

MINUTES—FOX CITIES TRANSIT COMMISSION
August 13, 2014

Commissioners Present

Chairperson Chuck Rundquist
Vice Chairperson Carolyn Mewhorter
Aldersperson Kyle Lobner
Aldersperson Christine Williams
Bob Buckingham
George Dearborn
Joel Gregozeski
Carol Kasimor
Jeff McCabe
Trish Nau
Linda Stoll

Commissioners Excused

Rick Detienne
Lynn Erickson
Travis Parish
Bruce Sherman

Valley Transit Staff

Deborah Wetter, General Manager
Sal La Puma, Assistant General Manager
Nikki Voelzke, Community Relations Specialist
Lisa Laughlin, Communications Technician

Others Present

Chris Behrens, Assistant City Attorney

Chairperson Chuck Rundquist called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

There was a brief introduction of all members of the Fox Cities Transit Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There being no questions or corrections to the minutes of the July 23, 2014 meeting, Commissioner Carolyn Mewhorter moved that the minutes be approved which was seconded by Commissioner Bob Buckingham. The minutes were approved (9/0).

Linda Stoll arrived at 3:03 p.m.

APPEARANCES

Public Participation of Agenda Items

There were no public appearances.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Payments

General Manager, Deborah Wetter presented the check register covering 07/19/14 through 08/01/14 for questions and comments. The price of fuel for July was \$2.94/gallon, year-to-date average is \$3.08/gallon and the budget is \$3.20/gallon. Aldersperson Kyle Lobner asked if the damage to the glass in the shelters is continuing. Ms. Wetter reported that the person responsible for the vandalism was caught and the vandalism has stopped. A motion was made by Commissioner Bob Buckingham and seconded by Commissioner Joel Gregozeski to accept the payments 07/19/14 through 08/01/14. The motion carried (11/0).

Aldersperson Christine Williams arrived at 3:06 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Social Media Update – Nikki Voelzke

Community Relations Specialist, Nikki Voelzke gave an updated Power Point presentation on the

various social media tools used by Valley Transit. Ms. Voelzke reported that Facebook likes are up from 603 in January to 665 in August. Facebook has been a big success since Valley Transit started using it in 2009. Facebook allows Valley Transit to get timely information out to riders and provides another platform for people to ask questions and share commendations and complaints. In July, Valley Transit “boosted” (paid) a Freedom Pass ad to promote the purchase of the 30 Day Freedom Pass for kids. The ad was viewed 13,794 times in the week it ran for a cost of only \$49.

Twitter followers have also increased from 812 in January to 926 in August. Twitter continues to be an excellent way to connect with the media and a broader audience. It was one of the key platforms Valley Transit used to promote the mini concerts on the Mile of Music bus in August.

Valley Transit started using YouTube to post creative video content in October, 2013. The viewers are continuing to grow.

Instagram was another social platform Valley Transit began using in October, 2013 to highlight public transportation through imagery and has been the best way to target younger riders. Valley Transit has 90 followers as of August, which is up from 26 followers in January. Activity on our Instagram page jumped considerably in August with the Mile of Music bus and festival.

Storify is the latest tool in Valley Transit’s social media toolkit. . Storify allows users to build stories by compiling media scattered across the Web into one location to show the PR impact/ and social media reach of an event. Ms. Voelzke showed the Storify page she created to highlight and capture the tremendous amount of online activity regarding the mini concerts on the Valley Transit Mile of Music bus. This new social media tool allowed Valley Transit to compile all of the social media conversations (Twitter, Instagram and TV, radio and newspaper coverage) about the bus in one central location. You can find Valley Transit’s Mile of Music Storify post at www.storify.com/valleytransit.

June Ridership and Revenue

Ms. Wetter presented the ridership and revenue for June, 2014. She reported that over the last 4 to 5 years ridership had been steadily growing. Ridership was up in June by 3.1% over the previous June but is down year-to-date by 6%. The revenue year-to-date is down 4.4%. Ms. Wetter stated that she and her management team are concerned with the decrease in ridership this year and are working to find explanations and solutions.

On Time Performance Action Plan – Sal La Puma

Through both internal and external meetings as part of the Strategic Plan, Valley Transit has identified that On Time Performance (OTP) is an area of concern. Valley Transit has an OTP goal of 95%. In July the system wide OTP was 83.9%. However, Mr. La Puma felt that because a number of routes are on detour this summer and have different published route and schedule times than is recorded in the AVL system, the actual OTP was closer to 88%. The AVL system is somewhat difficult and time-consuming for staff to update so shorter-term detour schedules are not changed in the system.

Mr. La Puma stated that the daily and monthly OTP information is posted in Valley Transit’s offices for all employees to review. Sharing the OTP numbers with all employees every day

makes it a focus for the entire organization. With everyone working together to improve the performance, we are much more likely to see an increase in actual performance. Additionally, supervisors are focusing on individual route performance, individual driver performance and run time or scheduling of the routes that may be having a negative impact to OTP.

Mr. La Puma reported that a Route Improvement Committee was formed in April to evaluate Route 15 from the Transit Center to the Mall. It is Valley Transit's most difficult route to keep on schedule. The group will be making their final recommendation in September on changes that they feel will improve the running time. The next route to be evaluated will be Route 20 (Transit Center to Kaukauna through Kimberly and Little Chute).

Commissioner Carolyn Mewhorter asked for an explanation of how a late bus affects the system and the customers who are in danger of missing connections. Mr. La Puma explained how Valley Transit handles those situations including having a supervisor or bus operator transport the customer in a van to their connection point or to their final destination. The goal is to get customers to their destinations on time, whenever possible.

Aldersperson Christine Williams asked if drivers drive the same route every day or if there is a rotation, if the bus drivers go through Customer Service training, and what the tenure of drivers was. Mr. La Puma stated that there are three bids during the year. Once the bid is complete, the drivers have the same route or group of routes during that bid and potentially may bid for the same routes on the following bid. Some drivers drive the same route every day while others have bids that mean they drive different routes at different times during the week. Valley Transit has recently conducted customer service training, sensitivity training and diversity training for all of its employees. At the current time, the average tenure for bus drivers is approximately 9 years.

June Financials

Ms. Wetter presented the financials for June. She reported that Valley Transit is under budget through June.

Year-to-date, gas and diesel prices are below budget. Salaries are under budget due to overtime being tightly controlled. Administrative Expenses are close to budget but Training & Conferences is significantly over budget due to National Transit Institute training classes that were needed to complete a procurement manual for Valley Transit. The manual was required to close several findings in the FTA Triennial Review.

Vehicle & Equipment Parts is over budget. Sixteen of Valley Transit's buses were purchased in 2004 and another four in 2005 making that fleet almost 10 years old. Because they are approximately the same age, they require similar repairs. With an aging fleet, we have had to replace several major high-priced components such as transmissions. We expect the trend to continue until we are able to purchase new buses to replace the oldest ones.

Utilities are over budget due to gas usage that was higher than budgeted. Valley Transit staff is working with WE Energies and the Facilities Department to determine why usage has increased so significantly when Valley Transit's operation has not changed.

Valley Transit 101 Sessions for Commissioners

Ms. Wetter will schedule informational sessions for new commissioners covering Valley Transit's budget, how Valley Transit is financed, legislation affecting Valley Transit, a review of the services we provide, both paratransit and fixed route and a tour of both the Whitman Avenue facility and Transit Center. All commissioners will be notified of the dates and times of the sessions which will be held in September and early October and all are invited to attend.

Legislative Update

Ms. Wetter reported that Congress has passed a bill that will allow transit systems (including Valley Transit) to receive federal funds through May, 2015. Money from the General Fund will be transferred to the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Fund to allow funding to continue. This is only a short-term solution to the problem of gas tax revenues being inadequate to fund the programs in the two funds. In addition, MAP-21 (the surface transportation bill that appropriates money to public transit) expires at the end of September. Ms. Wetter expects Congress to pass a Continuing Resolution prior to that time that would keep the same bill in place until May, 2015.

Pending Items

Ms. Wetter reported that there are no new pending items. There are items that are being moved for discussion to meetings in August and September.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 27, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mrs. Deborah Wetter, General Manager