



Bis-Man Transit Board Meeting

July 27, 2023, 11:30 AM
Via Zoom and In-Person at
3750 E. Rosser Ave. Bismarck, ND 58501

Attending:

Lynn Wolf, President

DeNae Kautzmann, Secretary/Treasurer

Glenn Lauinger

Steve Heydt

Andrew Stromme

Helen Baumgartner

Commissioner Connelly

Not Attending:

Lacey Long, Vice President

Karel Sovak

Royce Schultze

Staff:

Deidre Hughes

Taylor Kitzan

Mike Mundahl

Craig Thomas

Tom Reisenauer

Guests:

Trevor Vannett

Rachel Lukaszewski, MPO

Bill Troe, SRF Consulting

Susan Dingle

Meeting called to order at 11:30 A.M.

Approval of Agenda: DeNae moved to approve the Agenda. Andrew seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda: Helen moved to approve the Consent Agenda. DeNae seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: Trevor Vannett commented that the TDP looks good and that he wants to help with the advocacy of the plan and will work with other groups to do so as well.

Susan Dingle commented that if members of the public had questions about Bill Troe's presentation on topics that were not anticipated, if they may ask. Lynn answered that the Board would take the request under advisement.

Unfinished Business

1. Transit Development Plan Update – *Bill Troe, SRF Consulting*: Bill discussed the conclusion of the Organizational Structure meeting held in June was that the current Organizational Structure is preferred by the majority minus some inefficiencies. The opportunity to become a Transit Authority in the future can improve those inefficiencies. Bill explained that closing the revenue and expenditure gap won't start with service reductions, but instead finding other sources of funding to cover the gap. Sales tax option is being researched currently. Bill and Deidre talked to both City of Bismarck and City of Mandan to request funding. City of Bismarck committed to provide funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24. City of Mandan is still discussing the request. Deidre also is reaching out to stakeholders.

New Business

1. 2023-2024 Safety Plan Targets: Deidre discussed that in the past Transit has piggybacked on NDDOT Safety Targets. After discussion with the DOT, they recommended Transit create individual Safety Targets. Andrew moved to approve the 2023-2024 Safety Plan Targets. Steve seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
2. National Express On-Time Performance Request: Deidre explained that CAT On-time performance is 80% and that is below the Liquidated Damages threshold. After a conversation with Craig, National Express would like a \$500 reduction in On-Time performance due to road construction detours on all routes. DeNae commented that the Finance Committee recommends the \$500 reduction in On-Time Performance. DeNae moved to approve the \$500 reduction in On-Time Performance. Glenn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Steve asked if the geofences can be updated so that



this won't be an issue in the future. Deidre answered that when the company switches to Passio it will have that capability.

3. **Jefferson Lines Lease Agreement:** Deidre discussed that the Jefferson Lines Lease Agreement is in line with National Express contract timeline and would like it to be on the same timeline as West River. Staff recommends to keep the Lease amount the same until the end of 2023 and increase the amount for 12 months starting January 1, 2024. DeNae commented that the Finance Committee recommends the Board approve the Jefferson Lines Lease Agreement as presented and moved approve. Glenn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Investment Discussion:** Deidre explained that both 13-month CD's renewed on July 24th that were opened in June 2022. Staff recommends to roll over both 13-month CD's to a new rate of 5.4% with Starion. Staff also recommends to invest an additional \$500,000 from Cash Reserves into a 6-month CD at the same rate. DeNae commented that the Federal Reserve raised the rates again this week and that interest rates on CD's might increase and recommended waiting a week to see if they do before commit to the 5.4% interest rate. DeNae moved to reinvest in two 13-month CD's and one 6-month CD as recommended by staff with the provision of looking at if the rate will increase next week. Steve seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Staff Benefit Renewal:** Deidre explained that staff recommends changing the health insurance plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield to a better deductible plan that is within the budget, staying with the TDA dental plan, and changing from Avesis to VSP plan for vision insurance. Avesis vision plan no longer covers Dakota Eye and staff uses that provider which is the reason for the vision insurance plan change. This brings the vision insurance budget \$23 over, but health insurance is under budget by \$2,000. DeNae commented that Finance Committee recommends the Board approve the benefit package presented by staff and moved to approve. Glenn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
6. **Grant Opportunities:** Deidre informed the Board that Transit was awarded the ND Community Foundation grant in the amount of \$5,000 to replace CAT bus route signs. Deidre will also be applying for Walmart and Costco grants and an Otto Bremer operating grant. Deidre asked that if anyone finds other grant opportunities to let her know.

Executive Director Report

1. **Funding Update:** Deidre will still be in discussion with City of Mandan on a funding request, as well as HIT in Mandan as they make up a majority of paratransit trips to Mandan. Deidre



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is grateful for the City of Bismarck for their commitment in providing funding and thanked Bill Troe and his staff for their efforts.

2. **Advertising Update:** Deidre updated that Transit is currently at \$70,641 in advertising revenue and will be trending over \$100,000 in advertising revenue for 2023. Deidre thanked Mike for his hard work growing the advertising program in-house to generate more revenue. Previously we were only receiving \$40,000 a year in revenue under Mobile Ads contract. New bus wraps are in the works with advertisers currently.
3. **Ridership Update:** Deidre discussed that May 2023 is the first time since pre-covid that CAT trips exceeded 9,000, this is the first time since May 2019. May historically is the highest ridership month. Paratransit completed 7,832 trips in May 2023. In June 2023, CAT ended the month at 9,090 trips and paratransit at 7,925 trips. This is a 40% increase in CAT ridership from this time last year. CAT on time performance is 86% and paratransit is 94.8% year to date. National Express is in a better position with paratransit staffing and excessive trip duration is down from the end of last year.

Glenn requested Deidre explain the Jefferson Lines Service Agreement. Deidre explained that National Express employs the Jefferson Lines bus depot, but Bis-Man Transit holds the contract. The Service Agreement is to staff the bus depot at a set rate with a 3% annually. The rate National Express is charging Bis-Man Transit is increasing at the start of their new contract. Deidre had a meeting with Kevin at Jefferson Lines and starting November 1, 2023 the rate to staff the bus depot will be monthly at \$3,000. This will give Transit \$160/month in revenue for administrative costs to facilitate. Once the Service Agreement comes from Jefferson Lines, it will be presented on the August Agenda.

Lynn thanked the entire staff for all they do to help Bis-Man Transit work.

Operations Report: Craig explained that staffing the Fixed Route continues to be a struggle due to drivers needing a CDL. National Express offers paid CDL training and a risk to this is drivers will obtain their CDL and go to work elsewhere after. This has happened recently and has now created issues for time off requests for drivers. If Blue Route is not running it is because of a shortage on drivers. Craig commented that a paratransit bus will some times be put on fixed route to cover because it does not require a CDL to operate. Deidre commented that Craig has been driving due to the shortage of drivers and thanked him for his work.

Other Business: Glenn recognized Starion Bank for being a Public Transportation supporter for the past 20 years and the Board values the business relationship.

Commissioner Connelly discussed that Global Neighbors has a new Executive Director and is interested in strengthening the relationship with Transit. Commissioner Connelly explained he has



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had conversations with long-term care facilities in the community as well to improve relationships with Transit.

DeNae moved to adjourn the meeting. Helen seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 12:23 P.M.