. Connell noted the training exercises are designed in a manner to generate response instincts, evaluate response activities and then identify deficiencies and recommendations. He said the three TSA agents that were onsite for the training session did a fantastic job engaging the BT staff, requiring them to "think on their feet". He said TSA evaluated our strengths and our weaknesses, and provided us a summary report. Mr. Connell noted there are some areas of improvement that we're going to be working on. He said we do have scheduled a security assessment for the facility. He said TSA will be out to do a walk through the facility to identify our weaknesses.

Mr. Connell stated, The Mayor and City Council continue to negotiate the rate of a possible income tax increase and the prioritization of projects for LIT funding. Mr. Connell said he did attend the April 13th, City Council meeting and was asked to discuss the process BT used to develop the list of projects which were submitted for LIT funding.

Board Member Hartman gave an overview of all the different kinds of local income taxes. Board Member Hartman noted if the ordinance is approved by the City Council, then what would happen is the City council would be Entering into and inter-local agreement with BPTC. She said then we would iron out just exactly how those funds might be distributed. Board Member Hartman stated largely our funding is federal. She said we have to have local matches and there are a lot of requirements, we have hoops we have to jump through as a Board that doesn't necessarily apply to other local governmental units. She said if the City Council decides to move forward with what's been proposed, and that gets passed, it will be on us to really be very careful in carving out some sort of inter-local agreement as to what kind of funds we would even be able to accept.

Planning and Special Projects Manager, Zac Huneck stated on Fixed Route we have provided a little over 174,000 trips in March. He said we are up 92% ridership in March compared to what ridership was in March 2021. He said BT Access ridership in March was just under 2000 trips and that is more of a modest gain of 12% compared to March 2021.

Controller Browning gave an overview of the March financial reports as included in the Board packets.

Human Resource Administrator/Marketing Director Brenda Underwood stated that we still need approximately 12 drivers. She said she remains hopeful and positive that things will turn around.

Board Member Horn stated he attended the hybrid meeting of the Bloomington Monroe county Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee held on April 8, 2022. He said the highlight of the meeting was final discussion and approval of the Monroe county Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan update. He noted a draft of the Plan was presented previously and the bulk of the effort and expenditure required to accomplishing the four principal goals of this federally mandated Plan falls to Bloomington Transit and Rural Transit. He said once the plan is available in its final form, he will circulate copies to the Board Members. He said the document is one that should be included with other peripheral transportation plans in our master plan discussions. Board Member Horn stated that the next meeting of the MPO Policy Committee will be held at 1:30 PM April 27, 2022 in the Common Council Chamber, Showers Plaza.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

The Claims for April 19, 2022 were presented for approval by Board Member Horn and seconded by Vice Chair McDaniel. The claims were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Andrew Coomer said as soon as the Route Optimization is finished, and the efficiency of getting around town comes back, he said he believes the ridership will start exploding again. He said right now it takes too long to get anywhere unless you are only going a block or two. General Manager Connell stated he is hopeful things will get back on track soon.

Natalia Galvin said she did go to the public engagement meeting and she spoke with Mr. Connell and Zac Huneck, she said she felt like they heard a lot of her concerns, particularly around outreach with micro transit and looking at the expansion of the Crestmont area. Natalia said she thinks we have some underserved neighborhoods that could benefit from more direct engagement and not so much like zoom, where people come to us. She said we need more direct engagement of reaching out to the residents of these communities in whatever way that works best for them to get direct feedback. Natalia said she would also like to see more engagement with our Student users.

Andrew Guenther, said he wanted to echo a lot of the comments made by Natalia Galvin concerning outreach. He said when they met with Mr. Connell and Zac Huneck at the outreach meeting he and Natalia were very clear about the reasons they know about all the meetings, and that they attend the meetings with Bloomington Transit and a lot of other Bloomington and Monroe County Boards and Commissions. He said he and Natalia are a part of a small, very politically involved group that pays attention to local government events and what's going on. Andrew said most people, he thinks that 95% are not being reached. He said besides seeing our buses he could not really name any marketing that reaches his generation. He said there are younger users and younger disabled users who don't have cars, for monetary reasons. Andrew said he wanted to make sure that the Board is looking to revamp some of their marketing in that area, so that they can have adequate outreach among the younger generation as well as everyone else in Bloomington. Through social media advertisements or some print advertisements that are targeted towards those groups. He said he thinks it would go a long way because most people he

has spoken to about the plan had no idea that we are planning on shifting to Uber and Lyft for late night service. He said he wants to make sure there is adequate outreach.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

General Manager, John Connell stated he thinks we definitely need to look into staffing issues. He said there are a lot of things we would like to do more professionally and we are squeezed right now. He said ~~staff member are wearing multiple hats. Mr. Connell said it's on the list to examine duties then move~~ forward from there.

Board Member Hartman questioned if we are getting close to needing a full-time marketing director. Mr. Connell said he thinks we are getting real close. He said it would be a marketing and development position.

Board Member Horn stated he thinks we may have many Public Relations issues that we can look to engage with, which will help our ridership.

ADJOURNMENT

APPROVE:

James J. McLary 05-17-22
James J. McLary, Chair
Board of Directors BPTC

ATTEST:

Nancy Obermeyer 05-17-22
Nancy Obermeyer, Secretary
Board of Directors BPTC