

MINUTES OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

LANE COUNTY MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

A meeting of the budget committee of Lane County Mass Transit District was held at the City Hall in Eugene, Oregon, on May 29, 1974, at 7:30 P.M. pursuant to notice duly published.

Present were the following:

Board members

Gary Buell  
Jack Craig, Treasurer  
Daniel Herbert, President  
Kenneth Kohnen, Vice President

Appointed members

Russell Poff  
Dick Rice  
Dennis Spitze  
Agnes VanVevender

Absent:

Marcella Fetzer  
Glenn Randall, Secretary

Absent:

Irvin Fletcher  
Mack Fullmer  
Jim Martin

Daniel Herbert was elected chairman and Dick Rice was elected secretary of the budget committee.

Daniel Herbert, president of the board of directors, then gave the budget message and Fred Dyer, general manager of the district and budget officer, presented the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1974, providing \$2,294,445.00 for personal services, \$666,390.00 for materials and supplies, \$216,900.00 for contractual services, and \$1,532,800.00 for capital outlay, making a total budget of \$4,710,535.00. Mr. Dyer advised that the amount of budget resources included a payroll tax of .0047 for the entire county.

Mr. Herbert pointed out that if the district stays within the current level of taxation at .0047, it will have to drop some of the services it has planned to provide. For example, the budget would not include sufficient operating funds to carry out the program for the physically limited and elderly, nor would it provide for extension of service to Laural Hill, west Santa Clara, southwest Eugene, northeast Springfield, or southeast Springfield. Mr. Herbert expressed the opinion that the budget should be adequate to provide for such service. The general manager informed the board that even if it were to adopt the maximum payroll tax of .006 there would still not be enough revenue to carry out those programs.

Jack Craig suggested that an opinion poll be taken among the bus riders to determine whether they desire Sunday service. Mr. Buell expressed the view that the vote taken at the election on May 28 on Ballot Measure No. 2 in which the proposal to allow the use of highway funds for mass transit was defeated showed that the people were not in favor of an extension of mass transit service. Mr. Craig replied that the vote was the result of misrepresentations by people opposed to Measure No. 2.

In reply to an inquiry by Mr. Spitze as to what service is contemplated for the outlying areas in the county, Dave Rynerson answered that both commuter and noncommuter service is contemplated for the area out Highway 126 as far as Vida; to Marcola, Junction City, Veneta, Elmira, Cottage Grove and out Highway 58 to Lowell and Pleasant Hill; and that noncommuter service is contemplated to McKenzie Bridge, Coburg, Florence and Triangle Lake. The expected starting date for that service would be March, 1975.

Following further discussion of the budget between the general manager and committee members, the matter was opened for public comment and discussion.

Edward Rubey, CPA, of Eugene, Oregon, said that he had made a study of the budget for the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce. He observed that as the specifications for the new buses are not complete, it will be impossible to obtain the new buses during the ensuing fiscal year, and therefore, there is no need to provide funds for the additional drivers and other contemplated operating expenses to run the new buses. He also commented that the item in the new budget for a beginning fund balance of \$79,200.00 is way short of what he feels it should be. Mr. Rubey also criticized as unnecessary items of expenditure for a bus washer, wheel alignment rack and other equipment which is available to the district for its use elsewhere and said that the budget committee should try to eliminate the frills. He went on to point out that many of the district's bus riders contribute nothing to operating costs and that the fare-paying ridership is declining and expected to decline further. He advised the budget committee that it has a duty to adopt a more economical budget.

Mr. Dyer replied that county-wide service could be provided by the acquisition of used buses prior to the delivery of the new buses.

Craig Robinson of Eugene (former president of the transit board of directors), observed that even if only three percent of the population used the buses, there are a number of indirect benefits to the community of having an adequate mass transit system.

Bob Miller of Coburg, Oregon, told the committee he feels it essential that mass transportation be increased because of gas shortages expected in the future. He also thought that a subsidy is justified for those riders who are unable to pay the full cost

of bus transportation, otherwise, some of them would be unable to get to and from work.

Dave VanFossen of 2700 Almaden in Eugene, reminded the committee that the Eugene-Springfield Ambulance Service plans to provide service for the handicapped and elderly at a fare of \$2.00 per trip. He also pointed out that expanded bus service existed in this community many years ago, but failed because the public did not want the expanded service.

Al Tussing of 2437 Riverview, Eugene, Oregon, spoke in favor of extension of service to the Laurel Hill area. He mentioned the benefit to employers in having mass transit so that their employees could get to work on time even during periods of gasoline shortage. He said that the people in the Laurel Hill area want bus service so much that they are willing to help with a special subsidy in order to obtain it.

In response to inquiry, Dave Rynerson advised that service to the Laurel Hill area is not included in the budget presented by the budget officer.

Mick Waggoner, a teacher at Pearl Buck Center, told the committee that some of the teachers at that center rely on the buses for transportation and that many of the students there need special buses so that they can get out into the community.

Annabel Kitzhaber spoke to the committee on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Central Lane county. She spoke in support of the activities of the transit district and the extension of service both within and outside the present service area and also for the physically limited and elderly. She stated that the League recognizes the unfairness of the payroll tax and feels that efforts should be made to go to the legislature for alternate methods of financing, in which the League is willing to render cooperation and assistance. She said that the League believes that the entire community benefits from mass transit and not just the bus riders.

Jack Craig responded that the board of directors of the district should work with the League of Women Voters in seeking alternate means of financing expansion of service.

Stan Cook of 1832 Longview, Eugene, expressed the view that people are not going to give up riding in their cars until bus service improves and also that adjustments have to be made to increasing prices of gasoline and automobiles. He mentioned the problems of air pollution, which need to be overcome by mass transit. He suggested that the transit district might ask the University of Oregon, EWEB, and other organizations not paying payroll taxes to help subsidize mass transit in the same manner in which EWEB now pays sums in lieu of taxes.

Robin Pierce of 2066 University Street, Eugene, Oregon, read a statement from Don South of 1195 East 21st, Eugene, Oregon,

stating that he was proprietor of a finance company; that he favors increased bus service and the broadening of the tax base. She also read a statement from Al Urquhart of 1960 Agate Street, Eugene, Oregon, favoring expansion of service, both as to areas and hours of service and recommended that the employers pass the cost on to the consumers. She also made a statement on her own behalf favoring the greatest possible expansion of service in order to diminish traffic and parking congestion, improve the environment, attain numerous other benefits.

Joanne Low of 1565 Garfield Place, a student at the University of Oregon, expressed appreciation for the bus service from the student housing area to the University and favored expansion of bus service.

Gene Davis of 734 Summit Boulevard, Springfield, Oregon, questioned the need for a second administrative assistant to the general manager, complimented the transit district on the good job it is doing, but recommended that service should not be expanded unless the people who want more service are willing to pay the cost thereof.

Vern McGuire of 7000 Stonehenge, Eugene, Oregon, a partner in Oregon Industrial Lumber Products, spoke against expansion of the transit system, denounced the employers payroll tax as inequitable, and said that his firm had paid \$1,630.00 tax last year although neither the partners nor their employees made any use of the buses.

George McCart favored expansion of bus service and told the committee that, in his opinion, the payroll tax is small compared to the amounts being spent on luxuries and entertainment.

Mary Briscoe of 1822 Charnelton Street, Eugene, Oregon, told the committee that she favors expansion of service and mentioned numerous benefits to the community as a whole, in addition to the direct benefits to the bus riders.

Carol Green of Oakridge asked that service be extended to Oakridge, particularly for the benefit of the elderly and disabled and for Lane Community College students.

Dave Rynerson advised that the present budget does not provide for service to the Oakridge area, although the county has a plan for non-commuter service to Oakridge.

Bill Guenzler advocated expansion of service and remarked that, although only three per cent of the person-trips may be by mass transit, nevertheless more than three per cent of the people are making those trips.

Merle Saunders, proprietor of Saunders Cleaners in Eugene, criticized the payroll tax exemptions as unfair.

Kathleen Stevens of 954 Rio Vista, Santa Clara, Oregon, said that when buses first came to her area she was the only rider on the bus, but now ridership has increased to the point where the bus is

often crowded and she urged expansion of service.

Gary Dixon noted that federal government planning for the recent gas shortage was very poor and he recommended that the district should continue providing mass transportation for the public.

Betsy Stevens spoke in favor of extension of service to Florence and other outlying areas where such service is both wanted and needed.

Gary Reed of Springfield, Oregon, criticized the employers payroll tax and expressed doubt that employers can pass on that tax to their customers.

Howard Warner of Barger Drive advised the committee that increased bus service will never reduce the number of cars on the streets.

David Whitbread expressed his awareness of the need for mass transit, but opposed the bureaucratic building of empires. He urged economy and efforts to broaden the tax base of the transit district.

Rusty Blake of West 16th in Eugene, Oregon, told the committee that he thinks there will be a need for extended bus service; that the district is doing a good job of providing public transportation, and favored the addition of service for the benefit of the disadvantaged and isolated.

John Nelson of Box 183, Springfield, Oregon, warned the committee that the anticipated federal grant may not come through and that plans should be made accordingly. The general manager replied that the government has already committed most of the expected capital grant indicated in the budget.

Charlene Lary of 60 West 25th, Eugene, Oregon, spoke on behalf of the Food Processing Union Local No. 670, concerning the problems of parking for those who work at the cannery. She pointed out that many of them have to be at work at 7:00 a.m. and many of them work at night so that existing service is not available. She expressed the need to find some way to obtain extended service for those employees at the cannery who are willing to subsidize the service to some extent, if necessary. She asked for an opportunity to meet with district representatives to discuss these problems.

There being no other members of the audience desiring to speak, the chairman declared the public discussion terminated, but announced that public discussion would be welcome at the next meeting of the committee.

The meeting was then adjourned to June 12, 1974, at 7:30 p.m. at the City Hall in Eugene, Oregon.

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Secretary