



SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
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BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 28th, 2009 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Chair Bline, Commissioners Gannaway, Goforth, Gaebel

Members Absent: Commissioners Conner, Mendenhall, Fenske

Staff Present: Executive Director Cindy Howe, Sarah Dailey, Roni Shaw, Brenda Higgins

Guests: Victor Kee, Chinese Heritage Park

Meeting called to order 10:13 a.m.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Judy Richmond

1 Nehalem Ave, Astoria, OR 97103

Judy addressed the board by reading a letter she sent to the commissioners; the letter arrived in the director's office the day before so it there was not time to include it in board packets. The letter outlined her continued concern regarding the relocation of the 4th & Olney bus stop. She feels it is not a safe place to wait for the bus because of the amount of traffic.

Pam Tilson

27 Nehalem Ave, Astoria, OR 97103

Pam expressed disappointment regarding the bus stop change not being publicized. She waited for the bus at the previous location after the stop had been changed, unaware the change had taken place. She also agrees with Judy, the new stop is not a safe location for passengers to wait for the bus.

Director Howe explained the change was posted at the stop prior to the change, along with postings on the buses and in the newspaper for the Astoria Safety Committee meeting. She also explained the change was not initiated by SETD. There were several concerns brought to the attention of the district by the committee including narrow streets lined with parked cars, the residential location and people crossing to reach the stop. The City of Astoria said that adding no parking and stop signs would not help the issue. Because of these issues, SETD had very limited options. She explained that Route 30 could be utilized more by people who do not want to cross the road. Route 30 goes from the college, down 7th Street and then towards the high school. It currently serves that area every two hours, but on February 1st will become hourly.

Roni Shaw shared ridership information for Route 12, which currently has two buses operating on the same route to provide 30 minute service during peak times in the morning and afternoon,

and hourly service the rest of the day. One year ago Route 12 had 3,138 passengers for the month of December (2008). This year for December 2009 SETD had 3,940 passengers-an increase of 802. This past fall in September 2009 we had 3,600 riders, so there has been an increase of 300 riders since September.

Judy asked how SETD tracks its riders.

Roni Shaw explained the drivers count every rider that gets on the bus, regardless of where they get on. Route 12 has two buses running during the peak hours of 6:00-9:00 a.m. and 3:00-6:00 p.m. and a single bus running all other hours of operation.

Director Howe said the main point is that SETD was responding to an issue brought forward by the City of Astoria and the Neighborhood Association. The reason a decision was made quickly is because the routes were being updated three weeks from then. The city would not allow SETD to continue using the old stop location for another 6 months until the next schedule change because of the previously mentioned safety concerns. SETD wanted additional time to figure out where the best new location would be, and identify where improvements such as curb cuts, sidewalks and landscaping would be needed. Currently the Astoria Safety Committee is doing a study to see if a crosswalk could be installed at the new stop location.

Judy said she'd spoken with city engineer Kevin Brodie about the possibility of eliminating a few parking spaces at the old stop location and he agreed it could be a possibility.

Director Howe commented that it could be possible but it's likely not probable. If the city removed street parking spaces they would have upset residents. Debating the parking space issues is not a concern of the district; it is an issue for the city to handle.

Chair Bline shared as a board we feel the same frustrations she does to encouraging people to ride. As a district SETD realizes there are parts of the community that do not want the bus traveling through their area and we have to try to provide the best service we can while trying to make it work for as many people as possible. SETD is continuing to work with the city, but the Astoria Traffic Safety Committee cannot ignore the neighbors' concerns. He asked Judy if Route 30 would work for her.

Judy responded that it's every two hours so she's only taken it about three times.

Chair Bline responded it will be every hour starting next week.

Judy repeated her concerns that not very many riders will wait at the new stop location, whereas before there were more. She hates to see fewer people riding, and she herself will not wait on the busy street.

Commissioner Goforth commented the Route 30 bus stopping at the Short Stop store should be a safer location for her. SETD has the ridership data that shows increased ridership on Route 12, and that is indisputable. The board meeting is limited to a three minute comment time, which she believes we have exceeded the time.

Commissioner Gaebel asked Judy Richmond if she had attended an Astoria City Council meeting to voice her concerns during their public hearing time. Because City Engineer Kevin Brodie has discussed some ideas to explore, that may be a more appropriate group to speak to on the subject of bus stop locations being adjusted to areas that are currently used for on-street parking.

Judy Thomspson
PO Box 24, Chinook, WA

Judy Thompson had one more question for the board. When the city or other group approaches SETD about a concern, does the staff complete a risk management evaluation of the issue and does SETD get to question what effect proposed changes will have on ridership?

Director Howe said they absolutely evaluate all issues from multiple angles. They also meet with any concerned groups including the city to look at the sites being discussed and talk about solutions and their potential effects. There isn't a single process or solution for the issues that arise. SETD has to try to find solutions that meet everyone in the middle. And there are things that get overlooked, for example the shelter at Hanover being on the wrong side of the road from the direction the bus is traveling. That should have never been left like that, but it got overlooked in the previous route changes until the current neighborhood issues arose. She feels overall SETD has gone through the process in the right way, and we can't always get everything lined out the way everyone would like.

Judy Thompson thanked everyone for their time and explanations. She is new to the area and this has given her valuable insight into the inner workings of the relationships that occur between organizations like SETD that work with cities.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Guest Victor Kee's item was moved to follow the Audience Comment period.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. City of Astoria Web/Security Camera on transit building, for the Chinese Park
Guest- Victor Kee, Chinese Park Committee

The committee has plans for new art additions to the Chinese Heritage Park. They will arrive and be installed this May. The committee will hold a kick off at that time, but there will be more additions made to the park in the year following. The committee would like the park to be completed by May 2011 for the Astoria Bicentennial. At some point the committee will be approaching the city for permission to install a webcam. It would serve two purposes: security for the future artifacts and for information and public viewing. The Maritime Museum has a similar webcam. The committee hopes SETD will support the idea of having a camera for the park mounted on the Astoria Transit Center building.

COMMISSIONER GOFORTH MADE A MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO CONCEPTUALLY APPROVE HAVING A SECURITY AND WEBCAM INSTALLED ON THE ASTORIA TRANSIT CENTER BUILDING CONTINGENT UPON

APPROVAL OF THE ACTUAL DESIGN. COMMISSIONER GAEBEL SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED.

There was a brief discussion with Victor Kee regarding whether the Astoria Bicentennial Committee had seen the renderings yet. Commissioner Goforth would be attending the upcoming meeting, so she agreed to take the drawings Victor presented at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2009 MINUTES

COMMISSIONER GAEBEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 2009 MINUTES. COMMISSIONER GANNAWAY SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR AND MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Goforth reported on helping out at the Christmas Food Basket program along with a lot of other people. She thinks it was a huge success.

Chair Bline reported on the most recent NWACT meeting, which had a large contingent of people from Cannon Beach including the mayor. Their main concern is the Dennis Edwards Tunnel. ODOT is currently studying the Highway 101 tunnel for plans of future repairs. Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce understands the repairs are necessary; they simply want them done quickly. The catch with this issue is that NWACT has to review comments from the Freight Mobility Commission, which would like to see the tunnel expanded as well as vertical clearance added. Out of all the vehicles that traveled through the tunnel last year, only 103 had to be rerouted, so the likelihood is strong that NWACT will not consider the issue further because there are alternative routes. NWACT will be receiving updates and a final comprehensive study to approve or disprove the repair plan in March.

There was a brief discussion about the Freight Mobility Commission's request to raise the tunnel height. It was mentioned that many RV's are also taller, and sometimes have to use both lanes to cross the tunnel because of the rounded ceiling. It was also mentioned the detour for tall and large vehicles is 14 miles, and full of sharp curves making it difficult if not impossible for those types of vehicles.

FINANCIALS

Commissioner Goforth spoke with Brenda for clarification on the Mass Transit Reimbursement being shown in the Miscellaneous line item. It has since been moved from expenses and was deducted from revenues. She also received clarification on how employee bonus amounts are figured; there is a system that is used each year so no further explanation was needed. Chris Bautista has now been paid so there should be no further planning expenses. SETD is receiving some money returned from paying too much Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA). Drug and Alcohol Screening expense is greater than anticipated due to SETD hiring additional employees. There are several other items such as the \$5,000 concert donation that should be shown instead as a sponsorship that are currently shown improperly on the financials and have since been moved. The \$5,000 is in fact part of SETD's overall marketing package that was purchased through NNB.

Director Howe said there will also be some changes made soon. Areas of the budget exceed the expected percentage for this point in the year. Adjustments will be made to preempt any spending that would allow those areas of the budget to be over at the fiscal year end. The overall single percentage that should be watched is where the agency is at for the entire budget for the year. Individual line items can be over, so long as SETD is below the appropriation total.

Commissioner Goforth mentioned her previous request to have an auditor meet with the board, or part of the board to go through and discuss the financials. She feels this would be valuable for the district to get a full picture.

Director Howe explained the auditor is not the financial manager of the district. The auditor does the audit, and is not intended to be the financial advisor to the district. They are used for specific purposes. It will cost the district money each time the auditor is used. The district is already over budget in the auditing line item because of extra time spent on phone calls with the bookkeeper.

Brenda Higgins said that is not true.

Brenda Higgins explained the fee is for all the auditing services they provide for the year. There was \$206 that is considered separate from those expenses because it is categorized as Account Management. There was a discussion about whether having the auditor make a special visit to the board would be an additional charge. **Director Howe** said she could look into it.

Commissioner Goforth said the Clatsop Historical Society pays a flat fee, of which visits are included.

Director Howe reiterated that the auditor is not our financial manager and said that if the board wanted to talk to someone about financial management, she would suggest having Special Districts visit.

Commissioner Gaebel commented she would be interested in having the auditor speak, but in regards to presenting the audit. **Chair Bline** asked when the audit report would be available. **Director Howe** said they did an extension, because the auditor is very ill. **Commissioner Goforth** asked if that was the same auditor SETD had last year. **Director Howe** said that it is the same company, but that last year we had a different auditor.

Commissioner Gaebel asked why the district stays with the same auditor if they are never available. **Director Howe** said she thinks this is the third year of the contract, meaning that SETD will be going out for bids this year.

Brenda Higgins asked Commissioner Gaebel why she feels the auditor is never available when she has never asked him before. **Commissioner Gaebel** responded she has asked why the auditor didn't come to present the audit every year. **Brenda Higgins** responded that no one asked him to. **Director Howe** reminded Ms. Higgins that she was staff and that it was not her place to question a board member's comments.

Commissioner Goforth said she would like to find out if it would be an additional expense for the auditor to visit. **Director Howe** said she would find out.

Commissioner Goforth said she would like to have an opportunity to review the draft findings prior to the release of the final report, so that specific questions could be asked and corrections made if necessary. **Commissioner Gannaway** said the past audits have listed items that should be corrected or modified, which SETD has modified. He wouldn't expect there to be much in the new report.

Director Howe proposed sending the executive committee the draft audit to review and comment prior to submission of the final report. Once the audit is finalized, the auditor will be required to be at the board meeting to present the final report.

Director Howe provided an update on the process of moving SETD bank accounts. We have provided our information to Clatsop Community Bank and she will be meeting with Dick Powell tomorrow. We haven't physically moved any SETD funds yet.

COMMISSIONER GANNAWAY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER FINANCIALS. COMMISSIONER GOFORTH SECONDED. THREE WERE IN FAVOR; COMMISSIONER GAEBEL OPPOSED. MOTION FAILED. DECEMBER FINANCIALS WILL BE HELD OVER TO THE FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING.

[Per a discussion at the March 2008 Board Meeting: Commissioner Gaebel votes no because she states she feels she has no control over what is happening as far as line items. She disagrees with a past motion made by the majority of the board that allows fluctuation outside of the line items up to \$5,000. She feels she doesn't know where anything is at any one time. She feels she is abdicating her own responsibility and believes the board has abdicated their responsibility for oversight. She feels staff should not spend above and beyond the line items without first coming to the board. Therefore she states she is voting no to protect herself.]

a. Resolution 2010-05 Establishing Driver's Fund

Chair Bline asked if the funds accrued in the account would ever reach substantial amounts.

Lori Karl said the most they've ever had in it was \$1,200. The money has been used for a variety of things such as assisting with the Adopted Christmas Family and to occasionally help employees. It has been used for bowling parties for staff and their families.

Director Howe explained the auditor requires the board to adopt establishing this type of account, so it can be shown on the financials.

CHAIR BLINE MADE A MOTION FOR SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2010-05 ESTABLISHING A DRIVER'S FUND. COMMISSIONER GAEBEL SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION APPROVED.

ROLL CALL VOTE TAKEN AND RESOLUTION 2010-05 PASSED.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Ride For A Can of Food

SETD collected 65 boxes of food in the Ride For A Can of Food program. The donations were divided between the Christmas Basket Program at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds, St. Vincent de Paul in Gearhart, and the Warrenton Food Bank.

The district will also continue to collect coats throughout the rest of the winter at the Astoria Transit Center.

b. Free Ride Day-(Today) January 28th - In conjunction with Project Homelessness

Roni Shaw has heard the driver's talking on their radios, and there seems to be quite a few people riding so far.

c. Update- SETD Board Policy

Chair Bline reported the Board Policy Committee recently met with Director Howe and Assistant Sarah Dailey to review some changes made by the committee on the draft. The goal is to have a draft ready for the board's approval at the next meeting.

Sarah Dailey said the new copy is a 2007 edition from Special Districts and will be replacing the 2001 version currently used by the board. The Board Policy Committee reviewed the new draft and noted any suggested changes. Director Howe and Sarah Dailey also reviewed the document to make necessary changes to the personnel references and staff procedures. The next step will be to have the auditor and the attorney review the manual.

There was a discussion about whether the rest of the board should review the document before or after the auditor and attorney. Having the auditor and attorney review it prior to the board was simply to correct any procedural items beforehand, which could possibly save the district money by saving time spent by the auditor doing the review.

It was decided to provide a draft of the policy in the February board packets, so board members can review it prior to the meeting at which time comments will be taken. Comments will be further discussed at the March meeting, with the goal of adopting the policy April's meeting.

Commissioner Gaebel suggested looking into whether the district needed to provide advanced public notification of the board's intent to adopt the policy.

CORRESPONDENCE

The board received two thank you letters, from the Clatsop County Food Bank and the Warrenton Food Bank.

NEW BUSINESS

b. Resolution 2010-06 Adopting the revised SETD Safety Policy Manual

Lori Karl reported on the OSHA visit to SETD's Warrenton Facility. OSHA comprised a list of issues to be addressed by the district. The district has since corrected the issues, but was surprised by the types of issues. An example is a safety manual that is to be kept in all employee break rooms. She had no knowledge of a current book, but discovered one being stored in the

bottom drawer of a locked filing cabinet. OSHA has made a return visit to check on progress of resolving the issues, and was surprised to find them already addressed. Lori also shared that SETD was extra surprised by the number of issues because the district is a member of the Special District Association of Oregon, who assist SETD in making sure they comply with OSHA rules.

COMMISSIONER GOFORTH MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE 2010-06 SETD SAFETY POLICY MANUAL. COMMISSIONER GAEBEL SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSED.

ROLL CALL VOTE TAKEN AND RESOLUTION 2010-06 PASSED.

OTHER ITEMS

a. Operations, Human Resources, and NWRC Reports

Roni Shaw reported Route 10 having another record day last week with 310 riders. The entire ridership for last month was 7,172. With Dial-A-Ride ridership included, SETD averages 8,000 riders per month.

Chair Bline asked how ridership is differentiated between cash and ticket fares on the monthly report.

Roni Shaw explained that riders paying with tickets and cash are considered cash fares, while passes are counted separately. Counts are taken daily on each route.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Sarah Dailey
Recording Secretary

Commissioner Goforth, Secretary/Treasurer