

MACON-BIBB COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 29, 2018

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority was held at 5:30 p.m. on May 29, 2018 in the Morris M. Cohen conference room on the fourth floor of the Terminal Station at 200 Cherry Street, Macon, Georgia. Those present were:

Vice-Chairman: Charles Howard,

Members: Violet Poe, Frank Tompkins, Sheddrick Clark and Dr. Tom Ellington.

Members Absent: Jami Gaudet.

Also present were S. Craig Ross, President and CEO, Lee Brown, Chief Financial Officer, Andy Stroud, Business Development Director, Brenda Banks, Executive Assistant, JoAnn Lamb, Operations Manager, Debbie Vetter, Human Resources Manager, Dave Golder, Safety and Training Manager, Weston Stroud, Transit Planner, Georgia Slagle, CPA for the Authority and F. Bradford Wilson, Jr., Counsel for the Authority. A proper Quorum was present.

Also in attendance were Michael Greenwald, Carl Brown, David Scott, Wade Horton and Jackie Glover.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Charles Howard and a moment of silent prayer was observed. Mr. Howard then asked the Board members to review the proposed agenda. A motion was made by Dr. Ellington to approve the agenda. Said motion was seconded by Mr. Clark and approved.

The Vice-Chairman then asked the Board members if they had an opportunity to review the April 24 Minutes. A motion was made by Dr. Ellington to approve the Minutes and such occurred following a second by Mr. Clark.

The Vice-Chairman then called on Ms. Slagle for the presentation of the Financial Report. The Authority received \$1,300,000.00 from GDOT in March. As a result, the Grants Receivables have decreased substantially and there exists a cash balance of approximately \$310,000.00. There were no new purchases of property and equipment in March. Liabilities are close in comparison to those of last year. There currently exists a \$670,000.00 balance on the line of credit and current liabilities total \$1,306,000.00.

Year to date rental and other income on Terminal Station totals \$472,000.00, which is \$56,000.00 below budget. After adding back depreciation expense, the income for March totaled \$26,130.00 and year to date results in an income of \$150,000.00.

Passenger fares for the fixed route totaled \$52,000.00 for the month compared to a budget of \$71,000.00. This was \$14,000.00 less than last year. Year to date, there is little difference in the actual fares from the previous year. Employee benefits are \$110,000.00 less than budget year to date, but repair parts and supplies exceed budget by approximately \$31,000.00. Other negative variances include garage costs of \$21,598.00 and interest expense of \$32,525.00. The change in net position for the month of March was a negative \$127,969.00, and year to date a negative of \$968,811.00. Once depreciation and other expenses are added back in, there is a \$104,000.00 favorable variance to a zero based budget. Passenger fares year to date total \$541,707.00 compared to last year's total of \$577,373.00.

There is a current balance of \$10,000.00 in the Paratransit checking account. Year to date, Paratransit is on budget with the Macon government. With decreased overtime, Paratransit salaries are under budget as are vehicles, gas and oil expenditures. With depreciation being expensed, there was a loss of \$21,269.00 for March and \$98,421.00 year to date. After adding back depreciation, the year to date loss is \$35,533.00.

Dr. Ellington then asked if there was a reasonable explanation for the reduction in passenger fares. President Ross responded in stating that fares usually follow gas prices and go down when the price of gas is low. He next inquired as to why there was an increase in the cost of repair parts and supplies. President Ross stated that the older buses require more frequent maintenance and that expense will decrease with the arrival of the new buses. Ms. Slagle added that it is also a timing issue as to when the parts were purchased.

Dr. Ellington then asked why the Authority does not budget for interest expense. Ms. Slagle explained that GDOT does not reimburse the Authority for that, but it might not hurt us to budget it. A motion was then made by Mr. Clark to approve the Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ellington and approved.

The Vice-Chairman then recognized President Ross for his report on the agenda items listed for discussion. His initial comment was to welcome Lee Brown as the new Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Brown has lots of experience with governmental accounting, having previously worked with the Georgia Forestry Commission and Homeland Security.

The first item of discussion involved the Electric Bus Project. Recently there was an article in the *Los Angeles Times* about the bus manufacturer-BYD that our contract is with. A recent conversation was held with our sales representative, John Hatch and Michael Greenwald. President Ross and Mr. Greenwald also spoke with five or six other Transit Authorities who had purchased electric buses from BYD and they all stated that they were very pleased with the buses and would purchase more. It was discovered that the unfavorable article was written with a political backdrop involving various union issues. They discovered there is a tremendous renewal of their contracts in other parts of the country. Mr. Tompkins expressed his appreciation for the investigation done by President Ross and remarked that the totality of the article seemed to be slanted toward one faction. The President stated that it was important to exercise due diligence in the investigation of the Company, and that Georgia Power is ready to proceed when the Authority is. He added that John Hatch shared with them this morning that they had joined the union and the controversy is over.

The GDOT and FTA site visit went very well. There were only three minor findings consisting of the following:

1. Maintenance was late in servicing one vehicle.
2. A blood cleansing kit is to be located on each bus.
3. The public address system did not work on a few buses, which is an ADA deficiency, and they are being repaired.

The Authority's request for \$140,000.00 in ESPLOST funds was approved at the last committee meeting. MTA hopes to negotiate a few more prices and then will be ready to proceed with the electric charging station.

At last month's meeting, President Ross was directed to contact Greyhound in response to their inquiry about the possible use of the Transfer Station. Mr. Stroud accompanied the President and they were most favorably impressed by their presentation. They learned that Greyhound merely needs two areas to park, and estimate ten buses a day will arrive. They will install two pedestrian walkways with very visible marking. Possible renditions of their shelters were shown to the Board, and it is projected they would depart on the Tubman Museum side of the street. Greyhound has already implemented this transition in 204 other stations in the United States in their downsizing transition. They would have a ticket booth in the Transfer Station that would operate from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. They estimate they will remain in their existing building for another year. Savannah is their closest Greyhound location, and normally only four

passengers get on and off at one stop. In response to Dr. Ellington's question as to when the Authority will need to formally approve the proposal, President Ross stated it can be completed in six months and will be placed on a future agenda.

Concerning the property on Elberta Road in Warner Robins, President Ross reported that Jay Collins stated that the Phase 1 Environmental had been obtained and the property merely needs the grass cut and cleaned up.

The Authority has received approval for the new computer system and the possibility of leasing is now being considered. Ongoing discussions are being held with Infinity Network Solutions in connection with its service and providing 24 hour technology support.

President Ross also reported that he would be attending the Downtown Challenge Grant Gathering later this week acknowledging receipt of the grant for providing lighting to the eleven bus shelters. He then noted that the Board Minutes dating back to June of last year are now online.

The floor was next opened for New Business and the consideration of the new Employee Handbook. President Ross stated that Waites and Foshee had provided an extensive amount of assistance in the preparation of this document utilizing their significant experience. He then commended Debbie Vetter for her tremendous input and hard work on the final product. Dr. Ellington asked if he could highlight some of the main changes. Some of the areas included in the new Employee Handbook is our focus to retrain employees if they have not been performing their jobs well, and provide them an opportunity to improve. There are no more across the board raises, such will be based on performance. President Ross stated that the annual leave and vacation policy has been changed, as well as the dress code. It allows employees up to two weeks of vacation, and also allows someone to carry one week of vacation forward. It provides specific rules addressing such questions as to whether an employee will be paid for vacation pay and sick leave when they leave the employment of the Authority. It also contains an arbitration policy. In response to Mr. Clark's question as to whether the Handbook would be placed online, President Ross stated that it can be.

Dr. Ellington then shared that he had serious concerns about the required arbitration provision, and that he did not think it should be included. Mr. Wilson concurred and stated that the possible insertion of that paragraph needed further consideration. A motion was then made by Dr. Ellington for the remainder of the Handbook to be approved as presented without the

Arbitration –Dispute Resolution provision. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clark and approved.

The next agenda item was that of Old Business. President Ross stated that the Authority was still waiting on the State to provide an RFP for Consultants. It has now been six months since the request was made.

The Vice-Chairman then opened the meeting for Public Comments. Carl Brown was the first individual recognized, and he stated that Buses 712, 706, and 701 have problems with the air conditioning.

Michael Greenwald stated he was here to hear and observe the business transacted at the meeting.

David Scott expressed his appreciation for being provided the opportunity to serve as an ambassador for the Transit Authority.

Wade Horton voiced his complaint as to the lack of air conditioning on several Paratransit buses. He also remarked that the notice for a special called meeting just came up on the afternoon of the meeting on the Facebook page. He asked how people are notified of called meetings. He acknowledged that the notification for tonight's meeting was up last Thursday at 4:30 pm which allowed plenty of advance notice of the meeting. President Ross responded and stated that the notice was posted at the Transfer Center, on all buses, in the Terminal Station lobby, and on the website. Mr. Horton then asked why Public Comments were moved to the end of the agenda. He stated that the public has no input on new or old business before it is voted upon. Mr. Horton requested that the Board consider moving Public Comments up near the top of the agenda.

Mr. Howard stated that the Board will discuss it, and consider a possible change. Mr. Scott also responded to Mr. Horton's remark, and noted that Public Comments were previously at the beginning of the meeting, and people would often come in late and miss the opportunity to speak.

Jackie Glover stated people who ride Paratransit have health issues that are tremendously affected by the heat. Riding on buses without air conditioning is not good. We need the older buses to have their air conditioning fixed.

The Vice-Chairman then asked if any Board members would like to make a comment. Mr. Tompkins commended those who put the Employee Handbook together, and asked how it would be presented to the employees. Ms. Vetter stated that they would go over it in detail and

explain to each employee that their employment is contingent on them agreeing to comply with the policies.

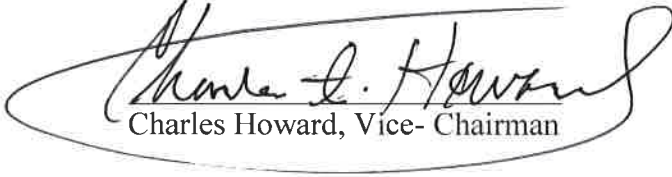
President Ross then stated that Dave Golder, Weston Stroud, Joey Connor, and James Taylor are going to Glendale, Arizona on June 12 - 14 to be trained on the Ron Turley Program. It should help the Authority significantly with preventative maintenance. Weston Stroud then stated that the representatives of AARP rode the bus last week, and were very impressed by how fast a breakdown was repaired. Surveys were very favorable, and the riders appreciated the opportunity to comment. Representatives of AARP will continue to ride and survey for the next ninety days.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Sheddric Clark, Secretary

Approved:

  
Charles Howard, Vice- Chairman