

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE COUNTY MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

Adjourned Meeting

April 1, 1980

Pursuant to notice given to the Register Guard for publication on March 27, 1980, to the Springfield News and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the district, an adjourned meeting of the board of directors of Lane County Mass Transit District was held April 1, 1980 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Hall, Eugene, Oregon.

Present:

Richard A. Booth, Secretary
Daniel M. Herbert, Vice President
Kenneth H. Kohnen, President, presiding
Ted J. Langton, Treasurer
Robert C. Loomis
Glenn E. Randall
Carolyn Roemer
Phyllis Loobey, General Manager
Mavis Skipworth, Recording Secretary

News media representative:

Marvin Tims, Register Guard

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY PRESIDENT: Mr. Kohnen welcomed the lay members of the budget committee and members of the audience. He advised that although the Transit Development Program included significant improvements in service, without the income tax revenues the plan must now be revised and that the overloading and scheduling problems resulting from demands on the system must be addressed. He said the board will receive a staff proposal and there will be opportunity at this meeting and one subsequent meeting for public discussion before adoption of new proposals. He spoke of the challenge facing the board and budget committee to allocate available resources in the most equitable manner and to minimize the problems created by service cutbacks.

The chairman reported on a meeting held in the governor's office and of a proposal by the state to contribute an amount equal to the payroll tax within the transit area, projecting an amount of \$1,000,000 for the district in a biennium. He said while this necessitated approval by the legislature and the cash flow would not commence until 1981, it was encouraging to hear the governor's strong statements in favor of public transit.

STAFF PRESENTATION: Ms. Bevington, Planning Administrator, presented a staff proposal of routing, fare policies and capital programs to address the current deficiencies through reallocation of the existing resources. She said it represented a significant departure from previous board policy of coverage criteria to productivity of routes.

Ms. Bevington listed five proposed action items: 1) Eliminate all non-urban routes and shrink the service area to the boundaries within the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area, 2) operate off-peak system on a 45-minute pulse all day Saturday, 3) eliminate low productivity route segments, add one additional

schedule to the base system, and reallocate existing resources to routes lacking scheduled running time, 4) reduce hours of operation by making last evening departure from the Eugene Mall at 10:55 p.m., 5) commit 10,200 annual vehicle hours to peak hour trippers to University of Oregon and Lane Community College. She added a sixth recommendation of direct service to Weyerhaeuser and other sizable industrial plants.

She said the staff recommended that this revised route plan should be circulated for public review with implementation of an approved plan targeted for June, 1980. She projected a slower rate of ridership increase through FY 81-82, with no ridership growth anticipated during FY 82-83. She spoke of the need for additional revenues to be derived through the payroll tax and farebox, recommending an increase in the base fare to 65¢ in June 1980, 70¢ in June 1981, and 75¢ as of June 1983, together with raising the payroll tax to the maximum .006. Outlining capital programs, she stated that those included in the TDP for FY 1980-81 should still be implemented with the exception of the Section 8 grant for non-urban shelters; that the construction of a garage/office facility should be cancelled, and no additional coaches purchased in FY 1982-83.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Shirley Miller, 202 W. Dixon, Coburg, presented a petition containing 43 signatures requesting continuation of service to Coburg with a minimum of four trips daily, 7:20 a.m., 9:35 a.m., 3:10 p.m. and 5:10 p.m. She spoke of the Coburg residents' dependence upon the buses and asked the district to work with them in determining a mutually satisfactory level of service.

Delbert Mallott, 421 Dixon, Coburg, said he was a regular bus rider and was aware of many students from the area depending upon the buses to attend Eugene schools. He said they consider themselves part of Eugene and would feel stranded if there were not at least four trips daily. He expressed a willingness for an increase in fares.

Thelma Cross, 145 E. Locut, Coburg, spoke of her reliance on the bus and noted that Coburg was only a few additional miles from the urban area.

Irene Stoneberg, P.O. Box 8431, Coburg, said she has ridden the bus since the Coburg service was initiated and she encouraged continued service.

Margaret Jones, P.O. Box 8023, Coburg, spoke as a senior, saying she would be willing to pay more as she and her family needed the transportation for medical reasons.

Mrs. Zelma Corgan of Coburg expressed her wishes for continued service and spoke of her dependence on the buses for medical needs.

Robin Stoneberg, Coburg, encouraged continued service with a minimum of two runs daily.

Barbara Hult of Walton said she was speaking for the residents of Veneta and had made five round trips on the bus to gather 144 signatures from people who depend on the service for work, school and senior needs. She said they would appreciate continuation of at least four trips daily.

Dorothy Duval, 900 Kelly Blvd., Springfield, spoke as a regular bus rider who had observed some areas where ridership was almost nil. She requested a revision of scheduling in her area so it would not take a full hour for her to get to work at 8:30.

Kim Montague of Coburg spoke of her dependance and other students' to get to Marist High School.

Emerson Hamilton, representing the Eugene Area Chamber, read a prepared statement expressing several areas of concern: 1) supporting public hearings on revised route proposals and capital programs, 2) supporting staff proposal to update the district service boundaries, 3) supporting the realignment of the district for the purpose of board member representation, suggesting the terms be staggered, 4) pull the district boundaries back and appoint the board members at large rather than by district, 5) endorsed strongly a fare increase to 65¢ as of June 1980, 6) recommend maintaining the payroll tax at the present level and explore alternative taxing measures such as a household tax, and 7) informally agreed the district should acquire property for new shops and offices but postpone construction of new facilities.

Barbara Kraft of Junction City said she rides daily to work and failed to see why the Junction City run is considered a non-productive route as she counted 43 riders this morning. She said two petitions are currently being circulated and many letters are being sent from people who wish the service continued, adding that she appreciates the service and would be willing to pay a little higher fare.

Clark Cox, 1085 Patterson, agreed many people would be hurt by the cutback but said there is a greater need for the equipment within the urban area and the buses should be put where they can serve the most people.

Rich Hands, a member of the Scandinavian Festival Board, asked that the district consider the effect on the festival in service cutbacks. He reminded that if buses are overloaded in town, people can wait for the next bus or walk a short distance, but the seniors in Junction City would be stranded. He said he realized the district has to make painful decisions but asked that they not overcut the service.

An unidentified woman spoke of her savings in riding the bus from Junction City versus driving her automobile to work with the problem of parking.

Gerald Morsello, a district bus operator, expressed the opinion that if fares are raised to 65¢, the group receiving additional service will be students who are unwilling and unable to pay the extra fare. He questioned the need for additional service in light of a fare increase and encouraged retaining some service for the outlying areas.

Paul Agerter, co-chairman of the Eugene Chamber, said he was a regular bus patron but because he believed the system should be financially run like a business, he would approve of eliminating all non-urban routes as they are not productive.

Dawn Jarman of Eugene said she was in the process of buying a house in Coburg and had bought it with the understanding that bus service would be available for her to get to work in Eugene.

Vi Hall expressed her appreciation for the service Junction City has been receiving, commenting that the transit district has well served the people but if service were deleted that would no longer be true. She said many people are riding the buses and trying to conserve gasoline and that seniors are dependent upon them for their transportation; that these people bring money into the Eugene area and she wanted some service continued for the working people.

An unidentified woman suggested the bus from Junction City could be routed inbound only as far as Santa Clara and patrons could transfer for the remainder of the trip to the Eugene Mall.

Mrs. Stoneberg and Lena Jones of Coburg advised that their handicapped children use the buses daily to Eugene.

Mary Carl of Junction City said her daughter would have no transportation to Eugene if service were deleted and would lose her job.

Elvira Fisk, Veneta, observed that there would be no basis for the district to call itself Lane Transit District and should be renamed to reflect only the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area.

Mr. Hamilton expressed interest in a precinct analysis of the income tax vote. He said the businessman is supporting about 70% of operating expenses and wishes to see a well run system.

Ida May Fields of Elmira commented that many people did not understand the voting on the income tax.

Clara Park said she realized a great savings of bus transportation over driving her car and would be sorry to lose the service.

There were no further comments from the audience. The chairman thanked the people for their input, assuring that there will be additional opportunity for testimony and that it will be carefully considered before decisions are finalized.

BOARD CONSIDERATION OF REALLOCATION PROPOSALS: Mr. Langton said he believed there would be a summer dropoff of student riders, lessening the demand on the system. Ms. Bevington agreed, saying that direct service would not be implemented until fall and the trippers would be added only on an as needed basis. Mr. Langton further said he believed the fare increase would have an adverse effect on that ridership.

Mr. Randall said he was totally opposed to deletion of the suburban routes, that it appeared the district was counting dollars rather than showing concern for the welfare of people within the district. He observed that people within the urban area can walk, ride a bike or take a taxi, but those in the suburban area have been good customers and the district owes them continued service.

Mr. Booth said he believed the taxpayers were saying they wanted the district to run the service efficiently and be more fiscally responsible. He agreed that if the more productive routes in the suburban areas would show a decent farebox return, some service should be continued but if even limited service proved uneconomical, it should be terminated.

Dr. Loomis said he was opposed to the meat ax approach and suggested a percentage of farebox revenue to operating expense could be set for the suburban routes that would be less than the urban routes, and from that an evaluation of continuing service could be made for each of the areas.

Mr. Booth said the board should determine where it can get the most passengers and find out if it would be an advantage to cut off all out of town service or be selective. Mr. Langton pointed out that it could be more productive to send an early morning bus to Junction City than to an urban route with low ridership.

Mr. Herbert observed that the testimony from the public indicated that people use non-urban service in a different way than urban service and it appeared to be a matter of survival for some people in the suburban area, while a convenience for others in town. He recalled that in 1974 the non-urban service was implemented with the assumption that it would continue and he said while service could vary and fluctuate, it should not be turned on and off. He asked that staff prepare some alternatives on what a minimum practicable service could be, the description, cost, and impact on the urban area.

Mr. Langton said he believed the element of social pressure the district imposes upon itself makes it have to face these difficult decisions and there should be a balance between the purpose of mass transit and social programs; that the district should be realistic and not try to continue down the same road when faced with a three to one decision on no funding from an income tax.

Mr. Kohnen reminded that although overcrowding to LCC and the university needs to be alleviated, there are other problems in the urban area that should be addressed, such as those routes than can no longer be operated within the scheduled time allowed and the extra time necessary for boarding accessible buses.

Mr. Booth reiterated his concern for doing the best job possible with the limited resources and said while he was not completely familiar with the district's contractual obligations, it would appear that the buses should be run when people need them most and parked in the middle of the day and evening. Ms. Loobey explained that trippers would be used at times of greater ridership. She cautioned that any service designated to the non-urban area would reduce service in the urban area.

Ms. Bevington said the proposed reallocation also includes deleting service from some sections of the urban area. She said planning criteria for the proposal included 1) 30 minute frequency as acceptable, and 2) transfer time in the downtown to allow people to have good transfers.

Dr. Loomis said he was willing to give less service to the suburban area and keep the integrity of the system, rather than taking it all away; that he would be willing to lengthen the headway on some urban routes in order to give some service to the suburban area.

Mr. Herbert said he believed 30 minute headway and time meets downtown should not be changed, and that he felt there was a willingness to maintain a suburban system of a 5% allocation of total resource, knowing it would be

less productive but acknowledging it as a social service aspect for people who depend on the bus service and the board would accept the responsibility to serve that need. Mr. Langton agreed this was a possibility if there were enough revenues to maintain the system.

Mr. Booth said in terms of solving money problems, the operation should be run in a businesslike manner and he believed there was a lot of money that could be saved internally. Mr. Kohnen replied that there had been investigations of the operation and so far no major inefficiencies have been brought out but if any were found, the board would address them.

Mr. Randall was excused from the meeting.

Dr. Loomis said that as the patrons from the non-urban routes had expressed a willingness to pay an increased fare, he would suggest an analysis could be made to establish a reasonable farebox/operating ratio as a measurement to determine whether the ridership is enough to subsidize the service; that additional zone fares would ensure that long trips pay their fair share.

Mr. Kohnen said the non-urban routes should be considered in accordance with the district's overall responsibility, that he would suggest the proposal of reallocation should be reconsidered to determine if some service can be provided to the suburban areas.

Mr. Booth referred to possible internal savings and said it had been suggested to him that with the heavy ridership demand, advertising could be cut back, and that with a good system map there could be less personnel in Information Services. Mr. Kohnen suggested that such concerns could be addressed in the budget meetings.

The staff was instructed to prepare an alternative service design to include the same number of vehicles hours with a minimum service on all non-urban routes.

Mr. Booth suggested action be taken at this time to raise the base fare rather than wait for the comprehensive fare analysis scheduled to be presented at the next regular board meeting. In following discussion, there was a consensus to give an opportunity for public participation at the April 22 meeting before acting on the fare increase.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE SALARIES: The chairman advised that administrative salaries should be reviewed prior to finalization of the FY 1980-81 budget. He appointed a subcommittee to review all non-contractual salaries, with Mr. Booth as chairman, Dr. Loomis and Mr. Kohnen.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Mr. Booth, seconded by Mr. Langton, the meeting was adjourned to April 4, 7:30 a.m. at Mr. Steak on Broadway and Garfield, Eugene, to review the bond revenue financing.



Secretary