



Oxford - University Transit Meeting **September 9, 2009**

Members Present: Jack Howard, Donna Gurley, Carole Haney, George Price, Shannon Richardson and Jim Windham

Others present: Tim Akers, Ron Biggs, Matt Davis, Frances Saralvarez, Melanie Addington (Oxford Eagle), Cary Robbins – Ole Miss Student and Taylor McGraw – Ole Miss Student

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Howard.

The meeting agenda was approved.

The minutes for the August 12, 2009 meeting were approved.

General Manager's Report

- Ridership is staying consistent with a year-to-date transportation of over 100,000 people and with an average of 600 per day, which is above expectations.
- Since school started, the Blue Line has shown improvement in ridership.
- Due to heavy traffic and pedestrians at the University Campus, we've had problems maintaining our schedule. The biggest setback being the traffic and pedestrian congestion around the Student Union. Things have improved this week compared to last week, and we hope the problem continues to get better.
- The new route expansion might also have traffic and pedestrian challenges when the buses arrive at the Ole Miss Campus.
- Mr. Biggs spoke with the owner of Big Star and the Manager from Kroger in regards to expanding the bus services to their businesses. After reviewing the matter with Mr. Tim Akers and Mr. Tim Lett, we will try to provide service when the expansion takes place, but it would be in 1 hour intervals. Mentioned service would be on a trial basis.
- Four new drivers have been hired and have gone through 80 hours of training in preparation for the expansion.

Planner's Report

- After submitting a Budget Revision, which was approved by MDOT, we were able to process invoices being held until we were able to transfer funds from other line items to the required line items. In the process, we identified other issues, which are being handled through another budget revision.
- A computer has been order for OUT's General Manager with the stipulation of delivery in September.

- As part of the expanded service, the budget for fuel and insurance will be increased.

Service Expansion

- Mr. Tim Lett sent an update from Charlotte, NC. The FTA had a few additional questions in regards to the new buses, indicating our documents were being reviewed.
- We'll likely miss the October 1st start-up date.
- Mr. Ron Biggs is getting the fair boxes, counting machines, monthly passes, and transfers printed out.

Fare Structure and Date

- The original plan was to implement fares simultaneously with the expansion, but since we are not sure when the expansion will occur, charging fares should be implemented soon. There is approximately \$87,000 projected in fares for FY 2010.
- Due to subsidized funding from the University, there should be no charge for Ole Miss Students and faculty. Students and faculty will be required to show a photo ID to ride the bus at no charge.
- In regards to a family plan, Tim Lett looked at other bus systems and could not find a comparable fare structure. A motion was made by Commissioner Gurley and seconded by Commissioner Haney to adopt the fare structure as proposed and that fares will be charged beginning November 1, 2009. All voted in favor of the motion.
- The monthly passes will be sold at City Hall, OUT office and other places to be identified later. There will be signs with the fare information posted on the buses.
- The Commission will consider other issues in the future such as: giving special passes to businesses located at the Square as a promotional strategy for the holiday season and advertising in the new buses.
- McDonald Transit provided a marketing plan that needs to be tailored to OUT. Mr. Akers agreed to scan the marketing plan and email it to the Commission members.

Ole Miss Students Present

- They had a big emphasis on alternative means of transportation because "traffic is a nightmare in campus". Students are looking on ways to help ease the traffic, and they would like to work together with OUT.
- The students were questioning if the buses could be furnished with bicycle racks. They were informed that the new buses will have bike racks with space for 2 bicycles.
- The students also questioned if the hours of operation for the transit system could be extended. The Commission had discussed it in the past, and it is cost prohibitive due to budgetary issues.
- Mr. Biggs informed the Commission that OUT service will bypass the University on Saturdays when there is a football game, and some Fridays depending how crowded it might be. OUT will place signs on the buses one week ahead of time to notify the public of the route modification.

- Mr. Biggs also added that OUT is taking precautions for the viruses that are going around. OUT has contacted a genatorial service company who sells a product that kills germs in 45 seconds. The drivers have also been given hand sanitizers to keep on the buses.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Jack Howard called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Jim Windham Made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Donna Gurley seconded the motion.

With all voting yes, the meeting was adjourned.