

Oxford - University Transit Meeting 12/10/08

Members Present: Jack Howard, Donna Gurley, Carol Haney, Jim Windham, Rebecca Bertrand

Others present: Tim Akers, Tim Lett, Megan Taylor

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Howard.

The meeting agenda was approved.

The minutes for the November 12th meeting was approved and submitted.

November Report from General Manager

Tim Lett presented the November report to the commission members, remarking that the Blue route is very successful with over 200 riders daily. He discussed the numbers presented. He explained that ideally he would like to see 8 passengers per hour.

Tim Akers presented the award funds program management sheets that must be submitted to MDOT. When asked the timeline for the turnaround on reimbursement Mr. Akers explained that because of the new award and transit system the time is unknown, though he does not expect any issues or major time delays. These sheets will be presented at each meeting. Chairman Howard suggested that they be emailed ahead of the meeting. Tim explained in the future a packet would be created a week prior to the meetings and distributed to the commission members.

Discuss Fare Structure

Tim Akers presented a proposal to continue to allow riders to use the transit system at no charge until the end of the fiscal year, which would be September 2009. He asked that meetings be held with both the Board of Alderman and with the University authorities, so that if the proposal was approved it could be adopted as part of the OUT policy.

Jack Howard assured the commission that of this action was not satisfactory that a fare structure would be pursued with a public hearing and a commission vote.

Tim Akers explained that the free fare extension is not necessarily tied to the expansion, as expanded routes would not be ready until October 2009 at the earliest.

Jack Howard also commented that it may not be appropriate to charge fares because the service is rather limited right now.

Tim Akers explained that an extension of free fares would bring financial responsibility to the City of Oxford and the University at the cost of approximately \$42,000 per entity. Donna Gurley reminded the commission that mid-semester would not be a good time to switch fares. Tim Lett explained that ideally the fares would be in place by the beginning of August 2009.

Carol Haney made a motion to extend the free fee structure for the FY 08 year, understanding an approximate \$42,000 increase in support per entity.

Jim Windham seconded the motion.

With all voting yes, the motion was passed.

Discuss Potential Service Expansion

Tim Lett presented a draft report to the commission proposing expanded routes. The proposed changes were listed under the purpose in order of importance. The service enhancement recommendations were presented to the commission in a study and proposal format.

Tim Lett explained that routes that targeted apartment and condo complexes the bus stops would be placed at the entrances of each complex, they would not route the buses into the individual areas. Some sections of Jackson Ave. will have duplicated service, but this would be a place for riders to switch routes if they would like.

Jim Windham expressed concern about expanding routes when revenue has not been generated yet.

Tim Lett explained that typically ridership only contributes about 20% to total revenue. He reviewed the costs involved with the expanded routes and explained that there must also be an ADA paratransit service to accompany the expansion. For this reason there are five new buses figured into the cost of expansion.

Tim Akers reassured the commission that the chances for approval to resubmission on this grant are very good because it is a new successful service. He asked the commission for confirmation to continue forward on the proposed expansion.

Tim Lett emphasized that the success of the system will depend on the student ridership. If they have to physically pay themselves, the system will not grow.

Jack Howard summarized the commissions feelings but stating that they have reservations about the budget but they like the overall concept of expansion.

At this time a few comments were heard from the public regarding benches for bus stops and having all bus stops noted on the route maps.

Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Carol Haney seconded the motion.

With all voting yes, the meeting was adjourned.