

Public Transit Advisory Board
March 14, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM (#155), CITY HALL

PTAB PRESENT:

Andrew Ooms
Jennifer Ham
Doug Miller
Genevieve Mina
Elijah Haines
Chelsea Ward-Waller
Dawn Groth

CITIZENS PRESENT:

D'Arcy L. Coffey
Karen Carson
Garcia Paz
Barbara Roberts
Carl J Brown
Iris Crothers
Tyler Crothers

Allen Williams
Joshua Williams
Wendy Williams
Samuel Williams
Ezeiel Williams
Nehemiah Williams
Lshmael Prado

STAFF:

Jamie Acton
Bart Rudolph
Nicholas Abugel
Wes Renfrew
Christine Schuette
Allison Gutacker
Whitney Tillman
Jesse Ferman
Paris Butler

Melissa J. Hart
Arnold Hildrc
Sherry Himes
Patricia Olson
Linda Larson
Sean P. Ryan
Ross Willnet
Bev Wilke
Albest Bidenshaw
U. Joe

Joseph Prado
Terry Shakey

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Andrew Ooms called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL, INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, STAFF, AND GUESTS

Mr. Andrew Ooms, Ms. Jennifer Ham, Mr. Doug Miller, Ms. Genevieve Mina, Mr. Elijah Haines, Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller and **Ms. Dawn Groth** were present. After roll call, a quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement was made by **Mr. Bart Rudolph** to those in attendance that there would be a public comment period in which those wishing to make comments would be allowed two minutes each. Comments would also be accepted after any informational item. Comments would be accepted both during the public comment period and during the informational item period so long as the comment made during the informational period related to that item.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Doug Miller moved to add introductions to the March 14, 2019 agenda. **Ms. Genevieve Mina** seconded. Introductions were added to the March 14, 2019 agenda. The agenda was then unanimously approved.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 14, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved.

VI. INTRODUCTION

Ms. Jennifer Ham stated that she has been riding the bus since 2004 and has never been on an advisory board before and was looking forward to participating. **Ms. Genevieve Mina** stated that she has been riding the bus since 2017 and that she was excited to be sitting on the advisory board. **Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller** stated that she is a transportation advocate and is also on the board for Bike Anchorage and is interested in a more multimodal city; she added that she is also a public health student at UAA. **Ms. Dawn Groth** stated that she works for the State of Alaska in public health and has specific interest in getting people to ride the bus. **Mr. Doug Miller** stated that he has been on the board for 2 years and has been using public transit in Anchorage for 8 or 9 years. **Mr. Andrew Ooms** stated that he works locally as an engineering planner. **Mr. Elija Haines** stated that he has been on the board since last fall; he works for the Alaska Center of the Blind and uses the bus in his personal life. Staff present introduced themselves: **Ms. Jamie Acton**, Director of Public Transportation; **Mr. Bart Rudolph**, Planning and Communications Manager; **Mr. Nicholas Abugel**, Transit Planning Technician; **Ms. Christine Schuette**, Transit Planner; **Ms. Allison Gutacker**, Transit Scheduler; **Mr. Paris Butler**, AnchorRides Program Manager; **Mr. Larry Gibson**, MV Contract Manager; **Mr. Jared Pece**, MV Operations Manager; **Mr. Wes Refrew**, Operations Superintendent; **Mr. Jeff Barney**, Operations Supervisor; **Mr. Will Brown**, Customer Service Manager.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Sherry Himes – Stated that she is a People Mover bus operator and is concerned about the safety of the drivers. Specifically, about drivers being assaulted. Ms. Himes stated that she had an incident a few days ago that had her worried for her wellbeing. Ms. Himes described her role as an informer while on the bus. Ms. Himes stated that people sometimes become irate when challenged to pay the fare to ride. Ms. Himes stated that in the past Operations Supervisors were able to write tickets to fare evaders. She would like this to come back in some form.

Caren Carson – Stated that she sometimes observes intoxicated individuals board the bus and act aggressively towards drivers to get free fare.

D’Arcy L. Coffey – Stated that she rides route 65 in the evenings. She stated that she has witnessed some passengers acting aggressively towards drivers, specifically women drivers. Ms. Coffey asked if there was any sort of “safety button” like a silent call button. **Mr. Jeff Barney** responded that there was a silent call button that would alert dispatch. **Mr. Wes Refrew** added that there are radio codes to alert dispatch of a driver in distress.

Gretchen Wehmhoff – Stated that while attending some Assembly meetings, she observed some interest by the Assembly to add additional or more service in the Eagle River area. Ms. Wehmhoff also presented the idea of having a seasonal bus route to support the Anchorage School District related to their afterschool programming and/or any other school related activities.

Public comment was closed at 5:45 p.m.

VIII. BUSINESS / INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Elections

- i. **Mr. Andrew Ooms** opened the floor for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. **Ms. Dawn Groth** nominated Mr. Andrew Ooms for Chair. **Mr. Miller** seconded. There were no other nominations for chair. **Ms. Dawn Groth** nominated **Mr. Doug Miller** for Vice Chair. **Mr. Elijah Haines** seconded. There were no other nominations for Vice Chair. Both Mr. Ooms and Mr. Miller accepted their respective titles.

- b. Transit on the Move Event Series #1 Recap and Next Steps
- i. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** stated that Transit on the Move is Peoples Mover’s short-range transit plan which includes a list of projects for when or if People Mover gets additional funding. The plan identifies what is the number one priority by vetting it by the public. In addition, any changes that are made will have performance measures associated with them to track how those changes are doing. **Mr. Rudolph** also noted that Transit on the Move will not result in any immediate changes and that this plan is just to develop ideas for what’s next. **Ms. Christine Schuette** described how Transit on the Move was doing; she stated that in the last seven meetings, which collected public input, 541 separate comments were received that covered 651 topics. **Ms. Schuette** added that Transit on the Move was collecting comments not only for People Mover but also AnchorRIDES and RideShare. She added that most of the comments received were related to coverage goals. **Mr. Rudolph** added that all the information collected is very accessible, it has been sent out to everyone on the Transit on the Move email list and print copies are available at the Downtown Transit Center. **Mr. Elijah Haines** commented that it must have taken a lot of work to collate all the data collected in these meetings. **Ms. Gretchen Wehmhoff** commented that some of the comments received were “thank you for asking.” She appreciated that there were blank boards and the public was able to voice what they would like to see. **Ms. Dawn Groth** asked if the public meeting locations were accessible for disabled persons. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that all the meetings were accessible.
- c. July 1, 2019 Service Change
- i. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** stated that once a year People Mover has a service change to make minor tweaks to the system to improve its performance. He stated that this year is no exception and that a service change will take place on July 1, 2019. **Mr. Rudolph** explained that in April there will be additional meetings with the proposed changes. Right now, People Mover is considering making route 40 end service at midnight instead of 2 a.m. because the ridership on that route at that time is extremely low. The other change is to make route 40 a loop. This would resolve issues of riders having to get off the bus if they happened to get on right when route 40 ended. **Mr. Andrew Ooms** asked if the stop in front of baggage claim could be restored. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that People Mover would try to restore that stop.

IX. NEXT PTAB MEETING DATE

Next Meeting Date: April 11, 2019, 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. (Location TBD)

Comments:

Mr. Doug Miller – Asked about onboarding packets for new PTAB members. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** replied that all the new PTAB members have received an email with relevant information. **Mr. Miller** also praised the People Mover drivers’ ability to handle disruptive passengers.

Ms. Dawn Groth – Asked if there was a possibility to expand AnchorRIDES service. **Mr. Paris Butler** replied that AnchorRIDES tracks the Fixed Route (People Mover) by a 3/4th of a mile buffer.

Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller – Stated that she has been a part of the Anchorage Climate Action plan which is currently open for public comment. She stated that there was a lot of relevant information related to public transit.

Ms. Genevieve Mina – Asked for clarification on the current scheduling process. Specifically, what is the process now and what will the new software do. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that the current process involves Ms. Alison Gutacker using Excel and manually putting together the schedule. The new scheduling software should help automate that process by hopefully finding some efficiencies which could be tapped into. He continued that right now if a decision was made to change something in the network it would take up to six months to implement whatever that change was.

Ms. Jennifer Ham – Stated that she appreciates the luggage racks on buses, especially in the winter when she’s doing laundry. She also stated that her son is homeschooled which causes an awkward interaction with drivers during the school year. She also wanted to know if it would be possible for homeschooled children to have free passes, similar to those that the Anchorage School District provides to its students. **Ms. Jamie Acton** asked if there was an organization that could be contacted to establish a program similar to the ASD’s. **Ms. Ham** replied that there were a few charters. **Ms. Acton** replied that People Mover would try to contact these charters to see what could be set up. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** added that the ASD pays for its students’ bus passes.

Mr. Elijah Haines – Asked about books on buses program. He stated that he noticed that they were empty most of the time. He wanted to know if there were plans to revitalize that program. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** stated that the library has been contacted to provide more books and updated signs. **Mr. Haines** also wanted to thank People Mover for the free bus passes that were mailed out to encourage ridership within a quarter mile of any of the system routes. **Mr. Rudolph** added that People Mover is always looking for more marketing ideas and that there is a separate budget that can only be used for marketing purposes.

Mr. Andrew Ooms – Welcomed the new members to the board. He added that because of the system change in 2017, students in Government Hill are unable to use the bus for school trips due to the small size. He asked if there could be anything done to alleviate that issue. **Mr. Wes Renfrew** replied that the teachers could contact People Mover’s customer service manager and something could be worked out.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.