

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING
LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING ON FARES AND SERVICE

Monday, March 13, 2006

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on March 9, 2006, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District held a special Board meeting on Monday, March 13, 2006, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the Bascom-Tykeson Room at the Eugene Library, 100 West 10th Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gerry Gaydos, President, presiding
Susan Ban, Vice President
Debbie Davis, Treasurer
Dean Kortge
David Gant, Secretary
Mark Pangborn, General Manager
Susan Hekimoglu, Representing the Clerk of the Board
Kimberly Young, Minutes Recorder

Absent: Mike Eyster
(One Vacancy)

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

ROLL CALL – Mr. Gaydos 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 - There were none.

PUBLIC HEARING ON FISCAL YEAR 2006-07 FARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Presentation

Andy Vobora, Director of Marketing and Communications, introduced the item, recalling that the Board previously discussed two proposals: the increase in the group pass price and the increase in token prices. The testimony the Board received previously was from one of the group pass organizations, and no other testimony was offered at that time.

Ms. Ban determined from Mr. Vobora that the Board received no additional testimony from the Lane Community College (LCC) student group.

Opening of Public Hearing by Board President – Mr. Gaydos called for public testimony on the fare recommendations for FY 2006-07.

Public Testimony

Misha Seymour of Eugene thought free buses would be fair. He recalled the TransPlan adoption process, during which free buses were discussed, but nothing ever became of that discussion. He maintained the buses were becoming "yuppie-only" because they carried employees participating in employer-provided bus pass programs. He said that was good for them, but what about everyone else? He questioned whether it represented a democratic approach. Mr. Seymour called for more equality. He said that some riders pay nothing while others paid full fares, and it did not seem right to him. Mr. Seymour also wanted to retain token prices as they currently were.

Mr. Seymour criticized the time the meeting was held but acknowledged that it was held downtown in a central location.

Closing of the Hearing – Mr. Gaydos closed the public hearing.

Staff Comments

Mr. Vobora discussed LTD's outreach to Cottage Grove, noting that Lockwood and Associates was hired to conduct a study of the riders of the #98 bus. He briefly reviewed the survey methodology. He said that LTD secured 149 completed surveys, and offered to provide the surveys to the Board. A postcard was mailed to all Cottage Grove residents, both to promote the open house that occurred in Cottage Grove at the community center and to alert residents to the fact that LTD was evaluating service. He noted other outreach efforts that had taken place. Mr. Vobora reported that Cottage Grove Councilor Mike Fleck had asked him to convey Councilor Fleck's concerns about the lack of morning service enhancements.

Mr. Vobora called attention to a video produced by Jim Evangelista that illustrated the variety of service needs that Cottage Grove residents had. He said there was considerable interest in additional service to Cottage Grove.

PUBLIC HEARING ON FY2006-07 SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS**Staff Presentation**

Will Mueller, Service Planning manager, reported that the Board would make its final decisions at the regular Board meeting on March 15. He said that the Board Service Planning and Marketing Committee reviewed the testimony that had been received and that the recommendations before the Board came from the committee.

Mr. Mueller recalled that most of the testimony the Board heard regarded the deletion of the City View Neighborhood loop from #76. The staff recommendation to delete the loop remained the same because staff believed the resources required could be placed elsewhere in the system. Two of the four loop trips were more productive than the other two. Staff also considered an alternative proposal to combine route #22 with the neighborhood loop, but staff did not think that was an attractive option.

Mr. Mueller noted testimony calling for more service to the Cottage Grove #98 route. Staff proposed to add a 2:30 p.m. trip and a 6:00 p.m. trip to alleviate crowded conditions that existed now.

Mr. Mueller said that the Board also heard testimony calling for additional service to Springfield. He said that some of the areas in question should be reexamined, but for the foreseeable future, staff wanted to ensure that the system worked well and proposed fixes and enhancement to the current system instead. When the EmX project to Pioneer Parkway and Gateway occurred, staff proposed to take a comprehensive look at service in Springfield. He anticipated that would occur in 2009.

Responding to a question from Mr. Gaydos, Mr. Mueller said that afternoon buses to Cottage Grove were much busier than the morning buses, so staff recommended enhancements to afternoon service. Some riders might have to stand between Creswell and LCC. He acknowledged that there were needs in all parts of the system and that staff were focused on addressing the most immediate problems, those of overcrowding or late buses.

Opening of Public Hearing by Board President – Mr. Gaydos called for public testimony on the FY 2006-07 service proposal.

Public Testimony

Mel Barnes asked that the #18 and #19 buses be moved off G Street because #13 also runs on that road, and that the bus be moved to B, C, or D streets. He recommended that a bus be routed down Daisy to carry senior citizens to the Willamalane Community Center. He said that some people had asked why there was no service on International Way from Springfield. He said there was a lot of manufacturing in the area that LTD could serve.

Kathleen Brandt and her family thanked the Board for its years of service. She thanked the Board for the fact her husband was able to ride the bus during his rehabilitation. She asked the Board to consider maintaining a one-time a day neighborhood loop on the #76 route. She said that her family was seriously considering moving because of the lack of service. She had been riding the bus for some time and she would be scared if there was nothing. She noted the recent snow storm and said she did not know what she would do if the bus was not there. Ms. Brandt said her children were growing and her daughter wanted to ride the bus to Roosevelt Middle School. They had already practiced the ride and transfer. Ms. Brandt noted her family's use of the bus to reach the Amtrak Station to take a vacation.

Betty Joslen said she wanted earlier bus service in the morning on the #40. She had less than 20 minutes to reach her job with the current schedule. Her company was moving to West 11th Avenue in July or August and the earliest trip from downtown left at 7 a.m., and that was when she had to be at work. When she had to be at work earlier, the bus was not an option at all.

Lucas Murphy of Springfield reviewed a proposal to alter the arrivals of the #11 Thurston and EmX route and route #11 up B Street. He believed that the change would serve the interests of all, particularly riders in Springfield and Thurston, as well as the operators. He said the result would be a #11A and a #11B, and it would not be hard for people to remember.

Dell Lewis expressed appreciation for the bus system. He commended the job done by LTD in operating the system. Some of the people who needed the service the most were not receiving it. He had other people living with him who also needed to ride the bus. He had to drive people places because they were not able to take the bus.

Marion Walters suggested that Mr. Murphy had offered staff an interesting mathematical problem in regard to the minimization of total waiting times for the Thurston and EmX. She discussed service on the #27 bus, saying that service reductions had reduced ridership on the route. She hoped something was done. She said on Saturday, the bus got downtown just after 30 after the hour, just in time to see other buses leave. She asked that the schedule be arranged so riders on the bus traveling downtown arrived in time to make transfers. She noted times of waiting for weekend service and said that the #33 had a 55-minute wait and the #40 also had a 55-minute wait. She said that it was not surprising people did not take the bus. The first bus arrived downtown at 10:40 a.m. and she thought that was too late. Ms. Walters said that she had asked many people if they were aware of the hearing but many were not. She suggested a big sign be put on the platforms downtown to notice people of the hearing. She called for Board members to give up their cars and ride the bus for a week.

Mark West, 2582 West 28th Avenue, asked the Board to consider maintaining the neighborhood loop on the #76 bus and even to increase the number of stops. He thanked the Board for the service, saying it was a good way to save money.

Jim Evangelista briefly discussed his history with LTD, which was a positive one. He said he was proud of LTD in many ways. His son rode the bus, which was why he was at the hearing. As a non-custodial parent, he was affected by LTD's service decisions. Mr. Evangelista said the survey in Cottage Grove seemed skewed. No return trips were surveyed. No weekend or afternoon trips were surveyed. That was the reason he made the DVD provided to Board members. He believed more people would be at the hearing if they did not have to catch the 5:30 p.m. bus. He was speaking on their behalf. He called attention to his suggested schedules. Mr. Evangelista called for additional outreach to Cottage Grove residents.

Chris Phillips, 2965 City View Street, asked the Board to retain the neighborhood loop on the #76. It was the only bus service he had. Even if it was reduced to three trips a day, that would still be almost as useful as the current schedule. He said that LTD had indicated the previous year that the ridership target was four boardings and deboardings per trip. Staff indicated service had been averaging 4.5 boardings and deboardings per trip, so he questioned why the service did not meet productivity goals. Apparently the target had been changed to five boardings and deboardings per trip. He said that was not right. The ridership had been increasing and had reached current levels despite substantial service problems that occurred on the route. In September, the bus was late 15 minutes every day for a week and a half, and unfamiliar bus drivers had failed to go up the loop at all. He suggested that was not the way to preserve ridership. The 5:30 p.m. trip leaving the UO was often five to ten minutes late. Despite those problems, the bus was getting 4.5 boardings and deboardings per day. The least important trip was the one at 8 a.m. He thought it most important to preserve the afternoon trips.

Larry Peterson said he started riding the #76 bus regularly to work after experiencing physical problems. It was a long way to walk up and down the hill to reach another bus. He said that he saw four to eight riders every morning on the loop. Many people did not ride the bus every day but rode the bus periodically. He said that going down the hill in bad weather was difficult for the

physically challenged and coming up was worse. He did not know what he would do without the bus because he could not drive. Mr. Peterson said the #76 was always crowded in the morning because of the students the bus picked up at Westmoreland Student Housing and he questioned the safety of that; in addition, it made buses late. He suggested that additional buses could be added or departure times delayed to accommodate those wishing to travel downtown and make transfers.

Misha Seymour of Eugene suggested that the Breeze buses be scheduled at a time when people could use them. He called for better service to the Gateway area, noting that the #12 was often standing room only. Mr. Seymour thought that LTD used to have a good system, but now the bus drivers said people should be happy to be standing. It did not seem right. It was not a caring way of dealing with people. The system should go back to what it was. He called for more frequent bus service up Willamette Street. He supported the addition of service to Cottage Grove. When he traveled to Cottage Grove for an afternoon performance, he had to take a bus at 10 a.m. He suggested that a bus be scheduled to leave for Cottage Grove at noon. He criticized the time of the hearing and suggested it could be televised to let people know what was happening.

Susan Urchin of Eugene, a rider of the #76 bus, said she was in good shape but there were times when she did not want to walk a long way to a bus. She said if LTD had to cut back, it should reduce service to three times a day. She said the bus was really needed in the area. Many houses were being built in the area and people traveled down City View or Hawkins Lane to reach other areas of the community. She offered to distribute fliers advertising the service.

Tom Baldinger discussed the #51 bus, saying it was chronically late. He called for more buses to be added to peak hours, suggesting three times an hour before 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. He said that he also rode the #27 bus, and it took a minimum of 42 minutes. To ride a bicycle from his house to work took nine to twelve minutes. If the bus took 22 minutes to get to work, it would be great. However, it took four times as long. Mr. Baldinger asked whether the EmX money could be spent on the fixed-route system, saying it appeared to be a waste of money. He asked who did the planning, and if it was done by computers or the drivers. Mr. Baldinger said that radios and food were a problem on the bus. People listened to the headphones really loud, and the signs helped a little bit but more could be done.

Debbie Blue agreed with all that was said by others. She said that she was a student with two children and did not have a lot of money. Her family did not own a car and depended on the bus for its transportation. She was grateful for the service, but shared Mr. Seymour's concern about the #12 bus, which her family used to get to the movies. She said having to stand while holding her infant and controlling her seven-year old was very difficult, and as a consequence, they no longer went to the movies. Her friends and associates in wheelchairs quit riding the #12 on Saturdays because there were only two wheelchair bays. She suggested that more buses be added on Saturdays to alleviate the standing-room-only conditions. She did not think it was reasonable.

Chad Krieger also wished to preserve the neighborhood loop on the #76. He said he was acquainted with other students who also wished to preserve the route who were not able to be present. He had moved to the area because of the bus route, and would be disappointed if the bus was eliminated and would likely have to move to other location. He agreed with Mr. Phillips that service problems with the bus had affected the ridership of the #76 bus and discouraged

people from riding. They would not stand at a bus stop if the bus was not going to arrive. Mr. Krieger said that his wife was looking forward to riding the bus to the University of Oregon and he would appreciate it if the Board could retain one morning and one afternoon trip.

Happy Matthews, Associated Students of Lane Community College, said that LCC students traveling from Cottage Grove were concerned about their safety. He thought that people on a bus traveling 65 miles an hour could be hurt in the case of an accident. He agreed with Mr. Evangelista that a bus every two hours to Cottage Grove would be useful.

Gloria Faust asked the Board to add additional trips on the #7X back in the morning and evening.

Closing of Public Hearing – Mr. Gaydos called for additional testimony. There was none. Mr. Gaydos closed the public hearing and called for staff response.

Staff Comments – Mr. Mueller responded to public testimony. Regarding the suggestion to reroute the #18 and #19 buses off G Street back to B, C, or D Street, he said that from past experience he had little optimism about buses being allowed to run on the streets in question. Ms. Ban asked if it would be helpful to lobby the City of Springfield. Mr. Mueller said yes. He encouraged residents to do so. Regarding the suggestion to route down 32nd Street to Virginia Street, he said that Springfield did not allow LTD to run down Virginia Street.

Speaking about the issue of service from International Way to and from Springfield, Mr. Mueller said that LTD would have liked to have diverted #12 to pick up people but wanted to keep #12 a main pulse route on the hour and at 30 minutes after, and the bus did not have time to make the stop. He said if people caught the express bus that went to Eugene, they would spend the same amount of time as they would on a diverted #12.

Regarding the #76 service, Mr. Mueller said that if LTD retained one bus in the morning and one in the afternoon, the trips would meet the productivity standard with a total of 24 trips, since the productivity standard was 20. He said the #76 loop must average ten people a day to be maintained, and the numbers were very close but not quite there. If the route was to be retained, he agreed with Mr. Phillips to keep at least three trips. Many of those who used early morning trips needed to go home by bus later on.

Mr. Mueller spoke about the issue of early bus arrivals, recalling that the 6 a.m. arrival at the Eugene Station was dropped in 2002 and was not reinstated this year. He said that LTD would like to restore that service as soon as possible.

Mr. Mueller expressed appreciation to Mr. Murphy for his graph. He said LTD did timing trials that indicated four to five minutes of extra running time. He said that LTD intended the #11 to be a closed system that ran back on itself once EmX was instituted. That could occur at certain times of the day but at other times it would be hard, and the trend was toward more ridership with added travel time. He said that it was likely that buses would be unable to meet the travel time 40 percent of the time and would consequently have to sit out a whole pulse, which was expensive. He acknowledged that service on B Street was missed.

Mr. Mueller said the first arrival time of #27 could be reexamined, but he did not think there was sufficient ridership at this time to justify it.

Speaking about the rider survey of Cottage Grove riders, Mr. Mueller said that the people who rode the bus in the morning rode back in the afternoon, so he believed the survey captured afternoon riders. He said there were a lot of unmet needs in the system, and he agreed that Cottage Grove needed more trips. However, there were also urban routes under pressure. Mr. Mueller expressed concern that spreading out the service to Cottage Grove for those who came home later at night might not address the route's most pressing needs. He said that in the future, LTD might have to go to more frequent service to Cottage Grove if ridership continued to increase.

Mr. Mueller clarified that LTD staff did the route planning with the assistance of computer software.

Mr. Mueller indicated that LTD would add an early trip on the 7X in the summer service package to accommodate those at OML (Oregon Medical Labs) and Royal Caribbean.

Also in response to testimony, Mr. Pangborn reported that LTD could not use federal funding for its operating system; it could only be used for capital purposes.

VII. WORK SESSION

A. Smoking at the Eugene Station Plaza Area

Mark Johnson recalled the Board's earlier discussion of the issue of smoking at the Eugene Station. Since then, the law had changed to restrict smoking 25 feet from the front door of businesses, which shifted people from the Eugene Library to the Eugene Station plaza area to smoke. It was not comfortable for some customers and LTD did not legally have to provide patrons with a smoking area. He recommended that LTD eliminate smoking in the Eugene Station plaza area and place signage there.

Mr. Gant supported the recommendation. He said that many people have asthma and they were affected by second-hand smoke.

Mr. Gaydos asked what process was involved to change the current rules. Mr. Johnson said that staff would place signs in the area and begin to enforce the ban. It was a matter of educating those who used the area.

There was general Board support for the staff recommendation.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.


Board Secretary