



SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
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**BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 28, 2010 9:00 a.m.**

Members Present: Chair Bline, Commissioners Goforth, Gannaway, Kee, Conner, Fenske, Gaebel

Members Absent: Commissioner Conner

Staff Present: Executive Director Cindy Howe, Sarah Dailey, Sharon Williams, Scott Earls, Elisabeth Pietila

CALL TO ORDER 9:05 a.m.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No audience present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Add to Old Business, Veterans Administration Meeting and Seaside Transit Center Update.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES & OCTOBER SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

COMMISSIONER GANNAWAY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 2010 BOARD MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER FENSKE SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR (COMMISSIONER GAEBEL ABSTAINED BECAUSE SHE WAS ABSENT)); MOTION PASSED.

Commissioner Gaebel asked a comment be added to the October 11th Special Board Meeting Minutes to reflect the original cause of SDAO's recommendation to hire a Human Resources consultant.

There was brief discussion and the board agreed.

COMMISSIONER GAEBEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 11TH, 2010 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER GOFORTH SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED.

REPORTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Fenske attended the Oregon Transit Association Annual Conference. She was at the day-long session titled Understanding the ADA. Some of the information covered raises some questions, such as whether our Dial-A-Ride service should be operating the same hours as fixed route to provide ADA Complimentary Paratransit service. She also asked about the service area and whether there is a legal bar preventing us from providing it in certain areas. She said overall the instructor was great and the class was good.

Director Howe explained DAR and ADA Complimentary Paratransit service are two separate services. DAR can be offered anytime, anywhere, and can charge whatever fee is desired. ADA Complimentary Paratransit must be offered with fixed route service on the same days and hours for a fare that is not more than twice the regular rate, without a long wait time. These are laws so they are a must. Complimentary ADA Paratransit service is offered to clients who have applied and are eligible for the service. Once eligible, they receive an I.D. card, and to use the service must call to schedule the paratransit ride the day before they want the ride. In the past, because there were very few paratransit clients and SETD was relatively small, DAR was used to simply pick them up and take them where they needed to go, rather than take them to the nearest fixed route stop. Now, with a Mobility Department, we are better able to determine which option is going to best serve the needs of the client. As for the legal bar, SETD is already a district and is governed by the rules of Special Districts Association of Oregon. The example being used in the class was likely referring to other entities such as county-operated systems. Also the county's lines are SETD's defined service area. Complimentary ADA Paratransit service must only be offered $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the fixed route service area, but SETD goes $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles beyond.

Commissioner Gaebel asked if there was a new ordinance, as she has seen several instances of buses driving with flashers on, for some distance, such as across the Young's Bay Bridge. She has also seen at least three instances of a burnt headlight during the past couple weeks, and is wondering if there is a pre-trip procedure the drivers complete before using a bus.

Director Howe asked that SETD be called when a bus is seen with flashers going, because it's likely the driver is unaware they were left on. All drivers complete a long list of pre, interim, and post trip inspection items.

Scott Earls commented a head light can conceivably go out between these inspections. In those cases, the driver would be unaware until the next inspection. If a bus is on route all day, it would go through two driver shifts, and six inspections. New buses, such as the EK Coach buses, have an automatic shut-off feature for things such as the flashing yield sign, which turn off when the bus pulls out into traffic. Some drivers may get used to the feature and forget to flip the manual shut off switch when driving the older buses.

Commissioner Goforth also attended the OTA conference in Seaside. She also attended the ADA session and thought it was very good. One thing she came away with, from two policy sessions, was the feeling SETD should update its employee policy manual. It is the responsibility of the board to make sure it gets done. Certainly the Human Resources person should be involved, but the board chair should appoint a group of board members to accomplish the task. There were also some good case study examples of letting employees go, that she feels would be

a good addition to the manual for employees to see the process. Another class she took was titled 'Minimizing the risks of layoffs.' The booklet provided was excellent and it's another topic to consider adding to the manual.

Director Howe said the SDAO Human Resource Consultant's first comment was the SETD Policy Manual should be updated. She passed along the information to Chair Bline, and the intent is to form a committee and get it updated.

Commissioner Goforth also commented on the Operations Report. She feels there are sections in the report where the work and information is likely duplicated, such as ridership information divided into day, week and year categories. She feels this is unnecessary.

Director Howe explained the report provides data about the service SETD provides. The board should have an interest in seeing the data, but as requested last month, the report is now emailed and only the cover sheet is included in board packets. This allows the board to view the reports, and if desired, select and print specific reports.

Commissioner Kee attended the Oregon Transit Association Annual Conference in Seaside. He did not think the food was great and the acoustics and sound system need improving. The keynote speaker was terrific. He found the OPTIS class interesting. In class, ODOT said the turnaround time for OPTIS is two days. In the session he was told SETD is not yet using OPTIS. He also attended the session about Community Meetings which included role-playing to practice dealing with difficult people. They provided some tips about dealing with difficult board members.

Director Howe commented that we were one of the first agencies to submit in OPTIS on October 8th, and we have not yet seen our quarterly grant funds.

Chair Bline shared the executive committee met with Judy Clark, consultant sent by SDAO from HR Answers. She would be reviewing the personnel policies and meeting with certain employees as needed. At the conclusion of her audit, she would be providing a report to the board. One of her immediate recommendations is to update the personnel policy manual. He also shared the Northwest Area on Commission meeting is in Seaside next Thursday, at the South County College location. ODOT has already said there will be hardly any funds for improvement projects this year.

Director Howe said it may be smart to consider having a Human Resources consultant help update the personnel policy manual every time it's needed.

FINANCIAL REPORT

a. Financial Update-Sharon Williams

Sharon Williams shared employee Brenda Higgins has submitted a letter of resignation. Her last day is next Thursday. She has accepted a position with another company. The position has been posted internally, and we are actively looking for a replacement. The accounting department has been entering information into the new MIP software. This will improve all data and fund tracking for managers and the board. Hopefully financial reports for next month's board meeting

can be generated using the new software. Sharon provided a copy of the old financial report for comparison purposes. Total figure of Accounts receivable are getting closer to being accurate as physical assets are being added, where in the past they have not been shown on the books. We still have not received a reply from the past audit agency; we have requested three times to get journal entries from them and why they did certain things, and have not received answers. She explained the current financial figures on the balance sheet and profit and loss sheet. Something that will change that is currently missing is the physical assets of buildings and property owned by the district. The vacation accrual is also missing from the books and will be added in soon.

Commissioner Gaebel asked if the Wauna Tax funds that were received by SETD, and set aside, were used elsewhere.

Director Howe responded they had not; the funds were part of the LGIP account.

Sharon Williams shared that SETD would continue to under anticipate tax revenue with the current economy. We have also taken steps to reduce our internal expenses by approximately 30%. We are still taking additional steps towards cost saving measures such as centralizing the supply ordering and looking at comparables or changes to Medical Benefits.

There was discussion about what is currently being offered for Health Coverage. Our employees receive full coverage, and family members are offered coverage at 12% of the premium. The district started offering an HRA program last year, which over the long run was supposed to save the district money. This is another area that is being researched.

Commissioner Gaebel asked if SETD has researched utilizing Open Source software. It supposedly has programs that mirror those offered by Microsoft.

Director Howe said John recently learned more about it at during a training he attended. Right now we are updating our software according to what was planned in the grants providing the funding. Some of the new software programs cannot be operated with Open Source without paying for bridge software, which could cost more. We can have John do additional research.

There was a discussion about where the radio station marketing expense is shown on the financials.

Sharon Williams said she does not think it is shown. She will look into it and make the adjustment to reflect what she finds. There is a big difference between advertising and marketing, and they will be careful to reflect expenses in their respective categories in the new software program.

Director Howe also added the reason we have 10,000 rides per week is because people are aware of the transit system through marketing and outreach, getting the information out there. The district can't simply do away with marketing.

Commissioner Gaebel hears complaints all the time about the amount of advertising The Bus has by New Northwest Broadcasters. The perception is there are too much funds being spent towards it.

Director Howe said there actually aren't a lot of funds being spent specifically at NNB. NNB does have five of the local stations that air, so the ads through NNB would be heard more often. SETD also has radio contracts with 9-4-9 in Seaside and Coast Community Radio in Astoria.

Commissioner Gaebel said the district is doing much more outreach than before with Clatsop Community College, Tongue Point Job Corps Center and programs like Ride Pal. Some of the ridership is being generated from expanding on those relations.

Director Howe replied she is correct, but when in the middle of a contract and fiscal year, the district does have to be careful about what expenses are cut.

Commissioner Goforth asked if we had received any further information from the auditor that resigned.

Director Howe said we had not. The last item received was a bill with a single figure on it.

Sharon Williams said we will not be paying the bill until SETD receives the details requested. She continued discussing the financials, adding that services donated by SETD such as VOCA camp, forestry day and free ride day, can and should be shown on the books. That way the value of the donation can be seen.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Veterans Administration transportation meeting

Director Howe attended a meeting last Monday and Tuesday with the Veterans Administrator that she organized. The meeting was to share about issues and potential solutions to improve transportation options for Veterans in their local communities. There was a great turnout of attendees and the meeting went very well. The first goal is to gain permission from the VA to run a six month trial program for local veterans to call the NWRC to set up their ride appointment. The local trips will continue to be free on DAR, while the long distance trips will continue to be done on the VA vans.

There was a discussion about what this will cost the district. The cost is minimal at this time because it will only involve dispatching. The transports are on the VA van, which is what is currently taking place. SETD's DAR program has been transporting veterans within the county free of charge. If the VA approves this program, SETD will be reimbursed for those trips. Right now the number is low, and the ride is almost always a shared trip.

Sharon Williams requested those costs be sent to her so she can add them to the books. If needed, those kinds of costs can be used as match for certain grants.

Director Howe said Tami Carlson and John Layton can get them to her.

Chair Bline commented he thinks this is great, but our transit service is a necessary utility in the county. There are thousands of people who depend on the bus every day. We can't take on more expenses right now. If the program will be a detriment to the greater district, then he does not want to move forward with it.

Director Howe commented there are veterans out there who are hiking all night long to get to a VA van, while a local Medicaid van is traveling the same route and will not let them on. That is not right, and the proposed program is causing the VA to take a hard look at veterans' needs that should be addressed.

B. Seaside Transit Center-Update

Director Howe said tomorrow is the deadline for receiving RFQ's for the project. The next step will be to review and select a firm. A board member is needed to help with the process, likely in December.

Commissioner Gaebel said she would like to try to do it.

Commissioner Gannaway said he would also be willing to help.

Director Howe said that would be especially helpful as he was involved with past district projects.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. Letter to EK Coaches

There was discussion about the EK Coach lemon bus issue being almost resolved. SETD has been using the buses without issue for over a month. The board discussed a letter sent to EK Coach by SETD, asking for a warranty extension and honor of major repairs that may occur. SETD is awaiting a reply.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Senior & Disabled Advisory Committee-Nominations

Sarah Dailey shared the district is searching for advocates, users or providers of Dial-A-Ride to serve on the Senior & Disabled Advisory Committee. Please be thinking of names of people who may be interested. Three names are needed.

b. Public Transportation Advisory Committee-Nominations

Sarah Dailey said this is a new committee that will advise on public transit services offered by the district. Four people have volunteered so far, and three or four more are needed. A board member also needs to serve on the committee. We would like to have the first meeting in November, but it depends on how many members have.

Commissioner Gaebel said she would like to serve on the committee.

c. November 25th Board Meeting-change date due to Holiday

There was brief discussion about alternate dates. It was decided to hold the meeting a week early on November 18th.

Director Howe said she may not be available that date, but that is fine. Sharon Williams and Sarah Dailey will be present.

OTHER ITEMS

a. Operations, Mobility Management, and NWRC Reports

1. Request for Ken Matson

The board discussed a letter submitted to them by Human Resources regarding Ken Matson, requesting an FMLA extension. The district would also like to continue paying the employee's medical premium, which is solely for the employee, not the family. A new medical evaluation will take place in February, at which time the situation will be reviewed.

COMMISSIONER GAEBEL MADE A MOTION TO EXTEND KEN MATSON'S INSURANCE AND FMLA THROUGH FEBRUARY. COMMISSIONER GANNAWAY SECONDED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR; MOTION PASSED.

Elisabeth Pietila will have a power point presentation at the next board meeting, about the Mobility Department's progress during the last year.

Scott Earls shared there is now trash cans at Avenue U and Highway 101 provided by the City of Seaside Public Works department. He drove past the stops several times during the OTA conference and they appeared to be staying clean.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Sarah Dailey
Recording Secretary

Commissioner Goforth, Secretary/Treasurer