

Minutes/Proceedings

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office
San Gabriel Valley Conference Room
3369 Santa Anita Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731

Called to Order at 5:14 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Bart Doyle, Chair
Harry Baldwin
Emile Bayle
Bruce Heard
Henry Lopez
David Spence

Officers

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Helen Ortiz, Community Relations
Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary

1. Election of Officers:

APPROVED nomination of Chairman Doyle for a second term as Chair.

APPROVED nomination of Vice Chair Sid Tyler for a second term as Vice Chair.

2. DISCUSSED amendments to Service Sector Council Bylaws.

Chairman Doyle and Councilmember Baldwin were present at the May 27, 2004 Board meeting at which amendments to Sector Bylaws were discussed. Mr. Gabig reported that representatives from all five Service Sectors gave extensive testimony on the issue involving limitation of meeting frequency, which served as the primary focus of contention. Other issues including reduction of the travel budget and costs associated with holding the meetings were also debated. Mr. Gabig stated that subsequent to the meeting, Sector staff has taken measures to reduce the costs of the Council meetings. The number of security officers attending the meetings has been reduced and the Council is considering limiting the number of staff attending the meetings to those doing presentations.

Chairman Doyle was pleased that the Fasana motion, which left the meeting schedule unchanged, passed unanimously. He expressed uncertainty over whether adoption of the amendment allowing Board members to remove or replace a Council member by majority vote will materially impact the Council. He cautioned that actions by the Council may be carefully scrutinized in the future.

3. APPROVED May 11, 2004 Governance Council Minutes.

4. Public Comment – None.

5. Safety Contact - Sr. Safety Specialist Scott Boim gave an overview of how a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) works and its role in helping prevent electric shocks in the home. He stated that a GFCI can be installed in most areas of the home, particularly where there is a moist or wet environment. Mr. Boim offered a few tips on how to test a GFCI to ensure proper functioning of the device.

6. RECEIVED report of the General Manager.

Mr. Gabig announced that performance indicators showed mostly positive trends for the month of April. Worker's Compensation Costs were \$234,000 for April, which falls far below the target of \$376,000. OSHA Recordable Incidents continues to perform well. The April figure met the target exactly. There were 2.37 Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 hub miles and just under 1 New Worker's Compensation Claim per 100 employees for April. Both of the figures for these indicators outperformed their respective monthly targets.

Mr. Gabig reported that the Sector exceeded the target in the area of Miles Between Mechanical Failures with an impressive 9,644 Miles for April. Bus Cleanliness rating was 7.78. The target is 8. Complaints have been trending downward with 3.3 Complaints for April. Mr. Gabig mentioned that Passenger Boardings information is an imprecise measurement and that the Sector's Boardings level is below the target, mirroring an agency-wide trend. On-Time Performance reached a record high of 75%. The target is 80%.

Councilmember Heard inquired about the most significant reason for the spike in On-Time Performance.

Mr. Gabig stated that centralized field supervision had the greatest impact, but many factors contributed to the increase in On-Time Performance. These include planning and scheduling, following through on passenger complaints, and enforcing disciplinary write-ups. He explained that On-Time Performance is measured through point checks on the heaviest lines, and that a 75% rating for any given month is exemplary.

Mr. Gabig reported that Division 3 Transportation ranked first place for the fifth consecutive month in the "How You Doin'?" Competition. Division 9 Transportation also did quite well with a 3rd place ranking. Both Divisions performed nearly as well on the Maintenance side, with Division 9 placing 2nd and Division 3 placing 3rd.

Mr. Gabig announced that there will be an annual meeting with the CEO, Deputy CEO, and all of the Sector Councils on June 22 at 4:00 P.M. in the Gateway Building Cafeteria. Chairman Doyle added that each Council will be expected to do a presentation at the July 22 Regular Board meeting on the progress it has made during the past year and the Sector will designate one or two Councilmembers to appear at the presentation.

Financial Review:

Mr. Rosenberg noted that he has made slight changes to the structure of the financial information shown on the handout. The monthly budgeted amounts are shown on the left side of the chart in the handout, and the YTD variance is shown on the right side of the chart.

Transportation is \$34,000 over budget due to a higher than expected fringe/overhead allocation. Maintenance is \$100,000 over budget with a YTD variance of \$1.2 million under budget. Total Sector Office is \$17,000 over budget and Subtotal Sector Operations, before strike adjustment and estimated strike savings, is \$156,000 over budget with a YTD variance of \$3.8 million under budget. After adjusting for strike savings the YTD variance for Sector Operations is \$900,000 over budget. Other Sector Support is \$150,000 under budget with a YTD variance of \$3.3 million over budget. Mr. Rosenberg explained that this is due to costs related to the strike. Total SGV Sector is \$1,200 under budget based on a monthly budgeted amount of \$9.3 million. The YTD variance is \$515,000 under budget. After strike adjustment there is an overrun of \$1.7 million YTD variance for Total SGV Sector. Revenue Service Hours is almost exactly on budget with only 67 hours over budget for April. The YTD variance indicates 127,000 revenue service hours under budget. Total Cost per Revenue Service Hour is \$12.21 over budget for the year due to hours that were not delivered during the strike.

April Sector Labor is just slightly over budget. April Fuel Expense is \$195,000 over budget, with a strike adjustment of 19% over budget.

Councilmember Heard noted that the agency has one of the largest fleets of CNG buses. He inquired if CNG is as volatile as diesel in terms of price. Mr. Rosenberg responded that it may be more volatile and that this year the fluctuating price of CNG has been more of an issue than in the past.

Mr. Rosenberg reported that April Parts Expense is 5.2% over budget. He stated that Parts Expense will have to be carefully monitored as a potential budget issue in FY05.

April WC Charges constitute only 45% of the budget. Mr. Rosenberg stated that the budgeted amount of this item will be decreasing in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that Fringe and Overhead are 7.4% over budget, and April Other Sector Support is 13% under budget.

7. RECEIVED an oral report on Community Relations by Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Community Relations Officer.

Ms. Ortiz, Community Relations Manager, announced that she will be moving on to a new role as San Gabriel Valley Public Affairs Regional Manager in the office of the CEO. She expressed gratitude for having had the privilege to work with the Council, and complimented Councilmembers for the energy and composure they have shown during the past year.

She mentioned that she will ensure that the names of Councilmembers are presented at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Gold Line Eastside Extension in July.

Ms. Ortiz introduced Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Community Relations Officer. Ms. Armijo-Holbrook reported participation in the following Community Relations events for May: a Cinco de Mayo Parade at Cypress Park, a Community Health Fair in El Monte, an Inner City Games Annual Luncheon, a Career Day at Cleveland Elementary, the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Gala, a CAMINOS presentation in Boyle Heights, a neighborhood council meeting in Boyle Heights, and a Remembering Our Veterans Event that was attended by L.A. County Supervisor Antonovich.

Ms. Armijo-Holbrook stated that there may be some reduction in community relations activity in the next few weeks and that she will be keeping the Council posted.

8. RECEIVED a report on FY05 Budget by Steve Rosenberg, Administration & Finance Manager.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that the agency budget was adopted and the Consent Decree budget was amended at the June 7th Special Board meeting. He reported that the Sector budget is in the process of being finalized and that the assignment of Consent Decree service and associated service transfers between Sectors are impacting the budgets for Bus Operator Labor and Maintenance Labor and Associated Fringe, WC Chargeback, Fuel and Parts.

Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that more detail about the FY05 budget will be available next month and that he hopes to have an actual budget to present at the next Council meeting.

9. RECEIVED a report on Customer Complaints by Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Hillmer reported that the Sector currently operates 32 bus lines, 26 of which are directly operated by the Sector and 6 of which fall under contract service jurisdiction. Mr. Hillmer, referring to customer complaint trends shown in Attachment A of the handout, noted that directly operated bus service within the San Gabriel Sector averages roughly 3.4 complaints for every 100,000 passengers. The target is 3 complaints or less per 100,000 passenger boardings. Contracted bus service averages roughly 10.3 complaints per 100,000 boardings.

Referring to Attachment B, Mr. Hillmer reported that contracted service tends to have an unusually high rate of complaints relative to service that is directly operated. He explained that contracted buses tend to not only operate longer lines, but provide less frequent service. As a result, there is a much longer wait for passengers if mishaps occur, leading to a higher number of complaints. In addition, Mr. Gabig stated that the level of supervision on these lines tends to be lower.

Mr. Hillmer mentioned that Line 177C (JPL-Pasadena-City of Hope) generates a great number of complaints and that the Sector will be working with contracted bus management to improve service quality on this line.

Councilmember Heard asked if Sector field supervisors deal with complaints relating to contracted bus lines. Mr. Hillmer responded that these types of complaints are referred primarily to contracted bus administration. Mr. Gabig added that contracted bus service is considered somewhat separate from MTA directly operated service, although the agency is working with contracted services to try to minimize this barrier.

In response to Councilmember Heard's inquiry about the ridership on contracted buses, Mr. Hillmer stated that there are fewer boardings on these lines. He added that the new contracted service lines that have been introduced are doing fairly well. In the next fiscal year, the Secret Shopper program will include contracted service lines in addition to directly operated lines.

10. RECEIVED a report on June Service Changes by Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Hillmer gave an overview of minor service changes that will be implemented as part of the June 27 Service Change Program. Staff has authorized implementation of all major changes that were introduced at the February 10 Public Hearing.

Line 251 (103rd St.-Soto St.-Avenue 26) will be rerouted in the vicinity of the LAC-USC Medical Center from State St., Zonal Ave., and North Broadway to Daly St. and Marengo St. Line 252 will be extended from Soto St. and Whittier Blvd. to Soto St. and Olympic Blvd. The new Limited Line 376 (Valley Blvd. Limited) will be modified to operate along Valley Blvd. (Valley Mall) and Santa Anita Ave. in El Monte. A new terminal for restructured Lines 484 and 490 will be established in the vicinity of Cal Poly Pomona. The Sector will establish Valley Blvd. and Temple Ave. as the routing for new Line 684 in the vicinity of Cal Poly Pomona. The bus layover zone for Lines 78-79 (LA-Arcadia via Huntington Dr./Main St.-Las Tunas Dr.) will be relocated from Grand Ave. to Olive St. in Downtown L.A. Service on Lines 180-181 (Hollywood-Glendale-Pasadena) will be limited to selected closely spaced and low demand stops along Colorado Blvd. to improve on-time performance. Limited Line 370 service will be expanded to include the route segment of the line between Eastern Ave. and City Terrace Dr. and Garvey Ave. and Atlantic Blvd.

Councilmember Lopez asked if there is a bus that allows passengers on Line 487 to travel farther down to the Cal Poly Pomona station. Mr. Hillmer responded that Line 684 and Foothill Transit Line 482 would provide this service, and Mr. Gabig added that it is possible to purchase an intra-agency transfer to get on Foothill Transit by way of a Metro bus.

Chairman Doyle mentioned that the Sector should carefully consider issues associated with signalization and signage along the Gold Line at some point in the future. He noted the importance of having cities within the San Gabriel Valley work together to improve traffic flow through the using of signaling.

Mr. Hillmer passed out a handout showing key dates leading up to the implementation of the December 2004 Service Change Program. He stated that on August 10, a Public Hearing will be held (possibly in Pasadena) to discuss December 2004 service changes. On September 14, the Council will consider approving the final recommendations and on December 26 the Service Change Program will be implemented.

11. RECEIVED a report on impact of Gold Line on bus ridership by Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the Sector has been coordinating with other public transit operators to implement significant bus service changes designed to provide better bus access to the Gold Line, reduce service duplication between bus and rail, and reinvest any savings from bus operations back into the system to improve quality of service. Mr. Hillmer explained that post Gold Line ridership data by line is based on sampling from the period June 29, 2003 to January 31, 2004. He stated that bus ridership has decreased about 2% since the opening of the Gold Line, representing a reduction of approximately 1.4 million riders per year. Nevertheless, Gold Line post-strike ridership data indicates a growth in overall transit ridership of about 5% despite the fact that Gold Line ridership remains below pre-strike levels. Mr. Hillmer mentioned that express bus service that was duplicated by the Gold Line was cancelled.

Mr. Gabig asked how many former patrons of the express buses are now using the Gold Line.

Mr. Hillmer responded that he does not have the exact data. He added that the Gold Line attracts roughly 14,000 riders per day and that he has observed that more people are taking the Gold Line than were traveling on the express buses.

Referring to an attachment in the handout, Mr. Hillmer reported that from the period January to April 2004 it appears as though bus ridership is returning to pre-strike levels in spite of the fare increase.

Councilmember Heard mentioned that passengers who had been taking express bus Lines 401 and 402, which were cancelled due to duplication of service by the Gold Line, have given up on using the Gold Line primarily because it does not allow for seamless travel.

Mr. Hillmer reiterated that the Sector is still working to improve bus and shuttle access to each Gold Line station, and that greater marketing efforts may be needed to assist passengers in navigating particularly difficult stations such as Union Station.

Chairman Doyle inquired about when the Sector will be planning for reconfiguration of bus services in anticipation of the opening of the Eastside Extension.

Mr. Hillmer responded that it is premature at this point to comment on this issue. He noted that it would be a good idea for the Sector to introduce residents in the vicinity of the Eastside Extension to the proposed route of the Extension.

12. RECEIVED an oral update on Governance Council workplan workshop by Jack Gabig, General Manager.

Mr. Gabig reminded Councilmembers about the planning retreat to be held on June 18 at 7:30 A.M at the Eaton Canyon Nature Center. An outside facilitator will assist in coordinating the meeting. Mr. Gabig gave an overview of items of possible discussion at the retreat and passed out a handout on the Strategic Plan for the Council. He informed Councilmembers that telephone interviews will be conducted by the facilitator to gather feedback and issues that the Council would like to address at the meeting. He noted that all comments will be kept confidential.

13. Chair's Remarks:

Chairman Doyle announced that the next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, July 13.

14. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – None.

ADJOURNED at 6:45 P.M.

Michele Chau, Council Secretary