



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 16, 2015**

The Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) held a meeting in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 4:00 PM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the May 19, 2015 minutes and the PSTA Customer Code of Conduct and to provide information on the FY2016 Draft Budget, Future Service Changes, and New Shelter Plan. The following members were present:

Present:

Elaine Mann, Committee Chair
Stephanie Leishman, Committee Vice-Chair
Lugene Blancher, Mid County
Sonny Flynn, Beaches
Gloria Lepik-Corrigan, North County
LeAnn McClravey, Mid County
Vivian Peters, Mid County
Jaksa Petrovic, Professional
Kimberly Rankine, DART
G.W. Rolle, South County
Christian Smith, Alt. Student
Lori Thomas, South County
Carson Zimmer, Alt. Professional

Absent:

Catherine Baranowski, Alt. South
Demetrius Sullivan, South County

Also Present:

Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Chair
Brad Miller, CEO
PSTA Staff Members

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Elaine Mann opened the meeting at 4:05 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes - Mr. Rolle made a motion, seconded by Ms. Flynn to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PSTA Customer Code of Conduct - Shelbie Harris, Superintendent of Transportation, presented a draft of the revised "PSTA Customer Code of Conduct" which replaces the current "Courtesy Guidelines". The new Code of Conduct was prepared based upon review of several other public transit systems, as well as input from PSTA Staff, bus operators, and TRAC members. The new draft lists 15 rules as compared to 5 on the Courtesy Guidelines, and is intended to emphasize strict enforcement so that customers will feel more comfortable and welcome to ride the bus.

TRAC asked that specific dress code requirements also be added to the Code of Conduct. Also of concern was how to address those who refused to move over or remove packages from the seat to allow others to sit. PSTA staff assured that operators are allowed to step in to resolve this problem as needed. Some rules were deemed open to interpretation such as the rule concerning weapons and how to define what a weapon is, questioning such items as a box cutter used for work or a baseball bat for recreational use. Staff advised that discretion be used as to how to handle these items as well as drinks such as water bottles or a covered/sealed cup of coffee.

The Committee was concerned about enforcement and was told by staff that drivers had authority to stop the bus and call for law enforcement to remove disruptive passengers from the bus. Repeat offenders are issued a trespass warrant and are not permitted to ride the bus for a period of six months. TRAC suggested considering a grievance process to allow passengers (who violate the code of conduct and whose riding privileges are revoked for the violation) to eventually be able to ride the bus again. Staff agreed to create such a policy and present it at a future meeting. PSTA plans to launch a marketing effort over the next several months which will highlight the new Code of Conduct, bringing it to the attention of the riders.

Ms. Harris asked the TRAC to approve a recommendation to the Board to change the guidelines. Ms. Flynn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Petrovic to recommend approval of the PSTA Customer Code of Conduct. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Fiscal Year 2016 Draft Budget - Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer presented the FY 2016 Draft Budget and its impact beyond 2016. By the end of Fiscal Year 2015, PSTA is anticipating a surplus of \$486,860. Next year will see a deficit of approximately \$382,000 which will continue to grow annually if no programs or adjustments are put into place to change this trend. Looking at all options, various savings and ways to increase revenue have been. These include administrative savings, fare adjustments, outsourced advertising, increasing the Ad Valorem millage rate, and various service adjustments. If decisions are made in before September, PSTA will accomplish a more sustainable budget and achieve a long term positive impact.

Ms. Leous pointed out that fare revenue is expected to decline as riders take advantage of the TD Discounted Bus Program. Although property values are going up, increasing the tax base collected by PSTA, a loss of over one entire year's worth of Ad Valorem revenue still occurs.

Some expenses are anticipated to increase with wages being the largest, increasing by \$1.8 M. Fringe Benefits will go up \$894,183 with a 7% increase in health insurance costs. Bus Repair will go up \$410,000 to assist in extending the useful life of the fleet. However, diesel fuel is expected to go down saving \$1,434,420.

As part of the Path Forward, PSTA is focusing on customer satisfaction allocating funds for training and customer surveys. Money has been allocated for a strategic marketing plan and 2 new cleaners will be hired to attend to better bus cleanliness. PSTA will also be investing in training and merit based compensation for all employees and governance training. A federal lobbyist will be hired to help locate additional government funding.

In order to sustain a sound financial plan, PSTA is prioritizing projects to move \$7M from deleted projects to bus replacements and will add \$15M from build up reserves. The proposed draft budget is down \$1.6M from the FY2015 adopted budget. The newly approved Community Bus Plan, plus new data driven analysis will save \$930,000.

The Committee asked questions concerning the Ad Valorem as well as the relationship between the TD program compared to standard bus passes. Staff reported a negative

impact of \$1.4M in FY15 due to the additional TD program members. Ms. Leous also explained that PSTA is changing how it handles fuel purchases and plans to lock-in the price at the lowest rate possible.

Future Service Changes - Chris Cochran, Senior Planner, introduced the proposed System Redesign Work Plan which is a step by step approach used to examine the PSTA System through a four-step process which includes Route Performance Evaluation, Route Redesign Concept Development, Public and Board Engagement and Recommended Action and Implementation. The plan looks at 10 groups or phases of redesigning system and applies the four-step process to each group. The groups are:

- Group 1 Lowest Performing Route Adjustments
- Group 2 Relocation of St. Petersburg Transfer Activity from Williams Park
- Group 3 Countryside/Safety Harbor/Oldsmar
- Group 4 Gateway Area
- Group 5 St. Petersburg/Pinellas Park/Largo
- Group 6 Clearwater/Palm Harbor/Dunedin
- Group 7 Gulfport/Pinellas Point/South St. Petersburg
- Group 8 Regional Express
- Group 9 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Beach Trolley Services
- Group 10 Route 52 Carillon

Mr. Cochran answered various questions from the Committee related to the changes of routes, particularly Williams Park and 444. He also addressed concerns about the ability for pedestrians to get to the bus stops they need to access, perhaps crossing heavily traveled thoroughfares in the process. Staff encouraged members to call PSTA to discuss concerns about specific locations so that PSTA can work with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the county to have the problem areas corrected and also promised that challenges will be addressed through community outreach as changes occur and that details of each of these plans will be brought to TRAC each month for their consideration.

New Shelter Plan - Chris Cochran, Senior Planner, presented the New Shelter Plan. The contract for new shelters was approved by the PSTA Board in March of 2015.. Staff has identified initial replacement locations which will include approximately 30 shelters. A distribution strategy has been developed that focuses customer needs taking into consideration locations that benefit the most riders, maximizing the area impact and taking into account geographic equity. The strategy also looks at community revitalization by complimenting existing and future plans, leveraging investments by other agencies and local jurisdictions, fostering partnership opportunities and supporting local economic development.

PSTA is recommending a balanced deployment which aims to maximize goals, assess replacements based on shelter condition and phase deployment by first concentrating on replacement and then expansion. A list was provided detailing 31 top priority replacement locations scheduled to be completed by January, 2016. Replaced shelters will be repurposed and used in other locations or used for parts to repair existing shelters.

A suggestion was made to offer kiosks within shelters for the purpose of purchasing tickets but was deemed cost prohibitive. However, the smart card and mobile application program to be implemented in 2016 would help to alleviate the need for on the purchases at shelters.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The committee was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 PM. The next meeting will be held on July 14, 2015 at 4:00 PM.