



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – JULY 27, 2016**

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors met in regular session in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date with the following members present:

Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Doug Bevis
Mark Deighton
Ben Diamond
Dave Eggers
Samantha Fenger
Pat Gerard
Patricia Johnson
Bill Jonson
Brian Scott

Absent:

Darden Rice, Chairperson
Joseph Barkley
Kenneth Welch
Lisa Wheeler-Bowman

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairperson Bujalski called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Harry Sherouse, St. Petersburg resident, stated that is difficult to get his shopping cart and walker on and off the bus when the bus does not pull close enough to the curb. He also said there is no room for stroller storage on the buses.

Phil Compton, Sierra Club, thanked the Board for the vote last month on the buses, and said that he was sorry to hear about the non-award of the LoNo grant to PSTA. He added that he looks forward to working with the Authority in the future.

SPECIAL ACTION ITEM

Demand Response (DART) Paratransit Services Contract – Ross Silvers, Mobility Manager, provided a brief background of the DART program and the current paratransit contract with TransDev/Yellow Cab and Care Ride.

James Bradford, Chief Operating Officer, explained that the current contract will expire on September 30, 2016, and in April 2016, PSTA released a Request for Proposal (RFP). He presented the enhanced performance requirements that were included in the RFP as well as the penalty and incentive program details.

Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, reported that in response to the RFP, PSTA received four responders for the wheelchair service and three for the ambulatory service. She said that all but one company made in-person presentations to the Selection Evaluation Committee, which was comprised of PSTA staff. Care Ride, LLC is being recommended as the sole service provider for both accessible and ambulatory services. Ms. Leous noted that Care Ride was the highest ranked provider in both service categories.

The Board had numerous questions regarding the cost, ridership, and the penalty and incentive program, as well as the transition period. Mr. Scott reported that the Finance Committee unanimously recommended approval. Elaine Mann, TRAC Committee Chair, reported that there was a resounding endorsement from the TRAC Committee as well.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Bujalski's call for public comment, Annette Spadaro, Pinellas County resident, stated that she loves Care Ride.

Diane Berberian, St. Petersburg resident, pointed out that she was able to go back to work because of Care Ride.

Diane Sorton, Pinellas County resident, stated that Care Ride drivers are very kind and never late. She added that she could not imagine being without Care Ride.

Susan Crompton, Gulfport resident, said that she has been riding Care Ride since the first contract with them. She stated that they are based on integrity and she has never been late for an appointment.

Kim Rankine, St. Petersburg resident, commented that the old wheelchair transport company was awful and that Care Ride really cares about their customers. She said that the reservationists are great and the drivers are respectful and on time. She asked the Board to award the contract to Care Ride.

Doug Towne, St. Petersburg resident, indicated that the Pinellas Council of the Blind has had to file complaints about Yellow Cab, and that at their last meeting, the Council endorsed Care Ride as the sole DART provider.

Arlene Johnson, St. Petersburg resident, said she has a disabled 14-year old son. She stated that Care Ride picks him up and takes him to his job. She is concerned that Route 23 is no longer going by her home and Care Ride has to follow the bus schedule, so she is very concerned about the cut off times for Care Ride.

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the contract with Care Ride, LLC for a total cost not to exceed \$36 million over the maximum five-year period. There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

A break was taken from 9:48 AM until 10:04 AM.

[Mr. Deighton entered the meeting during the break.]

NON-BOARD COMMITTEES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Ms. Mann reported on the July 19th TRAC meeting.

Forward Pinellas (Metropolitan Planning Organization - MPO) – Vice-Chairperson Bujalski reported on the Forward Pinellas Board meeting that took place on July 13th.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Chairperson Bujalski pulled item 5.F for discussion. Mr. Jonson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Zimmet read by title

Resolutions #16-07, #16-08, #16-09, and #16-10. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the June 22, 2016 Board meeting minutes, the mediated settlement with Pepper Contracting, the employee health benefits, the heavy duty towing and related services contract, and the annual Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant approvals.

Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, described the revised Dunedin service changes based on comments from Dunedin staff and residents. Mr. Deighton reported on the Planning Committee meeting stating that the Committee discussed the Jolley Trolley route and the possibility that it could continue the route past the Blue Jays stadium even after spring training ends. He stated that the Committee unanimously recommended approval as presented by staff. Vice-Chairperson Bujalski indicated that she and Ms. Mann had worked very hard on these changes. She is pleased that the changes will provide service on Douglas and Patricia on a regular basis and seasonal service to the stadium. Vice-Chairperson Bujalski indicated that Lyndhurst Street needs to be re-visited due to the narrowness of the road and she stated that she still has concerns about the disabled access on the Jolley Trolley. Mr. Miller noted that the Jolley Trolley has indicated a willingness to try to allocate their vehicles with the side disability access to the Dunedin route.

Mr. Scott asked about the budget impact, and Mr. Miller responded that PSTA has budgeted \$250,000 for the changes and the extension of Route 61 to Countryside Mall. He pointed out that this will be in the FY 2017 budget. Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the Dunedin service changes. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Millage Rate/FY 2017 Service Improvements Proposals - Ms. Leous provided the FY 2016 forecast summary and noted that there is a projected surplus of \$767,921 that will be added to the reserves. She said this is PSTA's fifth straight year of substantial savings. Ms. Leous reviewed several accomplishments over the past year and indicated that outreach is a focus area for the upcoming year. She also spoke about results from the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) and pointed out that PSTA will focus on areas such as employee training, capital investment, and service frequency.

Ms. Leous reviewed the FY 2016 forecast to the FY 2017 budget and stated that the FY 2017 budget without an ad valorem change is balanced by \$78,495. She added that an ad valorem adjustment to the maximum millage would provide \$1.1 million that can be used for increased service to customers.

Ms. Borchers presented staff's recommendations for incremental expansion of bus service if the ad valorem were raised to 0.7500. She explained that the adjusted ad valorem would allow for extended weekday hours on heavily used routes and improved weekend frequencies and service span.

Mr. Deighton reported that the Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval of increasing the ad valorem to the 0.7500 cap. He said the Committee took into account that this increase will be tied to service improvements. He noted that the average household would be paying \$2.21 more per year.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Bujalski's call for public comment, Mr. Compton stated that he supports this effort. He expressed his opinion that a lot of people cannot relate to PSTA and the service that the Authority provides. He said he appreciates the work of staff to tweak the services to make the routes as efficient as possible with the resources the Authority has. He also briefly spoke about the cost of electric buses.

Jeanette Young, Pinellas County resident, indicated that she is a daily bus rider. She spoke about a problem that she encountered when the Route 52 did not show up. She stated that she does not understand Uber and also mentioned the need for expanded hours on the weekdays and weekends.

Mr. Eggers asked if the extra money from the FY 2016 budget would go toward bus purchases and Ms. Leous replied yes. He believes that revenue from increased property values should be used for service adjustments on a pilot basis; however, does not believe that PSTA should raise the ad valorem at this time. Ms. Long indicated that staff is always looking for ways to make the routes more efficient. She said workers want to be able to get to work and get back home, adding that she is excited about the direction PSTA is going. She also reiterated the fact that technology is moving very quickly. Mr. Diamond stated that he shares Mr. Egger's perspective and asked about the cost of the expanded service. Ms. Borchers answered that the increased weekday service would be \$263,000, Saturdays would be \$461,000, and Sundays would be \$330,000.

Mr. Scott said he is in favor of the service increases but has concerns about why PSTA has to go to the maximum millage rate right now. He believes that should be saved for when the Agency needs it and believes that the service increases could be accomplished with the funds PSTA has. Mr. Deighton reiterated that the increase would be \$2.21 per year for the average household. He stated that PSTA is supposed to be providing services. Ms. Gerard indicated that she supports the millage increase. Mr. Bevis asked if the DART contract takes into account the expanded service hours and Ms. Borchers replied yes. Mr. Bevis stated that he would like to keep the ad valorem where it is. He

clarified that he is in favor of expanded services, but does not want to increase the millage rate for that purpose. Ms. Johnson pointed out that there are businesses open on Saturdays and Sundays and workers need transportation to get to work and back home.

Mr. Jonson said that he has been speaking with the business community and they have emphasized how important it is for their employees to get to work and back home. He said he will support the change today and in September. Ms. Long reminded the Board that the vote today is not to increase the tax but to set the millage rate for the TRIM Notice. There will be another opportunity to have further discussion on how to accomplish the expanded service with or without the increased millage rate. Ms. Gerard reiterated that one of the reasons that Forward Pinellas is not considering Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for PSTA is because the Agency has not exhausted all its resources. Vice-Chairperson Bujalski commented that she is supportive of expanding the service, but is concerned about maxing out the millage at this moment. She suggested the Board vote for the maximum today and ask staff to go back to the Finance and Planning Committees and show a long-term view of the budget including the service changes without an increase in millage.

Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jonson to increase the ad valorem for the TRIM Notice to 0.7500. There were no public comments. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed (7:4) with Mr. Bevis, Mr. Scott, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Eggers dissenting.

[Ms. Long left the meeting at 11:20 AM and did not return.]

TD Late Shift Contracts with Uber/United Taxi/Care Ride – Mr. Miller indicated that this is a pilot program to serve the low income TD riders. He explained that these contracts with Uber, United Taxi, and Care Ride are related to a \$300,000 grant from the Florida Commission on TD to provide TD eligible citizens with free rides between 9:00 PM – 6:00 AM; seven days a week. He said that they are also eligible to receive one urgent TD trip per month using any of the three partner providers for \$3.00. Mr. Miller indicated that the total project budget is \$333,333 with PSTA providing a 10% match of \$33,333. Mr. Miller noted that the TD Commission is a great partner in funding this program and has indicated a willingness to allocate additional TD funds, if needed. Mr. Scott reported that the Finance Committee unanimously recommended approval. Mr. Eggers made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jonson to approve the contracts with Uber, United Taxi, and Care Ride for TD Mobility Enhancement Grant Services at a total cost not to exceed \$333,333. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bevis questioned if there is a way to identify the vehicles as a PSTA Uber with some type of signage and Mr. Miller responded that staff will look into it.

[Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 11:22 AM and did not return.]

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was included in the Board packet. Mr. Miller mentioned the Ridership Analysis presentation that was delivered at the Finance Committee. He said from his analysis, much of what is happening in Pinellas County parallels almost every transit system in the nation. The national consensus shows that declining ridership is due to gas prices being at an all-time low and the improving economy. He said locally, PSTA increased its fare and cut 2% of service, which had some impact. He reported that there are increases in ridership from the UPass and TD programs.

[Ms. Gerard left the meeting at 11:24 AM and did not return.]

Ms. Borchers indicated that there are two Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) public workshops scheduled: August 1st and 2nd in St. Petersburg.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. Mr. Miller said that there is a PSTA/Forward Pinellas joint work session scheduled for July 29th at PSTA.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Diamond thanked staff for the excellent presentations and said that it is great to hear such positive feedback from the riders about the new Care Ride contract.

Mr. Deighton stated his belief that the decrease in ridership was not due to the fare increase in October 2015 since ridership began dropping in 2014.

Ms. Fenger thanked everyone who came out to speak on many of the agenda items and said she especially enjoyed the discussion about Care Ride.

Mr. Bevis indicated that he is looking forward to telling his citizens the good news about Care Ride. He noted that PSTA has done a pretty good job of receiving money

from Tallahassee and said just because the Agency has not maximized its revenue opportunities through millage, the Authority is still receiving funds. He said the key to receiving funds is to show that PSTA is a good steward of funds.

Mr. Jonson stated that PSTA's goal is to get people to and from jobs and help them be productive citizens. He continues to believe the Agency needs to constantly reach out to the community. He reminded people to consider taking the ferry when going to Clearwater Beach.

Vice-Chairperson Bujalski thanked staff for working with Dunedin on the service changes. She believes all Board members would like to see increased service and urged some compromise on everyone's part. It is her hope that when it comes time to take action, that it is not a split decision.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairperson Bujalski adjourned the meeting at 11:36 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for August 24th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson