

**BATTLE CREEK CITY COMMISSION  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
FULL BLAST – CONFERENCE ROOM  
35 HAMBLIN AVENUE  
MARCH 3, 2010  
3:30 P.M.**

**Committee Members Present:** Comm. Ryan Hersha, Comm. Lynn Ward Gray, Mayor Susan Baldwin, and Comm. Diane Thompson (Arrived 3:55 PM)

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

**City Staff Present:** Greg Zanotti, Jerry Hutchison, Rich Werner, Deidre Laser

**Call to Order:** Mayor Baldwin called the meeting to order at 3:37 P.M.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Comm. Hersha, supported by Comm. Ward Gray, to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2009 meeting. All yes. Motion carried.

**Public Comments:**

Jerry Pollard asked if there would be a discussion about raising bus fares.

**Update on July 20, 2009, Service Changes:**

Jerry Hutchison provided an update to the committee regarding the recent transit implementation changes for the following:

**Rolling Hills route** – As part of the recent transit service changes, the City was not able to provide service to Rolling Hills. Based on feedback, a dedicated van service was implemented to service the Rolling Hills residents. Summertime ridership was low, but there was a concern that ridership might increase in the winter months. Ridership actually dropped to 54 trips over a two month winter period.

Rich Werner stated the new service is well established and has not affected the regular service. Mr. Werner recommended leaving the service until the end of the fiscal year and he will continue to monitor ridership.

**Kendall/Goodale and Main/Post routes** – Mr. Hutchison indicated that changes were made to these two routes to run in a figure eight type of pattern to eliminate a large number of transfers. However, based on immediate feedback, riders preferred making the transfer to a different bus. Therefore, the old system has gone back into effect.

Comm. Hersha asked how long the service change was in effect.

Mr. Hutchison stated for about one month.

**Capital Avenue N.E. route** – The service change of making a 30 minute route from a 60 minute route has proven to be a great change.

Comm. Hersha asked how the continuation of service to Rolling Hills will fit into the next fiscal budget.

Mr. Zanotti does not anticipate changing the service.

Mr. Hutchinson recommends maintaining the route through fiscal year end and perhaps reevaluating with the new budget year.

Mayor Baldwin stated that she is pleased with the increased ridership in the Capital N.E. route.

**Proposed Relocation of Bus Transfer Facility:**

Greg Zanotti presented three relocation alternatives for the Bus Transfer Facility to the Public Transportation Committee. Mr. Zanotti indicated that after much feedback, research and discussion, the best choice is Site #3 – The Rink parking lot - as it is better to have a central location near the Intermodal Station and Battle Creek Central High School. Federal funds are available to move the transfer facility to the parking lot with construction to begin this summer.

Comm. Ward Gray asked about the portion of the handout that indicated modification with the Revolution Hockey Club.

Mr. Zanotti stated that the City recently entered into a nonexclusive lease with the Revolution Hockey Club for parking spaces at The Rink. The existing lease agreement may require modification.

With the vision that the Revolution Hockey Club will make aesthetic improvements to The Rink and increase participation, Comm. Hersha asked if moving the transfer facility to their parking lot would provide enough space for hockey parking.

Mr. Zanotti stated that the requirement according to the City's Planning and Zoning Department is one parking space for every 6 seats. Based on that requirement approximately 168 parking spaces would be required to meet code. In order to meet the criteria with proximity to the High School and central core for the downtown there are limited options.

Comm. Baldwin questioned what if a Y Center/Full Blast agreement does not occur, would Transit still want to move the transfer facility.

Mr. Zanotti stated the intent is to relocate the current structure and provide new lighting, better schedule information, and a kiosk for ticketing.

Comm. Baldwin commented on the Minneapolis, MN bus stations have electronic signs showing the time of the next bus.

Comm. Hersha felt that the concept was good and would like to see the structure heated.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Comm. Hersha, supported by Comm. Thompson, to endorse the Transit recommendation to relocate the bus transfer facility to Site 3, The Rink parking lot, as presented. All yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Zanotti said the concept depends on what happens to Full Blast; however, the move would position the City to develop the downtown area.

Comm. Thompson asked when would the committee know about the federal funding and she was concerned about how the Commission would vote.

Comm. Hersha did not see this as a controversial issue and felt it was a minor investment.

Mayor Baldwin agreed that the move would be a chance to upgrade the current facility.

Mr. Zanotti indicated that with shrinking capital improvement funds, it would be tough to make a lot of upgrades in addition to relocating the transfer facility. The infrastructure could be created for future technological upgrades.

**Update on Jobs Access – Reverse Commute (JARC) Program:**

Mr. Zanotti reported that they are looking at purchasing a larger standard van to provide expanded service in the Beckley corridor. He asked for confirmation from the committee that they would like to move ahead with the grant application for JARC.

Mr. Hutchison stated that the City started working with a consultant approximately a year and a half ago on a master transit planning study. The consultant developed short, medium and long term recommendations. One of the mid-term suggestions was to provide a different and improved type of bus service for people to get to and from work, which expanded to include shuttle service to the Beckley Road corridor. Transit followed up with a grant application to MDOT and Transit received \$427,000 to provide the service.

Mr. Zanotti noted that the program requires renewal annually in October and that he would like to implement the van in June.

Comm. Hersha asked what the chances of continued funding are.

Mr. Hutchison stated that once a grantee is in the program they will likely receive continuation funding for two years. While there are no guarantees the chances of continued funding are very good providing the program is still in place at the State level. It would require the hiring of 3-5 new drivers. Staff is concerned a little due to the current budget situation and the fact that these positions would be the first to be cut if layoffs become necessary. This could happen within six months of being hired.

Mr. Werner reported that the Amalgamated Transit Union just went through tough negotiations and whoever Transit hires for the Beckley service would be the first to be laid off.

Comm. Hersha stated there are no guarantees at this point; however, the Committee may need to make a decision to continue the program or not.

Mr. Zanotti stated that there is a strong possibility of JARC funds continuing to be available; however, the City may not be able to support the necessary staff in tough budget times.

Mayor Baldwin asked when the funding application is due.

Mr. Zanotti said that he would like to submit a resolution to apply for the grant.

Mr. Hutchison indicated that he would prepare a resolution for the March 16, 2010, meeting for submittal of the application.

Mr. Werner stated that the van could work on other routes if the Beckley service doesn't continue.

Comm. Hersha and Comm. Thompson supported the plan.

MOTION: A motion was made by Comm. Thompson, supported by Comm. Hersha, to support the application for the JARC program. All yes. Motion carried.

Comm. Baldwin suggested at looking at the flexibility of the bus schedule and to work with the Beckley Road employers.

Both Mr. Zanotti and Mr. Hutchison thanked the committee for their service and announced that they both will be retiring by the end of March 2010.

Mayor Baldwin thanked them for their years of service and asked if there were any other comments.

Comm. Thompson asked if there has been any progress in publishing Spanish bus route information and schedules.

Mr. Hutchison stated that he has completed some preliminary research and apologized for not having completed more on that.

Comm. Hersha asked if more information could be made available on the city's website.

Mr. Werner reported that he recently had a meeting with Dan Ryan regarding placing new content on Transit's web page and would like to see the bus schedules posted.

**Additional Public Comment:**

Jerry Pollard stated that Jerry Hutchison has done an excellent job for Transit.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:10 P.M.