



Duluth Transit Authority

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MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 29, 2021
DTA Administration Offices / Board Room
4:00 PM

NOTICE: The DTA Board of Directors will be holding its Board Meeting by other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021 in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Board members will be participating through video conference. Due to the COVID-19 emergency and the closure of City facilities, public comment will not be taken in person. However, members of the public can monitor the meeting and provide public comment on agenda items through WebEx Events. All persons interested may monitor and participate in the public hearing by clicking on the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83835530559?pwd=U2pmV2htSGFUNKtVUHh0VXNyM3JLUT09> or by dialing (312) 626-6799, Meeting ID: 838 3553 0559; Passcode: 863377. The public is also encouraged to submit written comments to lpaczynski@duluthtransit.com. Please include "DTA Board of Directors Mtg. September 29, 2021, Agenda" in the subject line and include your name, address, and the agenda item you are commenting about. Please note that all public comment is considered Public Data.

ROLL CALL (5 min.)

Directors Present: Aaron Bransky, President; Henry Banks, Vice President; Tom Szukis, Secretary/Treasurer; Rondi Watson, Michael Casey; Julie Zaruba Fountaine; Krystal Brandstatter; Jarl Carlson

Directors Excused:

Directors Absent: Edmund Gleeson

DTA Staff Present: Rod Fournier, General Manager; Michelle Immerfall, Finance Director; Chris Belden, Planning & Grants Director; Aleda Johnson, Information Technology Director; Dave Clark, Marketing Director; Nancy Brown, Procurement Manager; Lisa Paczynski, Administrative Assistant.

Others Present: KBJR staff, Henry Pan

CALL TO ORDER

President Bransky was unable to chair this meeting, therefore, Secretary/Treasurer Szukis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. President Bransky announced that Vice President Banks would be joining tonight's meeting a little late. Director Casey announced that he would need to leave the meeting by 4:30 p.m. but would be able to log back in around 5:15 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL (5 min.)

Director Watson requested the General Manager Report be removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion. There being no further requests, a **motion** was made by Director Carlson and **seconded** by President Bransky to approve the Consent Agenda and the August 25, 2021, DTA Board of Directors Meeting

minutes as presented. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – August 25, 2021
- General Manager Report
General Manager Fournier stated emergency Safety Meetings regarding situational awareness were recently held in light of the tragic event that occurred this past month. Interviews are being scheduled for bus driver applicants to help alleviate the driver shortage the DTA is currently experiencing.
- Marketing Report
- Operations Report
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Report

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comment was given.

FINANCIAL REPORT (10 min.)

Director Immerfall reviewed the August Financial Reports and noted that passenger revenues were higher than the prior month, but lower than reported in August 2019. Total operating expenses are also lower compared to August 2019. Paratransit passenger revenue and operating expenses are also lower than in the prior month and lower than reported in August 2019. UPass and Regular Route ridership are still down, but it is hoped that these numbers will increase as students return to in-person classes. DTA staff met with UMD last week to discuss tabling events and ridership. Low ridership could be attributed to the fact that UMD has two new freshman classes this year, because due to the health pandemic, last year's freshman class did not get to experience campus life or public transportation. Additional tabling events at UMD have been scheduled in the near future. DTA staff anticipate ridership will increase as new students acclimate to campus life. One challenge is this year's numerous construction detours and adjusting on the fly makes it very difficult to traverse the city by bus for all passengers. UMD has embedded the MyDTA Mobile App in their Bulldog Mobile App to encourage UPass ridership as well.

- August Financial Statement/Financial Statement Summary/Board Documents

ACTION ITEMS (60 min.)

- Resolution 373 - Free Fares for MPTA/WPTA Annual Conference Attendees (R. Fournier)

The MN/WI Public Transit Conference is held in Duluth every five years at the Duluth Event and Conference Center and is scheduled from October 4-7, 2021. As in past years, free fares are offered to participants to supplement their travel throughout the conference with the presentation of their badge. Normally, a DTA facility tour is offered to conference participants, but given the COVID restrictions, it was decided to use drone footage to create a virtual 3-D tour instead. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Watson and **seconded** by Director Casey to approve the request to offer free fares to participants of this year's conference. Resolution passed.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Resolution 374 - Free Fares on Election Day Approval (R. Fournier)

For many years, the DTA has provided free fares on all DTA buses on Election Day. This service encourages more people to vote and to use public transit. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Zaruba Fountaine and **seconded** by Director Carlson to approve Resolution 374 providing free fares on Election Day. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Resolution 375 - Thanksgiving Day Extra Service Approval (R. Fournier)

If this year's Thanksgiving Day dinner is not canceled due to an increase in COVID-19 cases and provided that funding can be secured to reimburse the DTA for free fares, DTA wishes to offer free fares and additional service to the DECC for people attending the annual dinner. The DTA will be operating holiday service on Thanksgiving Day, and additional service is needed in the City of Superior, from downtown to the DECC and Central Hillside. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Watson and **seconded** by Director Casey to approve Resolution 375 authorizing free fares for those people attending the annual Thanksgiving Day dinner at the DECC. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Resolution 376 - Christmas Eve Curtailment Services Approval (R. Fournier)

As in previous years, DTA staff recommend curtailment of Christmas Eve transit service due to very low ridership. This also gives employees the opportunity to spend the holiday with their families. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Carlson and **seconded** by President Bransky to approve the curtailment of Christmas Eve services with the last bus on each route that departs downtown prior to 7:10 p.m. and no STRIDE trips scheduled after that

time. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Resolution 377 - Overhead Door Refurbishment Contract Award Approval (N. Brown)
The DTA has four overhead doors at the Operations Center. Two were refurbished in 2018, but due to funding restrictions, the remaining two were postponed. The maintenance bay door has recently required multiple costly repairs, and presently has a temporary fix to keep it operational until a new door can be installed, which can take up to several months to get replacement parts for repairs. Therefore, replacing the entire door is the most cost-effective solution. The fourth door on the east end of the building has not had maintenance issues recently, but it is the least used door and is 13 years old. The bid includes pricing for the fourth door to be replaced no later than December 31, 2023. The DTA properly sought bids to refurbish two overhead doors at the DTA Operations Center and two bids were received. DTA staff evaluated the bids and determined that both bids were responsive and responsible. However, the bid from DoorCo, Inc. best met the specifications, warranty requirements, and its cost was determined to be fair and reasonable. In addition, DoorCo has performed well for the DTA on other contracts. There being no further questions or comments, a **motion** was made by President Bransky and **seconded** by Director Carlson to award the contract for overhead door refurbishments to DoorCo, Inc. Resolutions passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Michael Casey, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Henry Banks

- Resolution 378 - Facility Camera Upgrades Contract Award (N. Brown)
DTA staff properly sought bids for new Network Video Recorders and associated software upgrades for use at the DTA Operations Center and at the Duluth Transportation Center and six vendors responded. Bid specifications required Avigilon equipment to ensure compatibility with the existing DTA system and vendors must be a certified Avigilon installer. Currently, DTA has two Network Video Recorders to store camera video footage in the event of an incident at either the Operations Center or DTC. Pricing also included additional spare cameras, an increase of recorder storage capacity, adding a camera in the fuel lane of the main Operations Center, and upgrading the software at both DTA buildings to Enterprise software with a 5-year maintenance plan for software upgrades. After evaluating all bid respondents, DTA staff determined that all bids were responsive and responsible. Hunt Electric Corporation's cost was determined to be fair and reasonable, and Hunt has performed satisfactorily for the DTA on other contracts. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by President Bransky and **seconded** by Director Zaruba Fountaine to award the contract for Network Video Recorders to Hunt Electric Corporation for the amounts presented. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Julie Zaruba Fontaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Michael Casey

- Resolution 379 - Heavy Duty Bus Hoist Refurbishment Contract Award (N. Brown)

The DTA has six in-ground hoists to perform maintenance on DTA vehicles. These hoists were installed in 1980 and have been refurbished at least twice since and are scheduled to be refurbished again within the next five years. Recent inspection revealed that these hoists need replacement or to be refurbished sooner than five years. Therefore, DTA staff sought proposals from qualified vendors to design and build a new hoist system that incorporates the latest safety features and is durable enough to withstand the demanding conditions of heavy-duty bus maintenance. The selected vendor is responsible for designing the system and performing the required engineering evaluations for the new system. Several different styles of hoists are available, and two vendors responded to the request for proposals. Although both proposals were deemed responsive and responsible, DTA staff determined that Midwest Lift Works' proposal was the best choice for its needs and whose costs were determined to be fair and reasonable. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Zaruba Fontaine and **seconded** by Director Brandstatter to award the contract for up to three heavy duty bus hoist refurbishments to Midwest Lift Works, LLC in the amount presented with the option to add three additional hoist refurbishments subject to available grant funding. The DTA Board also approved a 10% contingency to be retained by the DTA for any unforeseen conditions that may occur. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Julie Zaruba Fontaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Michael Casey

- Motion - Ratify Temporary Bus Lease Agreement (N. Brown)

Similar to other transit agencies nationwide, DTA has been experiencing severe supply chain delays for spare parts. Maintenance staff have been going to extraordinary lengths to ensure there are enough buses to meet the DTA service commitments. As staff continues to work with original equipment manufacturers to secure parts for repairs, a back-up fleet will allow DTA to meet service needs. Metro Transit has agreed to lease five 2008 Gillig buses for a period of six months at no cost. However, the DTA is insuring and maintaining the vehicles, as well as paying for the tire mileage when used. No fares will be collected while they are in use due to a noncompatible farebox, and DTA staff are working with Metro Transit on programming the signs and obtaining access to the camera system if needed. DTA staff are going to pick up these buses tomorrow, and they will only be used for emergency use purposes. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by Vice President Banks and **seconded** by Director Zaruba Fontaine to ratify the Agreement with Metro Transit to lease five Gillig heavy duty buses to serve as back up vehicles for the DTA fleet to ensure DTA can meet its service commitments. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Julie Zaruba Fontaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Michael Casey

- Motion - Emergency Phone Server Purchase Approval (N. Brown)

In late August, one server out of three began to fail and served the DTA's telephone system and AVL system. This physical server runs the 13 virtual servers and is a critical infrastructure for DTA operations. Therefore, there was no time for a competitive procurement, and a sole source procurement was made; the server has not yet been received. The phone system is currently operating, but it is not at optimal performance. DTA financial procedures require Board approval for emergency purchases over \$5,000. The server that failed was purchased four years ago with an estimated life cycle of 5-7 years but had a one-year warranty. There being no further discussion, a **motion** was made by President Bransky and **seconded** by Director Zaruba Fountaine to approve the emergency purchase of a telephone service from Citon Corporation for the amount presented. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis, Jarl Carlson

No: None

Abstain: Michael Casey

OLD BUSINESS (10 min.)

- FTA Oversight Compliance Update (N. Brown)

Staff continues to use the oversight process that DTA committed to the City of Duluth. It has been working well and has enabled Finance to identify payment and contract issues before the check is remitted. The next section to be reviewed is the DTA's Technical Capacity for managing its award and focuses on regular reports to the FTA on financial transactions using FTA funds, their timeliness and accuracy. We have only been required to complete these reports within the past month and will provide the oversight checklist with our reconciliation within the next month for their review and comment. A copy of the checklist and the City's review will be presented to the Board as soon as it is available; hopefully by the end of the year.

- DTA Board Member Appointment to Accessibility Advisory Committee (A. Bransky)

Since Director Casey expressed his interest in serving on this Committee, President Bransky appointed him to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

NEW BUSINESS (20 min.)

- City of Duluth Boards & Commissions Appointment Process (M. Casey)

Director Casey requested that this topic be postponed until the October Board of Directors Meeting. Director Watson added that she is interested in the Board appointment process and offered her assistance.

- Bus Stop Balancing Project (C. Belden)

In the DTA's 2017 Transit Development Plan, the community expressed a strong desire to see improvements to travel times and investments at bus stops. The Better Bus Stops Program will address two items based on high priority objectives in the plan – investments at targeted bus stops

to improve the passenger experience and a bus stop balancing initiative to consolidate and optimize the number of stops. Consolidation of bus stops will improve on-time performance and the ability to effectively invest in amenities (e.g., shelters, lighting, larger waiting areas, benches, bike storage, heating). Additional benefits include improving rider experience by increasing the overall speed of the system to be more efficient, safer driving by limiting weaving in and out of traffic, consistent route scheduling, reducing operating costs, exhaust, and noise pollution. Cleaning and maintenance are another consideration; having so many stops to maintain makes it very difficult for DTA staff to respond to cleaning and maintenance needs. The objective of the bus stop balancing project is to look at every bus stop for usage, safety for all users of the street, the distance between bus stops, elevations, sidewalk accessibility for persons with disabilities and mobility impairments, route transfers, and more. As identified in the 2019 Bus Stop Policy, generally, bus stops should be spaced every 0.125 to 0.25 miles (660 to 1320 ft.; 4-8 stops a mile), and industry recommended spacing is 800 to 1320 ft., and typical spacing in the DTA service area is an average of 664 ft. The DTA will make exceptions when unique circumstances exist. Considerations for exceptions may be made for, but are not limited to, the following reasons: slope of street (greater than 6%); major trip generators close in distance; nearby multi-family senior or disabled residences; safety issues; proximity to schools, services, and grocery stores; transfer points; and others as determined by DTA staff and transit best practice guidance. Also, the DTA will follow the City of Duluth and City of Superior development plans outlining core business districts to inform areas that may be denser. Some potential drawbacks of consolidating bus stops are further walking distances for some passengers, overcrowding at bus stops, Duluth's climate, political backlash if there is a lack of understanding of the DTA's rationale, etc. The draft plan is very close to being finalized; several adjustments have been made based on the Blueprint. A two-week internal DTA staff survey will be conducted before all data is imported into a GIS interactive map application. Following that, a 30-day public comment process to solicit comments and feedback will begin. Along with the interactive GIS map application, posters will be placed at all bus stops notifying the public where they may find further Project information as well as a phone number and email address to submit their comments. The Bus Stop Balancing Project will be submitted for Board approval after the 30-day public comment period, and implementation is expected to be simultaneous with the Better Bus Blueprint service launch in the summer of 2022. The Bus Stop Balancing Project really complements the Better Bus Blueprint, and there are a lot of different conditions that need to be taken into consideration for balancing bus stops. More adjustments will be made as the project moves forward. MnDOT's future Central Entrance construction project presents a very good opportunity for the DTA to participate and incorporate its vision into that project. On-site shelter visits will be conducted and DTA staff are able to issue tickets to cars parked at bus stops within the City of Duluth. New bus stop signs should help better identify no parking areas, and it is hoped the City of Duluth's new snow emergency routes and snow removal policies will help alleviate those issues near bus stops and shelters. The hills in the downtown area do present some challenges, but in most cases, stops are generally one or two blocks apart.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 min.)

- Employee of the Month - October 2021

The Employee of the Month Committee has selected bus operator, Dan Rolland, as the October Employee of the Month. The DTA congratulates and commends him for his dedicated professionalism.

- Next Board of Directors Meeting - October 27, 2021
- Board Member Announcements

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a **motion** was made by Director Casey and **seconded** by Director Zaruba Fountaine to adjourn; the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Paczynski
Recorder

Board President
Aaron Bruly ' *Oct 27 2021*

Signed/Title

Date