

**CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

**April 28, 2003
4:00 p.m.**

**STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH BUILDING
Conference Room 241, 243 South Allen Street**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Spychalski, Chairman
Donald Sherman, Vice-Chairman
Richard Kipp, Treasurer
Joseph Davidson
Gary Powers

OTHERS PRESENT: Hugh Mose, General Manager
Judith Minor, Director of Administration
L. Eric Bernier, Director of Service Development
Joseph Gilbert, Director of Transportation
Jacqueline Sheader, Marketing Coordinator
Diane Heichel, Executive Assistant
Richard McCarl, Borough Liaison

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Spychalski called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Spychalski called for comments or input from the general public. No public comments were presented.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. *Approval of Minutes of March 24, 2003 Board Meeting*

Mr. Sherman moved that the Board approve the minutes of the March 24, 2003, Board meeting. Mr. Powers seconded the motion. There being no further changes or discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

B. *Receipt of the March 2003 Finance Reports*

Mr. Sherman moved that the Board receive the March 2003 Finance Reports. Mr. Powers seconded the motion.

Ms. Minor stated that the Authority has begun drawing on the Federal operating funds, adding that she feels with the recent approval of the federal grant there will be no need to borrow during the year. The estimate for the State supplement is about \$1,000 higher than anticipated.

Ms. Minor also noted that the revenue tire line item looks high for March, but this actually represents two months' bill, since the February bill came in too late for the February Finance Reports. She also added that the utility expenses are high because of the cold winter months.

In response to Mr. Mose, Ms. Minor noted that OnePass sales include the PSU Ride-for-Five passes, which explains why the OnePass sales are higher than farebox revenue.

Referring to the Ridership Report, Mr. Mose reviewed the routes which have increased in ridership, noting that the Ride-for-Five program may be having a positive impact on neighborhood routes. Ms. Sheader also noted that there was some targeting marketing done on the C and F Routes, which may have resulted in additional ridership.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

C. *FY 2003/04 Budget Update*

Mr. Mose reported that the General Forum will meet this evening, which is the next step in the budget process. He expects that the General Forum will authorize the budget to be sent to the municipalities for their review and comments. Mr. Mose outlined the budget review process, noting that it needs final approval by the COG Finance Committee, the General Forum, and each municipality.

Mr. Mose also noted that College Township is concerned with the considerable increase in their local share and the reduction for Ferguson Township. However, they did not object to the overall 5% increase.

Chairman Spychalski commented on the formula for calculating local shares. Mr. Mose reviewed the fare-free zone routes, noting that there is no easy way to account for this in the existing formula. Mr. Mose continued to outline the University funding and how the municipalities are affected by the fare-free Centre Line trips.

No Board action was required.

D. *Proposed Service Changes*

Mr. Bernier reviewed the memo included in the Board packets outlining the proposed service changes to be implemented for the Fall Semester.

Mr. Bernier noted that the only new changes would be on the M and U Routes. Presently, the M Route only provides service to the Wal-Mart / Sam's Club shopping center on the in-bound trips. As a result of the new routing within the downtown and campus, there will be enough time to provide service to Wal-Mart on both the inbound and outbound trips. He also noted that some consideration was given to using the Route 220 bypass, but with the opening of the new road, traffic along Benner Pike is light enough to allow for easy travel, plus there are riders using the service along Benner Pike.

Mr. Bernier reviewed the proposed changes in the routing and schedule for the P Route and how the time changes coordinate better with the class schedules.

Mr. Bernier added that the RE Route will also begin using the existing stops along Pugh Street. This will enable riders along that corridor to have two resources, rather than having to wait for the P Route which will now only arrive every 65 minutes.

In response to Mr. Sherman, Mr. Bernier noted that the P Route bus does not continue out Pugh Street to Atherton because of the safety issue of pulling out onto Atherton without a traffic light.

Mr. Sherman moved that the Board approve the proposed service changes to be implemented this fall. Mr. Powers seconded the motion. In response to Mr. Sherman, Mr. Gilbert noted that full service will begin September 2. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

E. *Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan Goal and Objectives*

Mr. Mose introduced Ms. Trish Meek, Project Manager, Centre Region Planning Agency (CRPA).

Ms. Meek summarized the overview of the Long Range Transportation Plan and its Goal and Objectives, reviewing the memo and outline included in the Board packets. Ms. Meek also outlined the presentation schedule for presenting the plan to the municipalities across the county.

In response to Mr. Powers, Ms. Meek noted that as part of the existing plan, the agency will be developing a county wide network of bicycle paths. Ms. Meek noted that the State College Borough has a program already funded for installing bike path signs.

Chairman Spychalski noted that he is pleased to see the focus on pedestrians and how it plays a role in access to public transit. Chairman Spychalski reviewed several areas where pedestrian amenities are vital to public transportation. He feels that agencies in this region need to work on institutionalizing capital investments on that particular dimension. He added that several national newspapers, including USA Today, have recently run articles on this subject. Chairman Spychalski concluded by stating that he would like to see the region move forward with not only maximizing the use of bicycles, but also by making improvements on the pedestrian side.

Ms. Meek stated that one of the biggest challenges is retrofitting already developed areas with those pedestrian improvements.

In response to Mr. McCarl, Ms. Meek noted that while passenger rail facilities are not included in the current plan, this long range plan is looking ahead to the year 2030 and possibly even 2050. There was further discussion on possible needs for light rail service in the area. Chairman Spychalski briefly reviewed how other areas are reimplementing electric railways for urban use.

Mr. McCarl reviewed the new plans approved by the State College Borough for a loading and unloading zone on Beaver Avenue. Mr. Mose noted that this will have no effect on the bus stop locations along Beaver Avenue.

In response to Chairman Spychalski, there was further discussion regarding long range plans for rail service.

No Board action was required.

Signal Priority Project

Ms. Zilla reported that the presentation on the Signal Priority Project has been made to Ferguson Township, Patton Township and the Borough of State College. At this time it seems that Patton Township is in favor of the project, the Borough of State College still has some questions before giving their final approval, and Ferguson Township is against proceeding with this project at this time. The Borough encouraged Mr. Zilla to also make a presentation to College Township regarding the savings from enabling emergency vehicles to use this system. He also noted that PENNDOT would probably not be interested in funding this project if the transit buses were not authorized to use the system.

Mr. Zilla stated that he will return to the Board with a further update at a future meeting and will need the Board's approval of the plan at that time. Mr. Zilla reviewed the safety concerns presented by the Ferguson Township Police Department.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution Authorizing the filing of FY 2003/04 State Operating Assistance Grant

Ms. Minor noted that the State Operating Assistance Grant application is due by July 1 and the resolution included in the Board packets is part of that application process.

Mr. Powers moved that the Board adopt the enclosed resolution authorizing the filing of the FY 2003/04 State Operating Assistance Grant application. Mr. Sherman seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

B. FY 2003/04 Shared Ride Grant Application

Ms. Minor outlined the program and explained that staff has prepared the annual application to participate in the state's Shared Ride program which provides lottery funds to partially reimburse costs associated with Shared Ride paratransit service for senior citizens over the age of 65. This service is provided through the Centre Ride program under a subcontract with Handy Delivery, Inc.

Under this program, senior citizens pay 15% of the general public fare (currently \$8.35) established under the grant, or \$1.25 per trip. Lottery-based reimbursement provides the remaining 85% of the full fare, up to the state-established limit for each trip. The grant amount is based on estimated senior citizen ridership for FY 2003/04, but is subject to adjustment by PENNDOT both prior to approval and during the fiscal year, depending on legislative authorization levels, actual statewide lottery receipts, and ridership during the year.

Mr. Kipp moved that the Board authorize the filing and execution of the FY 2003/04 Shared Ride Grant Application. Mr. Powers seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Resolution Approving the FY 2003/2004 Grant Request for Dedicated and Supplemental Public Transportation Assistance Funds (PTAF) under Act 26 of 1991 and Act 3 of 1997

Ms. Minor reviewed the memo included in the Board packets, stating that PTAF funding annually distributes dedicated state tax revenues from various sources to each Pennsylvania transit system. Although funding is restricted to capital projects, a limited portion may be used each year for asset maintenance and is accounted for as operating subsidy. Any asset maintenance amounts not used in the year of allocation carry forward for capital acquisitions only. PTAF capital grants finance either 96 2/3% of the total project cost or take the place of 16 2/3% state bond funding on projects with 80% federal funding.

The Authority's estimated FY 2003/04 PTAF allocation is \$640,232, slightly below the current year grant. As in the past, the maximum allowed for asset maintenance (\$320,116 for the coming year) will be applied to operating assistance; this amount is approximately \$2,000 less than what has been included in the DRAFT budget, but the small reduction can be made up easily during the year. Note: CATA's final grant will depend on actual revenues for the year, and therefore may vary from the estimate, although any such adjustments should only impact the amount available for capital projects.

Mr. Sherman moved that the Board adopt the enclosed resolution for FY 2003/2004 Act 3 and Act 26 dedicated PTAF funds and direct that the grant application be submitted to PENNDOT. Mr. Kipp seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the meeting passed unanimously.

D. Centre Ride Contract for FY 2003/04

Mr. Mose noted that historically the Authority has contracted out the operation of Centre Ride, our paratransit service for seniors and persons with disabilities. With the current contract due to expire at the end of June, the staff has circulated a Request for Proposals (RFP), to which responses were due on April 18.

Mr. Mose reported that the solicitation elicited only one response, from Handy Delivery, the current contractor. The Director of Administration and the Director of Transportation are currently reviewing the submittal to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of the RFP. Assuming that it does, they will then attempt to negotiate price, insurance coverage, contract duration and other terms and conditions, as provided in the solicitation.

With the Board not expected to meet again until almost the end of June, the staff would like approval to execute a contract, subject to the Board's ratification at the next meeting. Authorizing the staff to enter into such an agreement will allow the prospective contractor to mobilize in May and June, so that there will be no interruption of service at the end of the current contract period.

In response to Mr. Sherman, Mr. Gilbert noted that there hasn't been another competitor for many years. He added that although there is only one proposal, the costs are not out of line with the industry standards. Ms. Minor stated that the increase this year is a result of a substantial increase in Handy Delivery's insurance premiums. Ms. Minor reviewed the insurance issues presently under discussion.

In response to Mr. Kipp, Ms. Minor confirmed that this is a DBE qualified business, which makes it easy for the Authority to meet the DBE goals approved by the Board.

In response to Chairman Spychalski, Mr. Gilbert noted that there are very few complaints and Ms. Byers is quick to respond to any complaints or problems which should occur.

Mr. Powers moved that the Board authorize the General Manager to execute a new contract with Handy Delivery for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003. Mr. Kipp seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

E. FY 2003/2004 Marketing Plan

Ms. Jacqueline Sheader, CATA's Marketing Coordinator, reviewed the Marketing Plan included in the Board packets. Ms. Sheader pointed out that she has been looking at alternative marketing mediums to avoid the costly print and radio advertising.

Ms. Sheader also reported that the CATA email contact list continues to grow daily. Presently, she is targeting non-student riders such as new residents, seniors, and youth. One of the new programs is the Summer Youth Program. CATA will provide a three-month summer pass at the one month pass price of \$49 for youths under the age of 18. She also added that she is doing target marketing for the Centre Ride, Park-&-Ride and RideShare programs.

In response to Mr. Sherman, Ms. Sheader agreed that there has been little marketing efforts for the CATA Family Pass program and perhaps a feature article in the *CDT, Town & Gown* or *State College Magazine* would be a good opportunity to begin a marketing campaign for this program.

Mr. Mose also noted that there have been requests from PSU employees who have the Ride-for-Five pass, but would also like to use that as the half cost of a Family Pass. At this time, CATA is not prepared to offer the Family Pass in conjunction with the Ride-for-Five program.

Chairman Spychalski complimented Ms. Sheader on the progress she's made in marketing.

In response to Mr. Kipp, Mr. Mose confirmed that a PSU employee does not have to have a parking permit to turn in to be eligible for the Ride-for-Five program.

Mr. Mose also noted that next year will mark CATA's 30th anniversary. Other areas which he'd like to see some progress made would be to get a pilot program going where the Borough would help a resident with the cost of a bus pass rather than their having to drive and park downtown. He'd also like to see the downtown businesses subsidize bus passes for their employees.

There was further discussion on commuter diversity. Mr. Bernier pointed out the differences in non-student ridership and how the majority of commuters who do not work downtown require transfers to get to the other major employment areas.

Ms. Minor pointed out the financial impact of discounted programs, noting that the Ride-for-Five pass is discounted at \$9.00 a pass. However, Mr. Mose added that the revenue received is probably higher than the cash fares would be for the actual number of rides taken.

In response to Mr. Sherman, Ms. Sheader stated that the summer is the best time to implement new ridership programs because ridership is normally at its lowest.

For discussion only; no formal action was required.

F. Family Pass Program

As discussed with the Marketing Plan, Mr. Mose noted that at the March 24 Board meeting, the possibility of eliminating CATA's existing Family Pass fare option was discussed. In response to the Board, Jacqueline Sheader has researched the issue and possible actions. A summarized memo, which includes her recommendation to continue the program, was included in the Board packets.

G. *May (June 2) Board Meeting*

Chairman Spychalski noted that staff is recommending that the May Board meeting scheduled on June 2 be cancelled due to a lack of agenda items.

Mr. Kipp moved that the Board cancel the June 23, 2003 meeting due to a lack of agenda items. Mr. Sherman seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. *General Manager's Report*

Mr. Mose reported on the following items:

Open House: Mr. Mose reminded the Board that CATA will be holding its First Annual Open House on May 8, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. in conjunction with Ferguson Township.

AFSCME Election of Officers: Mr. Mose reported that the AFSCME Local 1203-B held their annual election of officers on Sunday and the following is the new slate of officers for this year.

President:	Chris Deck	Secretary:	Karen Ilgen
Vice President:	Rex Fleming	Treasurer:	Kent Wilson
Union Steward:	Larry Bartges	Shop Steward:	Mark Young
Driver Steward:	Chuck Beran		

Late-night LOOPS: With all the recent reports of problems on the late-night LOOPS, Mr. Mose noted that he decided to ride along on some trips from 11:00 p.m. until after 2:00 a.m. He observed that there are certainly a lot of people riding the buses at that time of night. Although nothing was extremely out of line, he observed that some drivers are very good at dealing with this particular clientele, while others are less successful. He also noted that during the day, there are periods of low ridership, but late at night it is incessant, with no lull in ridership at all. He feels that perhaps his presence may have deterred improper behavior; however, there are simply too many riders loading from East Halls for the service available.

Hershey Conference: Mr. Mose noted that he will be attending the PPTA Conference in Hershey this week. Eric will be in charge during his absence.

LOOP/LINK Service: Mr. Mose stated that on Thursday, May 1, the LOOPS and LINK will begin an early morning service starting at 4:45 a.m. Purchased by PSU, this service is an add-on to the original contract. Chairman Spychalski expressed his concern that this could be the beginning of an erosion of regular Centre Line ridership, adding that maybe it won't be that significant.

Mr. Kipp reported that PSU employees from outer parts of Boalsburg and Harris Acres are looking for service extensions to their neighborhoods to enable them to use the bus from home rather than having to drive to Lot 44 and then take the bus. Mr. Mose noted that PSU will be implementing the \$5 a month parking permit as of May 1.

Employee Breakfast: Mr. Mose reminded the Board that the CATA Employee Appreciation Breakfast will be on Thursday, May 15, 5:45 - 10:00 a.m. Board members and their families are welcome to attend.

Bike-to-Work Day: Ms. Sheader noted that she will be participating in Bike-to-Work Day on Friday, May 16, at College and Allen.

B. *Service Development Report*

Mr. Bernier called the Board's attention to the new format, stating that he'd like to continue with that format if the Board has no objections. Chairman Spychalski expressed his approval of the report and Mr. Bernier's efforts to provide an update on the activities.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sherman moved for adjournment. Mr. Kipp seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Spsychalski adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.