

MINUTES
METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2008

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Chairman David S. Wolff. Vice Chairman Gerald Smith, Board Secretary Jackie Freeman, and Board Members Burt Ballanfant, George DeMontrond, III, Carmen Orta, Trinidad Mendenhall Sosa and C. Jim Stewart, III were present and constituted a quorum. Board Member James W. E. Dixon, II was absent.

Chairman Wolff first called for approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting of January 17, 2008. Board Member Carmen Orta moved approval of the Minutes. Board Member DeMontrond seconded the Motion, and all Board Members present voted in favor.

MOTION NO. 2008 – 4

Chairman Wolff then called upon those members of the public who had requested to speak before the Board. The persons who spoke and the substance of their comments were as follows:

1. Mr. Clifton Casimire – presented photographs attempting to show the difficulty experienced by some patrons to board or de-board the buses.
2. Ms. Jessica Jackson - complained that she was assaulted by a passenger and the operator failed to call the police.

Chairman Wolff noted that the bus driver has been counseled and advised to call the police if a similar incident happens in the future.

3. Mr. Jose Ramirez – of the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Agency (MHMRA) of Harris County, explained that bus tokens, rather than stored value cards, are more appropriate for the travel needs of agency clients. He stated that the new fare system is more complicated and confusing for many clients and will have a negative impact on the continuity of services. He recommended that the METRO Board consider the re-issuance of tokens or a Q Card with a reduced value of one dollar or 50 cents.

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METRO's President & Chief Executive Officer, Frank J. Wilson, responded that staff reviewed the different fare media with the goal of keeping fares as low as possible. Mr. Wilson explained that METRO recognizes the special needs of MHMRA clients and asked that Mr. Ramirez remain after the meeting for further discussion with staff.

4. Ms. Sharon Jones – complained that bus operators have not allowed her to board the bus with her baby in the stroller. She also complained that a certain bus operator had acted improperly. She asked to speak to someone about her issues.

Mr. Wilson suggested several individuals that could speak to Ms. Jones after the board meeting.

5. Ms. Charles Perry – suggested bus shelters at all bus stops, and suggested light rail service to the airport.

Chairman Wolff agreed that more bus shelters are needed. He explained that service to the airport is under serious consideration.

6. Mr. Hartwell Remsburg – requested that the Board prohibit persons from bringing bicycles on the light rail vehicles.

7. Mr. Mark Hogue – spoke to persons in the audience and urged that patrons take better care of the bus shelters.

8. Ms. Elaine Kubicek – complained about overcrowding on the METRO buses. She requested more buses on the 204 and 209 bus routes.

METRO's Senior Vice President of Operation, David Feeley, asked Ms. Kubicek to remain after the meeting for further discussion of her concerns.

9. Mr. Carl Madsen – complained about late buses, rude drivers and inconsistent information from the Customer Service Division when he called for route information. He complained that route numbers and destinations signs were confusing. He also complained of too few Q Card vendors in the Third Ward and suggested an alternate alignment for the Southeast light rail line.

Chairman Wolff suggested that he submit some of his issues in writing so that staff can review them.

10. Mr. Vincent Trevino – complained that the bus drivers were not using the platforms for the elderly and disabled patrons. He also complained that a bus driver left the bus stop and he was unable to retrieve his belongings, important papers and grocery bag.

11. Mr. Dominic Mazoch – Suggested commuter rail routes using existing freight rail lines.

Chairman Wolff asked Board Member DeMontrond if he could address Mr. Mazoch's comment. Board Member DeMontrond explained that the private rail companies own the existing lines and there are limitations on the use of these lines by third parties.

12. Ms. Robin Holzer – of the Citizens Transportation Coalition, presented a letter suggesting certain policy considerations as METRO proceeds with conversion of its HOV lanes to High Occupancy Toll lanes. She suggested the continuing priority for transit vehicles, public dissemination of information, fair congestion pricing, and public meetings to address community concerns.

At the conclusion of the public comment portion of the meeting, Chairman Wolff called upon Mr. Wilson for his monthly business report.

Mr. Wilson reported that the Transportation Security Administration ("TSA") has recognized METRO's Chief of Police, Thomas C. Lambert, for his exceptional commitment to security in mass transit. The TSA Transit Policy board recently presented Chief Lambert with a Certificate of Appreciation for his involvement in mass transit security at both the local and national level.

Chief Lambert commended his staff for their hard work towards making these achievements possible and thanked Mr. Wilson for his support.

Mr. Wilson announced the installation of automated external defibrillators at METRO's administrative building and at the Operating facilities. He also reported on employee support for various community charities and how METRO employees raised over \$90,000.00 for the American Heart Association. METRO also received an award from the Federal Transit Administration in recognition of its high ridership levels from 2005 to 2007.

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Chairman Wolff added that bus service boardings increased 7.9 percent for the total system, year-to-date. He also noted that the magnitude of total system ridership, year-to-date, is 43 million boardings. The increase in boardings should be more significant if fuel prices continue to rise. Chairman Wolff stated that METRO must be prepared to meet growing demands for service.

Mr. Wilson further explained that METRO has had great success in maintaining its expenses, constant levels during the preceding four years. METRO is currently under budget for the first quarter of the fiscal year. He projected a significant change in the fare income level through the Q Card transition period. Mr. Wilson concluded his business report by stating that METRO should begin to see the effects of fare re-structuring by April. METRO should realize positive impacts on the operation ratio.

Chairman Wolff then moved for approval of the Summary Agenda, containing Agenda Items 5 and 6. Board Member Stewart moved for passage and approval, Board Member Sosa seconded the Motion, and all Board Members present voted in favor.

MOTION NO. 2008 – 5

By way of Summary Agenda, the Board of Directors approved the following:

1. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to execute and deliver a contract with Bridgestone Firestone for the lease and maintenance of tires for METRO's fleet of buses, for an amount not to exceed \$12,261,494.00.

RESOLUTION NO. 2008 – 4

2. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a contract with Neon Electric Corporation for fabrication and installation of kiosks, signs and other amenities for the signature bus service for an amount not to exceed \$7,299,986.00.

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Board Member Freeman next moved that the President & Chief Executive Officer be authorized to negotiate, execute and deliver an agreement with the Texas Medical Center to share test results from periodic testing of stray current along the Main Street rail line. Board Member DeMontrond seconded the Motion. Board Member Sosa abstained from the vote. All other Board Members present voted their approval.

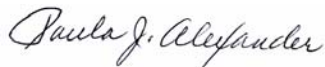
MOTION NO. 2008 – 6
RESOLUTION NO. 2008 – 6

Board Member Freeman next moved that METRO proceed with public hearings for the acquisition of properties for the METRO Solutions transit system plan. Board Member Smith seconded the Motion. All Board Members present voted their approval.

MOTION NO. 2008 – 7
RESOLUTION NO. 2008 – 7

There being no other matters to come before the Board for consideration, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Paula J. Alexander
Assistant Secretary