

Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2014

Members Present: Michael Benson Tom Crawford
Robert Goeddel LouAnne Bullington
Stephen Kunselman

Members Absent: None

Guests:

Officer Jamie Adkins, A2 Police
Jackie Beaudry, City Clerk
Mark LaSarge, Yellow Car/Select Ride
JP Heythaier, Blue Cab Company
Rick Clark, Amazing Blue
John Heed, Select Ride
Mark Neumann, Stadium Transport
Sarah Singleton (Recording Secretary)

I. CALLED TO ORDER – 8:43 a.m. by Mr. Benson

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Bullington moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Goeddel seconded. The motion passed.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

1. John Heed of Select Ride said the ride-sharing drivers are driving without proper insurance. He is not aware of any personal insurance policies that allow for commercial service or livery service.
2. Rick Clark of Amazing Blue Taxi said he sent the taxicab board an email with three links attached from independent news sources. He encouraged the board to read them.
3. Mark Newman of Stadium Transport said he was not aware of the council meeting discussing the Lyft and Uber. He said Uber X has 60-70 cars out during the day and night. All Uber cars have to be insured. He said he talked with at least three drivers for Uber that said they do not have commercial insurance for their vehicles. If there is an accident involving an Uber or Lyft vehicle, the city will be liable. Mr. Neumann said all of his vehicles are insured.
4. Mark LaSarge of Yellow Car/Select Ride asked if it is possible to resubmit the driver registration resolution to council. He would like to see the resolution brought before council again.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of Taxicab Board Minutes from August 28, 2014

Mr. Kunselman moved to approve the Taxicab Board Minutes for August 28, 2014, seconded by Mr. Goeddel. The motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Metro Cabs – Window Wrap Advertising
Officer Adkins brought this agenda item to the board last month and was asked to bring an example of the type of advertisement Metro Cabs would be displaying. Officer Adkins handed out a picture of a window wrapped van from Metro Cabs. As shown, the advertisement does not alter the outside appearance of the vehicle and they are temporary.

Ms. Bullington asked about obstructing views. Officer Adkins said passengers can see out but no one can see in. Mr. Kunselman asked if staff have an opinion from the attorney's office. Officer Adkins said she has not discussed vehicle advertising with the attorney's office. Mr. Crawford said vehicle advertising is not mentioned in the regulations.

Mr. Benson believes advertising could change the look of the vehicle. He thinks it's a distraction but it will allow them to compete with buses that advertise. He talked about whether the rates should be displayed on the window of the vehicle and how advertising might interfere. Mrs. Bullington and Mr. Kunselman said that they would not have a problem with advertising it if the attorney's office did not have objection. Mr. Kunselman responded to Mr. Benson's statement about where the rates would be located on the vehicle. He said the rates shouldn't be posted on the window because when the window goes down, the rates won't be visible.

Mr. Kunselman moved to postpone this item until after the discussed changes to taxicab regulation, seconded by Ms. Bullington. The motion passed.

2. Taxicab Rate Change Fees

Mr. Crawford said there is a fee charged once a year for meter inspection. He said, due to the fact that vehicle inspections occurred only a few months ago, we are not planning to charge a fee for this new implementation. However, we anticipate revisiting the fee level and incorporate it into the city's fee changes. It will go into effect next July. The fee charges/changes will have to be submitted to council for approval. Mr. Benson asked that the new charge be shared with the board prior to submitting to council.

3. Discuss Taxicab Multiple Rate Option

Mr. Crawford said the new rate card is set up to include standard and premium rates which allow companies to determine when and how much a premium or standard rate would be applied. A draft of the new rate card was distributed and discussed. Officer Adkins said that an area should be added to explain when premium rates apply. It was stated that a lower rate than what is on the rate card could be charged. Currently, a registration form is downloaded from the city website and brought in for the inspection. For new registration and a once a year change, this new card will have to be type in online and printed out on a 8-1/2 x 11 sheet of paper and brought in for changes to be made. In addition, a plastic holder that fit over the headrest will be provided by the city to hold the rate card and other documents required by the city.

Mr. Benson said his understanding after reading the proposed ordinance is that we provide for varying rates per vehicle rather than per company. Mr. Crawford confirmed that rates are set per vehicle. Officer Adkins said companies can request new rates beginning October 13, 2014 and she would have 30 days to do inspection.

4. Discuss Changes to Taxicab Regulations

Mr. Crawford discussed changed made to taxicab regulations. He pointed out the regulations have been numbered to be consistent with the ordinance. There were no changes to company licenses. Other changes were shown in track changes in the handout. Mr. Benson asked for comments from the taxicab industry.

Mr. Neumann of Stadium Transport said New York City post rates on the back door. Mr. Clark said he is concerned with the hanging document holder for the rate card. Officer Adkins showed a picture of the hanging document holder and stated the cost covered by the city.

The board agreed that the rates should be posted on the passenger side door.

Ms. Bullington moved to approve changes to the taxicab regulations effective October 13, 2014, seconded by Mr. Kunselman. The motion passed.

5. Vehicle Advertising Discussion Continued –

Mr. Kunselman said the board currently does not regulate advertising. Ms. Bullington said as long as it is legal; she does not have a problem with advertising. Mr. Benson said he is less concerned with advertising because the police will enforce if there is a visible obstruction.

VI. ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

Mr. Crawford commented about the question asked about bringing back the resolution that fail at council for vehicle registration. He said that would be a council decision. Council asked staff to bring an operating

agreement between the city and Uber and Lyft. Mr. Crawford said the agreement will probably be more like the agreement Detroit has with Uber and Lyft. Mr. Kunselman said that we have heard enough about operating agreements to know that we cannot enter into an agreement that does not comply with state law. Mr. Crawford said staff is working out the details and language of the agreements. Mr. Kunselman said he will bring back the ordinance amendments and take out the sentence that said "must comply with the state limousine act" so that the ordinance amendments and the operating agreement will be on council's agenda at the same time.

Officer Akins said East Lansing regulates limo and taxi. The new regional authority will form a taxicab board to deal with Uber and Lyft.

Mr. Crawford said someone asked about the October 6th council agenda. He said we don't have anything taxi related on that agenda. It is possible that the operating agreement would be brought to council at the second meeting in October.

Mr. Benson said he thinks it is important for the taxicab industry to differentiate itself from TNC's. There are certain levels of service and guarantees that registered taxicab companies can provide that TNC don't provide. He encourages the industry to come up with ways to promote that. He also encouraged them to reach out to council.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

1. Mark Neumann of Stadium Transport said hanging a rate card holder over the headrest is not a good idea because it may get ripped down. He suggests putting it on the dashboard. He asked if he would have to pay for re-inspections. Mr. Neumann also said that putting the rates on the doors is a good idea. He is looking to come back as a taxi from limo service.
2. Rick Clark said the rate changes seem to be in flux because of the October 13 date and the fact that we don't have the cards ready. He hopes that on October 14, if he doesn't have the rates on the door, he won't get pulled over. Mr. Crawford clarified how the new rate procedure will work. There is a 30 day application window. Companies can apply on October 14 and Officer Adkins has up to 30 day to license all vehicle. He does not expect anyone to be operating with new rates on the vehicle on October 14. Officer Adkins said she will send out notification to all currently taxicab companies outlining what needs to be done along with the time line to get it done.

Officer Adkins asked if the rates need to be posted on both sides of the vehicles. Mr. Crawford said a decision has not been made. Mr. Kunselman told Officer Adkins to use her discretion.

Mr. Benson asked staff to look into how the insurance coverage for taxicabs is set and by whom.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kunselman moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Bullington seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.