

Public Transit Advisory Board  
December 14, 2017, 5:30 pm  
*CITY HALL, MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM #830*

**PTAB PRESENT:**

Andrew Ooms  
Jedediah Smith  
Gretchen Wehmhoff  
Samuel Moore  
Britta Hamre  
Guadalupe Lugo

**STAFF:**

Abul Hassan  
Bart Rudolph  
Suzanne Thompson  
Will Brown  
Andrew Watts  
Wes Renfrew

**CITIZENS PRESENT:**

Kesha Ozenna	Nehemiah Williams
Jessie Skinner	Ishmael Prado
Rodney Jones	Joseph Prado
Easton C.	Carl Kancir
P. Olson	Shanice Love
Heidi Frost	<illegible>
Kim Ansaknok	Doug Miller
Dawn Palmer	Fredrick <illegible>
Sandra Anderson	Vera Rosier
Bev Wilke	Heidi Frost
Matthew Brown	Gil Stokes
Sophie M. Godzma	Linda Larson
Wendy Williams	
Joshua Williams	
Samuel Williams	
Ezekiel Williams	

*I. CALL TO ORDER*

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm by **Chair Jed Smith**.

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

After roll call a quorum was present. No one was absent.

*III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT*

An announcement was made to those attending by **Chair Smith** that there would be a public comment period in which those wishing to make comments will be allowed two minutes.

*IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA*

**Mr. Moore** made a motion to approve the agenda. **Ms. Wehmhoff** seconded the motion. It was agreed to add Item 7d – Ridership Report. Without objection, the agenda was approved as amended.

*V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 7, 2017*

**Mr. Moore** made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 7 meeting. **Ms. Hamre** seconded the motion. Without objection, the minutes were approved as submitted.

*VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY*

**Chair Smith** invited the members of the public attending to comment.

**Alan Rice:** Mr. Rice thanked the people who put together the new system.

**Vera Rosier:** Ms. Rosier stated that on November 30 there were 3 buses parked without drivers, and

route 25 couldn't get in the loading zone, so it drove past. 15 minutes later, the next route 25 loaded in a different zone. She stated that she went inside and the customer service person who sits on the left was rude and denied her a comment sheet. She stated that she is paying for this service, and the customer service person needs to change her attitude. She is lying to security about Ms. Rosier. She stated that the system doesn't work. Route 60 needs to come back, as well as route 2, and route 1 needs to go all the way to Muldoon. She is spending \$20 a day for taxis just to get to the bus.

**Andrew Klein:** Mr. Klein stated that he has been here for 55 years. The budget office told him that the Department's budget was \$23 million just to pay the drivers. He asked whether the system is broken beyond repair and whether the Department is broke or not? **Mr. Lugo** asked where Mr. Klein got that number, and he stated that it was from Courtney at the budget office. **Ms. Wehmhoff** stated that the Assembly sets the budget and that changes aren't easy.

**Jessie Skinner:** Mr. Skinner stated that he likes the new system and that maybe there could be a survey to see what people want to change still. He stated that some apps aren't showing GPS and that a better tracker app should be built to show bus locations.

**Patricia Olson:** Ms. Olson stated that she would add to what everyone else has said. Service every 20 minutes is great. She has seen some issues with people in the office, but she has also seen a change. She stated that she loves the hours, especially on weekends, and suggests that the Department cut back those later nights to add back route 60 and part of route 36.

**Heidi Frost:** Ms. Frost stated that she is the executive director of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska. She has a group of concerned people who are trying to figure out a way to augment the existing transit services to assist the Council's clients in their day-to-day lives. They are looking at more Medicaid reimbursements, micro-enterprise opportunities, and that sort of thing, and she invited the Board to join them in this endeavor.

**Gil Stokes:** Mr. Stokes stated that since October 23, he has been able to get to Fred Meyer twice due to issues with transferring and walking a block back. He will be speaking to the Assembly on the 19<sup>th</sup>. He seconds **Ms. Rosier's** comments.

**Linda Larson:** Ms. Larson stated that she has had problems with route 25 when it changes from 30 minute headways to 15 minutes at 12:56, as well as problems at the Senior Center with route 11 not showing up, skipping the stop, or leaving early. She has seen it skip part of the route twice. She stated that there are less connections now, so there's extra walking. She encouraged the Department to remove the signs at stops where there is no service. She noted that the lack of service from UAA to the Loussac Library is a real problem. There are also issues with the snow berms. The sidewalks are better, but there are still issues for people who use wheelchairs.

**Colleen Easton:** Ms. Easton stated that she is a disabled veteran. She has had difficulties with the office people and drivers being rude. There are a few good drivers who should be rewarded. The VA just started a transportation program, but they can't take everyone because they only have 3 drivers. She has experienced issues with people asking her to move on the bus with her walker. She stated that she just got out of her wheelchair and she has had to walk 8 miles.

**Marie** stated that taking away route 60 makes it difficult to get to Fireweed, as well as the YMCA and Centennial.

**Kimberly Ansaknok:** Ms. Ansaknok stated that the new system is better for her personally. She suggested adding trashcans and benches to stops that don't have them.

**D. Brandon** stated that Penland & Bragaw is a dangerous turn and drivers always hit the curb. Also, later at night, route 25 always misses the transfer to route 30 resulting in a 30 minute walk home.

**Lori** asked what can be done. She stated that drivers getting off breaks have to run, and they're going Drop-off Only too soon. She suggested more time before trips, as well as bringing back route 1 with 4 buses from Baxter to Dimond. She also discussed route 55 sitting at Elmore and UAA Drive.

**Amber** stated that she has issues with multiple buses. Route 55 is beyond ridiculous. You can't get to H2Oasis on O'Malley anymore. It takes 2 to 3 hours to take route 31 to work at the end of Boniface. She suggested rewarding drivers who do well, but right now the Department is using the budget the wrong way and should change back to the old system.

**Mark Augustus:** Mr. Augustus stated that he has been riding intermittently for 20 years. He talked to customer service about getting some day passes instead of monthly ones and asked if there is a way to put multiple day passes on smartcards.

**Sandra Anderson:** Ms. Anderson stated that she has no problem with route 20, but it's hard to judge when it's going to be there because a lot of times they're late. Route 21 is the problem. You aren't sure which way it's going at Northway Mall – if it shows up. Drivers are good except for one, who didn't strap down her wheelchair. She gave the date and time of the incident and stated that she had called it in on Tuesday and gone to customer service on Wednesday.

**Fred** stated that he has issues with route 40 leaving early, causing him to have to wait, then the bus he was catching also left early, and it took 2 hours to get from Spenard and Minnesota to Tikahtnu. He stated that he also had issues with route 11 and 21, and that route 11 at 7 PM on Monday had some confusion about what was or was not a stop for that route.

**Sharon Stockard:** Ms. Stockard stated that the new system is broken. She lives in Airport Heights, and lots of people used route 13. Her son can't get to college or to jobs because there's no bus, and he depends on her taking off work. It's a half-mile or more to the bus with snow and ice. She stated that it's ridiculous to deprive neighborhoods all over town and especially to remove the bus from the library.

**An unidentified citizen** stated that the Department should bring back routes 36 and 1. She stated that she was hit by a city car on November 14, leading to two bruised knees and a root canal. A police report was filed. She stated that in summer, her husband got approved for a reduced fare without actually filling out an application. Discussion followed.

**An unidentified citizen** stated that the new bus routes suck. Her husband works at Dimond. There has been irregular consistency with route 35, and she will continue to watch it. Sometimes, 3 buses with the same number leave at the same time. There should be customer service training on harassment and inappropriate conversation among drivers. Also, drivers shouldn't try to teach customers a lesson by driving past because they're waiting too far from the road.

## *VII. BUSINESS / INFORMATION ITEMS*

### *a. Item 7a – Officer Elections: Chair and Vice-Chair*

**Chair Smith** noted that **Ms. Hamre** was nominated for Chair and that **Mr. Lugo** was nominated for Vice-Chair at the November meeting. He asked whether there were any additional nominations. Hearing none, **Ms. Wehmhoff** moved to elect **Britta Hamre** as Chair and **Lupe Lugo** as Vice-Chair by acclamation. **Mr. Ooms** seconded the motion. Without objection, the motion was agreed to, and **Mr. Smith** relinquished the Chair to **Chair Hamre** at 6:19 pm.

### *b. Item 7b – Budget Update*

**Director Hassan** provided an update on the budget. He stated that the Assembly passed a budget for the Department that included the full request from the Mayor, as well as an additional \$75,000. He noted that despite this increase, the total budget was still lower than in 2015 or 2016. **Mr. Smith** asked what the total Department budget was, and **Director Hassan** replied that it was \$22,587,524 in 2017 and \$23,005,062 for 2018, with about \$544,000 of that total being debt service. There was a slight increase for 2018 due to increases in pay and benefits that were included in collective bargaining agreements. With the approximately \$400,000 in additional funding, the Department is providing about 17,000 additional hours of service annually.

### *c. Item 7c – DOT and/or Muni ADA Updates*

Representatives from Alaska DOT and from the Muni ADA office were not present at this meeting. **Ms. Wehmhoff** asked whether the coordination issues had been taken care of. **Director Hassan** replied that there had been some clarification on expectations for sidewalks to be cleared. It seems to be a little faster on Tudor, but it's too soon to tell. **Mr. Smith** stated that he hoped we could get the DOT reps at a future meeting, but he was encouraged that they were at the last meeting. **Director Hassan** noted that there had also been some confusion surrounding the equitability analysis. **Mr. Smith** noted for the public that for people having problems, this is something the Board members have experienced and that asking people to walk farther does come with higher expectations for maintenance.

### *d. Item 7c – New Bus System Ridership*

**Mr. Watts** presented the ridership figures for the most recent week under the new system. There was a question about how long ridership was expected to continue to decline. **Mr. Rudolph** stated that it is expected to rebound in a year or two. **Mr. Ooms** asked why **Mr. Watts** had put a caveat on the reliability of the data. **Mr. Rudolph** stated that it was because of old systems and training issues with the new routes and drivers. **Mr. Moore** asked what happens if a driver logs in wrong. **Mr. Rudolph** and **Mr. Watts** discussed the exceptions processing procedure and the sources of data loss and incorrect data.

## *VIII. BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS*

**Ms. Wehmhoff** stated that on Monday, December 18, there will be a town hall meeting concerning snow removal from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at Wonder Park Elementary. Assembly Chair Traini and Sen. Wielechowski will be in attendance. **Ms. Wehmhoff** also noted that Stacy from Enterprise spoke at the last Birchwood Community Council meeting concerning the rideshare program, and people asked good questions. She also stated that the Chugiak fire chief thinks we have a long way to go to improve transportation in that area.

**Mr. Ooms** thanked **Mr. Smith** for his service as Chair and for making the Board more effective. He noted that he represents the Board on the Non-Motorized Citizens Advisory Council, which is having its second of four meetings on the non-motorized plan, concerning walking, biking, and trails. They are having a hard time getting feedback from people who walk, and he encouraged transit users to comment at [anchorageanonmotorizedplan.com](http://anchorageanonmotorizedplan.com). He asked when the vacant Board seats would be filled and noted that with the new system he has experienced bus bunching in Anchorage for the first time.

**Chair Hamre** thanked **Mr. Smith** for his service as Chair and stated that she looked forward to continuing to learn from him. As a Board, the goal is to be able to better represent who they are to the public, including a better-organized comment period so we can hear everyone. She stated that she is using the new system, and it's not perfect but a step in the right direction. The Board would like to hear about the public's experiences, good or bad.

**Mr. Smith** stated that most of the Board members ride transit every day and experience the same challenges as everyone else. There are lots of things to adjust to, but overall it's going pretty well. It's a continuing effort to improve, and it isn't so helpful to just hear, "Change it back." He stated that he has concerns about the technology and asked about plans to upgrade and how the Board could advocate for it. He also noted that quarterly budget revisions were already coming up and asked for information on how the Board should advocate. He noted that it had been an honor to serve as Chair.

**Mr. Moore** thanked **Mr. Smith** for his leadership and tutelage. He also thanked staff on the spectacular job rolling out the new system. Since implementation, he has lost 9 pounds and still kept riding the bus. He stated that he works at Denali and Fireweed and lives at Arctic and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and his experience with walking has been that the Muni has done an amazing job clearing the sidewalks, while the state has done an embarrassing job. He also asked about the arrival boards at the Downtown Transit Center. It's a clear systemic move to the west side of the building. **Mr. Brown** replied that the east end would be blocked off when construction starts on February 1. **Mr. Moore** asked how pedestrian access would be affected, and it was clarified that the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue sidewalk would remain open. Finally, **Mr. Moore** noted the following: real-time data on Google id not currently working; signage should be placed inside the transit center showing where buses load (the signage on the buses is great); he would like to see data on on-time performance in the new system; and he asked whether there was a policy on drivers waiting for people to sit down before moving the bus. **Mr. Renfrew** replied that they don't have to wait.

**Mr. Lugo** thanked everyone for welcoming him to the Board and nominating him for Vice-Chair. He stated that his goal is to build fruitful relationships with the Board and with the public. He stated that there seems to be a disconnect on what the role of the Board actually is. It's an advisory board. The members are members of the public, and the job is to listen to what people have to say and convey that to the people who actually make these decisions.

## *IX. NEXT PTAB MEETING DATE*

Next Meeting Date: January 11, 2018 – Location TBD<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note: this meeting was cancelled as of 4 January 2018 due to lack of business. The next meeting will be February 15, 2018 in the Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall.

*X. ADJOURNMENT*

**Mr. Smith** made a motion to adjourn. **Mr. Moore** seconded the motion. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.