

Minutes

Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority

Committee of the Whole

March 9, 2009

Place: Room 207A, County Administration Building
Time: 5:34 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
Others Present: Linda MacDonald-FOT; Bernie Porn-Epic MRA; Claudette Reid-Millage
Committee; Bill Schomisch-Metro; Jon Start-KATS; Jack Urban-FOT; Lori Pyatt-
KCTA

Vice-Chair Rosine called the meeting to order, and welcomed David Worthams, the new Board member.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Paul Ecklund, Jack Mekemson, Greg Rosine, Char Sumney, Jan VanStratt and
David Worthams

Members Absent: Diane Kempen, Terry Kuseske and Linda Teeter

A quorum was present. A motion to excuse Ms. Kempen, Mr. Kuseske and Ms. Teeter was made,
supported and approved.

2. PRESENTATION BY EPIC MRA ON THE SURVEY

Reporting on the survey results, Mr. Porn said that most voters in November were unaware that the
proposal was on the ballot. For the current millage proposal, the survey tested the two millage
proposals with city residents and the one millage proposal for out-county residents.

Epic-MRA saw a reversal of the phenomena recognized during the last election: city residents now
objected to not having one system and to what they saw as ‘subsidizing’ county services. Mr. Porn
thought it would be imperative to make city residents aware of what they would receive for the
countywide millage. He also thought it would be important to let voters know how the system
benefited real people, even if they didn’t use the system themselves. The survey results showed that
not much information broke through to the voters during the last election. Other results were reported
on as well (a copy of the report will be on file with the minutes.)

Mr. Rosine stated that the current ballot proposal was much less complicated, and he was concerned
that those in the out-county were not aware of demand response service available in their area. In
response to Mr. Ecklund’s question, Mr. Porn stated that many didn’t feel the demand response system
directly benefited them which led to the “I don’t use the system,” and “There isn’t service in my area”
responses.

In response to a question from Mr. Mekemson, Mr. Porn broke down the responses by region (see pg. 6
of the report). He also stated that every region surveyed was weighted based on the representation they
had at the polls in the last two general elections.

Mr. Rosine thanked Mr. Porn for being at the meeting. Mr. Porn added that it would be wise to inform
city voters that they would be paying fewer taxes for the same amount of service.

4. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the February 23rd minutes as presented was made by Mr. Ecklund, supported by
Mr. Mekemson, and approved by a voice vote.

5. PRESENTATION BY BLAINE LAM REGARDING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr. Lam explained his organization's role as being communication support for the KCTA. He also said that the responsibility of the Board was to inform the public in a fair-minded way, regardless of their personal views.

Mr. Lam explained the brochure his firm had prepared for those wanting information. He felt that after presenting fair-minded information to interested parties, that information would get to the citizen who then would make up his or her own mind.

He affirmed that the brochure wasn't meant to move someone to a 'yes-vote'. Mr. Rosine added that the KCTA had asked Mr. Lam to draft this informational piece and during this process the KCTA was mindful to not cross the line of using taxpayer resources to advocate for a ballot issue.

Mr. Lam said that people would want to know the answer to "What would happen if it failed", and that he hoped the Board would make itself available to meet with interested groups and government entities to answer their questions.

Mr. Lam ascertained from the Epic MRA survey results that confusion was a factor in the last election, and said it would only be more confusing if the KCTA had an inconsistent message. Vice-Chair Rosine added that they owed the public a consistent message due to the critical nature of the issues. Mr. Lam added that the information in the brochure was the basis of the message they could share with area organizations and entities. The Board members were asked that their suggested changes be forwarded quickly so the brochure could be finalized.

After comments from Mr. Mekemson and Ms. VanStratt, discussion turned to the importance of logically answering questions such as, 'what happens if it fails.' Mr. Lam maintained that the KCTA could not speak for the TAB or Metro, and that it was the KCTA's job was to find out from these entities what would happen in the even that the May millage failed. Mr. Rosine added that the issue was made more complex by the need to easily explain what both millages would cover.

Mr. Worthams believed that it was important to include the economic benefit to the community in the talking points; that transit was part of a larger component that could help turn the region around. Mr. Rosine recalled how the Chamber surveyed its members and found that 30% of the responding companies said they had staff members that used the transit system to get to work.

Ms. Van Stratt commented that graduating high school students and students at local colleges and universities and their parents may not realize what would happen if the millages didn't pass. Mr. Rosine mentioned using Western students to help get the word out. Mr. Lam said a final version of the brochure could be turned out very quickly.

6. SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN KCTA, TAB AND CITY OF KALAMAZOO

Mr. Schomisch explained that the Service Agreement was identical to the previous agreement except for the numbers (which he explained in the worksheet). If the KCTA Board chose to approve it, the agreement would go before the TAB, then before the City Commission for consideration.

A motion to approve the service agreement was made by Mr. Worthams and supported by Mr. Mekemson. Mr. Schomisch stated he would consider different terminology ("service" vs. "jurisdictional contracts/subsidies") as he moved forward.

Mr. Schomisch added that the amount mirrored Metro's calendar year and the KCTA fiscal year. The KCTA would be voting on a 12-month proposal covering the 2009 calendar year.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: All Present
The motion carried.

Nays: None

Absent: Kempen, Kuseske, Teeter

7. CONTRACT WITH LAM AND ASSOCIATES

Mr. Rosine stated that the contract was not to exceed \$5,000 and the KCTA attorneys had reviewed it. Even though the KCTA office could approve purchases up to \$5,000, the contract with Lam and Associates was going before the KCTA Board, so everyone would be involved. It was acknowledged that, financially speaking, the amount was a ‘good deal’. A motion to approve the contract was made by Mr. Mekemson and supported by Mr. Worthams.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: All Present

Nays: None

Absent: Kempen, Kuseske, Teeter

The motion carried.

8. TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Schomisch stated that Metro Transit was eligible for \$3,155,510 of Federal Stimulus dollars, which could go toward capital projects only and could not be used for operating purposes. These dollars would go to the City of Kalamazoo via: the regular 5307 formula. System improvement projects were currently being analyzed by Metro Staff for implementation over the next four years.

The State reported that they may not have the 20% match for capital projects. The Federal Stimulus dollars, however, would be funded at 100%, so Metro staff was working to balance their needs while making sure the stimulus dollars lasted as long as possible.

Metro hoped to hear this week on a finalized contract with WMU. Mr. Schomisch then focused on his “Demand/Response Trip Scheduling” memo that explained how procedural changes would lead to system efficiencies and halt the practice of having drivers ‘watch’ some caretakers’ dependents sometimes in excess of two hours (this was happening with about 30 individuals). The web-based program would be launched Monday, March 16. The City Manager and Transit Authority Board would be notified of this change as well.

9. CITIZENS’ TIME

Linda MacDonald turned in Mr. Lam’s brochure with her questions and comments written out.

10. MEMBERS’ TIME

VanStratt said there would be a South County Needs Assessment that would include the subject of transportation. She was assured that it would not be a conflict of interest to speak to this issue and was also told that the new brochure would serve as talking points. She thanked Mr. Mekemson for his presentation to the United Way Executive Directors meeting.

Mr. Mekemson felt that it had been a good meeting to get the survey results and to receive direction on the message.

Ms. Sumney urged the members to read the Gazette story in the previous day’s paper.

Mr. Worthams thanked the members for a good first meeting.

Mr. Rosine announced that notes from the February Stakeholders’ Meetings and new Board Rosters would be handed out after the meeting.