

**Centre Area Transportation Authority
Board Work Session
Minutes**

December 17, 2009
4:00 PM
CATA BOARD ROOM
2081 W. Whitehall Road, State College, PA 16801

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Spsychalski, Chairman
Joe Davidson, Vice-Chairman
Richard Kipp, Treasurer
Gary Powers
Kathryn Bittner

STAFF: Hugh Mose, General Manager
Judith Minor, Director of Administration
Sherry Snyder, Director of Operations
Mark Kutzer, Director of Maintenance
Eric Bernier, Service Development Manager
Jackie Sheader, Marketing Manager
Julie Hartley, Human Resource Manager
Greg Kausch, Transportation Planner
Marsha Kyper, Assistant to the General Manager

Call to Order

Chairman Spsychalski called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion Items:

1. Mid-year Recap

Hugh Mose referenced the memo in the Board packet which he prepared to give a Mid-year Recap of the goals set by the Board for him and the Staff.

Kathryn Bittner arrived at 4:30 PM.

2. Funding Update. Hugh reported that at this point we do not have much information on either state or federal funding for the coming year, and that with continued declines in sales tax revenues, the best we can hope for from the State is the same level of transit assistance we received this year. Hugh went on to state that in Washington, Congress has just passed its FY 2009/10 omnibus appropriations bill, which increases the federal Section 5307 formula assistance program just slightly, and that with everything else that's going on in Washington, the passage of a successor to SAFETEA-LU has been put off, for probably another year. Judi Minor referenced the spread sheet in the Board packet that was provided to give a general idea of

where we think we will be with our Operating Budget for next year and continuing out to FY 2013/14. The Board received the information for its edification.

3. Fares and Local Shares. Hugh Mose stated that in 2010 it will have been nine years since we have raised fares, and that while we could survive another year or two without an increase, the “status quo” spreadsheet Judi Minor has put together shows that if we don’t raise fares, we will be in financial trouble in FY 2012/13. Hugh further stated that if we do raise rates, the next logical **CATABUS** base fare would be \$1.50, with **CATARIDE** moving to \$2.00 for seniors and \$3.00 for persons with disabilities, and with corresponding increases to pass and token prices. Hugh went on to say that regarding local shares, after six years of 5.0% increases, for the past two years we have not requested additional funds from our local municipalities, and that we believe that we could go one more year before Act 44 will require an increase in local shares, but just like with fares, an increase now will help keep CATA in the black over the long term, as shown on the second spreadsheet provided from Judi Minor which is in each Board packet. After brief discussion, the Board concurred that it would be in favor of considering increasing fares and local shares in FY 2010/11.

4. Capital Planning. Hugh Mose referred to a third spreadsheet in each Board packet, prepared by Judi Minor, that shows CATA’s Capital Improvement Program going out five years, which is taken directly from the FY 2009/10 Budget. Hugh stated that the report is modified to reflect new developments that have occurred over the past nine months and to show which projects are funded, and which ones we still need to find money for. Hugh mentioned that the purpose of having this item on the agenda is simply to refresh Board member’s memories concerning those major investments that the staff believes CATA will need to be making over the coming years, and to clarify how important it will be to aggressively pursue federal earmarks, CMAQ and JARC funding, and any discretionary state funding that may be available. The Board received the information.

5. Miller Formula. Hugh Mose stated that several years back, at the request of State College Borough, the COG Finance Committee considered the issue of whether the COG Formula used to allocate costs for other regional services should be used for CATA’s local shares, and that the CATA staff supported the change, because they felt that it would greatly simplify our cost allocation process. Hugh further stated, that not all of the municipalities agreed, so no change was made, but that with the initiation of service to Halfmoon Township, the issue may arise again. Hugh referred to the following table which shows the impacts on each CATA member municipality, but went on to state that there are other issues, such as cost allocations for outlying municipalities and the handling of public-private partnership revenues, that may be more difficult to account for without the Miller Formula framework.

COG Municipality	Miller Formula	COG Percentages	COG Formula	Difference
State College Boro	\$72,500.00	25.23%	\$70,088.18	(\$2,411.82)
Ferguson Township	\$76,692.00	27.76%	\$77,116.45	\$424.45
Patton Township	\$61,083.00	19.91%	\$55,309.38	(\$5,773.62)
College Township	\$46,439.00	18.08%	\$50,225.70	\$3,786.70
Harris Township	\$21,083.00	9.02%	\$25,057.29	\$3,974.29
Total	\$277,797.00	100.00%	\$277,797.00	\$0.00

The Board concurred that it needed to give further consideration to its position on adding Halfmoon Township to the Authority and the Miller vs. the COG Formula.

Board members and Staff took a meal break at 6:00 PM

6. Service Planning. Hugh Mose reported that although CATA's financial situation may limit our ability to expand service over the next year, it would still be appropriate to discuss the list of unmet needs and the criteria staff has developed to help prioritize those needs should we find ourselves in a position to put additional service on the street in the coming year. Eric Bernier referenced the memo he had provided in each Board packet that outlines where we currently are in both of those areas. The Board gave its concurrence on the information provided in Eric's memo, which it agreed could serve as a starting point for the annual Public Hearing that the Board typically holds at its meeting in February.

7. Late Night White LOOP. Eric Bernier reported that the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA), the Penn State student government, has requested that the White LOOP be extended for two additional hours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Eric further stated that the UPUA apparently has funds available to support the cost of the service, and they would like the extension to begin with the Spring Semester. Sherry Snyder stated that after staff's discussion of the operational issues, she thinks that we can put the service on the street without too much difficulty on a trial basis in the spring of 2010. Eric stated that we do not yet have a confirmation that the University administration will allow the UPUA to use their funds for this purpose, but that we would like to know the consensus of the Board as to whether it would agree to a trial or not. The Board concurred that it would support a trial extension of the White LOOP service if Penn State University authorized and agreed to the trial, and if there was a well defined exit strategy and means of gauging the success or failure of the trial.

8. Long-range Planning. Hugh Mose reported that the CCMPO is beginning an update to the Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and that one of the first steps of the process is to solicit project requests from municipalities and other entities like CATA. Greg further stated that most of CATA's projects are either operating assistance or the routine replacement of vehicles and other capital items, which do not require individual requests. Greg went on to state that any new projects that the Board is interested in pursuing that are not already on the Transportation Improvement Plan, either capital investments or service expansions, need to be identified. Examples might be regional commuter service in corridors beyond those already identified, further expansion of our Cato Park facility, or bus rapid transit or another alternative to the increasingly congested North Atherton corridor. Greg Kausch referred to a memo provided in each Board packet listing potential projects identified by staff. The Board concurred not to eliminate from or add any items to the Project list at this time, and that the number one priority on the list is the expansion of the Maintenance Facility.

9. CATA/CCOT Evaluation. Hugh Mose stated that at the November 23 Board meeting Walt Cherwony had made a presentation on the evaluation of paratransit services operated by CATA and the Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT), and that two of the options that he recommended for further consideration are consolidation of services – either under CATA or under CCOT. Hugh further reported that the staff has gotten together and discussed the ramifications of both of these alternatives, and has some very significant reservations.

Greg Kausch presented the staff recommendation of Option II, which is to form a coordination committee which he stated would: require little or no expense; allow CATA to protect the **CATARIDE** brand; and not represent a long term commitment. The Board concurred that it was not in favor of the option which would turn all paratransit over to the County to operate, but that it would consider the option of CATA taking over the County's program, and that a coordinating committee might be the best option at this time.

10. Major Projects for FY 2009/10. Sherry Snyder reported that major projects in Operations for FY 2009/10 include: bid repackaging; renovations to the Dispatch area; development of a new Operations Reporting Plan; the Safety and Training Committee projects and process. Mark Kutzer reported that the eighth of the ten LYNX buses should be on the street by the week of

December 21st; that the Transit Resource Center has been hired to provide consulting services on bus specifications; bid specifications are being prepared for replacement of the CNG tanks on all of the Orions in 2010, and for the procurement of a new Dump Truck. Mark further stated that he is working on the development of a reward system for mechanics who receive A.S.E certifications. The Board received the information.

Adjournment.

With no further discussion, Chairman Spychalski adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Executive Session.

The Board reconvened for an Executive Session to discuss personnel issues including item number eleven on the agenda, the Pay Plan for Non-represented Employees.