

**Transit Advisory Board**

**Meeting Minutes**

 **March 10, 2016**

**Called to Order:**

Ms. JonesFrancis called the meeting to order at 11:50 am

**Board Members:**

In Attendance: Lucy Birbiglia, Cristen Conley, David Kesner, Orville Pratt, Willie Richardson, David Schott, Warren Smith, Bob Tilley, Jayne Frandsen.

**Public:**

In Attendance: Art Lake, Cheryl Hunt, Judy Hatfield, Greg Perez.

**ABQ Ride:**

In Attendance: Bruce Rizzieri, Director; Phyllis Santillanes, Administrative Assistance.

Ms. JonesFrancis took roll and polled the Board as well as others as to their mode of transportation to the meeting.

**Acceptance of Agenda:**

Ms. JonesFrancis asked for approval of the agenda. Mr. Pratt moved to accept the minutes. Mr. Richardson seconded and the minutes were approved.

**Minutes from February 11, 2016:**

Correction to the minutes: Ms. Birbiglia reminded Transit that the Sun Van newsletter needs to be provided in alternative media when requested; also added to the minutes was a suggestion from Ms. Birbiglia to read the News Letter as part of the voice over that individuals listen to as they wait to schedule a Sun Van ride; another correction was the spelling of Mr. Tilley’s name; and Mr. Pratt asked for a roster of the buses from Mr. Rizzieri.

Mr. Smith moved for approval. Mr. Richardson seconded and the minutes were approved with corrections.

**Public Comment:**

Mr. Lake stated that he would like to be part of the Board and asked if the Board had a Mission Statement? Mr. Lake asked, “From where does the Board receive its information.” Ms. Conley stated the Mission Statement was on the website at cabq.gov/transit. This web site also includes information about the TAB.

Mr. Lake discussed the ART project. He stated that public is confused about ART. They have concerns about how the ART project will change Nob Hill.

 Mr. Tilley stated that Nob Hill has been changing for the past one hundred years. The question is, “Will it be changed for the better?”; Mr. Tilley believes the change will be for the better.

Ms. Hunt wanted to know about the Board members, their interest in being on the board, and the member’s board position.

 Ms. Hunt asked Mr. Rizzieri if there was some where that one can see how the funds come into the Transit system. Ms. Hunt wanted to know both the operating fund and the capital fund.

Mr. Rizzieri explained that regarding the operating fund the City’s General Fund receives money from the gross receipts tax. In the budget process the administration makes recommendations to the city council and the council votes on the budget and sends to the mayor for approval.

The department receives money from Bernalillo County because the county contracts with the department to provide fixed-route and paratransit service within the County.

The Rio Metro Regional Transit Division also contracts with the department to provide specific fixed-route service; service to several New Mexico Rail Runner stations, and some other fixed-route service. Also, Rio Metro receives funds through the countywide transit gross receipts tax and the department receives some of those funds.

 The City has a one-quarter percent transportation gross receipt tax and the department receives thirty-six percent of these funds for operating purposes.

On the capital side there is a general obligation bond election every other year. The property mill levy funds the cost of the projects approved through the bond election.

Federal Transit Administration money is used to pay for technical staff. Some parts for bus maintenance can also be paid with Federal funds.

Ms. Hunt also asked if any particular age group qualify for federal funding, if this ridership increases. Mr. Rizzieri stated there are formula funds in the Federal appropriation process. The formula includes factors, such as population density, to determine the amount of these types of funds for transit agencies.

 Ms. Hunt asked if the formula factors in security. Mr. Rizzieri stated that it does not.

 Ms. Hunt wanted to know where she can see the budget. Mr. Rizzieri stated the budget is on the city website.

Mr. Rizzieri stated we do not receive money from the state and no operating money from the Federal government.

Mr. Tilley also added that transit funds are stretched because they are competing with roads and maintaining bike trails.

Ms. Conley responded to Ms. Hunt’s first question. Ms. Conley stated “All of us are civic minded volunteers, who work for people who use the bus.” The Board members continued by each introducing themselves and giving a short background history and of their interest in transit services.

Ms. Hatfield commented that the printed bus schedule had enough space at the bottom to print the weekend schedule. Her comment was that it would be nice for all the information to be in the same place.

Mr. Perez, who is a driver with ABQ Ride, commented that he was shocked that more people were not at this meeting. His concern was that road construction pylons were blocking some bus stops and it is causing him to not to be able to get close to the curb for a person with a disability. Mr. Perez stated he was unaware to whom he would bring this concern to, so he brought this to the Board. Mr. Perez stated that he loves his job as a driver.

**Announcements/Chairpersons’ report**

Ms. JonesFrancis announced a “Complete Streets Charrette” that was currently being held at the Collection Library focusing on the area from Central and Broadway to Central and 1-25.

Ms. JoneFrancis inquired about a short article in the Alibi in which it stated that Councilor Brad Winter and Councilor Ken Sanchez introduced a measure to create a Central Avenue Transit Advisory Board. Ms. JonesFrancis questioned the creation of another transit advisory board.

 Mr. Rizzieri stated that he cannot speak for the city councilors, however, he thinks the concept is similar to that of the “Downtown Action Team”, which concentrates on improvements in the Downtown area. The proposed board would provide suggestions and recommendations regarding transit, zoning, and land use plans along Central and along Louisiana to Uptown.

Ms. JonesFrancis and other Board members stated that they feel the proposed board is a replication of the TAB.

Mr. Tilley asked Mr. Rizzieri how many ART meetings has ABQ Ride had? Mr. Rizzieri stated that there has been 20 public meetings, 6500 personal contacts, as well as many requested individual meetings.

A question was asked about left hand turns. Mr. Rizzieri stated that along segments of Central Ave. median openings are being closed. However, additional signalized locations for protected left-hand and U-turns are being added. From Coors to Louisiana, there will be signalized locations, on average, every one-quarter mile.

**Directors Report:**

Mr. Rizzieri began by reporting about the ART meetings. Mr. Rizzieri commented on how some of the meetings had gotten rowdy, as many had seen in the news. The purpose of the meeting in the Kiva auditorium in the convention center was to allow individuals the opportunity to express their opinion and ask questions regarding ART.

Mr. Rizzieri stated that each person who wanted to speak was given two minutes to do so. Mr. Rizzieri stated that the questions and comments presented at this meetings will be posted on the ART webpage, with responses. This will be in about a week. Mr. Rizzieri thanked members of the TAB for being present at some of these meetings,

Mr. Rizzieri wanted to present some of the concerns and comments that were made regarding project funding. One of the comments was why isn’t the city spending this money on police, mental health, and road improvements. Mr. Rizzieri explained that we can’t spend this money on those types of projects: first, the city can’t use these funds for operating purposes; secondly, these funds are for a specific type of transit project.

Mr. Rizzieri spoke about different locations along Central Ave. In Nob Hill one of the topics discussed during meetings was medians or widen sidewalks. Widen sidewalks would allow for outside seating areas, and landscaping. Slower traffic would result from the reduction of general purpose travel lanes to one in each direction.

 West of the river the two lanes of general purpose travel lanes in each direction will remain. The medians will be used for the two dedicated ART lanes. Sidewalks will be widened where public right-of-way is available and sidewalk landscaping will be added. The city will have another, separate landscaping project along this portion of Central.

Mr. Rizzieri stated that throughout the project, Transit will be working with the Small Business Resource Collaborative, which is comprised of organizations outside of the City that work with small businesses to provide information, advise and support in the areas of marketing, advertising, and some financial assistance.

Mr. Rizzieri spoke about the city working with the UNM Fine Arts department to bring performances to construction areas to help bring people to businesses.

Mr. Rizzieri spoke about the funding resolution that the City Council will discuss on March 21. The funding is $69 million in FTA Smart Starts funds that is recommended in the U.S. Department of Transportation budget for FY 2017. If the resolution passes, the ART project will go forward and construction could start sometime this summer, assuming that the city receives a letter of no prejudice from the Federal Transit Administration, a type of pre-construction agreement. Basically, the letter of no prejudice allows the city to spend local money on the project before the grant is approved, and these local funds are still eligible to be accepted as matching funds.

Mr. Rizzieri also spoke about the International District. This area will have stations at San Mateo and one at Louisiana; a station is not planned for the Central and San Pedro location.

Regarding construction: Mr. Rizzieri stated that through a competitive selection process Bradbury Stamm was selected as the construction manager at risk. Bradbury will work with HDR, the prime consultant, through a value engineering process to identify cost reductions that do not significantly affect the project. Bradbury will develop a construction schedule and prepare a guaranteed maximum price cost proposal. The city will review the final cost proposal and determine whether to accept or to go with a different construction method.

Mr. Rizzieri stated that during construction the city will require the contractor to keep one lane in each direction open, and will have other items that will help to minimize construction impacts to businesses.

There was a question regarding the source funds for the low interest small business loans. Mr. Rizzieri stated that he believes the city is proposing to use some funds from an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG).

Ms. Conley asked, “Does that actually take money away from low income neighborhoods in order to give it to the existing businesses?” Mr. Rizzieri stated that he believes that the city has to update its UDAG plan every so many years, and the plan is now being updated. The proposed plan, he believes, is to include segments of Central that qualify under the UDAG guidelines. The dollar amount is about $2.5 million. The proposed updated plan is now in the public review process.

Mr. Rizzieri also went over ridership statistics, stating that it is holding steady.

Mr. Tilley stated he would not be able to support the idea that the ART will stop a 9:00 pm. Mr. Rizzieri stated that he will look into this issue.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Richardson motioned to adjourn, Mr. Smith seconded and the meeting is adjourned at 1:18 pm.

The next meeting for TAB will be held on April 14, at 11:45 am, on the second floor of the Alvarado Transit Center.