

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, January 10, 2005

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on December 9, 2004, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special meeting on Monday, January 10, 2005, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the LTD Board Room at 3500 East 17th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, President, presiding
Susan Ban, Vice President
Debbie Davis
Mike Eyster
David Gant, Secretary
Dave Kleger, Treasurer
Ken Hamm, General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Clerk of the Board
Lynn Taylor, Minutes Recorder

Absent: Dean Kortge

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Gaydos called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL - General Manager Ken Hamm called the roll.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT – Mr. Gaydos welcomed new Board members Debbie Davis and Mike Eyster. He said that the executive session would focus on the labor negotiations. Communications guidelines for Board members during labor negotiations would be discussed in open session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Mr. Hamm announced that a Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) dinner would be held on January 27, the Eugene Chamber of Commerce Celebration of Business would be held on January 26, and the Springfield Chamber of Commerce would hold its annual awards and installation banquet on Friday, January 21, 2005. He said that LTD Board members historically had attended those events and asked those members who were interested to contact him or Ms. Sullivan as soon as possible so reservations could be made.

Mr. Hamm said the Board's annual strategic planning work session was tentatively scheduled for a half-day on Thursday, February 3, and a full day on Friday, February 4, 2005. He said a question had been raised about whether the work session should be held in the event a labor strike occurred and Mr. Gaydos felt it was important to proceed because the work session was strategic to development of the budget. He invited comments from other Board members. The consensus was to continue with the work session.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS – Mr. Gaydos thanked the new Board members for their willingness to serve and said that staff and current Board members were looking forward to working with them. He said the upcoming strategic planning work session would provide an opportunity for everyone to become better acquainted, as would the functions mentioned earlier by Mr. Hamm.

EXECUTIVE (NON-PUBLIC) SESSION PURSUANT TO ORS 192.660(2)(d), LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION Mr. Kleger moved that the Board meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d), to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations. Mr. Gant provided the second.

VOTE The motion was approved as follows:
AYES: Ban, Davis, Eyster, Gant, Gaydos, Kleger (6)
NAYS: None
ABSENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Kortge

The Board entered executive session at 5:38 p.m. The District's negotiating team was present for this discussion with the Board.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION: Upon a motion by Mr. Kleger and seconding by Ms. Ban, the Board unanimously returned to open session at 7:05 p.m.

WORK SESSION

A. Communications Training – Marketing and Communications Director Andy Vobora introduced Bev Mayhew of the Ulum Group. He said the purpose of the training was to provide the Board with guidelines on how to respond to different situations and questions that could surface during labor negotiations and to solicit input and suggestions on the communications strategies that were being employed. He distributed a handout that addressed communications strategy, audiences, and conversation tips for Board members.

Mr. Vobora emphasized that LTD's key messages were of primary importance and labor negotiations should stay at the table with the professionals and not be conducted in the media, which is why LTD was not responding to the union's newspaper advertisements or placing advertisements of its own. He said if LTD did place advertisements, the purpose would be to communicate to the community service options should a strike occur and how to obtain more information if a ten-day notice was received. He said that fair and balanced coverage had been given by the news media following the initial strike vote based on interviews with him, Mr. Gaydos, and Mr. Hamm. He said additional opportunities, such as possible appearances on the "Water Cooler" feature of a local television station by Mr. Hamm and Mr. Gaydos, would be evaluated as they arose. He related that a labor negotiations informational section for the LTD Web site would be launched on January 11, 2005, to provide detailed information for the public and employees.

Ms. Ban asked if information for riders would be available on LTD's Web site. Mr. Vobora replied that it would and a "heads up" had already been given through the newsletter and posters and signs at stations.

Ms. Ban suggested that information on service options could be e-mailed to partner agencies such as social service organizations, the University of Oregon, and Lane Community College. Mr. Vobora responded that Accessible Services Manager Terry Parker was working on communications with social service agencies and he would check on how best to reach students with information.

Mr. Gant asked how far in advance of a strike notice to riders would be given; specifically, whether riders would be told at some point that they may need to prepare for lack of service, or whether they would be told in advance that a strike would happen on a specific date. Mr. Vobora said that advertisements were being prepared and would be placed within one or two days of receipt of the ten-day notice and continue throughout the ten-day period; the notices would advise riders that a notice had been received from the union that a strike would occur on a specific day and they should be prepared for no bus services. He said that service options for other transportation also would be included in the advertisements.

Mr. Vobora said that a question and answer page was being prepared to help guest services and administrative staff respond to inquiries from the public about strike-related issues and it probably would be included on the LTD Web site to inform the public better about those issues.

Continuing, Mr. Vobora reviewed the audience groups, including partners, employees, group pass organizations, and guests. He planned to discuss with both the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce how best to communicate with their membership. He asked Board members to forward to staff any suggestions for additions to the audience groups.

Mr. Gant asked that Board members be notified promptly if the media policy changed, as it was difficult to decline a request from the press for an interview, particularly when a Board member resided in a small town such as Cottage Grove and the inquiry was from the local newspaper. He expressed surprise that a Board member would be on the "Water Cooler" as it was his understanding that LTD did not intend to conduct negotiations in the media and that Board members should refer media inquiries to staff. Mr. Vobora clarified that LTD's policy was to avoid using paid advertisements to try to convince the public of the validity of LTD's position, and instead to use media opportunities, such as requests for interviews or the "Water Cooler" to share information about LTD's strategic plan. The purpose of Mr. Gaydos' involvement was to have him, as the Board president, affirm that negotiations were consistent with the plan and Board direction. He said it was appropriate for other Board members to provide that assurance in conversations with friends, neighbors, and colleagues, but media inquiries should be referred to LTD spokespersons.

Mr. Eyster said that he had been interviewed as the Director of Housing and LTD Board member by the University of Oregon newspaper, the *Daily Emerald*, regarding the impact of a strike on students and faculty. Ms. Mayhew recommended that all media inquiries be directed to the designated spokespersons, Mr. Gaydos or Mr. Vobora, so that the key messages could remain consistent. She suggested that Board members could simply state that it was the policy for all inquiries to go through Andy Vobora; Mr. Vobora would then direct inquiries, as appropriate, to Mr. Gaydos.

Mr. Eyster felt that those situations were different from an inquiry from the University newspaper asking about the impact of a strike on students or food service workers. Ms. Mayhew said that Mr. Eyster's situation was unique and it was important for any contact with the media to be immediately reported to Mr. Vobora. She emphasized that Board members should indicate that Mr. Gaydos, as Board president, would speak for the Board on the subject of labor contract negotiations.

Mr. Gaydos said that the subject would be addressed again at the Board's annual strategic planning work session.

Ms. Ban asked if it would be useful to have briefings with certain audiences such as local legislators or other elected officials. Mr. Vobora said that legislators and local elected officials were being updated on the negotiations via e-mail. Ms. Mayhew said that briefings might be an option as the process continued.

Mr. Vobora reviewed conversation tips related to casual conversations with friends and neighbors and contacts from LTD employees and the media. He urged members to report any inappropriate contact from employees. He said that if a Board member was in a position where conversation with a media representative could not be avoided, it was critical to stick with the key messages, be aware that there were no "off the record" comments, and never guess at an answer if not certain.

Mr. Eyster said he felt an obligation as a Board member to be able to respond to media inquiries, which was different in his opinion than negotiating in the press. He said the Board represented the public interest, and he was uncomfortable taking a position to refer inquiries to staff. He believed he had a responsibility to state his position.

Mr. Gaydos reminded Mr. Eyster that all LTD Board meetings were open to the public and people could attend and listen to the full discussion. He said one of the reasons for designating a Board spokesperson was that the contract issues were complicated and took some time to fully understand. He said the goal was to deliver a consistent message to the public. He suggested that the process could be re-evaluated at the Board's strategic planning work session.

Mr. Gant pointed out that labor negotiations were different from the other issues in which the Board was involved and it was best for negotiations not to have too many voices speaking for LTD and the Board.

Mr. Kleger said it was important to avoid getting involved in discussions about the details of negotiations and stay with the general theme of solving a cost control problem that threatened the District.

Ms. Mayhew agreed with Mr. Kleger's remarks and urged Board members to underscore service to guests as the top priority, followed by the value of employees and response to local economic conditions. She agreed that Board members should avoid discussions of contract proposal details.

Mr. Vobora said that Mr. Gaydos might be submitting a guest editorial to *The Register-Guard*. Mr. Gaydos said that the editorial would be circulated to Board members.

Mr. Hamm alerted the Board to the possibility of a meeting being called on short notice during the next few weeks.

B. Annual Route Review Preview – Director of Development Services Stefano Viggiano presented a preview of the Annual Route Review (ARR). He said the ARR provided an opportunity to take a comprehensive look at the system and consolidate all significant change into one time each year in order to minimize inconvenience to customers. He said that changes were implemented at the start of school services in the fall.

He listed the four major components of an ARR:

1. Address operational "fixes"
2. Identify and resolve substandard service
3. Implement new/redesigned service
4. Adjustments to meet budget limitations

Mr. Viggiano said that operational "fixes" could include schedule adherence problems, overloads on trips, and safety concerns. Substandard service was defined as two-thirds of the average service and could involve an entire route, trips on a route, or a section of a route. He said that the new automated passenger counting system provided extensive data on ridership. He said that new and redesigned services based customer and operator requests, new development, and planning staff recommendations were implemented during the ARR process. He noted that service drove the budget process and when there was a major budgeting problem, it had to be addressed through service adjustments.

Mr. Viggiano outlined the general schedule for the ARR process, which began with the preview presentation to the Board of potential changes and continued with public hearings in February and March 2005 and preparation by staff to implement changes in September 2005.

Ms. Ban thanked staff for scheduling the public hearings at a downtown location.

Continuing, Mr. Viggiano explained some of the potential changes:

Operational "fixes"

- 18/19 route – eliminate the Fairview Loop segment, which had low ridership and was frequently behind schedule
- 40/51/52 routes – provided service to the River Road/Danebo area, routes could be redirected to address schedule and overload issues

Substandard service

- 55, 22, 41, 76, 96, 426 – trips or sections of routes with low ridership that could be eliminated or adjusted

New/redesigned service

- 78, 55 – possible route extensions, other modifications

Budget impacts

- long-range financial plan assumed no cuts to service for this year and, thus, no change in service levels associated with the ARR
- may need to add time to fix some operational problems, which would take time from elsewhere in the system, such as substandard service
- likely impact to service level because of unpaid break issue, which will not be absorbed by the remainder of the routes

C. Progressive Corridor Enhancement – This item was postponed to a future meeting.

D. Franklin EmX Design Review – This item was postponed to a future meeting.

Mr. Kleger stated that he was entirely transit-dependent and if there was a strike he would conduct essential travel by taxi. He would accept assistance from LTD only for travel to and from official District functions, but otherwise would live with the same inconveniences and additional expenses as other customers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.


Board Secretary

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