

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

5:00-7:00 PM

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

La Cienega Tennis Center
325 S. La Cienega Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Council Members present:

Brad Robinson Chair
Jerard Wright, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Greg Fischer
Carol Gross
Joyce Perkins
Glenn Rosten
Anny Semonco

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. Public Comment for items not on the agenda - None
2. APPROVED Minutes from September 13, 2006
3. RECEIVED General Managers Report

Roy Gandara reported that August showed improved trends in Mean Miles Between Mechanical Failures. December will be the first full month of ATMS On-Time Performance numbers will be available, this will provide a much larger sampling. Accidents per 100,000 are also trending positively. Complaints are on target, but slightly higher than FY07 year to date. Workers' Compensation Indemnity Claims are below the FY07 target.

Representative Gross asked if there was any particular reason that complaints are up.

Michael Davis said there had been some street closures, which might have caused buses to be late. Chair Robinson suggested looking at those numbers again next month.

Representative Rosten asked if complaints had been received about noise from the articulated buses. Roy Gandara said he has only seen one written complaint. He added that he believed a faulty belt is causing the noise and that they are being replaced.

Chair Robinson asked if any measures have been implemented to affect on-time performance.

Mr. Gandara responded that he would follow up with the on-time performance task force and report back next month.

Mr. Gandara also queried the Council regarding if or how they would like to participate in the "Adopt a Line" Program similar to what is active in the South Bay and Gateway Sectors. In those sectors, each Representative selects a line to ride and then reports their observations to the Council or General Manager. The program is intended to improve service quality.

Representative Fischer said he rides Line 720. This morning the driver went right past him in the fast lane while he was waiving frantically at Wilshire and Beverly Glen. The driver of the next bus drove so slowly that it took 45 minutes to get to downtown, which usually only takes 30 minutes.

Staff advised that a report was received today from Representative Capone-Newton that on Line 2, which usually has very good service, the buses have started arriving late or not at all.

Chair Robinson suggested that everyone continue to ride and report back at the Council Meetings. All Representatives concurred with this approach and asked that an item be added to the Agenda in the future to allow for these reports.

Roy Gandara gave a status update on the Yaroslavsky/Burke motion regarding Rapid Express service on Wilshire. Discussions have taken place with the Supervisors' staff regarding criteria and implementation. The resources for the Express service will most likely have to come from the existing 720Line; and implementation may take place between the December 2006 and June 2007 service changes. Another meeting is scheduled either this week or next, and a report will be made to the Board in November.

Yesterday, Metro received the APTA Award for Outstanding Public Transportation System for properties with more than 30 million passengers. All Representatives should have received an email about tomorrow's event to be held at Division 1 at 10 a.m.

Representative Capone-Newton asked if there was a formal report of what made Metro the outstanding transportation agency. Ms. Litvak responded in the affirmative and said she would make available to the Council. Mr. Gandara responded that Communications recently completed a customer satisfaction survey and the trends are good. Satisfaction continues to be high; image continues to improve; continuing to attract choice riders; operator courtesy continues to improve; and passengers feel more seats are available.

Representative Perkins asked the status of the Consent Decree. Mr. Gandara replied that only 18 days remain on the Decree; however we are still waiting for a ruling on two motions brought by the Bus Riders Union. Chair Robinson requested email notification of the outcome.

4. RECEIVED report on FY07 YTD August Financials, Michael Davis, Finance Manager

Michael Davis reported that the year-to-date budget is \$24,562,038 with actual expenditures of \$23.8. The overall Sector budget is \$806,000 under budget due to favorable variances in workers' compensation, fuel and allocated fringes.

Contract wages are over budget by \$117,000 because of ATU and UTU overtime. The ATU overrun is caused by mechanics in training programs and the UTU overrun is caused by the continuing shortage of operators.

Non-contract salaries are under budget by \$91,000 because there are fewer people in the transitional duty program.

Workers' Compensation is under budget by \$305,000; however, there has been an increase in claims and severity of claims at Division 6 due to many of the operators being younger and many just coming out of training.

Experiencing a \$1 million overrun in personal liability/property damage (PL/PD) caused by the on-street accident at Division 10.

CNG was budgeted at \$1.01/therm. Year to date we are paying 73 cents/therm. Have paid as little as 53 cents/therm during the first two weeks of October. If these rates continue, some significant underruns will result.

Responding to a question from Chair Robinson, Mr. Davis explained that there is a \$526,000 favorable variance in fuel for two months having paid 30 cents less per therm than budgeted. Should the current rate, which is almost 50 cents less per therm, continue for three to four months, it could offset the overage in PL/PD. With regard to allocated fringes, total labor is under running by \$26,000. Allocated fringes would be expected to follow that trend. We have budgeted \$36 million. Last year the actuals were \$32-36 million. Mr. Davis added that he would not anticipate an overrun.

Chair Robinson also asked about the category of "chargeback – Regional Costs". Mr. Davis said the Sector would expend the money to fix the bus and then submit it for reimbursement. That category shows a forecasted credit to the agency. Representative Gross asked if labor rates being charged back to the manufacturer are fully burdened. Mr. Davis indicated he was unsure but would speak to a Maintenance Manager and report back.

Representative Gross complimented Mr. Davis on the improved charts in his presentation.

Mr. Davis also reported that the Finance Managers met last Friday and will meet again next Friday to formulate a response to the Antonovich Motion to look at the Service Sector Concept to determine how the Sectors are functioning versus how they were envisioned. Once all the data is collected, we will come back to the Councils and General Managers to get additional input. Hopefully the project Manager will have had some conversations with Director Antonovich's office.

5. RECEIVED report on Operator Recruiting Program, Stefan Chasnov, Director of Human Resources

Mr. Chasnov reported that as of October 8, there are 4,000 operators, which means a shortage of 300. Last month the number was 250, but some were promoted to Transit Operations Supervisors or Train Operators. We need to be able to bring in more than we lose. Twenty applications are needed to hire one operator. With a shortage of 300 operators approximately 6,000

applications are needed. Operators on any type of leave become inactive and are no longer included in the numbers. There are currently 398 operators on leave. Total number of employees on leave company-wide is 573 or 6% of the workforce.

Recruitment/retention efforts include a reduction in the time it takes from application to hire (one month or less), increased starting pay rates (from \$10 to \$11.25) and faster promotional opportunities (salary increases to \$13/hr. after the 6-week training program).

The agency has recently instituted the Bridge Program which is a partnership with Metro, Work Source (City of L.A.) and the Community Colleges. The program targets people who may have been out of school for a long time or who do not speak English well. They may not be ready to be drivers today, but can be trained to ultimately pass the employment test. The Community Colleges are teaching them required work habits and testing skills. Early results are very positive. Sixty-five people will graduate on Friday. We are confident that this program will help cut our vacancy rate.

MTA will be hosting a Job Fair on November 4, 2006 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The agency is also looking at a youth program to attract people between 18 and 24 by offering them career opportunities for the future.

6. RECEIVED report on Identification Standards for Metro Transit Lines, Cosette Stark, Director, Research & Development, Regional Communications Programs, Communications

Ms. Stark reported that currently customers may see the same transit line identified in several different ways on bus stop signs, vehicle headsigns, timetables and in the Trip Planner available on metro.net. Therefore, agency-wide standards providing guidelines and procedures on line information and how it is presented will ensure that information is consistent across mediums and will improve the customer experience and usability of the system.

Research shows that destination-based identifiers are preferred. Under the new system, lines will be identified by end points and the major corridors. Street intersections will not be used. Short-lines will show its short-lined trip destination, not destination of entire line. Sectors will be responsible for developing proposed line names. An interdepartmental task force will review for consistency with standards; and changes will be discussed with Sectors before they are finalized.

Representative Semonco asked if the trip planner could be adjusted so that the street names do not have to be entered in a particular order. She also asked about signs being posted and directions given in Spanish. Cosette Stark commented that they are working on some cultural guides.

Representative Semonco also asked what is being done to improve customer-notification when a bus stop is moved. Roy Gandara said it depends on the cause of the change. If the change is being made for operational reasons, notices are posted at the stop with the effective date of the change. When the change is being driven by outside forces, it may have to happen more quickly.

Public Comment

Ken Ruben spoke regarding bus stop signs on Line 2. He feels that Hill and Venice is a great thing to have on the sign; and thinks Pacific Palisades should have the same thing.

7. RECEIVED report on June 2007 Service Change Timetable, Rogelio Gandara, Service Development Manager

Roy Gandara recapped the previous Metro Connections presentations to the Westside Central Service Sector and presented the preliminary routing and implementation proposals.

Staff offered the following proposed timeline for June 2007 service changes:

December 13, 2006 Establish date for public hearing
January 10, 2007 Council meeting date
January 17, 2007 Conduct public hearing
February 14, 2007 Staff final recommendations/Council approval

Mr. Gandara noted that the above-schedule was subject to change as this was still being discussed by all sectors. The intent is to hold one public hearing in order to avoid confusion and achieve economies of scale by publishing one notice.

Chair Robinson asked if the above-schedule allowed the Council the opportunity to look at the final recommendations twice.

Representative Gross suggested scheduling only the public hearing on January 17, then allowing the Council to give their input so that it can be included in the final recommendations for Council approval on February 14, 2007.

Representative Wright asked the status of the proposal for Lines 704/730. Mr. Gandara responded that a meeting is scheduled with Santa Monica to discuss the 730, so he might be able to bring information back in November. Line 704 will still replace the 304 in June 2007.

Chair Robinson commended staff on the progress made.

8. Chair's Remarks - None

Adjourned at 7 p.m.

Mehle Jackson
