

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 17, 1993

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 12, 1993, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a special work session of the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District was held on Wednesday, February 17, 1993, at 6:00 p.m. in the LTD Board Room at 3500 E. 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Jack Billings
Peter Brandt, Treasurer
Janet Calvert
Tammy Fitch, Vice President
Patricia Hocken
Thomas Montgomery, Secretary
Keith Parks, President, presiding
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

WORK SESSION ON BOARD MEETINGS AND AGENDAS: Because of the number of lengthy agenda items the Board had been discussing, and the lack of time to finish the agenda at some meetings, staff had asked to talk with the Board about meetings and agenda materials. Mr. Brandt said that he had been attending meetings for ten years, and it seemed that the meetings were more drawn out than they used to be, even though the agenda items may be no more difficult. He suggested that the Board and staff should be able to shorten the meetings. Mr. Parks said that, as President, he typically would not move on to the next agenda item if people appeared to be interested in the current one. He suggested that the other Board members should let him know if they want any topic to move faster.

Mr. Billings liked the idea of a consent calendar. Each Board member would have the ability to remove any item from the consent calendar for further discussion; otherwise, all items on the consent calendar would be dealt with as a block. Ms. Calvert wasn't sure there were enough items for a consent calendar that would make a large difference in the length of the meeting, and she also recalled that sometimes some Board members felt that there was not enough discussion about certain issues. She wondered if the Board should continue to have one meeting a month, but begin earlier.

Ms. Hocken said she was surprised at how many public hearings the Board held. Ms. Loobey explained that the hearings usually were required by law, and sometimes there was public testimony, and sometimes there was not. Mr. Brandt asked if staff encouraged people to attend the hearings. Ms. Loobey said that the hearings were published in the newspaper and the public was informed. There was some discussion about setting more

stringent time limits for testimony or presentations from others, without discouraging public input. Mr. Parks said that if the Board was going to commit itself to action by putting something on the agenda, last-minute public input should be expected on occasion.

Ms. Fitch said it would be very helpful if the packet could be delivered by the close of business on the Friday before the Board meeting, so the Board members would be sure to have time to read the materials. She also said that, because the Board members were doing more in the community, mass transit spilled over into everything else the Board members did, such as her participation on the Springfield Chamber Board of Directors. She said she did not want to miss the last information items on the agenda because the Board members were tired, because those items might be brought up somewhere else the next day.

Ms. Hocken said she would prefer to extend the meeting time than meet twice a month. She suggested the possibility of a 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. meeting. Mr. Billings expressed his resistance to expanding the meeting or instituting a second meeting, because the agenda would expand to fit the time, and expanding the meeting time did not impose any discipline on the Board and staff. He said that a two-hour meeting might not be enough, so second meetings could be called as needed, rather than scheduled on a regular basis.

Mr. Brandt thought the staff presentations were too long. He said the staff did an outstanding job of preparing the packet, and sometimes went through routine information which the Board members could read themselves. He said he would rather see staff introduce issues and ask for questions, especially for the less difficult issues. He wondered if introducing the employee of the month was necessary at the meetings, because that took five to ten minutes each month. He also wondered about the continuing value of the program, because over time, most employees could be employee of the month. Ms. Loobey thought it would be wonderful if every employee could be employee of the month, and said she believed it was important for them to be recognized by the Board. She believed they saw that recognition as a singular honor, because they had to pass a range of criteria to be employee of the month. Mr. Billings said he would like to see this stay on the agenda. He felt that the Board members did not get to see the employees often enough. Ms. Calvert added that one of LTD's strengths had been its employees, and she thought it paid off in the long run if employees felt the Board was accessible and interested.

Mr. Parks was concerned about eliminating presentations if interested members of the audience were present. He suggested that the staff could check for interested persons before beginning presentations. Ms. Fitch agreed. Mr. Brandt wondered why the Board should feel the need to put on a presentation just for the audience, if the Board members were already informed. Ms. Hocken said that if a person had an interest in an agenda item, he or she could receive the agenda materials ahead of time and could even ask questions, but maybe a 15-minute presentation would not be necessary. She wondered if staff talked to people who called about specific issues. Ms. Loobey said that they did. Also, agendas were published ahead of time, and delivered to the media and other interested persons. However, staff could not always be sure what agenda items the media might talk about or who might be sparked by certain information, or how they would receive it, unless they were on the mailing list for all agenda packets. She suggested that the Board could set a five-minute limit for members of the audience. Ms. Calvert thought the Board members had an additional responsibility to hear

the public because they were not elected officials. They needed to be open and accessible to what people wanted to say. She said she would object to not letting people come to share their ideas and express their opinions.

The Board looked at the agenda for the regular meeting to follow, to see how they might handle the agenda differently. Ms. Loobey said that staff had tried to limit staff presentations to five to ten minutes, but could eliminate them entirely. To do this, staff would have to presume that the Board had read their materials. Board members could call staff with questions before the meeting, if they wished.

Mr. Brandt asked why the Board was being asked to approve the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) if they had to do it as part of the budget process. Ms. Loobey explained that staff presented items such as the CIP, the administrative salary recommendations, and the annual route review to the Board before the budget process because it was the Board's responsibility to adopt them, not the Budget Committee's. If the Board had questions or did not agree with part of the CIP, it could be changed before the budget process. Mr. Brandt said that the Board had to hold a public hearing on service, but otherwise it was not a big deal to him until he saw it in the budget. Mark Pangborn, Director of Administrative Services, said the budget is supposed to be Board-directed direction to staff, and there could be potentially embarrassing situations if staff did not discuss certain ideas with the Board, resulting in a lengthy process to change the budget. He said he would not want to take something this important to the Budget Committee if the majority of the Board did not discuss it first.

Mr. Brandt said that in March, if he were staff, he would send out a general overview of how staff planned to put the budget together, including major changes and their costs. Mr. Pangborn said that March was probably too late, because the budget had to be pretty well determined by the end of March to be included in the recommended budget distributed to the Budget Committee. He said some things could be done that way, but some issues required public hearings.

Ms. Calvert asked about discussion of service changes. Mr. Pangborn said that staff responded to all inquiries for information, and recorded and gathered suggestions for service, so it may not always be necessary for members of the public to testify at the meetings, but some wanted to talk directly with the Board.

Ms. Fitch asked if there was consensus that the Board needed to move to an earlier meeting time. Mr. Brandt said he wanted to shorten the meetings. Ms. Fitch said she did not want to end the meetings later. Mr. Montgomery said he would have more trouble making two meetings a month than staying later one time a month.

Mr. Parks summarized the discussion. He said that he thought the agenda materials and minutes were pretty well accepted by the Board; staff presentations should be kept to a minimum; Board members should read their materials; and he would help run the meetings more efficiently. There was not yet agreement about the frequency or length of meetings, but the Board members hoped these efficiency measures would reduce the need for longer or more meetings. Mr. Pangborn added that staff could try using a consent calendar for issues

of a routine nature, and the Board would have their materials by the end of business on the Friday before the meeting.

Establish Protocol for Board Presentations: Mr. Billings asked to talk about the issue of establishing protocol for Board presentations. He apologized to the Board because some statements he made to the City Council regarding the proposal for a downtown rail loop were badly reported, and not what he had said. He had said he felt that the railroad was grossly misrepresented in terms of how much money it would cost to run, etc. The Register-Guard misrepresented what he said, probably to the detriment of the Board, and he apologized for that. He had heard that the Council was going to discuss the issue, and he explained to the Council the lack of an endorsement and stated that he was speaking solely for himself. He had made a disclaimer about what he thought the Board would do, but his remarks were misrepresented in the paper, and on January 7, the newspaper said the railroad already had LTD's approval.

Ms. Calvert said that if the Board members were going to be in the public arena and were trying to represent the Board at meetings and discussions, they were going to be asked questions and would be misquoted. She thought they should just do their best to represent the Board. Ms. Hocken thought that the broader issue was whether Board members should be testifying about what the Board should have a policy on, but didn't. She said that maybe it was not appropriate for Board members to speak in a public arena unless the Board had taken a position on that specific issue.

Ms. Loobey said that the environment was changing, and the Board members or District did not always have total control. She thought there would be a lot of issues that would come up through the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) or the Transportation Rule process when Board members were interacting with other units of government, and some of those issues would not have had direct Board scrutiny. She stressed that LTD was the transit expert, and in some cases the Board members or staff should be able to say in some forum that something is a good or bad idea. At many meetings, such as MPC or the Central Area Transportation Study (CATS) Citizen Advisory Committee, staff were present to help the Board members with the technical details or an overview of an issue. Sometimes, she said, things took on a life of their own, and needed to be responded to immediately.

Mr. Parks thanked Mr. Billings for helping the Board with this discussion.

ADJOURNMENT: There was no further discussion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.


Board Secretary