

**BATTLE CREEK CITY COMMISSION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

March 12, 2009

FULL BLAST

35 HAMBLIN

4:00 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Commissioners Baldwin, Hersha, and Thompson

Committee Members Absent: Vice Mayor Walker

Others Present: Rev. William Stein, Dawn Nichols, Joanie Bailey, Robert Beavo, Mary Conklin, Zoe Carpenter, Robert Carpenter, Monica Lee, Paula Boyer, Dawn Hammond Britton, Jim Ritsema, Deb Crippon, Greg Zanotti, Jerry Hutchison, John Kenefick, and Dave Moore

Call to Order: Commissioner Baldwin called the meeting to order at 4:07 P.M.

Public Comment: Rev. William Stein commented that he did not see a posting for the meeting, has requested notices from the City of Battle Creek in writing, and has not received any. He noted that the Local Advisory Council did not approve the applications and he would like an investigation of the Transit staff.

Dave Moore felt that Transit only accommodates big businesses and needs to be more available for the average citizen. He talked about getting donations for transfers due to the cost, and that the bus routes should be increased.

Robert Carpenter wanted to make sure that the Capital Avenue SW route was not changed.

John Kenefick asked for members to identify themselves.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Comm. Thompson, supported by Comm. Hersha, to approve the February 11, 2009, meeting minutes. All yes. Motion carried.

Discussion Items:

Comm. Hersha asked that the meeting move more quickly as he needed to catch a bus by 5:15 P.M.

Jerry Hutchison spoke about the service recommendations from the previous meeting and stated they are still gathering information to see what the next steps will be. Meetings and a Public Hearing were held and a number of concerns were raised. The Corradino Group recommended the removal of service off W. Michigan (Rolling Hills). They revisited the

Rolling Hills change with a new proposal for Bedford Road and Taylor Avenue to keep the route within 30 minutes. An alternative is to provide Tele-Transit service at a reduced rate.

Greg Zanotti talked of a discounted rate for Rolling Hill residents on a trial basis. They are considering a \$2.00 ride for van service. Staff is still analyzing the data.

Jerry Hutchison stated that proposed service recommendations in the 0 – 6 months time frame are those that can be implemented at no cost or minimal cost

Comm. Baldwin asked how close the staff count versus the consultant's figures was in the planning study.

Jerry Hutchison said that the staff count was very close and that there were about 6-7 Rolling Hills riders per day. There are key times that it is used more then other times.

Comm. Baldwin asked if there would be a handout.

Comm. Hersha wished to expand service. He wanted to know what need or problem they are trying to solve with the Capital NE route.

Jerry Hutchison said that it would help the majority of people using the service to make changes to West Michigan and reallocate drivers to the Capital NE Avenue route. An additional issue is safety. The Capital NE route is a busier route, oftentimes resulting in the bus running late. The budget does not allow increasing service without decreasing service somewhere else.

Comm. Baldwin asked if there was any additional information that they would be getting with the recommendations.

Greg Zanotti said that they are still doing rider counts and they are going to continue to ride the Urbandale route to see if there is anything else that can be done.

Comm. Baldwin requested a Capital NE route count at the next meeting.

Comm. Thompson asked Mr. Hutchison to show on a map where better service is needed.

Jerry Hutchison pointed out the current Capital NE route.

Greg Zanotti spoke about making modifications to the route to make it a 30-minute route.

Comm. Hersha asked how developed the changes to the Rolling Hills route are.

Mr. Zanotti talked of trying to develop a scheduled time for "subscription" van service to Rolling Hills as an alternative to regular bus service.

Jerry Hutchison said that this is a very new idea and he needs more information to see if it is workable.

Comm. Hersha says that the van is not always available and would like the ability to expand the Tele-Transit system.

Mr. Hutchison said that a JARC grant application will be submitted to MDOT. JARC is a Federal program to enhance service, focusing on employment transportation for people with limited income. If approved, the express route M66 to Beckley Road would be implemented. A recommendation was for a bus ride to Beckley Road every 30 minutes versus Capital SW in 60 minutes. A shuttle-type service would tie into the bus route around the Beckley area. It has been proposed to provide after-hours service to midnight. Mr. Hutchison stated staff would work with private providers, possibly the taxicab company, to get people home once they arrive at the Transportation Center. If funding was approved, regular bus service on Capital SW would be maintained, with new "shuttle" service to Beckley Road. It would be several months before we would know if the funding request in the JARC application was approved.

Jerry Hutchison stated it has been an issue that sometimes a Tele Transit van rider is not there for his/her scheduled pick up and, subsequently, receives a no-show notice. Currently, three (3) no shows in a 30-day time frame may result in a 30-day suspension. There is a small group of riders that abuses the policy and Transit staff are trying to work with these people as much as possible. After a third no show, Transit sends a 30-day suspension letter via certified mail. He stated there is an appeal process in place. They are looking at the process to see where they can improve and implement stages of suspension, 15 days the first time, 30 days the second time, with the goal trying to correct the behavior.

Comm. Baldwin asked how many suspensions there currently are. Mr. Hutchison answered that there are 3 to 4 at any time.

Comm. Hersha felt the current policy is very lenient and the policy should be made very clear.

Jerry Hutchison said that new riders receive all information regarding the City's service-policy.

Comm. Thompson asked to have Capital Avenue SW numbers for the next meeting and a copy of the no show policy.

Next Steps: Comm. Baldwin stated one more meeting is needed. The next meeting is March 26, 2009, at 4:00 P.M. at Full Blast.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 P.M.

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