

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on February 9, 2006, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held its regular monthly Board meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 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, Treasurer
Dean Kortge
Mike Eyster
Mark Pangborn, Interim General Manager
Jo Sullivan, Clerk of the Board
Lynn Taylor, Minutes Recorder

Absent: David Gant, Secretary
(one vacancy)

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Gaydos called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL – Interim General Manager Mark Pangborn called the roll.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT – Mr. Gaydos thanked those who had attended the public hearing on fares and services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Mr. Gaydos indicated that the work session items could be attended to quickly and as many information items as time allowed would be moved forward on the agenda and addressed prior to Employee of the Month. He said that a report from Government Relations Manager Linda Lynch would be added to the agenda.

Mr. Eyster asked for time on the agenda to discuss the Walnut Station mixed-use development plan.

BOARD CALENDARS – There were no comments.

WORK SESSION

Board Feedback from Hearing on Fares and Service – Director of Development Services Stefano Viggiano asked Board members for any reactions they had to comments from the public at the recent hearing on fares and service, particularly comments regarding elimination of the #76 loop and addition of service on the #98 route to Cottage Grove.

In response to a question from Ms. Ban, Service Planning Manager Will Mueller said that a survey of riders specifically asked about additional #98 trips, particularly in the afternoon and evening, as that was when the most crowding was experienced. He said in part the issue was riders' perception of the safety of standing on the bus while it was on the freeway.

Regarding the #76 loop, Mr. Viggiano said there were comments that some service delivery issues had affected ridership and that was probably true. He said that actual ridership on that loop was higher than the figures presented to the Board but still did not meet the minimum standard. He said that elimination of the route had been raised and discussed for the past several years and whatever decision was made this year should be one the District was willing to live with for the foreseeable future. He said that the staff recommendation was still that ridership did not meet the standard and that service could be used more productively somewhere else.

Mr. Kortge asked about the actual ridership numbers. Mr. Mueller said that ridership was almost nine people (boardings) per day on the trips, and the standard was ten. Mr. Viggiano noted that the nine riders were on all four loops per day, not nine people per trip.

Mr. Eyster asked if #76 was interchangeable, in terms of dollars, with adding a morning run on #98. Mr. Mueller said that combination of the #22 and #76 deletions, at a tenth of a percent each, equaled adding one weekday trip on #98.

Mr. Eyster said he was persuaded by the Cottage Grove service need and the possibility of adding both a morning and evening trip. Mr. Viggiano noted that testimony regarding crowding on the #98 route referred to standing loads and from the District's perspective it was acceptable to have riders standing on buses; standing was a common occurrence on urban transit and riders stood on buses at highway and freeway speeds in other situations as well. He said it was not a safety issue and ten people standing was not an overload issue either, but that could be the perception of a rider.

Mr. Kortge asked if there was any indication that people did not ride the bus if it was crowded, particularly on the Lane Community College (LCC) to Creswell trip. Mr. Mueller said it was more of an issue when there were problems with the articulated buses and 40-foot vehicles were used on that route. He remarked that there were people standing on the Oregon Country Fair and football services. He said that staff wanted to add another afternoon trip on the #98 to distribute the load better.

Mr. Pangborn said that concern with standing was a relative perception; in many metropolitan areas standing shoulder-to-shoulder on transit was the standard. He said as LTD's ridership had grown and the District tried to create more efficiency, sometimes people had to go without seats on some portions of a trip.

Mr. Gaydos asked if drivers had concerns about standing. Mr. Mueller said there were concerns when a bus was packed, but all afternoon trips were assigned articulated buses to minimize overcrowding.

Ms. Ban suggested that the situation offered an opportunity for communication with and education of passengers on those buses regarding courtesy on such things as younger passengers offering their seats to older people who were less able to stand.

Mr. Mueller said that adding two trips on the #98 would mean that 20 percent of the service increases were going to the Cottage Grove route. He said that five more articulated buses were being delivered in the fall and perhaps one could be added on a #98 morning trip.

Mr. Gaydos reminded the Board that there would be additional public comments on service before decisions would be made. Regarding the #76 route he said that people often made decisions about where to live based on bus stops and locations and he hoped that in general the District would honor that and only change service when it was really important for operations.

Mr. Eyster hoped that the District could find ways to take pressure off drivers by communicating the rationale for regarding standing as acceptable.

Ms. Ban urged staff to consider ways that other routes might be modified to provide access for #76 riders. Mr. Mueller said that one of the people who testified at the hearing offered a proposal for combining the #76 with the #22 route. He said that might be possible but he felt the service was correctly fashioned as it was and did not meet productivity standards.

Mr. Kortge said the District had established a standard and worked closely to help the area increase ridership. He felt it was time to discontinue the service.

Mr. Viggiano said the Board Service and Marketing Committee would meet on February 28, 2006, and develop a set of recommended service changes for the fall of 2006. There would be a second public hearing on March 13, and the Board would make its decision on March 15.

Mr. Gaydos asked if LCC student concerns about better service to the campus had been discussed. Mr. Mueller said he met with student representatives following the hearing and a concern, in addition to crowding, was later night service to Springfield. He indicated that there was later night direct service to Springfield on that route a few years ago and there was very little ridership, averaging six or seven boardings on the trips that were deleted.

Ms. Ban observed that the Board's role was to establish that the policy was a productivity standard.

Mr. Gaydos added that another policy could relate to long-term stops and riders' reliance on those stops. He said that the District, through initiatives such as the Walnut Station node, wanted to encourage reliance on transit.

Mr. Eyster asked staff to provide Board members with an e-mail update on the February 21 meeting in Cottage Grove.

Mr. Kortge asked if the suggestions for modifying routes to preserve #76 service were realistic. Mr. Mueller said that the changes would provide better service to South Eugene High School and Roosevelt Middle School students in the neighborhood but would not improve productivity on the route.

Director of Marketing and Communication Andy Vobora remarked that there had been only one public comment on fares and there would be another opportunity to comment at the next hearing. He said that group passes were being handled separately outside the ordinance process through resolution and those would be presented to the Board in April 2006.

Pioneer Parkway EmX Corridor Update – Mr. Viggiano related that there had been a change in the decision process, but it was positive and presented an opportunity. He said the technical analysis of the four alternatives to the Pioneer Parkway corridor had been completed in January 2006. He said staff presented the findings to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and asked if it would be appropriate to conduct an environmental assessment instead of an environmental impact statement. He said the analysis showed there were no significant environmental impacts and the FTA had indicated that it was likely to approve an environmental assessment once it had reviewed the technical reports. He expected a final answer from FTA on February 21. He said the assessment process was much simpler than an environmental impact statement and could result in saving an entire year in the decision and construction process. He felt that that a final decision on the environmental process could be achieved in the summer of 2006 instead of 2007 and that would mean a fairly compressed decision schedule, which might or might not be feasible. He said a year of savings just in construction inflation could be \$1 million and an earlier Small Starts application meant less competition for available funding.

Mr. Viggiano explained that in order to have a completed environmental document by August 15, 2006, an environmental assessment had to be submitted to FTA by June 1 and that required identification of a locally preferred alternative, which meant that a preferred corridor design would have to be selected by the Board in April. He said that design selection also had to be confirmed by the Springfield City Council and Lane County Board of Commissioners. He said the environmental assessment would be subject to a public review process. He emphasized that a compressed timeline would still include an intensive public involvement process. He reviewed the plan for public outreach activities and the decision-making process. He said that staff would be updating the Springfield City Council about the opportunity for a compressed project timeline and the advantages that would have.

Mr. Kortge asked if staff were contacting Harlow Road businesses regarding access concerns. Mr. Viggiano replied that staff were meeting with those businesses with the intent of finding solutions, which could include operating in mixed traffic at some points on the route. He said the most significant impacts of the corridor would be on Gateway Street and along Harlow Road. He said the locally preferred alternative initially could include some design options, but a final decision on a single design would be required by July 2006.

RiverBend Transit Lane Construction – Mr. Viggiano said there was a timing problem in that RiverBend Drive would be built before the transit project was ready to go. It clearly made sense, he said, to build the transit lane on RiverBend Drive at the same time as the rest of the roadway. He said PeaceHealth had quoted \$250,000 to construct the lanes and *ConnectOregon* funds, if the District received them, could be used; the alternative, if *ConnectOregon* funds were not approved, was to use local funds. He said that staff would recommend signing a contract with PeaceHealth and putting in the lanes now.

Mr. Gaydos supported the idea of compressing the timeline and moving forward on an accelerated schedule, even though it committed staff and the Board to much more work. He said it was important to work closely with partners and be generous in terms of accommodating their schedules.

Mr. Viggiano stressed that the plan for an accelerated schedule was ambitious and might not work but it was worth the effort to pursue it.

Pension Plans – Director of Human Resources and Risk Management Mary Neidig reported that the Board's Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee had separately considered questions related to the pension plans. She said the purpose was to determine whether any increase in funding should be built into the budget. She said the Finance Committee had agreed on a target of funding both pension plans at 100 percent and reached consensus on a recommendation to reduce the amortization period for the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) plan from the current 24 years to 20 years to make it consistent with the salaried plan. She said there was also agreement to look at a reduced assumed interest rate but disagreement about what that rate might be. She said two members were comfortable with a 7.5 percent rate and one member preferred a 7.25 percent rate. She said the investment advisers had recommended the 7.5 percent assumed interest rate.

Mr. Kortge said that it was likely the committee would be more comfortable with a 7.5 percent rate given the information from the investment advisers.

Ms. Neidig said that the Board Human Resources Committee had a similar discussion and reached similar conclusions that the long-term goal for both plans was 100 percent, it made sense to reduce the ATU amortization period to 20 years, and a 7.5 percent assumed interest rate was appropriate.

Ms. Ban said the Human Resources Committee also had recommended that pension plan reviews be conducted more frequently.

Director of Finance & Information Technology Diane Hellekson said the version of the long-range financial plan reviewed by the Board Finance Committee assumed a 20-year amortization period for both plans and a 7.5 percent rate of return. She emphasized that the correct term was "rate of return" and not "interest rate."

In response to a comment from Mr. Kortge, Ms. Neidig said that the average years of service at retirement for District employees had gone down over the last four or five years and was now closer to 20 years.

Mr. Pangborn stated that the will of the Board on the plans would be incorporated into the budget document. Ms. Hellekson said that the revised long-range financial plan would be presented to the Board in March and that would provide another opportunity to discuss pension plans.

Monthly Financial Report – January 2006 – Ms. Hellekson indicated that the rate of growth and payroll tax receipts had slowed somewhat but was still well ahead of budget. She said personal services was at about a 4.2 percent annual growth, well within the targeted amount in the current-year budget. She said that fuel costs were still a concern but fuel expenditures year-to-date were within budget.

2006 Federal Agenda – Ms. Lynch referred to agenda packet materials that provided an overview of the process for developing the Eugene-Springfield area unified federal agenda for presentation to the Oregon Congressional delegation. She said that participating jurisdictions developed their agendas based on identified needs in capital improvement programs and budgets and the agendas were organized into a single document organized by appropriations area rather than jurisdiction. She said there was no competition among projects with appropriations subcategories, and representatives from jurisdictions would be going to

Washington, D.C., at the end of the following week to present the unified agenda. She said that LTD was requesting \$2 million to help with the purchase of a new radio system and \$1.5 million for preliminary engineering for the Pioneer Parkway corridor.

Oregon Transportation Plan Update – Ms. Lynch stated that comments on the draft plan were due March 1, 2006, and she had drafted a letter that addressed the following points:

- Support for the vision of a multi-modal connected system
- Limits on the Oregon Transportation Commission's (OTC) authority to execute the concept
- Point out that increased service was the best source of increased ridership, not just marketing
- Funding: taking funds from elderly and disabled transportation services, which was one of the few sources of flexible funds; lack of commitment to funding public transportation – increasing fares was not the answer

Mr. Kortge asked if the funding issues represented the philosophy of the OTC. Ms. Lynch said it was more likely a drafting issue and it was important that those concerns about the draft be raised to the commission. She said she would e-mail a copy of the draft comment letter to Board members for review prior to its being signed by the Board president.

Mr. Gaydos suggested that the letter also could emphasize the role of transit in increasing the capacity of corridors.

Board Vacancy – Ms. Lynch reported that the Governor's office was having difficulty identifying a potential Board member who was a regular transit user as defined by law. She asked the Board for assistance in identifying suitable candidates and noted that "regular" did not imply daily usage. Mr. Kortge indicated that he could be a "regular" user.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – Transit Operations Manager Mark Johnson introduced Bus Operator Emilio Garcia, March 2006 Employee of the Month. He said that Mr. Garcia had been employed by the District since February 1976 and was nominated by a regular rider for his consistently pleasant attitude and kind consideration.

Mr. Gaydos presented Mr. Garcia with his awards and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Garcia thanked the Board for its recognition and presented Mr. Gaydos and Mr. Pangborn with "easy" buttons to use when making hard decisions.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – Mr. Gaydos called for comments from the audience on non-agenda topics.

Fred Simmons, 312 South 52nd Place, Springfield, an LTD retiree, said the joint insurance committee reviewing Medicare was considering three plan choices: Pacific Source, Providence, and the Regency. He asked the Board to forward a request to the committee to examine whether there were opportunities for improvement of the offering. He stressed he was not asking for an increase in the dollar amount; rather, for an enhanced mix of offerings. He urged staff to monitor planning for a new Springfield jail as it could generate substantial rider opportunities.

Mr. Pangborn explained that when an employee retired, the District provided a supplement that could be used for purchasing insurance, either before qualifying for Medicare or after.

Paula Praus-Williams, 2171 East Irwin Way, Eugene, thanked the Board and Commuter Solutions on behalf of Home Source, an alternative education program for home school students, for the Smart Ways to School program and making passes available to Home Source students.

Mr. Gaydos mentioned that Commuter Solutions was also identifying ways to help KidSports use the Smart Ways program.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING

MOTION **Consent Calendar** – Mr. Eyster moved adoption of LTD Board Resolution No. 2006-005: "It is hereby resolved that the Consent Calendar for February 15, 2006, is approved as presented." Mr. Kortge provided the second. The Consent Calendar consisted of the minutes of the January 18, 2006, regular Board meeting and the nominations to the Budget Committee of Russ Brink and Michael Langis.

VOTE The Consent Calendar was approved as follows:
 AYES: Ban, Davis, Eyster, Gaydos, Kortge (5)
 NAYS: None
 ABSENTIONS: None
 EXCUSED: Gant, (one vacancy)

Strategic Plan Approval – Mr. Viggiano remarked that the updated Strategic Plan reflected the four budgetary priorities for the coming years, as well as other updates to the strategic actions. He said the Board requested an internal review of the plan and four priority areas, and that had occurred. He said the plan had not generated a great deal of reaction but the comments received were generally positive.

Referring to performance measures on page 10 of the plan, Mr. Gaydos asked for staff feedback on how soon the debt-standard and New Starts funding criteria standards would be defined and when the concept of neighborhood shuttles associated with EmX would be implemented. Mr. Viggiano said that neighborhood shuttles would be implemented when EmX corridors were implemented.

Mr. Gaydos suggested that neighborhood shuttles be reflected as short- or mid-term implementation strategies.

Mr. Pangborn noted that neighborhood shuttles also would be a part of progressive corridor enhancement.

MOTION Mr. Kortge moved approval of LTD Resolution 2006-006: "It is hereby resolved that the LTD Board approve the 2006 Strategic Plan as amended in accordance with Mr. Gaydos' suggestion." Mr. Eyster provided the second.

VOTE The 2006 Strategic Plan as amended was approved follows:
AYES: Ban, Davis, Eyster, Gaydos, Kortge (5)
NAYS: None
ABSENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Gant, (one vacancy)

EmX Steering Committee Appointments – Mr. Viggiano presented the recommendation that Steve Gordon be appointed to fill the At-Large position. Mr. Gordon had been a planner with Lane Council of Governments for many years and was a nationally recognized wetlands expert. Mr. Viggiano said that there had been a recent suggestion to invite Springfield City Councilor Christine Lundberg to join the Steering Committee during the Pioneer Parkway process. He said that would be an additional position and if the Board agreed she would be asked to join the committee.

Ms. Ban pointed out that she was listed as a committee member instead of Debbie Davis.

MOTION Ms. Ban moved approval of LTD Resolution 2006-007: It is hereby resolved that Steve Gordon and Christine Lundberg be appointed to the EmX Steering Committee. Ms. Davis provided the second.

VOTE The resolution was approved as follows:
AYES: Ban, Davis, Eyster, Gaydos, Kortge (5)
NAYS: None
ABSENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Gant, (one vacancy)

Decision Regarding General Manager Selection Process – Ms. Neidig reviewed the February 15, 2006, report from the Board Human Resources Committee, including the proposed time period for selecting the general manager. She said the committee had developed a draft work plan for 2006 and 2007 and described the various ongoing and special activities. She pointed out that the process for selecting a long-term general manager would commence in January 2007 with consideration of selection criteria and the goal was to select a general manager by the end of 2007.

Mr. Kortge said that the District currently had a general manager, Mark Pangborn, and given the numerous tasks facing the District and the Board it made sense to postpone the general manager selection process until 2008 or 2009.

Mr. Eyster concurred with Mr. Kortge.

Mr. Kortge said it was appropriate to conduct a general manager evaluation in August 2006 but he was not comfortable having a written plan saying a new general manager would be selected in December 2007.

Mr. Gaydos said the Human Resources Committee had developed a two-year plan and felt it could accomplish all necessary tasks within a reasonable period of time, but the general manager selection process did not have to be scheduled at a particular time.

Mr. Kortge agreed that the steps outlined in the committee's plan were good but should not have specific dates attached.

Mr. Gaydos determined that there was agreement among Board members with Mr. Kortge's suggestion to postpone selection of a new general manager by removing specific dates attached to the process.

Mr. Gaydos said that currently Mr. Pangborn's authority was based on a resolution appointing him as interim general manager in the event there was no general manager. He said the Human Resources Committee was recommending appointment of Mr. Pangborn as general manager.

Mr. Kortge agreed with the recommendation and added it was important to also appoint a general manager pro tempore, in the event that Mr. Pangborn was out of town or otherwise unavailable.

MOTION Mr. Kortge moved LTD Resolution No. 2006-008, to appoint Mark Pangborn as Lane Transit District general manager and that the Executive Committee or Board HR Committee negotiate an employment contract and, once that was concluded, the Board appoint a general manager pro tempore. Ms. Ban provided the second.

VOTE The motion was approved as follows:
AYES: Ban, Davis, Eyster, Gaydos, Kortge (5)
NAYS: None
ABSENTIONS: None
EXCUSED: Gant, (one vacancy)

Mr. Pangborn thanked the Board for its confidence in naming him general manager.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AT THIS MEETING

Board Member Reports

Walnut Station – Mr. Eyster reported on the Walnut Station mixed-use development plan. He distributed materials from the City of Eugene Planning and Development Department and said that TransPlan required efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). He said that nodal development, or mixed-use centers, was proposed as an alternative to the 5 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled and the Walnut Station plan reflected that initiative. He said a steering committee had presented three alternatives for public comment and would be meeting on March 8 to consider that feedback and develop a specific proposal.

Mr. Pangborn said the Walnut Station design included dual corridors for BRT and the District's current design had a single corridor.

Mr. Eyster said that the steering committee was taking the position that two lanes were preferable.

Mr. Viggiano said that TransPlan included more than 30 nodes and the Walnut node was selected as a priority in large part because of the EmX service and station.

Metropolitan Policy Committee – Mr. Gaydos reported that the West Eugene Parkway facilitator selection committee had received three applications and hoped to select a facilitator at its meeting on February 17. He said the facilitator would conduct an assessment of the situation that should be accomplished by May 2006.


Mr. Pangborn added that the MPC had endorsed all three *ConnectOregon* applications from the area, as had the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

Board Communication and Process Committee – Mr. Gaydos said that Mr. Gant had requested, and the committee agreed, that there should be time available to discuss issues such as how the Board related to the general manager and the role of the Board president, and those discussions should be included on future meeting agendas.

Mr. Eyster noted that the committee had also committed to having more regular work sessions on Monday nights in order to accomplish those types of discussions and facilitate communication.

Springfield Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Eyster said that he, Mr. Pangborn, and Ms. Neidig had met with the Chamber's Legislative Issues Committee and it was a good conversation.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.


Board Secretary