

CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
and PUBLIC HEARING

MINUTES
February 27, 2006
4:00 PM

STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH BUILDING
Borough Council Chambers, 243 S. Allen Street

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

STAFF PRESENT: Hugh Mose, General Manager
Judith Minor, Director of Administration
Eric Bernier, Service Development Manager
Jacqueline Sheader, Marketing Manager
Terri Quici, Executive Assistant
Amanda Jones, Human Resources Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Tim Geibel, CRPA, Transportation Planner
Craig Humphrey, State College Borough Liaison
Elizabeth Gorham, State College Borough Council Member

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Spychalski called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM and announced that an Executive Session took place on 2/24/06 to discuss personnel matters.

II. PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Chairman Spychalski opened the floor for public suggestions/comments regarding improvement for bus service.

Debbie Cleeton from Bellefonte spoke first and stated that she had conducted her own ridership survey on the X Route last week. She noted the heavily used stops are at the YMCA in Bellefonte and at College and Allen in State College. She stated that CATA needs to keep the service on the X Route and she is willing to conduct more surveys. Ms. Cleeton also noted that the "Santa Bus" did not make it to the X Route this year, so she bought a roll of tokens, which she used one day for those who did not have bus passes. She said that 15 of the 22 riders did not have a pass. Eric Bernier stated that collecting data on ridership by stop is very valuable but labor intensive. Mr. Bernier accepted the report from Ms. Cleeton.

Greg Boyer, a Penn State student, asked if staff has thought about implementing a tracking system that would provide information about where the buses are. Tim Geibel stated that CATA is currently working on deploying an Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS) initiative that will provide automatic vehicle location (AVL) as well as stop annunciation, internet mapping displays, bus stop display boards, and eventually cell phone "broadcasts". Joe Davidson asked Mr. Boyer if he has experienced these technologies. Mr. Boyer indicated that he has on SEPTA in Philadelphia and it was helpful.

Camella K., a Penn State student, indicated that she and her roommates are moving from State College Park to The Pointe because they feel the bus service is much better there. She also stated that she feels that the Blue LOOP and the N, V, and W bus routes are very good. She wondered why the buses don't show up on time at State College Park. Hugh Mose explained how service is tailored to each area and noted that perhaps more service is needed along Martin Street.

Edie Lesk, a State College newcomer, requested that a list be developed of all the shops in the area. She stated that she has called shops in the area and they did not know which bus route served their location.

Chairman Spychalski thanked everyone for their comments. Eric Bernier explained that any additional comments will continue to be received during the planning process. Mr. Bernier stated that staff has already reviewed comments received throughout the year and has developed a preliminary draft service plan for the March Board Work Session.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes of January 16, 2006 Board Meeting

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Joe Davidson moved to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2006 Board Meeting. Richard Kipp seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Receipt of December 2005 and January 2006 Finance Reports

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to receive the December 2005 and January 2006 Finance Reports. Gary Powers moved to receive the Finance Reports. Kathryn Bittner seconded.

Judi Minor stated that she has begun work on the budget estimates. Ms. Minor noted that fuel expenses will be very high and Farebox, OnePass, and Football Shuttle revenues are over budget. Chairman Spychalski noted that we have reached 85% of the fuel budget already. Ms. Minor indicated that if prices continue to fall, fuel cost may not be as much of a concern as originally thought.

Hugh Mose reported on the Fare Media and Ridership Reports. Mr. Mose stated that practically every category of ridership is up.

With no further comments, Chairman Spychalski called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Policy Adoption and Review

Amanda Jones stated that copies of the policies reviewed at the January 16, 2006 meeting were in the Board packets. Ms. Jones stated that it is recommended that the board adopt the policies with the suggested changes. Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to adopt policies reviewed at January 16, 2006 meeting. Richard Kipp moved to adopt the Political Activity Policy, Procurement Procedures Policy, Smoke-Free Workplace Policy, Sexual Abuse-Prevention Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy. Joe Davidson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Amanda Jones noted that polices for review this month are travel-related policies and include Business Expense, Mileage Reimbursement, Lodging Expenses, Meal Expenses, Non-Reimbursable Expenses, Expense Documentation and Temporary Cash Advance. Ms. Jones

indicated that staff has no recommended changes and asked the Board to review the policies and offer input to staff.

D. Budget Planning Discussion

Hugh Mose stated that a memo included in the Board Packet discusses program and staffing enhancements to be considered for inclusion in the preliminary Draft Budget. Mr. Mose stated that CATA is in a position, for the first time since the late 1990's, to consider budgeting for increased bus service, new public transportation programs and additional staff, and he wanted to provide the Board with a list of proposed initiatives for review and discussion at the Board Work Session on March 23. Mr. Mose then provided general information about the programs and additional staff needs, which includes: Building up our Operating Reserve, Creating a Capital Reserve, Increasing Centre Line Service, Investing More in Marketing, Implementing Regional Commuter Bus Service, Starting a Vanpool Program, and the addition of skilled Maintenance staff and a Safety/Training Officer.

Joe Davidson asked if the list was in any priority. Mr. Mose stated that building reserves and additional bus service is the most important but that the rest are not in any particular order. Chairman Spychalski stated his support for additional Marketing. Kathryn Bittner supported the order in which they were presented. Board members were in general agreement that the rank order is appropriate.

E. Public Transportation Policy

Tim Geibel reported that there has been discussion at the COG level as to how the community is affected by transportation decisions made by CATA, Penn State University and individual municipalities. Mr. Geibel stated that the Transportation Committee has been reviewing CATA's Strategic Plan since April 2005, focusing on the operation of public transportation services in the community; future use of public transportation in the community; financing of public transportation; and CATA's relationship with Penn State University. Mr. Geibel stated that at the conclusion of the discussions, the Transportation Committee recommended the following points of emphasis be forwarded to the COG General Forum and the CATA Board of Directors to help guide their efforts as the FY 2006/2007 Budget and future budgets are prepared:

1. The Centre Region municipalities would benefit from transit service to areas outside the Region, and potentially could be asked to provide a level of financial support for such service, although it is important for municipalities outside the Region to find a mechanism to support transit service provided to their residents.

2. CATA should continue to work with Penn State University to find the best method of encouraging transit ridership to campus.

3. CATA should continue to dedicate resources to promoting alternative modes of transportation for the single occupant automobile. Specifically, CATA should continue the RideShare program and carpool matching services.

4. CATA service must remain as convenient and reliant as possible to meet the mobility needs of the Region's residents and decrease the reliance on the automobile.

Richard Kipp asked if the word "reliant" is intended to be "reliable." Mr. Geibel responded that the Transportation Committee had specifically chosen the word "reliant." Joe Davidson asked if the rankings are prioritized. Mr. Geibel stated that he didn't think they were priority-ranked but noted that they felt transportation in the community is a priority.

Mr. Mose stated that this issue will be on the agenda of tonight's COG General Forum meeting and that he had asked Mr. Geibel to provide this information so that the Board is aware of these discussions. Chairman Spychalski acknowledged Craig Humphrey and Elizabeth Goreham's attendance at the meeting and thanked them for their support on the Transportation Committee.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution and Agreements to authorize CATA's membership in the Centre Region Insurance Cooperative and the PA Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative

Amanda Jones provided the Board with copies of the Resolution and Agreements which would authorize CATA's membership in the Centre Region Insurance Cooperative (CRIC) and the PA Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative (PMHIC). Ms. Jones stated that the signed Resolution and Agreements would be forwarded to Benecon with the proper documents.

Mr. Mose asked Amanda to provide information about who is participating. Ms. Jones stated that Ferguson Township, Patton Township, COG, CATA, and State College Borough are the participating membership. Ms. Jones further noted that a Board of Directors will be created from members of the CRIC to manage the bank account, review claims and bills, etc. Ms. Jones also stated that the agreement is for three years, after which a member can opt out after appropriate notification.

Ms. Jones explained that three separate actions are needed. The Board should first adopt a resolution authorizing CATA's membership in the CRIC. Once that is enacted, two separate but virtually identical agreements, one for CRIC and one for PMHIC, need to be approved.

Joe Davidson moved that the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing CATA to join with other municipal entities as a member of Centre Region Insurance Cooperative (CRIC). Richard Kipp seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Gary Power moved that the Board adopt the Agreement to enter into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement for the purpose of joining the CRIC as a participating member. Kathryn Bittner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Richard Kipp moved that the Board adopt the Agreement to enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement for the purpose of joining the PMHIC as a participating member. Kathryn Bittner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. CNG Fueling Facility Engineering Contract

Hugh Mose stated that one of CATA's major work activities this year is to upgrade our CNG fueling station. Mr. Mose stated that over the past several months staff members have been negotiating with Basic Systems, Inc. for the engineering services necessary to replace the compressors. Mr. Mose included a copy of Basic's proposal for the Board's review.

Mr. Mose noted that because of the very specialized nature of the work and the fact that no other firm has knowledge of our existing system, the Procurement Policy allows for sole-source procurement for these services. Mr. Mose stated that even though no other firms had been competing for the work, he felt that the price of \$82,208 was large enough to warrant the Board's consideration.

Gary Powers asked when work would begin. Mr. Mose stated that there is currently a back-order for compressors due to the increase in gas exploration, so it would most likely begin in May 2007. Mr. Davidson expressed concern about the overall cost of the work. In response, Mr. Mose offered to get a more detailed breakdown of the scope of work. Chairman Spychalski noted his concern about the reference to alternative electric backup due to possible future increases in electric rates, which would affect expenses.

Joe Davidson moved that the Board authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Basic Systems Inc. for the engineering services necessary for the replacement of CATA's CNG fueling station, with the assurance that in case of catastrophic failure CNG fuel is ensured for CATA's use. Gary Powers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. General Manager's Report

Mr. Mose began his report stating that Joe Gilbert and three other staff members are in Owosso, Michigan to visit Midwest Bus Rebuilders and learn all about rebuilding buses. Mr. Mose reported that the five old cut-away buses have found new homes: two will go to CPI for training classes and three will go to DuFast Transit in DuBois, PA. Mr. Mose stated that Jackie Sheader will be offering a CALL class on how to ride public transportation. He also reported that it appears that an operating agreement has been reached regarding the Schlow Library office; it is scheduled on the agenda of the Library Board in March. Mr. Mose lastly reported on CNG purchase prices. Mr. Mose stated that CNG was purchased for the first time this fiscal year at an amount below budget and it has been a remarkable turnaround from the \$15/mcf prices paid late in 2005.

B. Service Development Report

Eric Bernier reported that there has been lots of planning activity in the area over the past few weeks. He noted development in Patton Township with the second Premier theatre in Harris Township with the development of the Harpster Farm, on the Penn State Campus in which Graduate Circle is being redeveloped, and in Benner Township with the Nittany Glen development of 400+ units. Mr. Bernier also noted that ridership was up 14% during the extended LOOP service for Thon.

C. Other – Reschedule May 22 and June 26, 2006 Regular Board Meetings

Chairman Spychalski stated that due to his schedule he is not able to attend the May 22 and June 26 Board meetings. Chairman Spychalski suggested consolidating the two meetings into one meeting at the beginning of June 2006.

Joe Davidson moved to cancel both the May 22 and June 26 Board meetings and set a special meeting for June 5th. Gary Powers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Richard Kipp moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 PM. Kathryn Bittner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board reconvened in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.