

Oxford - University Transit Meeting 07/08/09

Members Present: Jack Howard, Donna Gurley, Carol Haney, Shannon Richardson, Jim Windham

Others present: Tim Akers, Tim Lett, Megan Prescott, Ron Biggs, Frances Saralvarez, Melanie Addington (Oxford Eagle)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Howard.

The meeting agenda was approved.

The minutes for the 06/10/09 meeting were approved.

June Report from General Manager

- Mr. Ron Biggs reported that ridership has increased by 4,000 passengers in the month of June. There was an increase from 12,398 riders in the month of May to 16,597 in the month of June, which totals 4,199 passenger increase.
- The problem of kids misbehaving while riding the bus was taken care of immediately when the problem started (soon after school ended); therefore it was not an issue anymore.
- Mr. Biggs mentioned he felt confident that the general public including students will continue using the bus system after a fare is implemented.
- Ole Miss approved to loan a bus while OUT's spare bus is being repaired. The insurance company was informed and agreed to cover the loaned bus if needed.

Mr. Tim Lett from McDonald Transit explained how to review the **Passenger and Revenue Performance Report** to better understand the performance of the system: Calculate **Total Miles** divided by **Total Hours** giving an ideal total between **13 & 14.5**. He also mentioned that **Passengers/Hour** should total between **11 & 13**. He added that the system was working above expectation.

Mr. Tim Lett also mentioned he has been working closely with Charlotte, NC to expedite the transfer of the buses to be used in the expanded service. He mentioned that things are going smooth, but very slow due to procedures required by the FTA.

Financial Report

- MDOT (Mississippi Department of Transportation) would be here on July 9th to do their annual system audit.
- Mr. Akers would be presenting the Planning Department budget to the Board of Aldermen.
- It was mentioned there is 50% discount in the fare for a monthly bus passes and that OUT is currently discussing a fare structure with Ole Miss for Ole Miss students, faculty and staff.

Discussion of Minimum Age for Elderly Passengers

Mr. Jack Howard asked what age should be used to determine an Elderly (Senior Citizen) in reference to the fare structure. Mr. Tim Lett suggested the widely recognized age of 62 years old as the minimum age.

Mr. Tim Akers suggested continuing with a general discussion on the institution of the fare and all that it would entail. There were many issues to take into consideration before the fare could be implemented such as: transfer tickets need to be developed and printed, fare counting equipment procured, expanded service material developed and printed, and the development of a fare evasion policy.

The commission recessed the meeting until the 6:30pm Public Hearing in the courtroom.

OUT Public Hearing – 07/08/09

Public/Passengers Present: PWL Jayaratna, Brent Caldwell, Dick Burkepile, Rebecca Long, Becky Moreton, Tricia Wilkerson.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Howard who introduced himself to the public. He asked for all those present to feel free to voice their opinions, concerns or comments in reference to the bus system and proposed bus fair.

There were a few points covered during the first part of the meeting:

- The Commission felt good about the proposed transit fare structure.
- It was confirmed that minimum age for Elderly would be 62 years old.
- The fare will be implemented simultaneously with the extended routes (new buses).

Mr. Howard gave an overview of the Proposed Oxford/University Transit Fare Structure. There were no comments against accepting it and the meeting was opened for public comment.

Mr. Dick Burkepile asked if there would be a charge for transfers and where would they take place. He was informed the transfers would take place at the Square and there would be a second point at Ole Miss Student Union once the route is extended. There will be no fee for transfers.

Mr. Dick Burkepile asked if there would be a discount for Ole Miss Students, staff and retired faculty. He was informed that OUT is working with Ole Miss to develop a strategy to allow Ole Miss Students and staff to ride the bus by showing their ID card.

Mr. Burkepile asked if there would be accommodations on the buses to bring bicycles on the bus. He was informed there would be racks on the buses which would hold up to two bicycles.

Ms. Becky Moreton voiced her concern regarding the safety of the bus stops, especially for handicap people. She was very concerned with the safety of the bus stop on University Avenue near Walgreens Store in front of Rapid Lube. She said it is very dangerous for elder passengers and handicap passengers to go through the McDonald's parking lot to go to Big Star Supermarket, and then have to cross the street with bags to get back on the bus. She asked if there was a way to add a bus stop in the Oxford East Shopping Center. She was informed that OUT would be happy to try to add a stop, and a suggestion was made that she could speak to the manager of the Shopping Center to get permission for OUT to go inside the parking lot.

Another passenger present also voiced her opinion that Kroger Food Store would be another good point to add a bus stop. Mr. Biggs informed her he was already making attempts to discuss the matter with Kroger's management.

Tricia Wilkerson made a special trip to voice her opinion on how courteous the bus drivers were and how they strived to keep the passengers safe. She was happy of the environment the drivers kept in the buses by not allowing foul language or other inappropriate behavior. She wanted to commend Tony Wortham and Fannie Goolsbie for being exceptional drivers.

Mr. PWL Jayaratna suggested that school age children K through 12 be given free bus rides. He was informed that unfortunately it was not feasible to give free bus rides because the price of the bus fare would cover the maintenance and gasoline of OUT buses in order to keep them running.

He also wanted to know if there could be one family pass. He was informed that the monthly passes were individual and were discounted, and once again the amount collected from bus fair charges had to be enough to cover bus expenses, while keeping the price of the bus rides affordable for passengers.

On the same matter, Ms. Becky Moreton suggested a \$15.00 charge for monthly passes for students K through 12.

As a conclusion to the meeting, passengers praised the OUT bus system service, and mentioned "It was the best thing that has taken place in Oxford in the last few years".

Since there were no more comments or suggestions, Mr. Jack Howard called for a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing/ Meeting.

Ms. Carol Haney made the motion and Mr. Jim Windham seconded.

With all voting yes, the meeting was adjourned.