

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE COUNTY MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT
ADJOURNED MEETING

September 11, 1979

Pursuant to notice given to the Register Guard on August 21, 1979, an adjourned meeting of the board of directors of Lane County Mass Transit District was held at Mr. Steak Restaurant, Broadway and Garfield, Eugene, Oregon, at 7:00 a.m. on September 11, 1979.

Present: Richard A. Booth, Secretary
Daniel M. Herbert, Vice President
Kenneth H. Kohnen, President, presiding
Ted J. Langton, Treasurer
Glenn E. Randall
Carolyn Roemer
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Mavis Skipworth, Recording Secretary
News media representative:
Marvin Tims, Register Guard
Navarre Davis, Downtown Development Board
Myron Feig, Eugene Downtown Association
Gil Fuchs, Eugene Downtown Association
Ray McIver, Eugene Downtown Association
Charles Wickizer, Downtown Development Board

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT: Mr. Kohnen introduced the guests present at the meeting, and explained the purpose of this adjourned meeting was to review changing conditions that would require updating of the Transit Development Program (TDP) and to discuss the financing of any revisions.

TELEVISION COMMERCIALS: Mr. Bruce Cappelli of Advertising Services, Inc., presented a preview of the television commercial that will shortly begin appearing on local stations.

CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW: Mr. Rynerson, Director of Planning and Development, presented a staff report listing four major factors contributing to the need to update the TDP projections made six months ago: 1) the budgetary decision to reallocate the 1979-80 Section 5 base funding from capital to operating assistance, 2) recent ridership growth, 3) increased operating costs, and 4) downtown growth and the associated higher costs of downtown parking. He reported on the ridership increase of the past few months, noting that the non-urban routes have experienced a more rapid rate of increase than the Eugene/Springfield area, and as yet the amount of increase that will occur from student ridership is unknown. He spoke of the possibility of bond financing through the Oregon Mass Transit Financing Authority (OMTFA) to accelerate acquisition of more buses at an earlier date, although it could not be utilized for the current bus purchase.

Mr. Rynerson listed three possible alternatives for board consideration of the fleet inventory between 1980 and 1982. Alternative No. 1 would amend the TDP to include refurbishing seven 49-passenger buses in the current fleet by 1981 which, he said, would make them usable for another five years.

Alternative No. 2 was the same as the first alternative except the district would buy seventeen 38-passenger buses for 1980 delivery instead of the ten 29-passenger and nine 38-passenger. Alternative No. 3 was again the same as No. 1 except that the district would utilize bond financing to increase the number of 38-passenger buses for 1980 delivery from nine to eighteen.

Gil Fuchs, President of the Eugene Downtown Association, inquired about the difference of fuel consumption between 29-passenger buses and 49-passenger buses and Mr. Rynerson responded that if the buses were put to the same use the advantage of the smaller buses would be 7 miles per gallon versus 5 m.p.g.

Responding to a question by Mr. Booth of whether one large bus or two smaller buses would carry more riders, Mr. Rynerson replied that with a fixed operating budget the larger bus would be more economical but that more people could be served by two smaller buses although there would be additional labor costs.

Mr. Langton said the board had previously discussed the system's capacity for handling ridership demand and had found it difficult to measure. He said he believed the district should thoroughly evaluate the need for any new buses and should not be panicked by an increase in ridership into getting into a bond indebtedness for additional buses. Ms. Loobey said the purchase of new 38-passenger buses would be for replacement of obsolete fleet and spoke of the leadtime necessary to get new vehicles to meet demands on the system.

Mr. Fuchs observed that a ridership decrease was projected to follow a fare increase in 1980-81 and said he did not believe that would occur because of the increase in population, the downtown parking developments, and inflation, and there would be an increase in ridership in spite of a fare increase.

Mr. Herbert responded that the district's experience has shown that ridership drops following a fare increase but after a year again increases. He said the district has no experience in learning what the effect of high inflation would be on ridership.

Navarre Davis, Chairman of the Parking Subcommittee, Downtown Development Board, spoke of developments in the downtown area that would affect ridership: an element of the parking and circulation study currently underway by the city to determine employee/customer parking needs in the downtown area, the advent of the performing arts complex, and the increased costs for employee parking, together with disincentives for violation of the parking rules. He suggested the district should take these factors into account in their planning process. He said smaller vehicles and more frequent service should be considered to accommodate transit usage that will develop within the next year from the downtown area.

Ray McIver, Manager of the Eugene Downtown Association, encouraged an aggressive program with incentives to get not only employees, but also shoppers to ride the buses, noting that it would be especially necessary during the holiday season. Mr. Powis spoke of a potential shop and ride program with support of the business community to persuade shoppers and employees to ride the bus between Thanksgiving and the Christmas season.

Myron Feig, Chairman of the Transportation Subcommittee of the Downtown Development Board, said he has heard objections that the departure time of buses from the downtown area does not coincide with closing hours of the stores. Mr. Rynerson explained the different departure schedules set to serve the variety of types of riders using the buses.

Mr. Kohnen referred to Mr. Fuchs' prediction of increased ridership above staff projection and observed that although the district's projections are conservative, they are reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Herbert reaffirmed his position that the district should obtain as many buses as soon as possible and should explore all means of financing, particularly the bonding authority, to increase the fleet in the future. He said the board should ask the staff to develop information on the timing necessary for acquiring buses under the bonding authority. Mr. Booth said the board should know if there should be a public vote before going into a bonding indebtedness and where the funds would come from to retire the bonds.

Mrs. Roemer said while she realized the old vehicles need to be replaced, she would want to see a good demonstration of the need for additional buses before pursuing purchase through the bonding authority; that empty buses make a continuing public relations problem. Mr. Wickizer expressed agreement with Mrs. Roemer in that he would prefer to see a full bus than several empty buses but said the purpose of the representatives of the business community attending this meeting was to share with the board the developments that are taking place in the downtown area. Mr. Davis added that any transit planning that could be done to recognize employee needs when the revised parking program is implemented would be mutually advantageous.

Mr. Randall said he believed the board should act quickly to change the boundaries and again consider submitting an income tax.

Charles Wickizer, Vice President of the Downtown Development Board, said if the financing costs of the district were shared through an income tax, it would increase the ability of the employers to subsidize their employees' rides.

Mr. Fuchs asked for a comparison of maintenance costs on the old and newer buses. Mr. Rynerson and Mr. Dallas gave a comparison of the costs and computed an estimated amount of difference of \$175,000 annually between the older and newer fleet. Mr. Fuchs commented that it appeared the district was wasting the cost of one new bus each year by maintaining the old buses. Mr. Dallas said it was more like two buses a year as 50% of the fleet is operating inefficiently.

Mr. Kohnen expressed appreciation to the guests for attending the meeting and for their input. He said the district wants to be aware of the needs of the downtown area and the projected additional ridership should be included in the planning; that the leadtime is great in obtaining new vehicles and the district must be progressive in its planning, but will not be panicked by the increased ridership. Mr. Davis said they appreciate Mr. Powis and Ms. Loobey attending the Downtown Development Board meetings and believe there will be mutual benefit from the interest shown.

The guests left the meeting.

MOTION
VOTE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Langton moved the board go into executive session. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously. The board was then advised of the status of a dispute over working rules and conditions relative to the system scheduled to be implemented in September.

The meeting was adjourned.


Secretary