



## SAGINAW TRANSIT AUTHORITY REGIONAL SERVICES BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Monday – November 28, 2022**  
**STARS Board Room (615 Johnson St.)**

**12:00 PM**

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### CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Gutierrez called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

### ROLL CALL

*Present: Ms. Diana Gutierrez – Chair, Mr. Carl Ruth, Mr. Floyd Kloc, Ms. Kathy Miller, Ms. Vickie Dillon, Mr. Dennis Browning*

*Absent: Mr. Larry Jones Sr., Ms. Evelyn McGovern*

### EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS

*Moved by Mr. Ruth, supported by Mr. Kloc, to excuse the absent members. Motion carried unanimously.*

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

*None*

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*Mr. Ruth, supported by Mr. Kloc, moved to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Mr. Browning, supported by Mr. Ruth, moved to approve the minutes from October 24, 2022, 2022 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (11/21/2022)

*Executive director, Mr. Glenn Steffens, said that during this meeting the committee talked about planning the board meeting event, in January or February of 2023, to discuss the Boards future goals, as well as goals for the Executive director. Ms. Kathy Miller said any information regarding this event/retreat will come via email. Mr. Floyd Kloc asked when this event will happen, and how long it will be. Mr. Steffens said that Ms. Miller and he are both speaking with some vendors and are trying to narrow it down to one. That this may be between 2-3 half day sessions, but we won't know until a vendor is chosen. Ms. Miller suggested that this could take place over one full day if possible. She said that completing the S.W.O.T. Analysis has freed up some time, so it may not take multiple days. They will attempt to plan this and get everything done in January if possible and go from there. Ms. Vickie Dillon said if she knows in advance, she will adjust her schedule accordingly. Mr. Kloc requested communication about this at least a month or half a month before the event. Mr. Steffens said we are working on some of the developed goals by MBTA in the past. Mr. Dennis Browning asks about the vacant board spot, and the upcoming vacancy with Mr. Larry Jones Sr. leaving the board after this year. Ms. Dillon says the nominating committee meeting is after this meeting. Mr. Browning suggests we push the event back if needed so the new member can attend, and suggested they give the new member some sort of board orientation prior to the event/outing. Mr. Steffens alludes to being able to explain how we run, funding, give them a tour; but that a board member may want to go over the board's responsibilities with this new member(s). Ms. Miller said that the committee reached out to some great vendors for this, and they are waiting to hear back after the holiday weekend. Mr. Steffens stated that he may bring this need up to the association, on December 8<sup>th</sup>, to see if this is a service they could provide in the future. Mr. Kloc said that may need to be pushed back a month if there is a new board member. Mr. Steffens said he will act accordingly to what the board*

wants.

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE (11/28/2022)

*Mr. Steffens explained that they met this morning and there is a budget that we are recommending approval of. Mr. Kloc said the committee went over the cashflows, October financials, and the FY2023 budget. Ms. Lauren Pavlowski, CFO, proposed a budget of 12 million dollars. We added fares back, as well as a new agreement with Huron Casting. There is an adjustment to the urban and non-urban state of liabilities based on the percent for allowable expenses we will get back. There is an adjustment to the Cares Act at 3.2 million. Ms. Miller asked where those line items were, and Ms. Pavlowski and Mr. Kloc showed her. Ms. Pavlowski said we are comparing things to FY2020 now that the fares are back, and she expects us to have less riders for a short period- because some people don't want to pay them. She stated they looked at FY2022 for staffing levels, where we anticipate being, outside services, operating supplies, insurance, and balance from prior year to year. Outside services, fuel, liability insurance, and maintenance costs all increased due to inflation. Ms. Dillon asked about the dispatcher salary and wages being down. Ms. Pavlowski said they were able to cut down overtime and that caused a huge decrease. Ms. Dillon asked if we should be concerned if the Cares Act will balance the budget. Mr. Steffens said this will be addressed later. Ms. Diana Gutierrez asked about having a SVSU pass, as we currently have one for Delta College. Mr. Steffens said if things are worked out with them, they may have passes made available to them, and they may suggest a student fee for this. He said the goal would be to have a year or semester fee for transportation and he will advocate for STARS as much as possible, but we need to take things one at a time to make sure things are done right. Ms. Gutierrez said she also has heard a personal increase of advertising on the radio for STARS and asked if we have enough budgeted for advertising. Mr. Steffens said the radio is not very expensive, and Ms. Pavlowski chimed in saying that they are budgeting like when they pushed for more advertising last year. Mr. Steffens said we will have radio ads for as long as we need them (i.e., there is a need for more employees, or to fill buses). Mr. Gutierrez said this is a great development and requested a motion to accept the Budget and action items. Mr. Kloc moved to adopt it; Mr. Ruth supported this. The budget was carried unanimously.*

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

None

#### ACTION ITEMS

None

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

*Mr. Steffens introduced the new director of IT, Mr. Andrew Abnett. Mr. Abnett introduced himself to the board. He then introduced the new finance assistant, Ms. Kayla Fales. Ms. Fales introduced herself to the board. Mr. Steffens wanted to give a brief rundown of the recent election, stating that Michigan went from a purple to blue state. He said transit is universal for both the democrats and republicans, and we need to be in the ear of both sides. He suggests we should be prepared for the house to flip again in 2 years. He said before at the MPTA meeting they were going to ask for a lower amount, but after the election they want to now ask for at least another 25 million to reach a funding threshold. He said he will meet this week to determine how high we should aim, and if we should ask for 50-100 million for year 1. He also plans to give the new candidate a tour of STARS if possible. Mr. Steffens explained that when we started, we were funded at 35-38%, now 29-30%, and looks to keep going down. Max funding is up to 50% operations and 60% rural. The goal is to have those ceilings met and look to amend that law to take out "up to". He wants to be sure both sides are sympathetic to transit, and our needs. Mr. Steffens is trying to alert people that we have 2-3 years before the ARPA fund dries up. Small, up to 3 million dollars funded, agencies will receive the most strife. STARS may have to cut some services and programs in that case. Yet that would lead to getting less funding from the state, so that isn't an option. He states we must get more money from the state or find other ways to receive proper funding. Mr. Steffens wants to get in the governor's ear about this issue, and that with the democrats in power that may be possible. We also need to figure out who is advocating for MDOT funding, and that we may need to advocate for it ourselves if others don't. Every transit millage in Michigan was passed this election, and he thinks Lansing will continue to see how important it is we receive funding and serve the community. We cannot*

continue with the 3.2 millage and need to advocate for more. He said we cannot leave this for us to handle locally unless we can tax additionally for the necessary funding. If not, we need help from the State. Ms. Miller says there is 3 million from the Cares Act in the budget. Mr. Steffens states that there is only about a year left with the Cares Act funding, and we need a resolution for the following years. Ms. Miller expressed the importance of this being a goal for the board. Mr. Steffens hopes by June of 2023 a budget will be passed or get an answer as soon as possible so we can search for funding elsewhere.

Mr. Steffens brought up that STARS will be providing transit to a youth group on 11/29/2022 that President Joe Biden will be attending. He also mentioned our recent route through Frankenmuth. It has run twice, the first weekend with 120 riders, the second with 1100 riders. Everyone is working hard on this. Mr. Steffens also lets the board know of his upcoming trip to oversee production of new buses at Gillig, with Mr. Vincent DeLosSantos. These are \$140,000.00 per bus, and we should have these on the road by the beginning of February once they are done being wrapped, and training is complete. There are no updates on the blue birds, as those are leaking. Mr. Steffens also bring up that we won't be selling passes until the new system is in line, and most importantly once the drivers app is running properly. Then we will look to implement the passes, and the phone app. We are currently doing quality control for the trip planning portion of the app and trying to adjust this accordingly until up and running. Ms. Dillon asks if this is common for others in transit. Mr. Steffens explains how we are one of the first to do this and are "guinea pigs" for this new technology/application. Ms. Gutierrez asks about the public's reaction to reinstating fares. Glenn suggests besides fraud, tearing of bills to avoid paying the full fee, this is going well – and alludes to the passes and app lowering the percentage of fraud in the future. Ms. Miller asks how many seats will be on the new buses? Mr. Steffens says there will be 28 seats, and up to 50 standing room on the new Gillig's, and the blue birds we spoke of previously seat 30-31. MS. Miller suggests we have city leaders ride the bus to promote the new systems once in place. Mr. Steffens says we fired off a draft MOU for Hemlock Semi-Conductor, we are looking to have \$165,000.00 annually for operations, and we are asking them to fund for that. Michigan Sugar has yet to get back to us, so we are focusing on Hemlock Semi-Conductor for now.

Mr. Steffens brought up that Mr. Larry Jones Sr. is leaving the board and will be missed with his vacancy coming at the end of the year. We are currently looking to bring on Dr. Michael Gavin, from Delta College, as a possible board member, after he interviews with the nominating committee. Ms. Miller says he emphasizes the importance for equality and service, and she thinks he will be a great addition to the board. Mr. Steffens supports him joining the board. Mr. Kloc hopes he will be involved with the community if brought on.

Mr. Steffens will be out of state until 12/19/2022 and will have Ms. Lauren Pavlowski or MS. Kimberly Davis sit in on any December meetings for him if he cannot attend, and suggests any concerns be brought to their attention if necessary. Ms. Gutierrez states there is no further discussion and motions to move forward, no one was opposed.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Dillon asked how the Rides to Wellness program is going, and Mr. Steffen said it has gone well as expected.

Ms. Miller expressed excitement regarding all the progress and growth.

Mr. Ruth said to keep up the good work and have a great upcoming holiday.

Ms. Gutierrez thanked the drivers and asks everyone to have a safe holiday.

Mr. Browning agrees with Ms. Gutierrez.

Mr. Ruth suggests we look into providing routes for weeknights and Saturdays, and Mr. Steffens says we are looking into this.

Mr. Kloc motioned that the upcoming December meeting should be canceled, Mr. Ruth supported this.

Unanimously approved, no further discussion.

The next Board meeting will be January 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2023.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Gutierrez, supported by Mr. Kloc, moved to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried at 12:56 PM.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Vickie Dillon, Secretary