

**CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
And PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES**

February 25, 2008
4:00 PM

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

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

STAFF PRESENT: Hugh Mose, General Manager
 Judith Minor, Director of Administration
 Joe Gilbert, Director of Transportation
 Sherry Snyder, Asst. Director of Transportation
 Jacqueline Sheader, Marketing Manager
 Dina Ruggiero, Executive Assistant
 Melissa Hnatkovich, Human Resources Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT: Theresa Lafer, State College Borough Liaison

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Spsychalski called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM.

II. PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMEMT

Prior to receiving suggestions from the public, Chairman Spsychalski called on Jackie Sheader to give a presentation regarding the proposed service enhancements for the upcoming Fiscal Year. Ms. Sheader read a brief summary and identified priorities in two lists. The first list of priorities is aimed at restoring service to areas that have been cut over the years. The second list of priorities will require additional lead time, but are recognized as service needs in the future. Chairman Spsychalski clarified for the Board and everyone else in attendance that the first list of priorities are the service enhancements that may be possible in the upcoming fiscal year and the second list of priorities are long term service enhancements that would require additional resources before they could be implemented. Chairman Spsychalski then opened the floor for public suggestions and comments regarding bus service improvements.

Mr. Jolly Harris, a Bellefonte resident, stated that CATA does a very good job regarding service considering the resources that are available and the complicated funding. Mr. Harris suggested adding extra service to the P Route (University Park Airport). He would like to see additional service that coordinates with the afternoon and late night flights although he does not think that all day service is needed.

Mr. Cary Supalo, a State College resident, also stated his support of service to the Airport; however, he would like to see all day service. He stated that due to delayed flights it can prove to be a challenge to

ride the bus home without having to wait for long periods of time. Mr. Supalo stated that all day service would benefit employees of the airport as well as others who frequent the airport simply to watch the planes. Mr. Supalo suggested adding Saturday service to the airport as well. Mr. Supalo suggested the renaming of the LOOP's back to Campus Loop and Town Loop. He feels that the renaming will help riders as it will be more apparent as to where the bus is going. Mr. Supalo suggested that the Blue and White LOOP buses be put on a schedule, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, when they run at 20 minute intervals. He also suggested bus service prior to 7 a.m. system-wide if possible for those people who work early in the morning or who schedule their work day around the bus schedule. Mr. Supalo suggested 24/7 access by telephone for bus schedule information. Mr. Supalo also suggested adding more frequency on the X Route through Pleasant Gap and Bellefonte.

Ms. Michelle Bernetskie, a State College resident, offered suggestions regarding increased frequency on the N/R/V Routes, especially on the weekends. Ms. Bernetskie also supported the suggestion of the buses beginning earlier in the day (prior to 7 a.m.). She also stated that she feels that CATA does a good job and would really like to see some of the enhancements happen.

Chairman Spychalski indicated that there were several additional suggestions received from the public either by traditional mail or by email that will be taken into consideration along with those received at the hearing. Hugh Mose thanked everyone for their comments and reminded them that they can contact CATA at any time with their comments and/or suggestions. He stated that CATA will try their best to accommodate the public with the resources that they have to provide the best service that they can. With no further citizens coming forward, Chairman Spychalski closed the hearing, thanking everyone for his or her comments.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Arthur Lesk asked the status of electronic signs at the bus stops that would inform riders how long until the next bus will arrive. Hugh Mose indicated that the project is being worked on; however, it has turned out to be a much more involved project than originally anticipated. The first stop to have the electronic signage will be at the Pattee Library. Next to be installed will be at the Schlow Library. There are questions as to how the signs would be incorporated at the College and Allen stop. Mr. Mose explained that the some of the delays are due to the complexity of our transit system and how the technology works. Hugh asked for the public to remain patient and assured that the problems are being worked out.

Michelle Bernetskie offered comments on the accessibility of bus stops on the N/R/V Routes during the winter months when there is snow on the ground. She offered that the bus stop behind Giant at Martin Street and the stop at Balfurd's on S. Atherton Street are not cleared of snow adequately enough and are difficult to navigate. She also indicated that curb cut-outs are not cleared of snow as well as they could be. She indicated that the snow removal at the bus stops needs to have more attention. Hugh Mose indicated that CATA does the best it can to clear the snow, but it is not possible to clear all 700 stops and asked her for specific examples. Ms. Bernetskie indicated the stops at Executive House, Lion's Gate and Balfurd's are stops needing attention. Hugh stated for bus stops that are directly in front of an establishment, it is the owner's responsibility to clear a pathway out to the curb, but bus stops such as Balfurd's are orphans and that is where CATA should be able to help out.

John Eagan, resident of State College, seconded the statements of Ms. Bernetskie. Mr. Eagan indicated that the bus stop locations are a major problem, especially for those with disabilities. He stated that CATA tends to locate and re-locate stops in the middle of a block and in the winter this causes a great problem. One stop in particular that Mr. Eagan finds unsafe is at College and Sparks. Another stop that he finds to be dangerous is at the Graduate on Atherton Street. Mr. Eagan stated that he has talked with Mr. Mose previously about these stops. Mr. Eagan asked what insurance company covers CATA for liability and Mr. Mose indicated that CATA uses a transit insurance pool called SAFTI. Hugh asked Mr.

Eagan to contact the CATA office and they would be able to provide the contact information for SAFTI. Mr. Eagan also inquired how much the technology system is costing CATA. Mr. Mose stated that he believes the federal earmark amount to be around \$584,000. Mr. Eagan would like to have a response to his questions on the placement of bus stops. Hugh indicated that he would follow up with him.

Cary Supalo stated that with spring around the corner, it is very difficult to step off a bus into soggy, wet ground as opposed to concrete. He stated that on occasion, bus drivers will drop him past the bus stop to avoid the wet ground and he would hate for drivers to get in trouble for this.

Chairman Spychalski stated that if there were no additional public comments, that he would like for Hugh Mose to make an introduction. Mr. Mose introduced and welcomed Ms. Theresa Lafer, the new State College Borough Council Liaison. Ms. Lafer echoed the concerns of Mr. Supalo in regards to stepping onto wet grass when getting off the bus. She agreed that there needs to be increased frequency on the N/R/V Routes during the day and on the weekends. Ms. Lafer indicated that she would address the concerns of snow removal, curb cut-outs and pavement planning with the Borough.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. *Approval of Minutes of January 14th, 2008 Board Meeting*

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Gary Powers moved to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2008 Board Meeting. Richard Kipp seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. *Approval of Minutes of January 15th, 2008 Work Session*

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Richard Kipp moved to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2008 Work Session. Gary Powers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

C. *Receipt of the December 2007 & January 2008 Finance Reports*

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to receive the December 2007 & January 2008 Finance Reports. Richard Kipp moved to receive the Finance Reports. Gary Powers seconded.

Judi Minor provided a brief review of various line items. Gary Powers questioned how much CNG fuel has been purchased. Judi stated that fuel has been purchased for March and half of April and May. Ms. Minor further explained that even though pricing for CNG has gone up, all of the fuel that has been purchased thus far has been under budget. Judi reminded the Board that through September 2009 the revenue vehicle fuel budget is reduced by a tax credit, which is about \$250,000 per year. The budget will need to be revised upward if the tax credit expires. There have been discussions to extend the tax credit, but no final decision has been made.

Hugh Mose reported that ridership on Centre Ride was up marginally for January compared to 2007. Hugh noted continued strong performance of individual One Passes and PSU's "Ride for \$5" passes, continuing the trend that has been ongoing for more than the past year. Hugh also noted that Park & Ride, tokens and Centre Ride coupon sales were down for the month of January.

Hugh introduced a new report to the Board on CENTRE COMMUTE and gave a brief summary of the report and an explanation as to what the numbers represent. Joe Davidson asked for an explanation of the number listed under the "Vanpool Passenger Trips". Hugh Mose explained that the number represents the number of single occupant automobile trips that were taken off the

road in one month's time. Chairman Spychalski commented on the revenues and expenses for January. Judi Minor explained that there are additional expenses for the vanpool program, such as the Rideshare Coordinator's salary and benefits, that are not shown on this report that should be taken into consideration.

Hugh Mose stated that ridership on Centre Line for the month of January was up 13% opposed to last year, noting that there was one more Full Service day this year. Ridership was also up 10% on the LOOP/LINK.

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

D. *Policy Review*

Missy Hnatkovich presented the first half of the Policy Manual that has been selected for review. Missy noted that the policies were thoroughly reviewed last year and that there were only a few minor changes. Missy reviewed the additions to the policies which include: Bulletin Board Posting Policy, Drivers License Policy and Servicemember Family and Medical Leave.

Chairman Spychalski noted that the presented policy additions are for review and will be adopted at the next scheduled Board meeting. Hugh Mose added that if anyone has questions or suggestions for the policies to submit them to Missy or himself before the next meeting.

E. *FY 2008/2009 Budget Work Session*

Chairman Spychalski asked staff to provide a recommendation as to when to hold the Budget Work Session. After brief discussion, it was decided that the date will be March 18th at 4:00 pending approval from Kathryn Bittner who was absent from the meeting.

Joe Davidson moved for the Board to accept March 18th at 4:00 p.m. as the date for the Budget Work Session, with the meeting being held in the CATA boardroom. Richard Kipp seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

F. *Bus Procurement*

As a follow-up from the January Board Work Session, Sherry Snyder presented the Board with staff's recommendation regarding the upcoming bus procurement. After additional research, staff feels at this time, the Authority should replace ten of the sixteen 1996 Orions with a like number of 40', CNG, low-floor coaches as opposed to replacing them with 60' articulated buses. Staff also recommends including the option for two of the new buses to be powered by a CNG-hybrid propulsion system. Sherry noted that the Authority may be able to replace the remaining six Orion buses with four - 60' articulated buses, powered by CNG-hybrid propulsion systems, in FY 2010/2011.

Joe Davidson asked for clarification as to why the recommendation is to only replace four of the six Orions with articulated buses, noting the anticipated growth and expansion. Sherry explained that at this time the recommendation refers only to the replacement of buses in regards to passenger capacity, rather than expansion of the fleet. Chairman Spychalski suggested for future analysis that it may be beneficial to provide information showing rolling stock and the equivalent passenger capacity. Richard Kipp commented that he felt that the recommendation is a good follow-up to the questions that were raised at the Board Work Session. Chairman Spychalski agreed and stated that if there is no further discussion, that staff should proceed with the project.

G. *Staffing Recommendations FY 2008/2009*

Hugh Mose reviewed the memo that was provided to the Board in their packets regarding the staffing recommendations for FY 2008/2009. The list was presented in priority order and included: Maintenance Manager, Operations Supervisor, Maintenance Person, Assistant General Manager, Operations Specialist and Laborer/Custodian. There are several additional staffing needs that have been identified but are not recommended for consideration this year.

Gary Powers asked about the stability of Act 44 Funding. Hugh Mose explained that if Act 44 were to be amended due to the lack of tolling from I-80 or for some other reason, he is confident that things would stay in place for the “old” transit assistance funds, which are now set at 4.4% of the statewide sales tax. Hugh further explained that because the entire state transit assistance program was completely redone with Act 44 it is not simply a matter of repealing the Act and going back to the way things were. In his opinion, if there is a retreat from the idea of tolling Interstate 80, it would only happen with a substitute revenue source i.e., privatizing the turnpike, raising the gasoline tax, etc.

Joe Davidson asked if the Maintenance Person and the Laborer/Custodian positions would be considered represented employees and what makes that determination. Hugh Mose stated those positions would be considered represented and explained the policy of how it is determined.

Richard Kipp asked in regards to the position of Maintenance Manager, if filling this position would result in more hours per week for the technicians to work on the buses. He also expressed his concern for the condition of the buses. Hugh explained that the Maintenance Manager position should not have a big impact on the Lead Mechanic positions as they would continue to supervise their shifts. The Maintenance Manager will be able to provide guidance to the mechanics and allow additional time for Joe Gilbert to work on the bigger projects that are in process or are slated for the future. Filling this position will also be beneficial for when Mr. Gilbert decides to retire.

Chairman Spychalski stated that he has additional questions regarding the staffing recommendations, but in the interest of time, will discuss them at a later time.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. *Adoption of Resolution for Section 1514 & 1517, Attachment 2*

Judi Minor presented a required revised resolution that conforms to the new Act 44 provisions.

Chairman Spychalski entertained a motion to approve the resolution. Joe Davidson moved to approve the resolution. Richard Kipp seconded. The resolution was adopted.

B. *Bid Award – Electrical Equipment*

Joe Gilbert explained that CATA only received one bid for the electrical equipment associated with the compressor project which was from Whitehill Lighting, and that the bid included several options which were approved by Basic Systems, the design engineer. Joe Davidson asked for Mr. Gilbert to explain what options are included in the bid price. Joe Gilbert explained the options and noted that it is his recommendation to accept the options presented.

Chairman Spsychalski entertained a motion to authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Whitehill Lighting in the amount of \$99,725 for the equipment and services necessary to complete the project. Gary Powers moved to so authorize the General Manager. Joe Davidson seconded. Joe Davidson asked for the record to reflect that the company name is Whitehill Lighting, instead of *Whitehall Lighting* which was an apparent typo in the Agenda Memo. Gary Powers asked if CATA has a history of doing business with Whitehill Lighting and Joe Gilbert explained that they have done work in the past, but the work has been on a much smaller scale.

With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

C. *Resolution of Appreciation – Lee Dickson*

Chairman Spsychalski entertained a motion to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for retiree Lee Dickson as presented. Richard Kipp moved to adopt the resolution and Gary Powers seconded. With no further discussion, the resolution was adopted.

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS**

A. *General Manager's Report*

Hugh Mose stated that he had been in labor negotiations all day long and did not have time to prepare a formal report for the Board. However he did comment that he had the opportunity to ride the buses very early in the morning, around 4:30-5:00 a.m., during the 24-hour service for THON. He noted that even though the buses were not full, they each still had around 10-25 passengers. Hugh stated that he received several comments from Drivers indicating that they are pleased that service does not normally run into the very early hours of the day due to increase in "alcohol enhanced" behavior.

B. *Service Development Report*

Mr. Eric Bernier was absent from the meeting, so only a written report was available.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Spsychalski entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Richard Kipp moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:33 PM. Gary Powers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board reconvened for an Executive Session to discuss labor negotiations and personnel matters.