

Transit Commission Meeting Minutes January 20, 2016

The transit commission meeting of Wednesday, January 20th was called to order by Chairman Charles Poole. Commissioners in attendance included Kathleen Cates, Lori Contreras, Dustin Perceful, Charles Poole and Leo Good. Staff in attendance included Ken Savage, Sue Ruth, Lori Carr and Mike Irwin. Public attendees were Andre Good and Keley Simpson.

1. Minutes of the December 10, 2015 Meeting:

Mr. Savage summarized the minutes of the previous commission meeting held December 10, 2015. He indicated there were no outstanding issues or questions from the last meeting and asked Mrs. Contreras if there had been any more problems with her rides on demand response service. She said there have been no further problems.

Chairman Poole called for a motion to approve the December 10, 2015 minutes of the transit commission. Commissioner Perceful made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Cates to approve the minutes as written. Vote resulted in approval by a vote 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

- 2. Review for Approval Changes to the Zero Street Route; AND**
- 3. Review for Approval Minor Adjustments to the Towson Route:**

Chairman Poole called for an overview by Mr. Savage of item number 2 regarding the changes to the Zero Street route. Mr. Savage summarized the public comments the department received during the 30 day public comment period. He stated that notification media included the Southwest Times, transit web site, transit information line and social media (Facebook). He referenced past surveys of the transit system that included comments as well as requests by phone the desire for transportation to Choctaw Casino. He explained that the casino parking lot, not the building itself, is inside the city limits of Fort Smith and the proposal includes going to the casino parking lot on call or by request.

The commission discussed the possible issues the drivers could experience as a result of passengers gambling their return fare money. Mr. Savage stated that the commission can consider some type of return home policy to insure passengers have the fare in order to return home.

Commissioner Cates made a motion to require passengers being transported to the casino to show the transit driver proof of a ticket for their return trip. Commissioner Perceful seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor (Cates, Poole, Perceful, Contreras) and 1 opposed (Good).

Mike Irwin pointed out on the presented map the proposed Zero Route/Jenny Lind Route. He also outlined the minor changes to the Towson route in order to maximize service connections with the Zero/Jenny Lind route.

Mr. Savage explained the proposed timeline if the commission chooses to approve the new route. He stated that a start date of March 1st would allow staff enough time to prepare all maps, brochures and bus stop sign placements. Mr. Savage also stated that providing transportation to the casino only on an on-call basis would take an approximate 2½ minutes. He also touched on a small adjustment for the buses to only pass by the new Neighborhood Market on Highway 71 South instead of taking an extra 5 minutes to go through its parking lot.

All commission members agreed to change the Zero route name to the Jenny Lind route.

Commissioner Perceful made the motion to approve the Jenny Lind route and the minor Towson route changes as presented. Commissioner Cates seconded the motion. By a roll call vote, the commission approved the new route by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

In other business, Ken Savage updated the commission on the status of the purchase and placement of five shelters. The specifications for the shelter structures have been circulated with a bid submission deadline of February 5th. The bid calls for five shelters with a purchase option of two additional shelters. The Jenny Lind route allows more placement opportunities for areas with high passenger volumes. Mr. Savage also stated that staff currently has permission for the placement of four shelters at this time.

Mike Irwin briefed the commission on the status of the property owner negotiations of easements for the placement of the shelters on personal property. There were discussions about looking into the possibility of placing the shelters in the right-of-way if possible.

Mr. Savage explained all the steps staff must take to complete shelter projects. After engineering surveys are performed on each site, the Street Department will construct the concrete pads at the cost of the materials only, then the transit maintenance staff will erect and place the shelters on the pads. With the Street Department providing the labor and our maintenance crew erecting and placing the structures, we hope to have enough remaining funds to purchase an additional shelter. Mr. Savage again thanked Ms. Simpson and the First Presbyterian Church for providing the \$50,000 local match to make these amenities possible for the passengers.

During the commissioner's forum, Commissioner Good explained to the commission why he chose to vote "no" on the casino return ticket requirement to guarantee a ride home. He indicated that the requirement would be difficult to enforce. There was further discussion among the commission and staff regarding the current guaranteed ride home policy that the department implements.

During the citizen's forum, Keley Simpson suggested transporting passengers to and from the casino parking lot on a trial basis.

Commissioner Poole called for suggestions for the next commission meeting. Mr. Savage stated that he would suggest a meeting in the early part of the second quarter. He indicated that the staff would like to evaluate any possible operational cost savings in order to find a way to fund the new Jenny Lind route on Saturdays.

The next meeting of the transit commission was scheduled for Wednesday, May 4, 2015.

There being no further business, Commissioner Poole adjourned the meeting.