



SAGINAW TRANSIT AUTHORITY REGIONAL SERVICES BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday – January 23rd, 2023
STARS Board Room (615 Johnson St.)

12:00 PM

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, Ms. Evelyn McGovern

Absent: Dr. Michael Gavin

EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS

Moved by Mr. Ruth, supported by Ms. Miller, to excuse the absent member. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Ruth, supported by Mr. Browning, motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Browning, supported by Mr. Kloc, moved to approve the minutes for the November 28th, 2022, Board of Directors meeting as presented, with the promise of a few grammatical changes being made, which were brought forward by Mr. Kloc and Ms. McGovern. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Ms. Gutierrez stated that Executive director, Mr. Glenn Steffens, had an update for the Board on the STARS fleet. He said after the Board meeting, he will take any members who would like to see the new buses from Gillig for a tour.

Mr. Steffens also had an update for the Board regarding the five weekend's STARS had a route in Frankenmuth. Mr. Steffens stated there were over 4,000 plus riders over the course of those 5 weekends, with very positive feedback from businesses and the public. He suggests we need better planning and infrastructure for this if we run a route again in 2023 and/or future years. Per Mr. Steffens, there was an issue with a vital turnaround spot after it had rained one weekend, so that stop had to be shut down for a few days, therefore we need better communication next time when planning routes. Some days we had close to 1,000 riders on that one route, with that one bus – which is impressive according to Mr. Steffens because our fixed route fleet typically handle around 1,600 riders a day. He is speaking with the City Council of Frankenmuth and their Board of Directors about doing this on a possibly permanent basis for weekends. The City of Frankenmuth would like a connection to Saginaw, which is also something to consider. He says that both Saginaw Township and the City of Frankenmuth both seem to be on board for this in the future. Mr. Ruth asked when we did this last year. Mr. Steffens explained that this went on for three weeks prior, and that the biggest issue here is the public not knowing about the route. Ms. McGovern asked where the route was. Mr. Steffens said this was a loop that ran on the main street. The future of this all depends on what the community wants and what they are willing to fund.

A contract with Hemlock Semiconductors has been signed, per Mr. Steffens, with a 150k operational cost per year, with rides being paid via the employer -similar to the pigeon model- and them directly collaborating with their employees regarding fares, employee billing, etc. Mr. Ruth asked what the schedule for this look like. Mr. Steffens explained that this will run for 7 days a week according to their shifts, so 6am-6pm. This would run stops daily besides for holidays or other days that the business is close. Ms. Gutierrez asked what we would do if they don't close on holidays. Mr. Steffens said we would likely run if necessary, or work with them to sort out a solution. Ms. Gutierrez suggests Mr. Steffens talk to them ahead of time regarding their holiday schedule.

ACTION ITEMS

Approvals for the annual VAP, TAC member roster, and Accessibility Plan will be brought to the board via the Planning and Governmental affairs committee for approval along with their update per their meeting on January 9th, 2023.

A recommendation for a vendor for the Strategic Planning Session for the Board of Directors will be brought to the board, for approval before moving forward with a vendor, via the Personnel Committee along with their update per their meeting earlier in the day on January 23rd, 2023.

PLANNING & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE (01/09/2023)

Mr. Steffens explained that the Planning and Governmental affairs committee need the following documents approved: The annual VAP, the updated TAC roster with new members included, and the 2024 Accessibility Plan. These documents had been reviewed at the Planning Committee meeting and should be all set to be approved unless anyone had reasons to oppose them. Ms. Gutierrez asked for a motion to approve them. Ms. Miller motioned to approve the VAP, Tac Roster, and Accessibility Plan as provided. Ms. Dillon seconded this motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATE (01/23/2023)

Ms. Miller said the Personnel Committee has provided the board with two proposals for the Strategic Planning meeting, but are recommending the one from Omnitech, with Ms. Leanne Keller, as the vendor for this project. Per Ms. Miller, Ms. Keller's flexibility, attention to detail, and vast client list shows they have the experience for this project – including the fact that most of her larger clients listed transportation as a main concern, which may benefit us. Ms. Miller suggests on paper Mr. Jerry Nehr may seem cheaper, but he is at a higher hourly price point. She believes the cost would be equal no matter which vendor we go with. Mr. Browning asks where each candidate is based out of. Ms. Miller said Ms. Keller with Omnitech is based out of Midland, and Ms. Kim Davis with HR said Mr. Nehr is from Detroit. Ms. Miller explained how Mr. Nehr has provided trainings and teambuilding for STARS in the past. Mr. Browning wondered if either candidate would be capable of fulfilling our needs. Ms. Miller believes both can do what is needed, but Ms. Keller may be able to provide a bit more detail and insight. Mr. Kloc mentions Omnitech's proposal mentioned a 3–5-year plan and asked if Mr. Nehr would as well. Ms. Miller said they both mentioned working on a multi-year plan. Mr. Browning asked if anyone had spoken in detail with these candidates. Ms. Miller said she hasn't with Omnitech but that she would after deciding on a candidate. Ms. Davis said she did relay some information and spoke regarding a few details with Mr. Nehr. Ms. Miller stated Mr. Nehr has quoted us at 3k for 15 hours of work (possibly more he has not itemized) and Ms. Keller has quoted us \$5,700 - \$10,500 for 38-70 hours. She seems very flexible based on our needs and budget. Mr. Kloc expressed concern about the higher end of Omnitech's budget and wanted the Board to be aware we would end up paying closer to 10k. Mr. Ruth said with Omnitech it sounds like we can control the number of hours we use, and that we likely won't need 70 hours. Mr. Kloc also expressed concern with not knowing exactly what we would get from Omnitech. Mr. Steffens referred to page 9 of the proposal, which breaks this process up into stages. He suggested that we could go through the 2-hour Stage 1 with Omnitech as a consultation, and from there we should be able to determine with them what we need from this Strategic Planning Session and how many hours of work will be needed. Mr. Browning asked if Stage 1 is the only thing we are for sure planning to commit to with Omnitech. Ms. Dillon also asked if they could only commit to those 2 hours and go from there. Ms. Miller believes Ms. Keller and Omnitech would be flexible enough to agree to going over Stage 1 first before making further commitments. She says after this initial meeting, she should be able to provide a clear plan of what they'd like to do regarding this session. Mr. Kloc agreed with this plan. He explained that

Board members need to anticipate at least one full day for this session, with the possibility of a second day.

Ms. Gutierrez says she would like there to be a subcommittee for this Strategic Planning Session, to plan the session along with the vendor. She suggested this include the Personnel Committee, members of HR, such as Ms. Kim Davis, and anyone else Mr. Steffens would like involved with this. Mr. Steffens agrees if this is the Board's wishes. Mr. Browning said this committee's members should be at Mr. Steffens' discretion. Mr. Steffens said Ms. Davis and him will not do anything against the Board's wishes. Mr. Browning asked if we have a budget for this. Mr. Steffens anticipated 10-15k for this and explained that we have budgeted with things like trainings, teambuilding's, and things like this in mind. Mr. Steffens believes the return on investment will make the cost worth it, especially spread over the 3-5 possible years this accounts for. Ms. Gutierrez requested a motion to move forward with this vendor. Ms. Dillon agreed if we are only motioning to move forward with Stage 1 of the proposal, and nothing more at this time. Mr. Browning motioned to move forward with this vendor as recommendation, and Stage 1 – up to 2 hours- of their proposal. Ms. Miller said they were not looking for a motion, as the Personnel committee was just making a recommendation. Ms. Gutierrez stated that she thinks the Board agreed with the recommendation's presented and asked if there were any further questions. Ms. Gutierrez also let the Board know that they are appointing the new member Dr. Michael Gavin to the Personnel committee, so he should be able to help with this. No further discussion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director, Mr. Glenn Steffens stated that Bluebirds we previously purchased came in poor condition, so we sent them all back to be brought up to par. The eight new Gillig buses are in excellent condition. Mr. Steffens said the news of the 1.7 trillion appropriation bill out of DC, which included 4 million in funding for STARS for new buses. The State should match 20%, meaning we would have 5 million dollars in funding for new buses. He believes we may be able to get 10 more Gillig buses, or buses similar to the 8 new ones we recently purchased. Mr. Steffens brought up that an event to show off these new buses was mentioned during the Personnel Committee meeting, where we could possibly have a ribbon cutting ceremony with Congressman Dan Kildee. We could use this to thank the staff, honor the 4 or 5 drivers we have retiring this year, as well as show appreciation to the community. We may even possibly have a bus parade, as suggested by Ms. Gutierrez. Mr. Steffens said we are years ahead in terms of what he thought our fleet would look like. He went on about how our contract with Gillig started with 8 for the original purchase, but can go up to 25 more buses. If we can purchase 10 like we will have the funding for, that leaves us with the potential of ordering 15 more. Mr. Steffens thinks at this rate, we may be years ahead of our projected plan for our fleet. He says we have the support of the community and our staff to thank for this. Mr. Steffens believe an event would appropriately show STARS' appreciation, and with Congressman Kildee there it could turn heads. Mr. Steffens also brought up the fact that the head of planning, Mr. Bill Wright, will be retiring here shortly as Mr. Dennis McDonagh takes over his position. We are currently planning a sendoff for him, and the Board members will be notified once a plan is in place.

Mr. Steffens shared the news that Hemlock Semiconductors contract with STARS was signed on Friday. We have no news on the possible contract with Michigan Sugar. Mr. Steffens states that February 6th is still the date he wants to see the new tablet system up and running for fixed route, but he wants to make sure this is done correctly. He says we need to figure out a good model for 30 day passes for government agencies. Mr. Steffens is optimistic that February will be the month we can start running routes both earlier and later in the day, possibly 6am-9pm. He hopes the new buses can start running in February as well, and we can use the phone app and card scanners.

Mr. Kloc asks if we are looking at Electric buses to integrate into our fleet. Mr. Steffens believes the push for electric vehicles is misguided, and that there is a renewable diesel option that would better fit our needs as well as being more sustainable. As other states push for electric vehicles, we may be able to require some of those nice renewable diesel from these transport's making the switch for a good price possibly. Mr. Kloc mentioned that there are also other biofuels that use grease from restaurants and other businesses that we could look into. Ms. Miller suggests we speak with transits making these changes to get their opinions on these alternative fuel buses.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Dillon said the staff has done a nice job making these changes and she is excited to see this progress.

Ms. Miller thanked the staff for their hard work.

Mr. Ruth said a late happy new year to everyone, and to keep up the good work.

Mr. Kloc appreciated being able to converse about EV's and being able to openly have these conversations.

Mr. Browning had a great time at the new employee luncheon and had some great discussions with STARS latest new hires. He filled them in on the Boards roll here at STARS and appreciated their enthusiasm.

Mr. Steffens appreciated the Board participation at the luncheon and said it does make a difference to the staff.

Ms. McGovern enjoyed visiting the potter station. She also gave kudos to Ms. Miller for going above and beyond to make positive change at STARS for the Board, the staff, and the community.

Ms. Miller asked about RCAH funds. Ms. Jamie Forbes said we had an opportunity to pitch our infrastructure proposal on paper, and that our name was mentioned during their last meeting, but that is as far as we were able to go with this. She is hopeful the discussion may continue and will keep an eye out for other opportunities for us.

Ms. Gutierrez agreed that the luncheon was fun, and then gave props to Ms. Davis for putting it together and making it an enjoyable experience for the new staff.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ruth, supported by Mr. Kloc, motioned to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried at 1:03 PM.



Vickie Dillon, Secretary

Date:

2/20/23