

LUZERNE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS
DECEMBER 17, 2013

PRESENT:

SAL LICATA, CHAIRMAN
PAUL MAHER, VICE-CHAIRMAN
ANTHONY BALDO, TREASURER
ROSEMARY LOMBARDO, SECRETARY
DR VALERIE KEPNER, PH.D., ASST TREASURER
DR SID HALSOR, PH.D., ASST SECRETARY
ROBERT CHEPALONIS, MEMBER
ATTORNEY SEAN ROBBINS, MEMBER
ATTORNEY JOSEPH BLAZOSEK, SOLICITOR

ABSENT:

PATRICK CONWAY, MEMBER

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

STANLEY STRELISH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FRED BROWN, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
RENEE CRAIG, HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR
MOHAMMED NAJIB, CONTROLLER
ROBB HENDERSON, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
LEE HORTON, OPERATIONS/ROAD SUPERVISOR
JOE ROSELLE, I.T. DIRECTOR
LOU URITZ, PROCUREMENT MANAGER
THERESA CHAPMAN, GRANTS CO-ORDINATOR
JOHN ALU, FISCAL OFFICER, SHARED RIDE
VINCE COVIELLO, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

MEDIA:

ANDY MEHALSHICK, WBRE -TV
PETER CAMERON, CITIZENS VOICE
JOHN DILIBERTO, INDEPENDENT GAZETTE
SUE HENRY, WILK RADIO

OTHERS:

ERIC TURINSKI, LCTA MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE
EDWARD CHESNOVITCH

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman, Mr. Licata invited everyone present to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. Roll Call:** The following Board members were present for the meeting: Mr. Baldo, Mr. Chepalonis, Dr. Halsor, Ph.D., Dr. Kepner, Ph.D., Ms. Lombardo, Mr. Maher, Attorney Robbins and Mr. Licata.

Board member Mr. Conway was absent although present at the work session.

3. Public Comment:

Mr. Eric Turinski questioned Board member Mr. Chepalonis on the number of buses Martz Trailways has in its Wilkes-Barre facility. Mr. Chepalonis stated there are 37 motor coaches and 2 mini-coaches. Mr. Turinski then asked how many mechanics there are – Mr. Chepalonis questioned the relevance of that question at an LCTA Board meeting. Mr. Turinski stated there are 15 mechanics servicing 86 buses while at LCTA there are 38 buses and 56 vans for a total of 94 vehicles, presently serviced by 10 mechanics following the recent retirement of Mr. Robert McGeehan. Mr. Turinski feels that with the addition of the Shared Ride vans the maintenance department is understaffed and stated Management has refused to replace staff while eliminating positions. Mr. Strelish referred to the recent Triennial Review and the positive comments made during the review which showed no deficiencies in the maintenance department procedures and also questioned the number of vans which Mr. Brown, Maintenance Supervisor stated there are 51 who also mentioned the work is being completed with the present staff but may encounter a problem when air conditioning work must be performed. Mr. Licata asked Mr. Brown if he would approach the Board if he felt the department was understaffed and also asked Mr. Turinski if he would approach Mr. Brown who could convey that matter to the Board in order for the Board to act on it. Mr. Strelish stated we are possibly going to contract out the Shared Ride service in the Hazleton area which would allow for the leasing of 14 vans by the contractor who would also perform the maintenance on the vans which would then reduce the number of vehicles to be maintained. Mr. Licata thanked Mr. Brown and Mr. Turinski for their input and suggested they address any other staffing concerns with the Board.

Next, Mr. Mehalshick from WBRE television addressed the Board and questioned the Board of any response to the current Grand Jury investigation regarding the “ghostriders” matter. Attorney Blazosek noted during the Personnel session held prior to the meeting he did provide information to the Board that an inquiry was being made on the State level that the Grand Jury had been convened in order to address some issues that pertain to LCTA. Attorney Blazosek stated he had communications with the individual who is handling the investigation, offering the cooperation of LCTA and the Board in matters of additional information or input that may be requested in order to move forward with the investigation.

Mr. Chepalonis noted that no Board members present at the meeting were served with sub-poenas to appear at the Grand Jury. Mr. Mehalshick noted the only Board member he is aware of receiving a sub-poena is Mr. Conway while Attorney Blazosek noted that while that type of information would be considered something that would not generally be revealed it had been disclosed by Board member Mr. Conway himself that he had been served with a subpoena and that information was not made public by Attorney Blazosek, other Board members or anyone else from LCTA. Upon question by Sue Henry of WILK radio if Mr. Conway had actually revealed to Attorney Blazosek the fact he had been served with a sub-poena Attorney Blazosek stated he had not been

told by Mr. Conway personally but rather heard and/or saw it on television or in the newspapers.

Mr. Mehalshick also noted that he had spoken with 1 driver, not identified since that driver is cooperating with Authorities who stated he had been told by managers to pad numbers. Attorney Blazosek noted that any matters that would be touched upon by the investigation should not be commented on at this time.

Ms. Henry noted Mr. Conway was not present at the public meeting, but was present at the Work Session held prior to the public meeting. Ms. Henry stated Mr. Conway made a comment claiming he was subject to witness intimidation during the work session and asked Attorney Blazosek if he could comment on that. Attorney Blazosek stated Mr. Conway chose to leave the meeting on his own accord without indicating why he was leaving the meeting. Attorney Blazosek stated there was no intimidation by anyone at any time during the meeting but there were conversations between him and Authority personnel which would be considered personnel issues which were observed by all Board members present. Ms. Henry asked if Mr. Conway used the phrase "witness intimidation" and Attorney Blazosek stated Mr. Conway would have to be consulted for what he said. Ms. Henry stated Mr. Conway did in fact use the phrase "witness intimidation". Attorney Blazosek noted that if Ms. Henry is asking if there was intimidation the answer would be "no" and that neither he or anyone present at the meeting would have control over what others say. Mr. Mehalshick and Ms. Henry thanked the Board for their time.

4. Approval of Minutes: November 26, 2013

Chairman Mr. Licata stated everyone was provided with minutes from the November 26, 2013 and asked if anyone had questions on the minutes. Dr. Kepner stated the Public Comment section states Ms. Slater invited Mr. McLaughlin from Wilkes-Barre City to an LCTA Board meeting when in fact Ms. Slater invited him to the Public Transportation Advisory Council meeting which meets on Saturdays and noted the email which Dr. Kepner saw to invite him did not have any reference to Ms. Slater taking the prerogative to invite Mr. McLaughlin to the LCTA Board meetings. The November 26, 2013 Board meeting minutes will be corrected. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Accounts Payable Checks: November, 2013

After review of the Accounts Payable Checks for the month of November, 2013 a motion was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote of the Board. Dr. Kepner asked what Strategic Mapping does, Mr. Strelish stated they are the vendor for the AVL system. Motion to approve was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote of the Board.

6. Chairman's Report : Mr. Sal Licata

Chairman Mr. Licata noted the Personnel Committee tried to meet on Thursday, December 12, 2013 but were unable to do so due to a lack of quorum however, issues that were to be discussed at that meeting were discussed prior to today's meeting. Motion to accept Mr. Licata's report was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Mr. Baldo. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

7. Solicitor's Report: Attorney Joseph Blazosek

Attorney Blazosek noted the Board went into a Personnel session from 3:20 PM to 3:55 PM. regarding matters touched on both by Attorney Blazosek and Ms. Craig, Human Resource Director as well as Mr. Strelish and a member of the management staff. Attorney Blazosek noted he had commented on the Grand Jury investigation and also discussed the status of negotiating a new bargaining agreement with the Shared Ride employees. Attorney Blazosek stated the negotiations will be a two step process first to request the Board to act on health care benefits that will be offered to the employees and at a later point, the remaining aspects of the bargaining agreement in order to present a full and final agreement by the February, 2014 meeting. Attorney Blazosek also mentioned that other items and matters were discussed with no decisions having been made.

A motion to accept Attorney Blazosek's report was made by Dr. Halsor and seconded by Mr. Maher. A roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes accepting Attorney Blazosek's report.

8. Executive Director's Report: Mr. Stanley Strelish

Information Items:

A. Ridership – November, 2013

Mr. Strelish reported the ridership for the month of November, 2013 was 98,337 which compared with October's ridership of 114,115 realized a decrease of approximately 16,000 passengers and also as compared with November, 2012 realized a decrease of approximately 18,000. Dr. Kepner noted there are less service days in November, 2013 which would be a contributing factor in the decrease in ridership.

B. Re-Organization Meeting – Tuesday, January 14, 2014

Mr. Strelish then noted the Re-Organization meeting for 2014 would be on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 3 P.M. for the purpose of Re-Organization only. Mr. Strelish then noted the regular general purposes January Board meeting would be held immediately afterward. Attorney Blazosek asked that separate notices be prepared for each meeting .

Action Items:

A. Motion to Approve Agreement and Amendment to Agreement to Provide Transportation Services between LCTA and Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health/Developmental Services from July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to approve the Agreement and Amendment to Agreement to provide transportation services between LCTA and Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health/Developmental Services from July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013. Motion was made by Mr. Maher and seconded by Dr. Kepner. Motion carried through a roll call vote of the Board.

B. Motion to Approve Agreement to Provide Transportation Services between LCTA and Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental health/Development Services from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014

Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to approve the agreement to provide transportation services between LCTA and Luzerne- Wyoming Counties Mental Health/Development Services from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2104. Motion was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Dr. Halsor. Motion carried through a unanimous roll call vote of the Board.

C. Motion to Approve Agreement to Provide Transportation Services between LCTA and Area Agency on Aging from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014

Next Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to approve an agreement to provide transportation services between LCTA and Luzerne County Area Agency on Aging from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. A motion to approve the agreement was made by Mr. Maher and seconded by Dr. Kepner. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote of the Board.

D. Motion to Approve Agreement to Provide Transportation Services between LCTA and Luzerne County Children and Youth from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014

The next item on the agenda was to approve an agreement to provide transportation services between LCTA and Luzerne County Children and Youth from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. Motion was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Dr. Halsor. Motion carried through a unanimous roll call vote of the Board.

E. Motion to Award Insurance Renewals to HARIE at Total Premiums of \$256,643 to be Effective January 1, 2014

Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to award the insurance renewals to HARIE at total premiums of \$256,643, effective January 1, 2014. Motion to award was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Mr. Maher. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

F. Motion to Authorize Renewal of Current Vision Benefits with No Change in Premium

Finally, Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to authorize the renewal of current vision benefits with no change in the premium. Dr. Kepner questioned if there is any change in the service of the plan and Mr. Strelish that benefits remain the same. Motion to approve was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Dr. Halsor. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

G. Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to approve the Professional Underwriters Public Officials insurance at a premium of \$14,231 which would be provided through the Joseph Joyce Agency. Motion was made by Mr. Maher and seconded by Mr. Chepalonis. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

H. Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to approve the amendments to the Safety and Security Emergency Preparedness Plan. Motion was made by Attorney Robbins and seconded by Mr. Baldo. Motion carried unanimously through a roll call of the Board members.

I. Mr. Strelish then mentioned the recent Triennial Review conducted by the Federal Transit Administration who review records for the past 3 years and is also co-ordinated with PennDOT. Mr. Strelish stated the reviewers were impressed with the entire staff and the willingness and efficiency in producing required documents and acknowledged and complimented the staff for the work involved in both preparing for and attending the review. Mr. Strelish stated that all areas were reviewed including finance and grants, maintenance, Equal Employment Opportunity and Title VI, DBE, purchasing and operations and once again expressed his thanks and appreciation to staff members for an excellent job in preparing for and participating in the review. Mr. Strelish stated the findings of the review were minimal and a final report would be made available to Mr. Licata Board Chairman who also acknowledged Mr. Strelish and the entire staff as well as drivers and maintenance employees for performing their jobs in a professional and efficient manner.

Department Supervisor Reports:

A. Operations Supervisor, Mr. Robb Henderson

Operations Supervisor Mr. Henderson also addressed the Safety and Security Emergency Preparedness Plan who stated the Plan was initiated in 2007 with updates now being needed in areas such as bomb threats, suspicious activity, criminal activity, flood events. Mr. Henderson stated the programs would be distributed to employees and Board members once they are printed.

B. Maintenance Supervisor, Mr. Fred Brown

Maintenance Supervisor Mr. Brown stated the Poetry in Transit signs have been placed in the buses and the preventive maintenance is back on track. Chairman Mr. Licata reminded Mr. Brown to approach the Board if he feels there is a need for more maintenance employees. Mr. Strelish stated it may be best to see how the department operates after transferring some of the Shared Ride services to a sub-contractor, reducing the number of vans left to be maintained. Mr. Strelish stated this could take a couple months to determine.

C. Shared Ride Division Operations Manager, Mr. James Darr

In the absence of Mr. Darr, Mr. Strelish updated the Board on Shared Ride division matters informing the Board that requests for proposals for sub-contractors were received from Mount Olivet Enterprises Inc., Trans-Med Ambulance and Easton Coach Company. Mr. Strelish stated the proposals are being reviewed and recommended having the Operations/Ridership Committee meet to go through the proposals and then present the recommendations to the Board at the January, 2014 meeting.

9. Operations/Ridership Committee – Dr. Valerie Kepner, Ph.D., Chairperson

Dr. Kepner, Chairperson stated the November, 2013 meeting minutes are not available since the December meeting would be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 and invited everyone to attend the meeting which would be held on Public Square at the LCCC Corporate Learning Center at 2pm. Dr. Kepner also mentioned the text and email alerts being made for bad weather is fantastic for passengers and also she makes announcements on the buses that alerts are now available to passengers through the LCTA website. Dr. Kepner also noted the bus departure system signs were

not working at the Intermodal. Mr. Strelish stated that problem would be corrected with the presence of an LCTA Customer Service Representative to be stationed at the Intermodal starting in January, 2014. Mr. Licata mentioned the LCTA website and was very impressed with the information available and complimented the IT Department for the work done .

10. Personnel Committee – Mr. Robert Chepalonis, Chairman

- A. Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Mr. Chepalonis made a motion to hire Ms. Elizabeth Santacroce as a part-time scheduler for the Shared Ride division at an hourly rate of \$11.00 pending pre-employment and background screening. Motion was seconded by Mr. Maher. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

- B. Mr. Chepalonis also made a motion for Shared Ride employees of the Teamsters Union 401 presently covered under life, dental and health insurance which expires December 31, 2013 to remain enrolled under the same plan during the interim period of time while completing contract negotiations. Motion was seconded by Dr. Halsor. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

- C. Mr. Strelish mentioned there is an oversight with an item not listed on the agenda which is to request approving the hiring of a part-time intern for the IT Department. Mr. Strelish stated the previous intern's term was completed and therefore, request the approval of another part-time intern. Mr. Chepalonis then asked for a motion to approve the hiring of Mr. Chris Detroya on a part-time basis at \$12.00 per hour, pending school processing, who would start in January, 2014. Motion was seconded by Dr. Kepner. Dr. Halsor asked if the position was advertised. Mr. Strelish stated it was not advertised but rather Mr. Joe Roselle, IT Director was contacted by the individuals for consideration at LCTA. After a brief discussion Mr. Licata suggested that for the future, LCTA would reach out to all of the local colleges and universities for students who would be interested in an internship at LCTA. A roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

11. Old Business

Board member Dr. Halsor questioned ITS and whether we are fully functional with the system. IT Director Mr. Roselle stated the Automated Vehicle Locator is almost complete with all of the Buses "going live" in early December while also checking all the routes on each bus, and the sound of each stop. Mr. Roselle stated some drivers are requesting additional training on the system and that is being done. Dr. Halsor commented that the system, with capabilities the Authority never previously had with the buses should be promoted for the public to know the system is in place and the information that will be made available for the public. Mr. Roselle and Mr. Strelish both noted the AVL system will be promoted by cds creative inc as part of the new marketing program.

Operations Supervisor Mr. Henderson also commented on what we do if service is curtailed early due to weather conditions. Mr. Henderson stated that during a recent snow storm it was decided to curtail service at 3:45 P.M. with that information being provided to various retail outlets so passengers at those locations can be informed. Mr. Henderson continued, saying all buses then co-ordinate their last outbound times so all passengers can make their departing bus.

Mr. Licata noted the discussion held during the November, 2013 meeting regarding Saturday service and asked if there had been any further progress made. Mr. Strelish stated that implementing Saturday service would rely largely on the funding being provided under the new State funding plan and he will keep the Board informed as details become known.

13. New Business

There was no New Business to discuss at this time.

14. Remarks:

Citizen Mr. Ed Chesnovich asked if it's possible for the Board meetings to be placed on the Luzerne County website. Mr. Licata mentioned that the meetings are already being placed there but Mr. Chesnovich stated it is not. After discussion it was noted that we will provide Luzerne County with a schedule of all meetings to be held during the year.

15. Adjournment:

With all business having been completed a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Maher.

Respectfully Submitted,

BY: Theresa Chapman, Secretary to the Board
FOR: rosemary Lombardo, Secretary of the Board