

LUZERNE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JULY 23, 2013

PRESENT:

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

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

STANLEY STRELISH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
FRED BROWN, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR  
RENEE CRAIG, HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR  
MOHAMMED NAJIB, CONTROLLER  
JOE ROSELLE, I.T. DIRECTOR  
LEE HORTON, ROAD SUPERVISOR  
LOU URITZ, PROCUREMENT MANAGER  
THERESA CHAPMAN, GRANTS CO-ORDINATOR  
VINCE COVIELLO, MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR  
JAMES DARR, DIRECTOR, SHARED RIDE  
JOHN ALU, FISCAL TECHNICIAN, SHARED RIDE  
THOMAS LANDON, FLEET MANAGER, SHARED RIDE

MEDIA:

SUE HENRY, WILK RADIO  
FRANK SORCIK, WILKES-BARRE INDEPENDENT GAZETTE  
JOHN DILIBERTO, WILKES-BARRE INDEPENDENT GAZETTE  
GARY PERNA, WYLN TV

OTHERS:

LINDA SLATER, PASSENGER & CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
DR MISHELLE ANTHONY, WILKES UNIVERSITY  
PAUL JASON, LCTA EMPLOYEE  
ERIC TURINSKI, LCTA EMPLOYEE  
BOB CHRISTOPHER, LCTA EMPLOYEE  
LOU ROMAN, LCTA EMPLOYEE

1. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman, Mr. Licata called the meeting to order and 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, Mr. Conway, Dr. Halsor, Ph.D., Dr. Kepner, Ph.D., Ms. Lombardo, Mr. Maher, Attorney Robbins and Mr. Licata. There were no Board members absent.
3. **Public Comment:** Dr. Mischelle Anthony of Wilkes University addressed the Board and spoke about the *Poetry in Transit* program which allows Wilkes University students the opportunity to have their poetry placed inside LCTA buses for the public to enjoy. Dr. Anthony mentioned the program has been in place since 2007 and is made possible through the funding provided by LCTA since 2009. Dr. Anthony expressed her thanks and gratitude for LCTA's continued support and mentioned this year's program launch will be held at Barnes and Noble. In response to Dr. Halsor's question, Dr. Anthony mentioned the poetry is created by Wilkes University students as well as local poets.

Ms. Slater, Chairman of the Public Transportation Advisory Council thanked the Ridership Committee for requesting an identification card to be created which could be used by visually impaired passengers when traveling to Scranton since COLTS does not accept the white cane policy. Ms. Slater thanked the Authority for providing the card.

Also, as Chairman of the PTAC Committee, Ms. Slater stated she would like to visit Senior Citizen Centers and high rises to encourage the residents to use the buses for transportation and asked for written permission to complete senior citizen identification cards. Mr. Strelish offered whatever assistance is needed to Ms. Slater and thanked her for her willingness to visit the centers and mentioned the possibility of drivers or operations department staff members assisting her. Dr. Kepner also complimented Ms. Slater on her presentation.

Next, LCTA employee, Mr. Eric Turinski questioned the drastic decline in Senior Citizen ridership of 52,000 passengers from June, 2012 and asked Mr. Strelish and Mr. Licata if they have an answer to explain the loss of the senior citizen passengers. Mr. Licata and Mr. Strelish replied they do not have an answer for the decline. A discussion on this matter continued.

Dr. Kepner asked of the progress of the investigation and Dr. Halsor suggested we contact PennDOT to inquire of the status of the investigation report.

Mr. Frank Sorick, Wilkes-Barre Independent Gazette asked if the Automated People Counters are in operation. Mr. Roselle responded, stating it should be completed within two (2) months.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes: June 25, 2013**

Mr. Licata presented the minutes from the June 25, 2013 Board meeting for approval. Dr. Kepner mentioned a misspelling of Ms. Slater's name and also a correction to a Board member's name in the roll call and also in a motion to approve the Accounts Payable Checks. Ms. Chapman stated she would make the corrections and present them at the August, 2013 Board meeting. A motion to approve was made by Dr. Halsor and seconded by Mr. Maher. A roll call of the Board resulted in affirmative votes with Dr. Kepner abstaining.

## **5. Accounts Payable Checks: June, 2013**

After review of the Accounts Payable Checks for the month of June, 2013, a motion to approve was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Mr. Maher. Roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

## **6. Financial Statement: April and May, 2013**

Next, the Financial Statement for the months of April and May, 2013 were presented for review after which a motion to approve was made by Mr. Baldo and seconded by Mr. Chepalonis. Motion carried through a roll call of the Board with all affirmative votes.

## **7. Chairman's Report: Mr. Sal Licata**

Chairman Mr. Licata did not have a report to give at this time but extended his thanks to the Board members and Committee members for attending the various meetings held. Motion to accept the Chairman's report was made by Mr. Chepalonis and seconded by Ms. Lombardo. Motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote of the Board.

## **8. Solicitor's Report: Attorney Joseph Blazosek**

Attorney Blazosek stated the Board broke for a Personnel Committee meeting from 3:10PM to 3:50PM during which time Human Resource Director, Ms. Craig and Executive Director Mr. Strelish discussed various personnel matters with the Board concerning job openings and potential hirings as well as other employee matters. Attorney Blazosek also updated the Board regarding ongoing litigation matters however, Attorney Blazosek stated no decisions were made in either area. A motion to accept Attorney Blazosek's report was made by Mr. Maher and seconded by Mr. Baldo. Motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote of the Board.

## **9. Executive Director's Report: Mr. Stanley Strelish**

### **A. Ridership – June, 2013**

Mr. Strelish began by addressing the ridership for the month of June, 2013 which had total ridership of 92,052 but also showed a decline in senior citizen ridership of approximately 52,000 riders. Mr. Strelish also noted the format for the senior citizen report was changed to include a 4 week date range comparison to make it easier to compare ridership on a 4 week basis and also a ridership report by number of operating days per month. Dr. Halsor asked if it would be possible to have the ridership from the Frances Slocum State Park trips included. Mr. Strelish stated he has that information available and would provide it to Dr. Halsor. Board member Dr. Kepner asked if it is possible to obtain specific information on the #8,#14, #15 and the Frances Slocum runs as the ridership on these routes is discussed during the Ridership Committee meetings. Dr. Kepner also commented on the run to Scranton which appears to be quite successful. Mr. Strelish stated the run is doing very well and the Operations Department is looking into expanding that run to coordinate with COLTS to offer early morning service which would essentially double the service. Motion to approve the Ridership report was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. Maher. A roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

Mr. Strelish stated a meeting was held with Lackawanna County officials in Scranton to consider the possibility of operating a light rail service from W-B to Scranton. Mr. Strelish the cost would be enormous but also mentioned we would look into obtaining federal funds to conduct a study for this project. Mr. Strelish also noted the possibility of establishing bus rapid transit was also discussed which could also include transportation from Hazleton thru Wilkes-Barre to Scranton.

Mr. Licata made a statement concerning the senior citizen ridership decrease citing various statistics from the ridership reports for the various months. Mr. Licata stated all Board members are concerned about the ridership in general and senior citizen ridership specifically. Mr. Licata stated the ridership is stabilizing over the past several months and noted that until the actual facts from the investigation by PennDOT is complete there is nothing else that can be done. Dr. Kepner questioned the number of emergency day passes sold during June and it was determined it was due to Dump the Pump Day.

Motion to accept the Ridership report was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote of the Board.

**B. Approve Shared Ride Agreement for Provision of Transportation with Mr. Olivet Enterprises, Inc. from July 14, 2013 to June 30, 2014**

Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to approve an agreement for the Provision of Transportation with Mt. Olivet Enterprises Inc. to be effective July 14, 2013 to June 30, 2014. Motion to approve was made by Dr. Halsor and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried through a roll call of the Board showing all affirmative votes.

**C. Approve Shared Ride Agreement for Provision of Transportation with Trans Med from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014**

Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to approve an agreement for the Provision of Transportation with Trans Med to be effective July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. Motion to approve was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. Chepalonis. Motion carried through a roll call of the Board showing all affirmative votes.

**D. Motion to Approve *Title VI* Statement**

Next, Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to approve the ***Title VI*** policy statement, required for the ***Title VI*** Program. Dr. Kepner inquired if ADA is incorporated in ***Title VI*** and Mr. Strelish stated it is. Dr. Kepner noted the Title VI statement is not mentioned on the LCTA website. Mr. Strelish and Attorney Blazosek stated Board approval is first needed then I.T. Director, Mr. Roselle will post the Statement to the website. LCTA Human Resource Director Ms. Craig noted the statement will be valid for three (3) years or until changes are required. A motion to approve and accept was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried. A roll call of the Board resulted in all affirmative votes.

**E. Motion to Approve Agreement to Provide \$2,000 to *Poetry in Transit* Program**

Next, Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to provide \$2,000 to the ***Poetry in Transit*** Program. A motion was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Dr. Halsor. Motion carried through a unanimous vote of the Board members.

**F. Motion to Allow Fiscal Officer, Mr. Alu to Conduct Balance Transfers and Wires in an Amount Not to Exceed \$650,000 per Transaction**

Mr. Strelish then asked for a motion to authorize Fiscal Officer, Mr. Alu to conduct balance transfers and wires in an amount not to exceed \$650,000 per transaction. Mr. Strelish mentioned this is being done in the event Controller, Mr. Najib is not available. Motion was made by Attorney Robbins and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried through a unanimous vote of the Board members.

**G. Motion to Approve One (1) Mechanic to Attend Air Conditioning Training at Thermo King Facility in Minneapolis, Minnesota September 29 – October 4, 2013**

Next Mr. Strelish asked for a motion to approve having one (1) mechanic attend air conditioning training at the Thermo King Facility in Minneapolis, Minnesota from September 29 – October 4, 2013 at a cost not to exceed \$2,000. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Conway and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried through a unanimous roll call of the Board.

**H. Reports by Operations Supervisor and Maintenance Supervisor**

Operations Director Mr. Henderson was not present at the meeting.

Maintenance Director Mr. Brown reported only minor problems with air conditioning on the buses during the recent heat wave with only one bus becoming inoperable during the extreme heat. Mr. Brown thanked mechanics Mr. Frey and Mr. McGeehan for their efforts to keep the air conditioning operational and also acknowledged the entire maintenance department employees for their work in keeping all buses running efficiently. Mr. Brown also mentioned three (3) new vans arrived which will be used in service for the Shared Ride programs and also noted a rusting problem on some of the newer vans due to a lack of undercoating from the manufacturer which the maintenance department is working to correct.

Dr. Halsor asked if the hybrids performance differs from the diesel buses. Mr. Brown stated the hybrids provide an estimated 2-3 miles per gallon more than the diesel buses but otherwise the performance is similar. Chairman Mr. Licata conveyed a message from the Board thanking the maintenance department for their work and efforts in keeping all buses running and repairs done during the recent heat wave.

Mr. Strelish introduced the new Maintenance Supervisor, Mr. Vince Coviello who is presently in training and will undertake the evening supervisors shift and interact with Maintenance Supervisor Mr. Brown. Mr. Strelish stated the Supervisor shifts would be from 6AM to 12 noon and 12 noon to 8PM.

Mr. Strelish also acknowledged the retirement of Shared Ride Fleet Manager Mr. Thomas Landon effective August 2, 2013 and complimented Mr. Landon on his many years of work and dedication with the Shared Ride division.

## **I. Report by Shared Ride Division Director**

Shared Ride Director, Mr. Darr mentioned the summer camps are continuing, providing transportation for approximately 220 children. Mr. Darr also stated transportation for group trips to Misericordia University in Dallas are being planned for a press release presentation by the State Attorney General's office.

A motion to accept the Executive Director's report was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. Maher. A roll call of the Board indicated a unanimous vote.

## **10. Operations Committee: Dr. Valerie Kepner, Ph.D.**

Dr. Kepner mentioned a discussion from the June, 2013 Board meeting regarding the County of Lackawanna Transit System not accepting LCTA's monthly pass. Mr. Strelish stated he was not aware that COLTS would not accept the LCTA monthly pass but would contact COLTS Director Mr. Fiume. Additionally, Mr. Strelish stated he believes that could be due to the fact that LCTA passes are less expensive than COLTS' which could result in a revenue loss for COLTS. Operator Mr. Roman noted COLTS will accept LCTA's daily pass but not the 31 day pass and LCTA Operator Mr. Jason noted LCTA's 10 or 20 ride passes will not work in COLTS fareboxes or COLTS in LCTA's fareboxes. Ms. Slater asked if we can inform COLTS that identification cards have been issued by LCTA to visually impaired passengers.

Dr. Kepner mentioned passengers calling BUS-TIME are still receiving a busy signal. Mr. Strelish stated the calls should be going into a holding pattern and also mentioned the new phone for BUS-TIME information has been installed at the Intermodal Center and is now operational.

It was noted the Board meeting agenda will indicate the "**Operations/Ridership Committee**" which meets at 2 PM on the third Tuesday of the month at the LCCC Corporate Learning Center on Public Square. Dr. Kepner asked if it would be possible for I.T. Director Mr. Roselle attend the next Ridership Committee meeting to discuss information which could be placed on the website. The next meeting would be held on August 20, 2013

A motion to accept Dr. Kepner's Operations/Ridership report was made by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Mr. Chepalonis. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of the Board.

## **11. Personnel Committee – Mr. Robert Chepalonis, Chairman**

Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Mr. Chepalonis stated that with the retirement of Mr. Thomas Landon, Fleet Manager of the Shared Ride Division, the position would be combined with that of the Director of Shared Ride Mr. James Darr to create the position of Operations Manager, Shared Ride division at his present salary. Mr. Chepalonis noted this would eliminate the position of Assistant Executive Director of the Shared Ride division. The motion made by Mr. Chepalonis was seconded by Ms. Lombardo. Motion carried through a unanimous vote of the Board.

Motion to accept the Personnel Committee report was made by Attorney Robbins and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried through a unanimous vote of the Board members.

## 12. Old Business:

Dr. Halsor noted it was mentioned at the May, 2013 Board meeting a marketing plan would be discussed at a future meeting and referred to a marketing report which was distributed to the Board stating the report offers a good amount of information and requested a discussion and review of the report at a future meeting. Mr. Licata asked Mr. Strelish to please place the marketing plan on the agenda for the August Board meeting. Mr. Strelish stated that Mr. Darr has been developing a Request for Proposals that would be available for the August meeting as well.

## 13. New Business:

Board Chairman Mr. Licata addressed the Board and those present making a statement of the many issues plaguing the Authority over the past year especially concerning the senior citizen ridership. Mr. Licata referenced a letter dated October 14, 2009 issued by Mr. Strelish explaining how the ridership projects revenue thereby requesting drivers to accurately record the passengers. Mr. Licata also mentioned the Authority's purchase of surveillance cameras which were purchased for the buses, helping maintain accurate ridership counts as well as the Automatic Vehicle Locator system, which is also designed to register accurate passenger count. Executive Director, Mr. Strelish commented the Administrative staff is also responsible for inadequate training of drivers in properly registering passengers. Mr. Strelish also noted the cameras on the buses were purchased as a means to provide safety and security to passengers and drivers alike.

Mr. Licata continued, noting that until an investigation report is received from PennDOT the focus of the Board and the Authority is to go forward in an effort to improve the Authority's position in regard to providing an efficiently run transit operation and working environment. Mr. Licata suggested that perhaps negative publicity toward the Authority is possibly a reason why people are not riding the buses and causing the decline. At this point, Mr. Turinski emphatically stated negative publicity would not cause a loss of 52,000 senior citizens. Storming out of the ongoing meeting, Mr. Turinski shouted "This is a bunch of bulls\*\*t," "This is a bunch of bulls\*\*t". **Further comments and statements were made regarding various issues and are available for audio access.**

Dr. Halsor mentioned that as a new Board member he feels there is a need to contact PennDOT to request the report be provided as soon as possible in order to conclude the issue. Mr. Baldo questioned what the focus of the report is based on since the decrease in ridership has been noted and is being addressed. Attorney Blazosek commented on the qualities of leadership Mr. Strelish has provided as Executive Director, resulting in efficient bus service and positive administrative reviews.

## 14. Remarks:

Mr. Maher commented on behalf of Mr. Strelish and his performance as Executive Director. Dr. Kepner stated her purpose as a Board member is to try to improve bus service and suggested that Board members and employees ride the buses to get a feel for where improvements can be made.

## 15. Adjournment:

With all business having been conducted, motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Kepner and seconded by Mr. Maher. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

