

Meeting Minutes
KALAMAZOO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
Annual Meeting
March 27, 2017

Place: Metro Transit Administrative Building, 530 N. Rose St.
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Staff Present: Sean McBride, Barbara Blissett, Kathy Schultz
Others Present: John Gisler

1). ROLL CALL

Members Present: Curtis Aardema, Jeff Breneman, Martin Janssen, JJ Meddaugh, Edie Trent, Linda Teeter

Members Absent: Saura Sahu, Greg Rosine

A motion was made to excuse Sahu and Rosine.

Motion: Breneman Second: Aardema

Motion carried by voice vote.

2). REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the March 27, 2017 agenda.

Motion: Aardema Second: Breneman

Motion carried by voice vote.

3). APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the February 13, 2017 meeting minutes.

Motion: Breneman Second: Aardema

Motion carried by voice vote.

4). CITIZENS' TIME

Gisler spoke about future plans of the Kalamazoo County reorganization of court and government offices and relocation to a new building three blocks west of the current Kalamazoo County Administration Building. He said the County would lease the building and finance it through municipal bonds. This would eliminate any millage vote or tax increase. Gisler added that the Kalamazoo County Courthouse would be sold with the caveat that the exterior façade facing Michigan Avenue would remain for historical purposes.

5). METRO COUNTY CONNECT SERVICE REVIEW

5a. 2017 Metro County Connect Passenger Survey – Exec. Dir. McBride stated Metro County Connect (MCC) conducted a 2017 passenger survey to gauge rider satisfaction with the service and assess areas for improvement or change. He said this survey would be used to evaluate the contractor Apple Bus Company for the proposed one year contract extension.

Exec. Dir. McBride summarized the survey results provided in the packet. He said out of 544 surveys mailed, 15% were returned with a 52% overall rating of very satisfactory. He said the highest areas of satisfaction were hours of service, driver professionalism, certification process and ease of paying fares. The highest areas of dissatisfaction were length of phone calls, scheduling of rides and punctuality. (A copy of the survey and its results are on file with the meeting minutes.) Exec. Dir. McBride invited questions regarding the survey.

Questions asked by the Board included ways MCC could improve on the dissatisfaction areas. Exec. Dir. McBride noted new technology could help with this area such as text confirmation for scheduling rides, appointment confirmation calls and better training of staff.

Janssen commented he had recently been in New York and utilized their public transit systems noting in some cases they used a texting option to inform their riders of when their rides would be available.

Meddaugh said that most of the survey responses would have come from the people who currently use MCC frequently and indicated the organization needed to look at the signup process, making it more user friendly.

Breneman said that with the responses being mostly positive, the negative comments should be used as constructive criticism.

Exec. Dir. McBride stated there was definitely room for improvement, and staff is looking at new technology. He noted there would be pros and cons for satisfying the riders.

5b. Evaluation of Apple Bus Company MCC Services – Exec. Dir. McBride explained Apple Bus Company began the Metro County Connect Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and county-wide Demand/Response services in 2009 and were awarded the initial contract by the City of Kalamazoo in 2010. Since then they have consistently been the low bidder for this service and awarded subsequent contracts including the current three-year contract ending December 31, 2017. This contract has the option of a two-year extension to begin in 2018 if both parties agree.

Exec. Dir. McBride said MCC passenger trip numbers have steadily grown since the service was created and set an all-time record in 2016 with 162,647 trips, an increase of 31% since 2010. He said the ADA service also continues to grow, setting an all-time record of 77,732 passenger trips in 2016, an increase of 7%. The Demand/Response service provided a record 85,275 passenger trips in 2016, a 4% increase from 2015.

Exec. Dir. McBride went over the specifics of the contract noting Apple Bus has always worked well with Metro Transit in drug and alcohol testing, reporting and providing extra services for special events. Apple Bus has accommodated some projects that went beyond the scope of the contract especially during the implementation of new services to include late night service and Sunday service. He noted the cost to provide Sunday service has been high for Apple Bus because of the number of cancellations by passengers when they still have to provide staffing and have drivers available.

Exec. Dir. McBride said in negotiating this two-year contract extension he would recommend Apple Bus work on improvements for scheduling rides and customer service. If funds were available, he would like to extend service by two hours on Saturday nights to meet the needs of individuals who would attend various late-night events but not have transportation home.

Breneman thanked CCTA staff for their work providing this information. He indicated the need for a higher level of excellence from Apple Bus Company. He said he was sure staff would negotiate a fair contract for both sides but to make Apple Bus aware that a greater effort to monitor the weak areas of service would be taken by KCTA.

Aardema agreed with Breneman and added he would like to see a better presence for the vehicles on the road with problems such as rusting paint and a lack of cleanliness. He said they don't fit the image the KCTA wants to project especially when asking for funding support from the community.

Meddaugh commented his concern was with the additional late night cost especially when the cost per ride during the weekends was already high.

Chairperson Teeter pointed out this survey report showed areas of the service that needed to be addressed such as scheduling, customer service and canceled trips. She said maybe there was a need for some policies to be put into place while still complying with ADA regulations. Chairperson Teeter reminded the Board that the KCTA would be taking the lead on the contract negotiations and make a recommendation to the CCTA before final approval of an extension.

6. ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson Teeter presented the KCTA Annual Report. She acknowledged that the demand response service in Kalamazoo County is growing and the need for the KCTA to be fully engaged in this service is essential. She said annual reports and meetings give a chance to look back but also to look forward.

Chairperson Teeter summarized the history of the KCTA as it began in 2006 with about 60,000 rides until now providing over 150,000 rides each year. She said when she presents the annual report to the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, she will applaud them for choosing the right individuals as members of the KCTA who have worked hard over the years to provide Kalamazoo County with the best demand/response service available.

Chairperson Teeter remarked she looked forward to working with the KCTA and partnering with the CCTA to gain new and innovative services to complement each other. (A copy of the Annual Report is filed with the minutes of the meeting.)

7. ELECTION OF KCTA OFFICERS

Janssen reported the Nominating Committee had met and discussed the KCTA accomplishments of the past with its leadership and what was ahead for the future. He said the Nominating Committee agreed they would like to retain the current Board of Directors as officers for the next term.

A motion was made to nominate Linda Teeter as Chairperson and Greg Rosine as Vice-Chair of the KCTA for the coming year.

Motion: Janssen

Second: Breneman

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Ayes: Aardema, Breneman, Janssen, Meddaugh, Trent, Teeter

Nays: None

Absent: Sahu, Rosine

Chairperson Teeter thanked the Board for their confidence in her and Vice-Chair Rosine to lead the KCTA for another year.

8. AMENDMENT TO PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED PLAN

Exec. Dir. McBride shared that the Public Transit Human Service Committee (PTHS) had met January 19, 2017 and discussed unmet needs for public transit. The updated plan had been adopted in July 2016. He said the newly identified needs involved the growing number of individuals that are low-income refugees locating in Kalamazoo County with struggles including: language barriers, requested travel outside the fixed-route system and the cost of transporting large families.

Exec. Dir. McBride said the amendment to the Plan would be adding “Item 8: Service Options for Low-Income Refugee Population” on Page 21 which identifies and provides public transportation to the low-income refugee population. He said the KCTA and CCTA need to approve the amendment per the KCTA/CCTA Operating Agreement.

A motion was made to approve the Amendment to the Public Transit Human Services Plan by adding “Item 8” on Page 21. “Explore Service options that will help address challenges that low-income refugee individuals are experiencing as they locate in Kalamazoo County. Challenges that these individuals face include: Language Barriers, Traveling outside the current service areas, and the Expense to travel with their families.”

Motion: Aardema

Second: Breneman

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Ayes: Aardema, Breneman, Janssen, Meddaugh, Trent, Teeter

Nays: None

Absent: Sahu, Rosine

9. COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Exec. Dir. McBride announced the redesigned www.kmetro.com website was up and running. He encouraged everyone to visit the website and offer their comments. He noted the former website www.kalcountytransit.com was being redirected to the new website.

Exec. Dir. McBride reviewed various focus areas for organizational development including: Non-Bargaining Unit (NBU) job descriptions and compensation, a Weight Watchers At-Work Program at Metro Transit, developing a Voluntary Employee Wellness Program and updating of procedures for employee on-boarding and off-boarding.

Exec. Dir. McBride announced Employees of the Quarter: Dominique Morris (4th Quarter 2016) and Missy Coulson (1st Quarter 2017). He said these employees were nominated by their peers and show qualities that include teamwork, job excellence, customer service, productivity and being the “unsung hero.”

Exec. Dir. McBride commented on the 50th Anniversary Celebration that took place on February 23rd. Innovation in Transit Awards were given to the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS), Friends of Transit (FOT), former Metro Transit Director Bill Schomisch and CCTA/KCTA Chairperson Linda Teeter.

Exec. Dir. McBride reminded those present there would be a joint CCTA/KCTA planning session on Monday, May 8th facilitated by Tim Fallon. He said it would focus on the review of previous plans, development of mission and vision statements and establishment of Board priorities for 2017/2018.

Exec. Dir. McBride shared that CCTA had completed the Designated Recipient Certification and a copy of the letter from Governor Snyder was in the packet.

Exec. Dir. McBride announced that David Miller had been hired as an Information Technology Analyst and Keisha Woodson-Sow had been promoted to Customer Service Manager at the KTC. He said five coach operators had been hired since January 2017 but the search for 10 additional drivers was ongoing.

Exec. Dir. McBride reported the installation of computers at the KTC for the Public Safety Officers was complete and would now allow them to be on site and more visible. He shared the latest Public Safety Update and invited questions.

Exec. Dir. McBride said that a Ridership Analysis PowerPoint was a part of the packet as informational before Kathy Schultz gives a presentation on it at the April meeting.

Janssen commented that he liked the practice of having employees recognized for their efforts as Employee of the Quarter.

Meddaugh thanked Kathy Schultz for making the new website accessible for screen readers. This was an improvement from the former website.

11). COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Executive Committee – Chairperson Teeter said the Executive Committees of both CCTA and KCTA had met and discussed future planning and agenda items. She said the joint retreat would take place on May 8th with Tim Fallon as the facilitator.

b. Finance Review Subcommittee – Has not met.

c. Joint Outreach Subcommittee – Has not met.

d. Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Has not met.

d. KATS – Chairperson Teeter said KATS did not meet in February but suggested the PowerPoint provided in the KCTA packet would be a good informational item for the next KATS meeting.

12. OLD BUSINESS – None

13. NEW BUSINESS – None

14.) CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Chairperson Teeter said she would be presenting the Annual Report to the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners April 18th and would let everyone know what time it would take place.

15). CITIZENS' TIME – Gisler congratulated the Board for selecting Chairperson Teeter and Vice-Chair Rosine to remain as Board officers. He reminded the Board about how the riders of MCC might not be as “tech savvy” in today’s world and not be able to utilize some new technologies.

16). MEMBERS' TIME –

Aardema shared the City of Kalamazoo was in the process of developing a Complete Streets Initiative and would be good to work with them for the benefit of public transportation.

Trent thanked the Board for her tenure on the KCTA for the past 16 months. She said after much thought, she was tendering her resignation from the KCTA. She said since retiring from the State Representative’s office, she felt there would be someone better suited to serve in the role on the KCTA.

Janssen thanked Exec. Dir. McBride for the excellent MCC survey and report on Apple Bus. He shared that while in New York, he saw their transit system had buses that were strictly for express service and hoped something like that could eventually come to Kalamazoo County.

Breneman thanked everyone for their hard work on the survey, reports and 50th Celebration. He also thanked Edie Trent for her service and Kalamazoo County Commissioner John Gisler for his continued interest and support for public transportation.

17). ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Motion: Breneman Second: Janssen

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

KCTA Chairperson

KCTA Secretary