



Duluth Transit Authority

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MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, June 30, 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/86394842159?pwd=aXFxUU05T0M1OVVvT25EK09DWUxXQT09> or by dialing (312) 626-6799, Meeting ID: 863 9484 2159; Passcode: 074979. The public is also encouraged to submit written comment to lpaczynski@duluthtransit.com. Please include "DTA Board of Directors Mtg. June 30, 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; Rondi Watson, Vice President; Henry Banks, Secretary/Treasurer; Michael Casey; Edmund Gleeson; Julie Zaruba Fountaine; Krystal Brandstatter; Tom Szukis

Directors Excused:

Directors Absent:

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

Others Present: Norma Zamora (First Transit), Adam Barnum (Connetics Transportation Group)

CALL TO ORDER

President Bransky called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Director Zaruba Fountaine announced that she will have to leave tonight's meeting at 6:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL (5 min.)

As an update to the Interim General Manager Report, WisDOT has almost finished the construction project on the eastern side of Superior and therefore, the DTA will no longer need to run the shuttle service and regular service can resume on July 5. This will provide some relief for the driver shortage that the DTA is experiencing. Recently, three new bus operators have been hired, and another training group is scheduled for

August. A **motion** was made by Director Zaruba Fountaine and **seconded** by Director Casey to approve the Consent Agenda and the May 26, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: None

- Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – May 26, 2021
- General Manager Report
- Marketing Report
- Operations Report
- Planning & Grants Report
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Report

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comment.

FINANCIAL REPORT (10 min.)

Director Immerfall reviewed the May Financial Report. Expenses are less than budgeted and passenger revenues have slightly increased for regular route and paratransit services. President Bransky requested to include 2019 data to use as a pre-pandemic benchmark in next month's Financial Report. The funds paid to LHB Architect are associated with the main DTA Operations Center Administration office, plumbing and fixture remodel projects which are expected to begin later this year.

- DTA Financial Statement Reports

ACTION ITEMS (20 min.)

- Resolution 361 - City of Duluth Local Tax Levy for 2022 Approval
A motion was made by Director Gleeson and **seconded** by Director Szukis to approve the DTA's Local Levy for 2022 at a total of \$1,666,900.00, which is a zero increase from 2021. This levy amount is based on next year's anticipated need for operating and capital costs. A letter will be sent to the City in August, and a budget will be presented to the Duluth City Council for their approval in September. Through a referendum, the City of Duluth taxpayers agreed to a certain amount of tax dollars to support public transit; the maximum levy set for the DTA is approximately \$4.5 million. Since 2004, the DTA has only increased the levy 3 times; still well below the maximum levy

set.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: None

- Resolution 362 - MnDOT ADA Demand Responsive Service Agreement Approval

As has been done in previous years, the DTA agrees to provide a local share of up to 15% of STRIDE's total operating costs and up to 20% of the total capital costs. In addition, the DTA agrees to provide 100% of the local share necessary for expenses that exceed funds available from the State. Federal law states ADA paratransit service must be provided during the same service hours as fixed-route service and within 3/4 of a mile of fixed route services. MnDOT had moved to a 2-year budget for 2020 and 2021, but due to the pandemic and the uncertainty around budgets, they are reverting back to a single year budget for operations. A **motion** was made by Director Casey and **seconded** by Director Gleeson approving Resolution 362 authorizing the DTA to enter into an agreement with MnDOT to provide STRIDE services in the cities of Duluth, Hermantown and Proctor, Minnesota. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: None

- Resolution 363 - MnDOT Regular Route Service Agreement Approval

As has been done in previous years, the DTA agrees to provide a local share of up to 20% of the total operating cost and up to 20% of the total capital costs. In addition, the DTA agrees to provide 100% of the local share necessary for expenses that exceed funds available from the state. A **motion** was made by Director Szukis and **seconded** by Director Zaruba Fountaine approving Resolution 363 authorizing the DTA to enter into an agreement with MnDOT to provide Regular Route public transportation service in the cities of Duluth, Hermantown and Proctor, Minnesota. Director Gleeson added that he would like to see Hermantown and Proctor step up their contribution because they are receiving transit service that benefits their residents and businesses. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Julie Zaruba Fountaine, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: None

- Resolution 364 - Superior School District Agreement Approval

The Superior School District approached the DTA to request assistance with providing free transportation for the School District's secondary students and staff. The DTA explained that they would have to go through the City of Superior. Director Szukis suggested removing the School District from this agreement because he believes it could become a liability issue should an incident occur. Director Bolden explained that this agreement is different from past agreements with the

Duluth School District where the DTA was contracted by the Duluth School District to provide school busing service. Now the DTA is simply providing a public transit service that anybody can get on and off of at any time. The DTA is saying that its bus drivers will allow students and staff to flash their student I.D. and that will be enough for them to ride the bus. The DTA also agrees to record ridership and on a quarterly basis provide that data to the city and the school district so they can track ridership. The DTA has a pass program with the Harbor School District as well. In addition, this agreement was actually formulated from a template by Metro Transit in Green Bay, Wisconsin, which has a similar program with their school districts. By including all three parties, it is a cleaner agreement because there are certain clauses where the DTA agrees to work with the school district in providing ridership data and working with them if there's any sort of issues, behavior related or not. This agreement was forwarded to Duluth's City Attorney and Superior's City Attorney for their review, and neither attorney noted any extraordinary liability concerns. Interim General Manager Fournier is comfortable with the contract, because the contract language was amended to make sure it listed secondary students, which is key to this agreement, and it does mirror what is being done in Duluth. A **motion** was made by Director Zaruba Fountaine and **seconded** by Director Gleeson to authorize the DTA to enter into an agreement with the Superior School District and the City of Superior to provide transportation for secondary students and staff as presented. Resolution passes.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: Julie Zaruba Fountaine

OLD BUSINESS (70 min.)

The General Manager position has been advertised and one internal application has been received and several external applications. The application deadline is July 9, and then Staff person Arnold will review the applications to determine if the applicant is qualified. Staff person Arnold suggested assembling an informal hiring committee to look over the applications and participate in the interviews. President Bransky suggested that Mr. Arnold creates a list of questions to be asked of every applicant and the interviews can be open to all Board members and the public. Interviews could begin the week of June 19 and then schedule a Special Board Meeting on July 28 to approve the hiring of a candidate for the General Manager position. After further discussion, a **motion** was made by Director Szukis and **seconded** by Director Gleeson to interview three candidates recommended by Human Resources and Director Gleeson seconded the motion. Any Board member that wishes to participate in the interviews may do so. Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Aaron Bransky, Rondi Watson, Henry Banks, Michael Casey, Edmund Gleeson, Krystal Brandstatter, Tom Szukis

No: None

Abstain: Julie Zaruba Fountaine

- Comprehensive Operational Analysis - "Better Bus Blueprint" (A. Barnum, Connetics Transportation Group)

Director Belden stated improving route frequencies, efficiency, and removing the complexity of the DTA transit system were identified in the 2017 Transit Development Plan ("TDP"). The Better Bus Blueprint ("BBB") is a cost-neutral plan (the existing and proposed network run the same amount of

service and costs the same to operate). Adam Barnum, Connetics Transportation Group, is the Project Manager, will give a high-level introduction of the BBB Recommended Draft Network at tonight's meeting. The Special Board Meeting scheduled for July 7 to discuss this Plan in greater detail will need to be rescheduled because many Board members are not available. The BBB is a full review of the DTA fixed-route bus operations. The study aims to develop recommendations to change the way Twin Ports residents use transit in the region to better meet the community's needs. The BBB will be conducted in five phases, and the DTA website will be updated with content during each phase to keep the public informed. The Project Overview and links to the route summary, survey, Stakeholder Meeting recordings are on the DTA's website for Board members to review prior to the next Special Board Meeting. Over 560 survey results have been received from the public, key stakeholders and bus drivers thus far. These survey results assisted in the development of the Recommended Draft Network. Highlights of the Recommended Draft Network are 14 simplified routes that reinvent and combine portions from the 33 existing routes and patterns; 2 new Pre-Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") routes add 8 miles of additional, high-frequency service; consistent, 7-days a week service with over 25% increase in weekend service; 98% of existing ridership remains within ¼ mile of the new network; 37% of trips see significant travel time improvements; 16,000 more people and over 14,000 more jobs within walking distance of frequent service; and identified equity populations see an increase in access to frequent service of 40% or more. It is hoped that the final Recommended Network can be brought to the Board for approval in later summer or early fall. Any service changes will not take effect until the spring of 2022 after the schedules and implementation steps are taken. Board members are encouraged to write down any questions or comments they have regarding tonight's presentation to discuss in greater detail at the next Special Board of Directors Meeting to be scheduled in July.

- DTC Security (H. Banks)

Secretary/Treasurer Banks is a regular user of DTC downtown and over the past three months has observed how the DTC facility and other properties are policed and the security that is provided by GSSC. It is his belief that the DTA needs to reevaluate its policing and security policies because he doesn't not believe the security service being provided to the DTA has much value to it. GSSC security personnel can often be found in the booth or on their cell phones, rather than patrolling the building. In regard to the DTA Transit Police Officer, there is no record of how many hours per week are spent on DTA security issues. The DTA pays 100% of the Transit Police Officer's salary. There are some other transit agencies that have their own internal transit officers, and Secretary/Treasurer Banks suggested that it may be less expensive for the DTA to pay for its own transit peace officers rather than the current security costs. Secretary/Treasurer Banks requested an ad hoc committee be formed to research ways in which these duties can be performed for less expense, and several Board members agreed such a committee should be formed to work with DTA staff. President Bransky appointed Directors Szukis, Director Zaruba Fontaine, Director Gleeson and Secretary/Treasurer Banks to the ad hoc committee. Interim General Manager Fournier mentioned there is a Transit Ambassador Program that could offset some of the security costs. When DTC first opened, DTA had a front line customer service team that would patrol DTC and TCE, and it may be time to implement this program at DTA. Secretary/Treasurer Banks will schedule the ad hoc committee meetings.

NEW BUSINESS (10 min.)

- Nominations Committee Election of Officers for August

The DTA Bylaws dictate that every June the President of the DTA Board will appoint members to the Nominations Committee. The Board President can not serve on this Committee, and only one current officer may serve on this Committee. This Committee will select members of the DTA Board of Directors to serve as the President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer; existing officers can serve additional terms. Those Board members nominated for an officer position will be approved at the August Board Meeting. President Bransky appointed Directors Zaruba Fountaine, Brandstatter and Casey to the Nominations Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 min.)

- Employee of the Month - July 2021
- Next Regular Board of Directors Meeting - August 25, 2021
- Board Member Announcements

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a **motion** was made by Director Szukis and **seconded** by Director Casey to adjourn; motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Paczynski
Recorder

Aaron Bransky - Board President

Signed/Title

8-25-2021

Date