



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2015**

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:

Bill Jonson, Chairperson
Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Joseph Barkley
Doug Bevis
Mark Deighton
Ben Diamond
Pat Gerard
Curtis Holmes
Patricia Johnson
Wengay "Newt" Newton
Darden Rice
Brian Scott
Kenneth Welch

Absent:

Dave Eggers

Also Present:

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

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Jonson called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED PHASE 1 ROUTE CHANGES

Board Chairperson Introduction - Chairperson Jonson delivered an introduction and instructions for public comments.

Staff Statement for Record - Mr. Miller read the Staff Statement for the record.

[Mr. Newton and Mr. Welch entered the meeting at 9:05 AM.]

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robin Shaw, Seminole, stated that she is disabled and the bus is her only means of transportation. She does not want the elimination of Route 58 and provided a list of over 100 names of people who also do not want the route eliminated. She mentioned issues with her on-board streaming subscription. Bob Lasher, External Affairs Officer, attended to her questions.

Deborah Lekente, Director of Transportation for Neighborly Care Network and the Chairman of the Board for Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger, suggested a U-Pass program for high school students in the summer.

[Mr. Diamond entered the meeting at 9:08 AM.]

Janice Pate, Pinellas Park, stated that if Route 444 is eliminated, she would have to cross Park Boulevard, which is a concern and safety issue.

Jackie Singleton, Pinellas Park, explained that she is also very concerned about crossing Park Boulevard if Route 444 was eliminated.

Vivian Peters, Largo, stated her opinion that Route 444 could be re-worked instead of eliminated.

[Ms. Long entered the meeting at 9:20 AM.]

Christine Lester, Pinellas Park, suggested using a shuttle to get to the transit center from St. Giles Manor instead of eliminating Route 444. She voiced her concerns about crossing Park Boulevard.

Robert Snell, Pinellas Park, stated that he and his wife are confined to wheelchairs and the elimination of Route 444 would be a loss of independence for them. He expressed his concern about using other modes of transportation on their limited income.

Betty Niles (also speaking for six other people), stated that the elimination of Route 444 will affect low income people, adding that some riders would have to walk six blocks to the nearest bus stop. She stated that Route 52 is very crowded and suggested Route 444 run through Pinellas Park two times a day. Ms. Niles also said the elimination of Route 444 would take away peoples' independence.

Matthew Goff, Pinellas Park, stated that if Route 444 were eliminated, he would have to make transfers to other routes, which will be very difficult given his visual impairment.

Robin Swedo, Pinellas Park, stated that she is also visually impaired and does not want Route 444 eliminated. She said that Route 79 is three-quarters of a mile away from her and expressed her concerns about crossing U.S. 19. She made some suggestions for modifying Route 444.

Tom Rask, unincorporated Seminole (also for Sully Grasso), indicated his opinion that PSTA has to make service cuts because there is no money. He believes this is due to central planning. He said the data shows that PSTA had years to tweak Route 444, which did not happen, and that these cuts are necessary. Mr. Rask also questioned why there are ten phases in the plan and suggested implementing the plan in two phases. He also stated that, in his opinion, there are other routes that should be cut such as the Safety Harbor Trolley.

Michelle Frazier, Pinellas resident, commented that she is very concerned about the elimination of Route 30 because it is the only way she can get to her connecting bus to get to work. She also believes that the whole bus system needs to be re-designed.

Staff Presentation on Budget Update and Identified Alternatives – Mr. Miller gave a brief overview of the proposed changes. He showed updates to the proposed FY 2016 Operating Budget, which included the route adjustments and \$3 million to be donated to the Capital Reserve Fund for bus replacements.

Mr. Miller indicated that in order to have a balanced budget for the next five years, the following need to occur: 1) outsource advertising, 2) route changes, 3) fare changes, and 4) ad valorem rate increase. He added that PSTA has recently been able to lock in diesel fuel prices at a savings of \$1.2 million for next year; therefore, staff recommends shifting

\$3 million to the Capital program for bus replacements and maintaining the tax rate at the current level.

Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, presented the history of the affected routes and outlined alternatives for people that would be affected by these changes. Ms. Sobush also mentioned the public outreach events that had been conducted for each route.

Mr. Newton asked about Neighborly Care Network and Mr. Miller responded that they have agreed to increase their service in Pinellas Park. Mr. Welch asked about the possible partnership with Uber or Lyft and requested more information. Ms. Johnson said that St. Giles Manor also submitted a petition of over 100 names to save the Route 444 and pointed out that Uber is not going to be able to address riders with disabilities. Mr. Barkley stated his concern that Uber drivers do not have proper licenses or insurance and are not regulated like the cab companies. He questioned who would be responsible in case of injury. Mr. Miller responded that he will provide that information.

Ms. Long stated the importance of addressing the liability issue when having discussions with Uber. She recommended that Uber's background checks be equivalent to the background checks PSTA conducts on the Bus Operators. Ms. Bujalski asked what was being done to combat the standing room only on Route 18, and Mr. Miller replied that the Community Bus Plan calls for more service on the high frequency routes like the 18 and 19. He said he will provide the Board with the phasing of when frequency will be added to Route 18 to accommodate the additional riders. In response to Mr. Scott question about the \$930,000 savings from the route changes, Mr. Miller explained how that amount was calculated. Mr. Diamond asked if PSTA was working with the other government agencies to ensure pedestrian safety once these routes are eliminated. Mr. Miller responded that PSTA is working with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC), and all the cities to ensure pedestrian safety. Ms. Rice stated her concern about the riders crossing busy roads and said it would be good to coordinate with the MPO about the locations of PSTA's bus stops in relation to crosswalks. Mr. Newton asked about the Authority's current agreement with the taxi cab companies and Mr. Zimmet responded that the agreement requires them to maintain insurance.

Mr. Holmes stated his opinion that riders were not informed of the proposed bus route changes and alternatives, and Mr. Miller responded that there were one-on-one discussions with the riders in the different areas to make certain they were aware of the changes and what alternative options were available. Mr. Bevis asked if the changes to

the routes as well as the alternative options were going to occur simultaneously to prevent a gap in service and Mr. Miller answered yes.

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) Recommendations – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported that the TRAC members received a presentation on the proposed route changes at the July 14th meeting and heard public comment from several affected riders. She said that staff returned to the August 18th TRAC meeting and presented transportation alternatives for the affected riders. Once the transportation alternatives were identified, TRAC unanimously recommended the route changes.

Planning Committee Recommendations – Committee Chair Bujalski reported that the Planning Committee received a presentation on the proposed route changes at their July 15th meeting and asked staff to provide the Board with information on the history of the low-performing routes. The Committee also requested staff to identify alternative transportation options for every route and allow the public to give feedback on the proposed route changes. Committee Chair Bujalski indicated that the Planning Committee talked about the Community Bus Plan and about concentrating resources on the most productive routes. The Committee also requested that the full Board get re-acquainted with the Community Bus Plan. She stated that after discussion, the Planning Committee unanimously recommended the route changes. Ms. Bujalski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rice to approve all the route changes as proposed.

Mr. Newton asked about the alternatives and if they would be implemented at the same time as the route changes and Mr. Miller replied yes. Mr. Welch indicated that from an operating standpoint, these cuts are not necessary and that PSTA would still have the same five-year budget forecast. He said he does believe; however, that the poorest performing routes need to be eliminated as long as there are reasonable alternatives. He added that he does not support the elimination of Routes 444 and 58 because he is not comfortable with the alternatives. Ms. Gerard agreed with Mr. Welch.

Mr. Miller addressed Mr. Welch's concern by stating that the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program and the Demand Response (DART) are presently available, and that Neighborly Care Network has committed to additional service starting on October 11th. He stated that the only alternative that is still in the development stage is the supplemental partnership with Uber. Ms. Gerard pointed out that the St. Giles Manor residents are aware of the TD program, but cutting this Route will take their independence away. Ms. Johnson agreed with Ms. Gerard.

Ms. Bujalski stated that she is flexible and open to amending her motion. Mr. Bevis said he would support a modification of the motion. Mr. Deighton mentioned the annual cost for running the 444. Ms. Long stated that she would support a motion to hold off on eliminating Routes 444 and 58 so staff can take a closer look at the Routes, as well as further outreach efforts to the affected riders to discuss their options. Ms. Bujalski agreed with Ms. Long. Ms. Rice said she supports Mr. Welch's statement that there is no rush to do these cuts at this time and that better alternatives could be explored with more time. She added that in the end, those routes might still need to be eliminated. She suggested looking at the return on investment and why these routes do not perform well.

Ms. Bujalski amended her motion to only approve the route changes to the East Lake Connector and Route 30. She requested that staff reach out to the riders on Routes 58 and 444 and talk to them about their options. Mr. Bevis seconded the motion.

Ms. Gerard requested information on the cost of the alternatives for the riders. Mr. Bevis mentioned the Route 444 and the possibility that it could be re-configured to be more efficient. Mr. Newton stated the importance that the public is better informed. Mr. Diamond said that he supports the amended motion, but believes the Board has to weigh the long-term fiscal health and success of the entire bus system.

There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously, ending the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

[A break was taken from 11:10 – 11:20 AM.]

PUBLIC COMMENT

Veatrice Farrell, St. Petersburg, spoke about the Art in Transit project and would like PSTA to consider a trolley on 22nd Street South.

Gail Eggeman, Managing Director of the St. Petersburg Saturday Morning Market, said that they have 10,000 customers on Saturdays and requested a bus stop at that location.

Mr. Rask (also speaking for Mr. Grasso) talked about a phone app that can be used to book an Uber trip. He stated that he believes the Community Bus Plan is being misrepresented and said that there should be less subsidies for the trolleys. He spoke about the award of PSTA's lobbying contract last month, and suggested that the Agency get the Attorney General's opinion on this matter. Mr. Rask stated that in the past, Pinellas Park contributed funds to run Route 444 and perhaps they could do that again.

He suggested that the performance matrix show riders per revenue hour instead of per day.

Travis Norton, Advocacy Manager of the St. Petersburg Chamber, expressed the Chamber's appreciation of all the staff's hard work in making these difficult changes to PSTA's system. He said that the business community is very supportive of the proposed Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and that the Chamber has made the funding for the BRT environmental study its top Legislative priority. He added that members of the Chamber have also shown an interest in funding the proposed express bus service from Tampa International Airport (TIA) to Clearwater Beach.

Ms. Shwedo, expressed her concern that Uber does not perform extensive background checks. She stated that PSTA staff should send someone out in the public to talk with people who use these routes to find out how to re-work them to be more efficient for both the riders and PSTA.

Gina Evans, Director of Government Relations at TIA, submitted a comment which Chairperson Jonson read: TIA thanks PSTA for moving forward with the Legislative request for express bus service from the beach to TIA. As our international service continues to grow, projects such as this enhance our region for international travelers who are accustomed to public transportation options.

Cathy Harrelson, St. Petersburg, said that she is an Uber and Lyft driver and noted that those agencies perform full background and driver's licensing checks, as well as maintain insurance. She also spoke briefly about PSTA's clean diesel bus purchase.

Elaine Mann, Dunedin, stated that she is pleased to hear that PSTA is investigating a partnership with Uber, indicating that she frequently uses that service.

NON-BOARD COMMITTEES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Ms. Mann reported on the August 18th TRAC meeting. She indicated that Board member Johnson attended the meeting and offered her words of praise to the TRAC. She said Jeff Thompson, Director of Transportation, and Alissa Kostyk, Social Media Coordinator, presented the Rules of the Road campaign addressing the new Code of Conduct. The Committee voted unanimously to endorse the Code of Conduct and marketing campaign. Committee Chair Mann reported that Sangita Land, Chief Compliance Officer, presented the renewal of the Trolley agreements and Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, presented the proposed route service changes, which the TRAC unanimously

recommended. The Committee also discussed the system-wide fare changes (which was also endorsed), the summer Haul Pass, and changes to the 10-day TD pass. She said the next TRAC meeting will be held on September 15th.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Rice made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the July 22, 2015 Board meeting minutes, the annual Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Grant Approvals, the Auditing Services, the Trolley Agreements, and the Riders Code of Conduct/Appeals Process.

ACTION ITEMS

In consideration of the time, Chairperson Jonson brought forward item 10A for discussion. He indicated that the Budget Hearing/Board Meeting is scheduled for September 23rd, which is a Jewish holiday; therefore, staff is requesting the full Board meeting be rescheduled to September 30th at 6:00 PM and keep the Budget Hearing on the 23rd. Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to reschedule the Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Bus Advertising Contract/Policy – Cyndi Raskin-Schmitt, Director of Communications, explained that there are three parts to this action item: 1) approve Resolution #15-04 to repeal Resolution #99-01, which does not allow government advertising, 2) approve the new Bus Advertising Policy, which includes the allowance of government advertising but not alcohol advertising, and 3) approve a three-year contract with the option for two one-year renewals with Direct Media USA for a total five year minimum guarantee of \$2,700,000.

Mr. Barkley reported that the Finance Committee met on August 19th and unanimously recommended modifying the Advertising Policy to allow government advertising, and unanimously recommended approval of the contract with Direct Media. Mr. Barkley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the Advertising Policy and contract with Direct Media.

In response to Chairperson Jonson's call for public comment, Mr. Rask stated that he would like more information on the protest that had been filed regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP). He commented that he is concerned about the omission of alcohol advertising. Ms. Rice and Mr. Newton thanked staff and their colleagues for not including the alcohol advertising. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Zimmet read Resolution #15-04 by title and Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Scott to adopt Resolution #15-04. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

[Mr. Holmes left the meeting at 11:56 AM and did not return.]

Gillig Bus Purchase – Henry Lukasik, Director of Maintenance, stated that under the Path Forward Plan, the commitment to ongoing capital bus replacement is one of the highest priorities. PSTA will continue its ongoing commitment to sustainability by purchasing new buses with cleaner emission engines in addition to maintaining its existing hybrid electric bus fleet. He noted that no hybrids would be eliminated for the next decade according to PSTA’s new Fleet Plan. Mr. Lukasik stated that the purchase will be 100% federally funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding and is included in the approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Committee Chair Barkley reported that the Finance Committee met on August 19th and approved the purchase of seven diesel buses to replace some of PSTA’s oldest diesel buses, adding that he was the lone member voting against this. He indicated that the Committee also had a lengthy discussion of the emission trade-offs between hybrid and diesel propulsion and PSTA staff agreed to provide additional details.

In response to Chairperson Jonson’s call for public comment, Guy Hancock, Largo, would like PSTA to purchase environmentally-friendly buses instead of the diesel buses, which he believes would also enhance the image of PSTA.

Frank Jackalone, Florida Staff Director of the Sierra Club in St. Petersburg, asked the Board to reconsider the purchase of the diesel buses and postpone the decision so that electric buses could be considered. He suggested purchasing a couple electric buses to test them out.

Bill Bucolo, St. Petersburg, spoke in favor of the Board delaying the decision to buy the diesel buses and suggested they get more information on the electric buses.

Tom Krumereich, Tampa, also asked PSTA to delay the decision on the diesel bus purchase and talked about incentives that are being offered for electric buses.

Mr. Rask indicated his opinion that diesel buses have improved tremendously over the last 30 years and urged the Board to move ahead with the purchase of the diesel buses.

He added that because hybrid buses are more expensive, PSTA would be forced to buy fewer buses, and that could result in the need to cut even more service.

Phil Compton, (also speaking for three others), Sierra Club, asked the Board to postpone the purchase of the diesel buses that he believes will cost more in the long run. He asked the Board to explore all the cleaner options available and encouraged them to talk to other cities that have electric buses. He also suggested that the Proterra electric bus return to PSTA for another demonstration for the full Board.

Mr. Miller stated that the Tallahassee transit system has six electric buses that were purchased with a federal grant. He indicated that PSTA is also an applicant for this federal grant, but does not currently receive funds to purchase electric buses. Mr. Miller said that a one-month delay will result in more than a month's delay in receiving the replacement buses, adding that he does not believe staff would be ready in a month with a recommendation to buy electric buses. Ms. Rice commented that there are 15 hybrid buses in PSTA's parking lot ready to be put into service by the end of August. She invited speakers to come to the MPO to speak to them about Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for bus purchases. Ms. Long said she will support the decision today, but asked staff to be mindful of the newest and greatest technologies in the future. Ms. Long made a motion to approve the purchase of seven diesel buses.

Mr. Barkley indicated the many reasons why he voted no for the purchase of the diesel buses at the Finance Committee meeting and also spoke about reconfiguring the diesel buses to electric buses. Ms. Bujalski talked about the sustainability and capital bus replacement programs. She expressed displeasure that the Board did not receive the emissions and cost analysis that the Finance Committee asked for; therefore, is unsure what decision to make. Mr. Scott stated that the bus replacement program needs to be grounded in reality and said that he supports the purchase of diesel buses. Mr. Scott seconded Ms. Long's motion.

Mr. Welch asked how many buses are replaced each year, and Mr. Lukasik answered seven to eight. He also asked if the cost/maintenance/emissions analysis for the various buses is complete and he was told that it is currently being prepared. Ms. Gerard indicated her opinion that buying diesel buses in this world of technology is like taking a step back. When Ms. Gerard questioned why moving this decision to a future meeting would delay the delivery by six to eight months, Mr. Miller replied that it takes about a year from the time the Board makes the decision to purchase a bus until delivery. He explained that the agency must secure a spot on assembly line schedule. Ms. Gerard suggested adding the purchase of electric buses to PSTA's Legislative priorities. Mr. Bevis

asked how long it takes to retrofit a diesel into an electric bus and Mr. Barkley responded eight or nine months.

Ms. Long pointed out that there are still more agenda items to go through and given the time she amended her motion to continue this item at the next meeting once more information could be presented to the Board. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

2016 PSTA Legislative Agendas – Mr. Miller presented the state and federal Legislative agendas which included much more detail than in the past, and also introduced strategies for each priority. He indicated that Ms. Rice and Ms. Long will accompany him to Washington D.C. to advocate for the federal priorities and also discuss low emission buses. Ms. Rice made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to accept the federal and state Legislative priorities.

Ms. Johnson mentioned a meeting that occurred between the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and Senator Latvala's Transportation Finance Committee. She said that she was unaware of this meeting and voiced her concern that there were claims made by participants that the TD program does not need additional funding.

In response to Chairperson Jonson's call for public comments, Mr. Rask commented on the state Legislative agenda and remarked that he believes it is misguided. There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

[Mr. Scott left the meeting at 1:07 PM and did not return.]

INFORMATION ITEM

Fare Structure Recommendations – Information was provided in the Board packet. Mr. Miller indicated that this item will be discussed at the September 9th Public Hearing at PSTA.

[Ms. Long left the meeting at 1:08 PM and did not return.]

MPO's Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Chairperson Jonson explained that this item ties into the fare structure recommendation and there was a recommendation from the LCB to work on the Haul Pass program.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Follow-Up – The report was included in the Board packet.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

Chairperson Jonson indicated that there is a Personnel Committee meeting on August 31st at 12:30 PM and a PSTA-HART Joint Executive Committee meeting on the same day starting at 2:00 PM.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Newton reminded everyone of the Public Workshop for the proposed fare increase being held on September 8th at Pinellas Technical College (PTEC) in St. Petersburg. He congratulated Mr. Diamond and Ms. Rice for being re-appointed to the PSTA Board.

Ms. Gerard mentioned the difficulties in getting the Chairperson's attention when members want to speak, suggesting the installation of a queuing system. Mr. Miller stated that PSTA's Director of Information Technology (IT) has already received some quotes for that type of system, along with other equipment upgrades for the Board Room.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Jonson adjourned the meeting at 1:13 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for September 30th at 6:00 PM.

Chairperson