

**METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**June 27, 2012**

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Presiding: Harold Cogdell (Chairman, Mecklenburg County Commission)

Present: Curt Walton (Charlotte City Manager)  
Rick Sanderson (TSAC Chair)  
John Collett (NCDOT Representative)  
Mayor Jeff Tarte (Cornelius)  
Anthony Roberts (Cornelius Town Manager)  
Mayor John Woods (Davidson)  
Mayor Jill Swain (Huntersville)  
Ralph Messera (Matthews)  
Bill Thunberg ( Mooresville Representative)

Deputy Director John Muth

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**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by MTC's Chairperson, Commissioner Harold Cogdell.

**II. Review of Meeting Summary**

The meeting summary of May 23, 2012 was approved as written.

**III. Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chair's Report**

**Rick Sanderson**

Mr. Sanderson reported that TSAC met on June 14. Members heard a presentation on the advertising policy update. TSAC also toured the Vehicle Maintenance Facility and learned how CATS maintains the light rail fleet.

**IV. Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) Chair's Report**

No report.

**V. Red Line Task Force Update**

**John Woods**

Mayor Woods reported that the Red Line Task Force met just before this meeting. Discussion centered on follow-up for a June 13 meeting with Norfolk Southern (NS) staff where NS expressed a desire for a rail traffic control study on rail line capacity. The task force is beginning scoping work for that effort and will have more to report in the coming months.

**VI. Public Comments**

None.

**VII. Action Items**

**a. Advertising Policy Update**

**Olaf Kinard**

Mr. Kinard, CATS Director of Marketing & Communications, said that the only change made from last month's report on the proposed update to the CATS Advertising Policy is the removal of the government speech change from the action item.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Cogdell clarified that the motion was to allow alcohol ads with the limitation that there be no alcohol ads inside the vehicles; Mr. Kinard agreed.

**Resolution:** Mr. Walton motioned to approve the recommended action to allow alcohol ads with the limitation that there would be no ads inside the vehicles; Mr. Collett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## VIII. Information Items

### a. **Special Transportation Business Solution**

**Larry Kopf**

Mr. Kopf, CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations, said that Special Transportation Services (STS) provides about 230,000 rides annually. STS applications increased 230 percent in FY2011. This raised call volume so much that the call abandonment rate increased despite schedulers' best efforts; drivers also had difficulty meeting the increased demand. To meet the service challenge, CATS Operations and Technology divisions collaborated to develop a suite of integrated services to improve customer service, driver navigation and customer pickup in STS. To reduce call volume, staff developed an internet reservations system. STS customers may now make reservations on the website, freeing customer service staff to offer better customer service on calls. A telephone Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) System schedules trips and places reminder/verification calls to customers for upcoming scheduled trips. The IVR system also calls customers five minutes before drivers arrive so customers are prepared and ready for their trip. To improve driver navigation, navigational GPS devices were installed in STS vehicles to map routes and provide voice directions to keep drivers' eyes on the road, eliminating the need to pull off the road to study a map. Customer call abandonment and wait time rates are lower since the new STS services were implemented. No-shows and late cancellations are down by about 12 percent. The project won the 2011-2012 Public Technology Institute's Technology Award for Best Sustainability. Mr. Kopf noted that Steve Smith with CATS IT and Jeff McCollum with STS were instrumental in the system's implementation.

**Discussion:** Mayor Swain remarked that it was a wonderful improvement. Mr. Messera said that the no-show rate is still high and asked if there were sanctions. Mr. Kopf said that if there are consistent no-shows, people can be barred from the system. However, it is a civil right, so CATS has to be careful not to violate civil rights when giving sanctions.

### b. **Annual Route Performance Update**

**Pamela White**

In Ms. White's absence, Mr. Kopf reported that the route performance system was developed to track efficiency and effectiveness for all CATS bus routes. The scoring system uses two industry standards: passengers per hour and net cost per passenger. Services are segmented for comparison by service category such as local, express and circulator route. Routes are compared to the system average and to their category average. The average route is scored at 1.0. Routes scoring above one are doing better than average; routes scoring below one are performing less than average. Some routes may experience temporary impacts. For example, ridership has dipped on Route 21 Double Oaks while a housing complex is renovated. When renovations are complete, residents will return and the route will recover. CATS does not plan to change that route. Mr. Kopf discussed recent changes made to some routes and how CATS adjusts low-performing routes to increase ridership.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Cogdell asked whether CATS considers phasing out routes that score below 0.5. Mr. Kopf replied that staff usually tries to adjust routes to boost ridership rather than discontinue service. Commissioner Cogdell noted that Route 25 Clanton Park scored low, but the area has an active homeowner association. Mr. Kopf said that staff has spoken with the group and identified potential changes to improve route ridership.

**IX. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

**Carolyn Flowers**

Under the CEO's report, Mr. Muth discussed the following:

**a. Ridership:**

Ridership continues to rise this year. May 2012 bus ridership was up 4.2 percent over the previous year. LYNX ridership was up 5 percent. LYNX weekend ridership remains strong.

**b. Legislative Update:**

Ms. Flowers is in Washington, DC and has met with FTA administrators. Staff anticipates receiving the approval letter for the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) to enter the Final Design phase on July 6, after which staff will submit the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) request. Staff is preparing the application now and hopes for FTA review and approval of the BLE's FFGA in early November.

**c. Budget Update:**

Sales tax revenue was up for May, exceeding budgeted projections. By the end of the fiscal year, staff anticipates sales tax revenue to exceed projections by around \$2 million dollars.

**d. Media Report Update:**

Local media reported last weekend that some conduit cable came loose at the LYNX Blue Line Woodlawn station. The conduit has been replaced. The biannual bridge inspection currently underway will be expanded to examine all clamps to see if others need replacing.

**e. Staff Update:**

Mr. Muth reported that Leonard Ganther, Manager of Facilities, is leaving CATS for a position in Texas. Bryan Leaird, Manager of Safety and Security, is leaving to take a position with the NC League of Municipalities. Ramond Robinson, Transit Planner, has accepted a job with a transit agency in Savannah, GA.

**X. Other Business**

Commissioner Cogdell led attendees in a round of applause for the CATS Rail Rodeo and Bus Roadeo winners. Mr. Muth introduced Mr. David Murphy, CATS Manager of Rail Transportation, who recognized Rail Operators Tara Stinson and Metro Coston, as well as Railcar Mechanics Patrick Mills, Eugene Capote, and Charles Truong. Operator Darryl Smith, who won first place in the light rail operator competition, was unable to attend this meeting. Mr. Capote won first place in the Light Rail Maintainer competition but was unable to go to the National Rodeo. Mr. Mills and Mr. Truong attended the national competition. The CATS team came in fifth place out of thirteen teams in their first national competition, and was first in the most important category, safety.

Kirk Scott, Director of Transportation for the Bus Operations Division (BOD), announced the following winners for the Bus Roadeo: Lonny Earnhardt (first), James Wimbish (second) and Carmen Alaman (third). BOD maintenance team winners were Craig Patch, Billy Belcher and

Jerry McNeilly (first); Jeff Dahle, Greg Trogdon and Charles Jones (second); and Ben Thompson, Jack Walker and Darrell Shaver (third).

Shannon Dabney, Operations Manager for Special Transportation Services (STS), introduced STS winners Greg Girault (first), Henry Minnet (second) and Twanda Buckhalter (third). The STS team won second place in the paratransit category in the North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) state rodeo competition in Wilmington, NC.

Mr. Muth reminded MTC members that they had previously voted to cancel the August MTC meeting. He said that there are no agenda items for a July MTC meeting and suggested that MTC members may want to cancel the July meeting as well.

**Discussion:** Mayor Swain said that would also mean cancelling the Red Line Task Force meeting in July. Mayor Woods said that was acceptable to him.

**Resolution:** Mayor Swain motioned to cancel the July meeting. Mr. Collett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**XI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m. by Commissioner Cogdell.

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NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2012, 5:30 P.M.