

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

May 27, 2015

Presiding: Mayor John Woods (Davidson)

Present:

Ron Carlee (Charlotte City Manager)

Scott Jernigan (TSAC Chair)

Dena Diorio (Mecklenburg County Manager)

Mayor Chuck Travis (Cornelius)

Greg Ferguson (Huntersville Town Manager)

Mayor Jim Taylor (Matthews)

Ralph Messera (Matthews)

Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)

Mayor Jack Edwards (Pineville)

Interim Chief Executive Officer: John Muth

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by MTC's Co-chair, Mayor Woods. Mayor Clodfelter was unable to attend the meeting.

II. Approval of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of April 22, 2015 was approved as written.

III. Introduction of the CATS Bus Rodeo and Rail Rodeo Winners

Larry Kopf/Allen Smith

Mr. Kopf, CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations, asked the bus Rodeo winners to come to the front. To enter the competition, competitors must have a safe driving record, good attendance record and no valid customer complaints for the previous year. Mr. Kopf introduced winners in the STS/Para Transit Rodeo. Cindy James, a 17-year employee finished in third place. Nechel Dunlap, a 1.5-year employee and veteran, won second place in her first time in the competition. Philip Underwood is the champion of the competition and a 10-year employee.

In the 2015 Bus Maintenance Rodeo, CATS employees came in ninth place in the national competition. The winning CATS team this year, who will represent CATS next year in the national competition scheduled for Charlotte, included Greg Patch, a 27-year employee who has now been on the winning team six times; Billy Belcher, a 16-year employee, and Ben Thompson, a 12-year employee who was working and unable to attend tonight's meeting.

The third place winner of the 40 Foot Bus Competition is Leonard Adams. Second place is Carmen Aleman, who has been a top-three finisher seven times. Once again, the first place finisher is Lonnie "Hollywood" Earnhardt, the longest-winning champion of the competition and distant cousin of Dale Earnhardt. Mr. Earnhardt represented CATS again in the national competition and in the customer service competition.

Mr. Smith, CATS General Manager of Rail Operations, said that due to streetcar testing and light rail expansion, rail rodeo participants are all working and could not attend tonight. Participation

in the rail rodeo is voluntary and an opportunity for the participants to show their knowledge and abilities.

Rail Car Maintenance winners include first place winner Eugene Capote, second place winner Anthony Calabiano and third place winner John Fletcher. First place winner in the Rail Operator competition was Tiffany Jerry, who has been an Operator for only about a year. Kevin Hooks took second place and Metro Coston took third place. Unfortunately, due to vacations and other scheduling conflicts, the rail car maintenance winners will not be able to attend national competition this year, but Ms. Jerry and Mr. Hooks will attend the Operator competition. MTC members applauded the winners in each competition in appreciation for their efforts.

IV. Employee Recognition

Olaf Kinard

Mr. Kinard, CATS Director of Marketing, Communications & Technology, said he wanted to recognize a different sort of employee achievement. He asked Kimberly O'Nele to come up. She and Robin Fletcher, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting, work in CATS' Call Center. Ms. Fletcher received the first of two phone calls on March 9 by an angry, profane gentleman who made a bomb threat. Ms. Fletcher responded with the usual procedures, including alerting Safety & Security and the police. When the gentleman called again 45 minutes later to reiterate his bomb threat, Ms. O'Nele received his call. Staff found out later that he has called in threats to schools and other organizations in the area. Ms. O'Nele calmed him and engaged him in conversation. One of his issues was that he was looking for a wife. She said she could help him with that and asked personal details including his name and phone number, ostensibly to set up a dating profile for him. The gentleman was later caught by police. MTC members applauded Ms. Fletcher's and Ms. O'Nele's quick-thinking and resourcefulness.

V. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 4 STAR Award

John Muth

Mr. Muth said that CATS received a system award from FTA Region 4, FTA's Superstar Award for a transit agency that consistently demonstrated outstanding transit service for an area whose population exceeds 200,000. FTA's award recognized that CATS is the largest transit system between Atlanta and Washington, DC. The award reflects CATS' excellence in bus, paratransit, light rail and vanpool and reflected CATS' expansion projects and plans to expand transit options, including light rail expansion and streetcar service initiation.

VI. Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chair's Report

Scott Jernigan

Mr. Jernigan reported that TSAC met on May 14. The committee voted to approve the service changes and received a presentation on the Operating and Debt Services program. TSAC will not meet in June, but will meet in July.

VII. Transit Funding Working Group Update

No report.

VIII. Public Comments

None

IX. Action Items

a. MTC Policy 06 Transit Service Guidelines

Pamela White

Mr. Muth said that CATS likes to have MTC review policies about every three years. The first two policies tonight do not involve major changes. Ms. White, CATS Manager of Service Development, asked MTC members to approve the Transit Service Guidelines, which

outlines principles CATS utilizes to make the services safe, reliable, comfortable and easy to use. They are measuring tools to make corrective actions when services fall short of the goals. The Guidelines were unanimously approved by TSAC. This is the current policy; staff does not propose any changes to the Guidelines.

Discussion: Mayor Taylor clarified that there were no changes from the last update. Ms. White replied that there were no changes.

Resolution: Ms. Diorio motioned to approve the Transit Service Guidelines; Mayor Travis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. MTC Policy 07 Transit Advertising

Olaf Kinard

Mr. Kinard said that this was the third-year required review of Transit Advertising. The only minor change is the addition of digital advertising, which was implied but not specified before. This policy allows digital advertising with the caveat that, as a City department, CATS will follow City policy on digital advertising and apps. There will probably be an update in the next 6-12 months with an update to the policy as the BLE parking deck vertical spaces become potentials for rental income.

Discussion: None.

Resolution: Mayor Taylor motioned to approve the new Transit Advertising policy; Mr. Carlee seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

c. MTC Summer Schedule

John Muth

Mr. Muth said that MTC has typically cancelled one of the summer meetings. Staff has reviewed the schedule over the next few months. There will be a presentation in June on the LYNX Silver Line. Mr. Muth recommended that the July 22 meeting was a good meeting to consider cancelling for the summer schedule. There would be no meeting in July, but there would be an MTC meeting in June and August.

Discussion: None.

Resolution: Mayor Taylor motioned to cancel the July 22 MTC meeting; Mayor Travis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IX. Information Items

a. USDOT Bonding Education

Arlanda Rouse

Mr. Rouse, CATS Civil Rights Officer, referred MTC members to the presentation in their packet. As a recipient of federal funding, CATS has an obligation to promote small businesses. CATS will bring a USDOT Bonding Course to the City of Charlotte. The course will be hosted by the South Atlantic Region of the Small Business Transportation Resource Center, part of USDOT's office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, which provides technical assistance and financial services to disadvantaged businesses. Education on bonding is a financial service. Local businesses are at capacity; there are only a limited number of small businesses bidding on the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE). CATS is trying to generate opportunities for small businesses as well as ensure that they are not over-capacity. The bonding program will assist businesses with this evaluation. Normally, CATS does a one- or two-hour seminar. The bonding course will last six evenings extended over

three weeks, hosted in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center. CATS will educate business owners on how to apply to do business with the City and provide business skill resources such as accounting, construction site safety and how to estimate and bid a project. A bonding agent will direct small business owners through the course so they can be bonded at the course's conclusion. After the course's conclusion, CATS will follow the businesses for up to a year to make sure that they are bonded and track their success.

Discussion: Ms. Diorio asked how many were signed up. Mr. Rouse replied that individuals from 20 companies have signed up. A large enrollment was not expected since companies must meet minimum criteria for company size and number of employees. Mayor Woods said that in his banking experience, he saw companies that could not apply for contracts because they were too small or could not obtain bonding. He thought this will help businesses in other industries as well.

b. Corridor System Plan Update

John Muth

Mr. Muth reviewed the System Plan, beginning in 1994 with the concept of five primary transportation and development corridors. The 2025 Transit/Land Use Plan was developed in 1998 to see how transit might be integrated into the five corridors. Progress on the 2030 Transit System Plan includes LYNX Blue Line light rail service and Sprinter Enhanced Bus service. In addition, the BLE and CityLYNX Gold Line Phase I are under construction and CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 2 and LYNX Silver Line are under study. Unfunded projects include the LYNX Red Line, CityLYNX Gold Line extensions to Beatties Ford Road, Central Avenue and the airport, as well as LYNX Silver Line and Charlotte Gateway Station. The Transit Funding Working Group, a working committee of MTC, has developed possible funding strategies which could be useful for the unfunded projects, including TIFIA/RRIF loans and pay-as-you-go capital such as TIFs, SAD/MSD, Pennies for Progress and an expanded sales tax.

In 1998, the Charlotte Mecklenburg population was projected to grow from 480,000 to 965,000 by 2025. In 2014, the US Census Bureau estimated that Mecklenburg County's population is already over a million people. We have exceeded the 1998 projections a full decade early. This rapid population growth emphasizes the need for transit. Mecklenburg County is the region's major employment destination, with over 150,000 people commuting into Mecklenburg County daily. However, since 2006, funding sources have become less sure and Norfolk Southern has taken a position on the use of the O-line precluding transit. Air quality remains a concern. The CONNECT Our Future project was a three-year process spearheaded by the Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) that brought together organizations across the 14-county bi-state region to develop a plan for growth. The public ranked increased transportation choices as a high priority in the study.

Many signs point to the need for an updated transit plan. Key components of the 2050 Regional Plan will be leveraging the full length of the LYNX Blue Line when the BLE is finished to maximize bus-rail connections throughout the county. Other opportunities include leveraging CityLYNX Gold Line, ensuring that the Human Transportation Services Plan for STS and DSS serve optimally, investigating opportunities for new regional express bus service and possibly reinstating discontinued routes.

There may be opportunities to provide enhanced and regional bus service in the planned Fast Lane network in I-77 or US-74 and the Monroe Bypass, as well as on I-485. The West

Corridor to the airport has not been viewed as cost effective by FTA; however, the growth in the area as well as at the airport raises the point that we need to examine the corridor again to see if light rail is now appropriate. The LYNX Red Line remains a key component of the long-term plan. There could be potential to add more express bus service in that area. There is a lot of potential for commuter rail from outlying counties in the long-term plan but the State will need to be a major partner in developing an overall regional commuter rail plan. All future commuter rail corridors would come into downtown Charlotte and terminate at the future Charlotte Gateway Station.

Staff receives questions on extending LYNX Blue Line to the Speedway, Concord Mills or the Phillip Morris development site to the north, or to downtown Pineville, Ballantyne or Fort Mill, SC to the south. There are a lot of mobility needs in the community. In the past, there were additional corridors considered beyond the five primary corridors in the current System Plan. These corridors should possibly be reconsidered for study along with additional corridors identified during the CONNECT process. A number of partners would need to be involved in developing a regional transit strategy. Some benefits would be to raise public awareness, participation and collaboration among regional partners and building on several key initiatives.

Discussion: Mayor Woods recognized Jim Prosser from CCOG. CCOG's report provides a framework for the region to work with neighboring counties, which is key to creation of a regional system. The CONNECT report will be rolled out to the counties in June. Mayor Woods said that he felt that this should be used as a framework to build grassroots demand for transit services throughout the region. Charlotte is the hub, but people have to get into Charlotte. At some point, employees will not be able to reach their destinations with any ease. In the northern areas of the county, people are beginning to plan their schedules around expected congestion. Mr. Thunberg said that since 1998, almost all the elected officials who were involved in the original plan have moved on to other areas. He said that raising public awareness was important, but also having an open discussion with elected officials in surrounding counties was a good place to start. He said that he feels there are elected officials who have no idea what the vision of the transit system is and who would not be able to answer simple questions about it. Mayor Woods thanked Mr. Prosser for his work. Mayor Taylor asked who was working on the LYNX Silver Line study. Mr. Muth replied that it was an internal team of City of Charlotte and Town of Matthews staff as well as a consultant group. Mr. Coxe added that close collaboration with the business community was critical to the success to the earlier efforts, as well as the sales tax referendum. He encouraged continuing collaboration with the business community.

X. Chief Executive Officer's Report

John Muth

Under the CEO's report, Mr. Muth discussed the following:

a. Financial Update:

Sales tax revenue through May is \$5.6 million. With one month remaining in the fiscal year, CATS has reached budget targets for the year.

Mr. Kopf referred MTC members to the April ridership report. Ridership took a downturn in April. Staff is analyzing what might be the cause. So far, staff cannot pinpoint a cause, but is

looking at the number of rainy days and whether there are any systems issues that need correction.

b. BLE Update:

Mr. Muth reminded MTC members that the three items for the BLE project enhancements were the expanded maintenance facility, the bridge over the rail corridor at the Sugar Creek Station and the extension of the pedestrian bridge at the JW Clay parking deck. Staff continues to work with NCDOT. Mr. Muth said he and Blue Line Projects Director Danny Rogers made a presentation about the project enhancements at the May Multimodal Committee of NC's Board of Transportation (NCBOT). NCBOT members asked whether major institutions that would benefit from the extension of the pedestrian bridge including the University might contribute towards the cost of the pedestrian bridge at the JW Clay Blvd. station. UNC Charlotte has committed to \$600,000 in support of the project; discussions are underway with Carolinas Medical Center about their possible participation. The current plan is to take the enhancements for NCBOT approval in July.

Staff met with USDOT in May on CATS' TIFIA application. The presentation was well-received. Staff continues to work with USDOT as the application moves through their process. Mr. Muth said that CATS hopes to close on the loan in September. He will keep MTC members updated on the loan's progress.

XI. Other Business

None

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m. by Mayor Woods.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2015, 5:30 P.M.