

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE COUNTY MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

ADJOURNED MEETING

January 11, 1979

Pursuant to notice given to the Register Guard and Springfield News on December 19, 1978, an adjourned meeting of the board of directors of Lane County Mass Transit District was held at the City Hall, Eugene, Oregon on January 11, 1979 at 7:30 p.m.

Present:

Richard A. Booth, Secretary
Jack J. Craig
Daniel M. Herbert, Vice President
Ted J. Langton, Treasurer
Kenneth H. Kohnen, President, presiding
Glenn E. Randall
Carolyn Roemer
Fred C. Dyer, General Manager
Mavis Skipworth, Recording Secretary

News media representatives:

Marvin Tims, Register Guard
Tom Jackson, Springfield News

Mr. Kohnen reviewed the schedule of meetings to be held for the update process of the Transit Development Program. He advised that at the regular board meeting held December 19, 1978, the board had instructed the staff to prepare a set of activities necessary to achieve a 25% ratio and the purpose of this meeting was to receive and discuss that material and to give direction to the staff in order to prepare a draft of the Transit Development Program.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Clark Cox commended the district for service performance during the recent severe icy weather, and asked that a specific commendation be given to the employee on duty at that time in the Customer Service Center.

STAFF PRESENTATION: David Rynerson, Director of Planning and Development, presented a memo entitled "Exploration of Factors Affecting Farebox Revenue/ Operating Cost Ratio" describing the potential contribution of three variable factors, Increased Fares, Reduced Service, and Increased Ridership, to an overall strategy and extended to a three year forecast. He stressed the effect on ridership response of any action that might be taken and suggested that data could be obtained from other properties for comparison purposes.

Mr. Rynerson said that other operations of comparable size do not differ in cost/farebox ratio and are experiencing a downtrend. He noted that the first two variables would not achieve the 25% farebox objective; that although reduced service would have the effect of decreasing total expenditures, such service reductions would not improve the farebox/operating cost ratio

significantly. He said that based upon the district's experience and upon observation of pricing policies throughout the industry, fare increases can result in a downward spiral of both revenue and ridership.

Mr. Herbert observed that while investigating the three variables, the item of efficiency in providing service had not been addressed and asked if it was believed that more progress toward the 25% goal could be accomplished through increased efficiency. Mr. Rynerson replied that it is an ongoing policy to be as efficient as possible in keeping down the unit cost of operation.

Mr. Herbert inquired, during discussion of reduced cost and vehicle hours, if it would be possible to keep the same number of vehicle hours but use less people hours. He said it was his belief that the district has maintained an appropriate number of people hours for vehicle hours and he would not foresee a significant savings in that area but asked if the staff could quantify the number of person hours it takes to operate the vehicle hours in order to determine the effect. Mr. Kohnen said efficient use of manpower is a desirable goal but the effect on operating cost in this instance would probably not be significant.

Mr. Booth said he believed there are some efficiencies to be gained in the maintenance department and spoke of information he had received through a driver in Springfield, Illinois; that it is a metropolitan area of comparable size with a more efficient transit operation. He asked that data be obtained on that operation. Mrs. Roemer said that area is more densely populated and would perhaps not be comparable.

Mr. Craig suggested that such requests for information should be put in the form of a motion to avoid too many requests requiring staff time. Mr. Randall concurred, saying it would also clarify instructions for staff. Mr. Herbert said in this instance he believed the staff should obtain any readily accessible information to make useful comparisons with other systems.

MOTION

Mr. Randall moved the staff be instructed to contact the transit system in Springfield, Illinois, and solicit all pertinent information that might be helpful to the district. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

VOTE

Mr. Rynerson then presented two alternative three year programs incorporating elements from the three variable factors; the programs including service reductions, fare increases, and ridership growth in response to changing conditions both external and internal to district operation.

Alternative I summary of actions:

- FY 79-80
1. Reduce Monday-Saturday evening service to Sunday type routes. September 1979.
 2. Reduce Saturday morning frequency from 30 to 60 minutes in September 1979.
 3. Eliminate routes #4 Marcola, #8 Big M/South 2nd, and #7B LCC/Goshen in September 1979.
 4. Eliminate free fares for Seniors on evenings and weekend. Set senior fare at 1/2 of regular fare.
 5. Increase Marketing budget by 30% in July 1979.
 6. Expand Employee Training Program.
 7. Install 100 bus stops and 30 shelters.

8. Add two new cross-town routes in September, 1980.
 - A. U of O - South Eugene Connection.
 - B. Springfield-Valley River Connection.
- FY 80-81 9. Introduce new buses in September, 1980.
10. Raise base fare from 35¢ to 45¢; raise zone charge from 15¢ to 20¢; set senior fare at 20¢ and senior zone charge at 5¢ in September, 1980.
11. Reduce token discount from 14% to 11%, or 5 tokens for \$2.00 in September, 1980.
12. Install 150 bus stops and 30 shelters.
- FY 81-82 13. Complete Riviera Transit Station and park n' ride.
14. Provide express service between Eugene Mall and Riviera during peak hours.
15. Provide express service in the Eugene-Springfield and West Eugene Corridors.
16. Install 150 bus stops and 40 shelters.
17. Raise base fare from 45¢ to 50¢; raise zone charge from 20¢ to 25¢; set senior fare at 25¢ and senior zone charge at 10¢.
18. Seek implementation of intersection priority treatment by Lane County at selected intersections on River Road in coordination with other traffic management improvements.

In response to a question about the marketing budget, Mr. Rynerson explained that it was proposed to be increased from approximately \$180,000 to \$250,000, and that these figures include personnel and printing costs as well as advertising.

Mr. Rynerson then presented Coordinated Alternative II, noting that it differed from Alternative No. 1 in FY 79-80 only in that it did not include crosstown routings; and that the difference for FY 80-81 would be a major redesign of the route structure in order to increase total rides per vehicle hour, albeit at the expense of total ridership, by implementing a redesigned urban route structure to reduce area coverage and eliminate route overlaps on major corridors during midday hours, deleting route #7C LCC/Lowell (non-urban only) and route #5 Blue River.

Mr. Kohnen thanked Mr. Rynerson for his comprehensive presentation. Mr. Craig observed that the presented information supports the difficulty in approaching a 25% goal while providing good service.

Mr. Booth said he saw no attempt to examine a reallocation of equipment to routes that are currently overloaded. Mr. Rynerson replied that the alternatives included reduced service at certain times of day which would release funds for use in other areas where needed. He added that the district currently can handle the ridership and no patrons are left waiting because of overload. Mr. Booth said he believed more ridership could be generated by increased headways in highly populated areas and this could be made possible by decreasing service in lower populated areas. He said his objective is to put buses where they are most productive in order to increase ridership and farebox percentage.

Mr. Langton commented that the district receives a considerable amount of input from seniors and they are given a great deal of attention but student ridership should receive more focus as they are a larger market.

Mr. Herbert referred to Alternative II, saying he would be unwilling to accept a service redesign that would result in decreased service standards and ridership. He said this was in opposition to the direction that he believed transit should be going and, in the face of potential external developments, would be the opposite direction that people would be expecting to find transit operating in this community. Mr. Booth voice the opinion that it was not a viable alternative as, while it decreased operating expenses, it did not perform as well in other respects, and Mr. Randall concurred.

MOTION
VOTE

Mr. Herbert moved that the board eliminate Alternative II from consideration. Mr. Craig seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Randall was excused from the meeting.

Discussion followed on the impact on ridership of increasing fares 5¢ each year or 10¢ in 1980. Mr. Rynerson said fare increases coinciding with major improvements in service seem to be more acceptable. Mr. Booth said it appeared to him that in keeping up with inflation, small increases each year would be more palatable to the public. Mrs. Roemer said fares should remain acceptable while gasoline prices increase as this would encourage more ridership. Responding to a question by Mr. Kohnen of any administrative problem in annual increases, Mr. Dyer said there were none and spoke of the sociological aspect of fare increases, adding that the inflation rate is something the district must cope with to even maintain the present ratio.

Mr. Herbert suggested that if a fare increase were delayed, there could possibly be a considerable ridership increase as gasoline prices go up, and the district would receive greater revenues; that possibly riders would be willing to accept a 10¢ increase with the implementation of the new buses.

MOTION

Mr. Herbert moved that the board approve Items 4 through 18 of Alternative I. Mr. Craig seconded the motion.

Mr. Langton said he believed all of the items should be included for consideration in the review process, rather than eliminating some at this point.

AMEND
MOTION

Mr. Herbert then moved to amend the motion to include Items 1, 2 and 3. Mr. Langton seconded the motion. Mr. Herbert said that by voting approval of the amendment, he wanted it made clear that he did not approve the reductions listed but was trying to find out what the public response would be. Mr. Craig concurred.


VOTE

The question was put on the amending motion and it carried unanimously.

VOTE

The question was then put on the main motion as amended and it carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.


Secretary