

DRAFT Proposed Minutes  
April 16, 2008  
Ann Arbor Transportation Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
ATA Headquarters, 2700 South Industrial Highway, 7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ted Annis, Eli Cooper, Charles Griffith, David Nacht (Chair), Rich Robben

Board Members Absent: Paul C. Ajegba, Sue McCormick

Staff Present: Ken Anderson, Tom Antonow, Terry Black, Francis Borzo, Ron Copeland, Dawn Gabay, Jan Hallberg, Ed Robertson, Mary Stasiak, Phil Webb, Chris White

LAC Representative: Rebecca Burke

Recording Secretary: Karen Wheeler

Mr. Nacht declared that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

1.0 Public Hearing

There was no public hearing.

2.0 Communications and Announcements

Mr. Nacht reported on a meeting with the Mayor of the City of Ann Arbor and the City Administrator. Mr. Nacht informed the City officials of the AATA Board's unanimous straw poll vote in favor of considering changing who AATA is; and that the Board was considering providing service to a broader community. Mr. Nacht expressed a desire for the City and other entities to work with AATA to solve the problem of funding bus service in Ypsilanti.

The Mayor requested that AATA consider holding off on spending Federal funds designated for a downtown transit center to explore the possibility of a future joint bus rail station. Mr. Cooper provided a brief update on discussions at Policy and Operations Committee meetings with regard to the Blake Transit Center. Staff is conducting due diligence on the status of the existing building to aid the Board in making decisions on the open questions of when, how and what to invest in the existing facility.

Board Members discussed the Mayor's request and the status of the two rail projects. Staff provided information on AATA's plans to provide bus service to meet north-south trains should the WALLY project proceed. Mr. Annis reported on information he received indicating that it was doubtful that residents on the west side of town would support buses meeting trains in their neighborhood. Mr. Cooper suggested that the

alternatives analysis may result in a rail system that penetrates through the downtown and that the existing site of the transit may be well positioned for a future rail service.

Ms. Gabay noted that the contract for the State matching funds designated for a downtown transit center expires on September 30, 2009. Mr. Nacht indicated that further discussion with the City regarding timing for spending the funds may be appropriate.

Mr. Nacht reported on a discussion with Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) representatives on the prospect of AATA buses going to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Mr. Nacht announced that he invited Terri Blackmore, WATS Executive Director, to make a presentation to the Board on the Transit Plan for Washtenaw County.

Mr. Nacht announced that he was scheduled to appear before Ann Arbor City Council on April 21 and welcomed Board Members to share thoughts they wanted conveyed to Council.

### 3.0 Public Time

Morton Brown appeared before the Board. Mr. Brown read from a prepared statement that is attached hereto and included as part of the minutes.

Nancy Shore appeared before the Board. Ms. Shore distributed "Curb Your Car Month" t-shirts to Board Members and explained details of the different programs taking place during the month long event. Ms. Shore commented on the upcoming Commuter Express service between Chelsea and Ann Arbor, and the new Night Ride service for downtown employees. Both services are scheduled to begin in May. Ms. Shore commented on a "Zipcar" program to reduce traffic congestion under consideration by the getDowntown program and the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority.

Jim Mogensen appeared before the Board. Mr. Mogensen commented on the possible readjustment of routes, vehicle traffic in the City, and capacity loads on Route #2 buses in the morning and evening due to commuters. Mr. Mogensen indicated that he and others are forced to use private vehicles. Mr. Mogensen commented on an upcoming appearance before the University of Michigan Regents. Mr. Mogensen commented on the challenge of figuring out how to provide service in the urbanized area, and identifying funding for bus service in Ypsilanti.

An unidentified speaker requested clarification that the proposed route changes would not be considered for adoption later in the meeting. Mr. Nacht confirmed that the proposed changes would not be considered for adoption by the Board until their May meeting, following the conclusion of the public comment period and the Board's review of public input. At the request of Mr. Cooper, Ms. Stasiak provided information on the public comment process and schedule. Ms. Stasiak reported that at the conclusion of the comment period staff will make a recommendation on the proposed changes to the Policy and Operations Committee at their May meeting, and a subsequent recommendation to the full Board for consideration.

Carolyn Grawi from the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living appeared before the Board. Ms. Grawi requested announcement of the date and time of the Policy and

Operations Committee Meeting. Mr. Cooper announced that the meeting was scheduled for May 14 from 4-6 p.m. [The meeting date and time were subsequently changed to Thursday, May 15 from 3-5 p.m.] Ms. Grawi thanked Mr. Brown for his comments. Ms. Grawi commented on her ongoing efforts to improve safety for passengers of Route #6 on Ellsworth Road. Ms. Grawi announced a "Let's Get Moving": Public Transit Coalition Legislative Day at the Capitol scheduled for April 22 in Lansing. Ms. Grawi announced a conference "Visions 2008: Technology and Services for the Visually Impaired" a vendor fair scheduled for Wednesday, May 14 from 10 a.m. to p.m. at the Washtenaw Community College Morris Lawrence Building. The event is co-sponsored by the Michigan Commission for the Blind and the Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled.

Mr. Annis requested the jurisdiction where the locations of the bus stops on Route #6 are dangerous. One side is in the City of Ann Arbor, and one side is in Pittsfield Township. Ms. Grawi indicated that the request is to modify the route so that the bus pulls into Research Park Drive, or for placement of a traffic light and platform where people can wait safely. Ms. Grawi has spoken to Pittsfield Township representatives and remains hopeful that a joint effort between AATA, the City and Pittsfield to remedy the situation will be undertaken.

Steve Pierce from Wireless Ypsilanti appeared before the Board. Mr. Pierce requested that AATA consider mounting a wireless antenna at the Ypsilanti Transit Center to allow free WiFi in the passenger waiting area and outside area. Mr. Pierce indicated that a one-time contribution of \$50 was requested to provide the wireless antenna.

Mr. Nacht indicated that Ms. Gabay informed him that the IT Department would be happy to consider Mr. Pierce's proposal.

No one further appearing, Mr. Nacht declared Public Time closed.

#### 4.0 Review and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Griffith moved approval of the minutes as written with support from Mr. Cooper.

##### 4.1 Review and Approval of Minutes of March 19, 2008

##### 4.2 Review and Approval of Minutes of April 9, 2008

The motion passed unanimously.

#### 5.0 Board and Staff Reports

##### 5.1 Treasurer's Report

Mr. Annis distributed a written Treasurer's Report. The report, which Mr. Annis indicated is a "progress report", is attached hereto and included as part of the minutes. Mr. Annis reported that he is working on an analytical view containing three scenarios, each with a different mix of operating efficiency (cost/bus service hour), and a fare that in combination explores the potential of AATA operating

without receiving local tax dollars from City of Ann Arbor taxpayers, and without any purchase of service agreements. Each of the three scenarios is predicated upon providing the same number of service hours that are currently provided; 182,000 hours per year.

Mr. Annis reviewed the report noting that of the ten peer systems he has received information on, the University of Michigan has the lowest cost per service hour, and the second lowest is Knoxville, Tennessee. Mr. Annis reported that AATA has the highest cost per service hour. Mr. Annis noted that absent a local millage, AATA could move quickly to a countywide bus system which would allow for service outside of the City of Ann Arbor without purchase of service agreement arrangements.

Mr. Nacht asked why AATA is more expensive, and where in the budget money can be saved. Mr. Annis indicated that he has not yet determined where money can be saved, that he is waiting on data from staff, and that in the meantime he wanted to share the implications of AATA's expenses with the Board.

Board Members commented on the report and the work Mr. Annis is undertaking. Mr. Griffith suggested that there are two separate issues: funding of the agency and operational efficiencies. Mr. Annis indicated that he is combining the two and asking staff to improve efficiencies. Mr. Annis suggested that AATA could raise fares, and that if Federal and State funds remain at similar levels, operate without millage funds. Mr. Annis will investigate the formulas for State funding and report back to the Board.

In response to a request from Mr. Griffith, Ms. Gabay explained a document containing peer data prepared by staff, originally for fact finding, and distributed to the Board. Mr. Griffith suggested that the data in the report be considered by the Board, noting that what goes into the cost per service hour for some agencies, including U of M, may be very different than what is contained in AATA's cost per service hour.

Mr. Cooper thanked Mr. Annis for his initiative and suggested that the Board commit themselves to exploring the differences between AATA and its peers, through analytical analysis and the perspective and experience of staff, with a goal of obtaining a shared understanding that the Board can benefit from, and that will promote a good debate about different financing scenarios.

#### 5.1.1 Report of Operations for Six Months Ended March 31, 2008

Mr. Annis referred to the Report of Operations noting that the \$185,000 negative variance of budget to actual is not material to a budget of \$24 Million.

#### 5.1.2 Discuss "Report from a Member of the Board" submitted on March 19, 2008

There was no discussion.

## 5.2 Finance and Audit Committee Report

Mr. Robben reported that he met with staff and reviewed an updated hybrid bus analysis. Staff provided an update on the Blake Transit Center site assessment. The item on annual agenda planning was tabled for discussion by the full Committee. Mr. White reported on receipt of preliminary word on the programming of Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds for FY 2009. AATA may receive \$1.3 Million, if a State match is provided. The amount would cover the cost of the last two hybrid electric buses. Staff submitted updates on the quarterly statement of operations and capital budget.

## 5.3 Policy and Operations Committee Report

Mr. Cooper distributed a written Policy and Operations Committee Report for April 9, 2008. Mr. Cooper reviewed the report which is attached hereto and included as part of the minutes.

Mr. Annis suggested that if the Blake Transit Center undergoes a redesign, waiting benches be placed under the roof to give passengers shelter from inclement weather.

Mr. Nacht commented on blogs he recently read information on AATA and transit issues in the community. Mr. Nacht noted that there were several comments about passengers with strollers who perceive attitude problems or rudeness by bus drivers toward slow moving expectant women or women with small children. Mr. Nacht indicated that while he believes the vast majority of AATA drivers do not engage in this type of rude behavior, Mr. Nacht urged staff to make sure that rude behavior toward families, or any passengers, by drivers is not tolerated.

## 5.4 Personnel Committee Report

Mr. Ajegba reported that the Personnel Committee met on April 9 and there was nothing material to report to the Board.

### 5.4.1 Second Quarter Goals and Objectives Update

Ms. Gabay referred to the Second Quarter Goals and Objectives Update.

## 5.5 Ad Hoc Committee Report

Mr. Ajegba announced an April 23 meeting between the Ad Hoc Committee, appointed to serve as the Design Committee, responsible for setting the agenda for the strategic working session, and Doug Eadie. The Committee will work with Mr. Eadie to set the agenda for the May 27 working session. Mr. Annis indicated that he would like to provide input in writing as he is unable to attend the May 27 session. Ms. Gabay indicated that Mr. Eadie will send information to the Board as the agenda is solidified.

5.6 Washtenaw Area Transportation Study Report

Mr. Nacht reported that representatives of bicyclists and pedestrians reiterated their desire to help play a role in the prioritization process of the use of non-motorized funds. WATS has committed to allocating 10 percent of funds to non-motorized use.

The Policy Committee received a report from SEMCOG representatives on a study about the Ambassador Bridge replacement.

5.7 Local Advisory Council Report

Ms. Burke reported that the LAC discussed the proposed service changes and encouraged members to submit emails to AATA on how the changes would impact them. Mr. Sapkiewicz from WATS provided an update on the Town Hall Transit Meeting. A concern was raised about paratransit drivers using cell phones while driving in service. Mr. Clouse agreed to investigate the matter.

5.8 Interim Executive Director's Report

5.8.1 March Performance Indicators

Ms. Gabay referred to the March Performance Indicators noting that ridership continues to grow.

Mr. Cooper noted that there continues to be crowding and more standing loads on buses and asked how AATA is preparing to respond over time. Ms. Gabay responded that staff is monitoring various routes and back up is provided on those routes where possible.

Mr. Annis requested an email listing of routes that have standing loads.

5.8.2 Quarterly Operating Statistics

Ms. Gabay referred to the Quarterly Operating Statistics.

5.8.3 Quarterly Service Standards

Ms. Gabay referred to the Quarterly Operating Statistics.

5.8.4 Report on April 11 Meeting with Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority

Ms. Gabay reported on a meeting called by the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to discuss the Ypsilanti Purchase of Service agreement and Ypsilanti's inability to fund transit. The meeting was attended by representatives from the City of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Chamber, City of Ypsilanti, University of Michigan, Washtenaw Area Transit Study, and Mr. Gabay and Mr. White from AATA.

The discussion was divided into two segments – short term defined as next year; and consideration of a longer term solution. A short term suggestion was that the group would meet again and invite a representative from Washtenaw County. Following the next meeting, representative(s) from the group will go with Ypsilanti representatives to other entities not present to request participation in a program to help Ypsilanti fund the shortage in the near term while the committee works on a longer term solution.

The eight entities suggested to participate include Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, St. Joseph Mercy Health System, Washtenaw County, AATA, Ann Arbor Chamber, Ypsilanti Chamber, and Ann Arbor DDA. The next meeting was scheduled for May to discuss the plan further and develop information to take to various entities. Ms. Gabay will report back to the Board on the group's progress.

#### 5.8.5 Information Technology Department Overview

Ms. Gabay introduced Jan Hallberg, AATA's Information Technology Manager. Ms. Hallberg provided an overview of the Information Technology Department and the systems the department supports. Ms. Hallberg responded to questions on passenger information systems.

Mr. Nacht suggested that the Board may want to have a working session on information technology at a future date.

#### 6.0 Question Time

There were no questions for Ms. Gabay.

#### 7.0 Old Business

##### 7.1 Ann Arbor Connector Study (formerly termed Alternatives Analysis)

Mr. Cooper announced a meeting on the Ann Arbor Connector Study scheduled for April 17, 2008 at AATA Headquarters.

#### 8.0 New Business

There was no new business.

#### 9.0 Public Time

Jim Mogensen appeared before the Board. Mr. Mogensen cautioned the Board to be careful when figuring out and sorting out cost effectiveness as U of M has a very different and low cost basis. Mr. Mogensen commented on how transit is funded nationally.

Carolyn Grawi appeared before the Board. Ms. Grawi shared a concern about the accuracy of timing of the announcement of major time points. Ms. Grawi suggested that it may be possible to improve the trip planner through technology by placing an identification tag on every bus stop and integrating with Google and using AATA's between global positioning system integrated with a microchip system to give customers access to information via cellular telephone.

Ms. Gabay responded that AATA was recently connected to Google Transit with a go live date of April 21. Ms. Stasiak added that the Google maps are much more up to date than AATA's internal mapping and provides customers with three different options to use. One limitation to the system is that it provides users primarily with time based information only. Ms. Stasiak reported that Google was working on a press release to announce the details of the AATA project.

No one further appearing, Mr. Nacht declared Public Time closed.

10.0 Adjournment

Mr. Griffith moved to adjourn the meeting with support from Mr. Cooper. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Nacht adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Eli Cooper, Secretary



For AATA board meeting April 15

My name is Morton Brown and I'd like to talk about the proposed curtailment of the Newport#13 mid day service for myself and for the 35 members of the Newport Bus e-mail group.

The route runs through Kerrytown, and then travels three miles through the residential neighborhoods of North Main Street, Summit Street, Brooks Street, Sunset Road, and Newport Road and then loops back.

Newport#13 serves Forsythe Middle School, Wines Elementary School, and Steiner school. There is no other route nearby. It also brings students to and from Community High. We are retirees, seniors, handicapped individuals, elementary and middle school students, teachers, and parents, UM, Eastern, and Community college students, and non-commuter workers.

Mid day riders typically depend on the bus, ride the bus frequently, but not daily, and not at the same times. As a consequence, there are many more actual riders involved than a simple count of "riders per hour" suggests. They are almost all further than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from alternate bus service, in fact, more than a mile to two miles away, and many would be literally stranded without the service.

Ridership has increased 25% since 2004 even though we lost weekend service a few years ago. According to the AATA website "AATA's goal is to maintain an average of at least 20 passengers for each hour of service." (The passenger per service hour standard is an informative measure: For example, *and example only*, the #22 North-South connector annually serves 5 times the number of passengers as Newport#13, but Newport#13 serves slightly *more* passengers per service hour. In other words, it's cheaper to run!).

In fact, Newport#13 needs to increase ridership by only one person per trip to meet the 20 riders per service hour goal. With AATA expending so much effort on increasing ridership, with gas prices skyrocketing, and parking so difficult, this seems like a much better prospect than curtailment.

Riding the bus, like exercise, is a habit that needs to be encouraged, developed and regularized. How can I suggest to someone that they try taking the bus regularly, if I have to tell them they can't use it in the evening, can't use it on the weekend, and must leave in the early morning and not return until the late afternoon. Indeed, how can I as a rider with alternatives do it myself?

But there is a broader issue. The AATA has a mandate to serve its neighborhoods, which, in turn, support it through millage taxes. It appears that the Board may revoke its historic standard to have transit service within a quarter mile to 95% of the city's residents. It would be a disservice if that mandate were thrown over without the transparency of a broad municipal discussion and public input on this issue. Demographic projections tell us that as the number of seniors and handicapped individuals increases considerably over the coming years the needs of neighborhoods for local service will correspondently increase.

We understand that difficult choices have to be made. The AATA has needs but it also has options. AATA should not cut a neighborhood loose.

Date: 16 April 2008  
 To: AATA Board  
 From: AATA Treasurer, Ted Annis  
 Subject: Treasurer's Report for April 2008

### Progress Report

As Treasurer, I am working on an analytical view containing three scenarios, each a different mix of operating efficiency (cost/bus service hour) and a Fare that in combination explores the potential of the AATA operating without receiving local tax dollars from AA taxpayers and without POSAs (Purchase of Service Agreements) with the City of Ypsilanti and the townships.

Each of the three scenarios for the AATA is predicated upon providing the same level of Service Hours that are provided today (182,000 hours/year) and upon receiving at least the same levels of State and Federal funding that are received today.

### Comparative Data

The common denominator measurement of bus system cost efficiency is cost/service hour.

The bus system with the best cost efficiency that I have been able to locate is in our backyard; it is the University of Michigan bus system with a startlingly low 2007 cost/service hour of \$55.

The second best bus system, which is comparable to the AATA, was the bus system in Knoxville, TN with a 2006 cost/service hour of \$58.60.

The bus systems in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, which are comparable to the AATA, operated at a 2006 cost/service hour of about \$75.

The bus system with the highest cost/service hour that I located was the AATA with a 2006 cost/service hour of \$101.40. For 2007/8, its cost/service hour is \$110.

### The Challenges

The challenges to completing my analytical view are those of obtaining current up-to-date comparative data and verifying that the State funds will remain at their current level of \$7M/year. Requests to staff are outstanding.

The challenge for the AATA will be that of making best-in-class operational efficiency part of its vision and mission.

### The Implications

Without the need for local tax dollars, the AATA could move quickly to become a countywide bus system.

Service to the City of Ypsilanti and the townships without POSAs, thereby requiring no drain on their General Funds.



Date: April 16, 2008  
To: AATA Board  
From: AATA Policy and Operations Committee  
Subject: Policy and Operations Committee Report for April 9, 2008

### **Strollers on Buses:**

The Committee received a presentation updating staff's considerations and investigations related to revising our "no" stroller policy. This issue emerged in response to concerns received from riders. Tri Delta Transit of Antioch, California is unique in staff's investigation as they are the only transit operator that allows strollers on buses. Tri Delta was contacted and staff shared their findings with the Committee. As the next step in moving forward, an evaluation of seating configurations of our bus fleet and options to accommodate strollers on AATA buses was conducted. It appears there are opportunities to allow strollers on our 40-foot coaches by removing a seat and allowing strollers on board. For other coaches in our fleet, consideration for other means of accommodating strollers is underway. This is necessary as there is limited ability to remove a seat and achieve a positive result as with our 40-foot coaches. One option under consideration is the design and fabrication of a mechanism that would safely hold a stroller in place. The Committee asked staff to check with our attorney and insurance carrier in an attempt to clear all hurdles prior to implementing a test period for strollers on buses. There was limited discussion of the impact of removing seats from our buses and the impacts this policy might have on other riders. This issue will be brought back to the Committee in May.

### **Employer Program**

The committee received an update of staff's efforts to develop a series of employer related transportation services. Working with SEMCOG a new online rideshare service, GreenRide, will be available in May. Development of an employee pass program for purchase by employers located outside of the Downtown area also continues. The committee asked for this information to be shared with the finance committee. Information and marketing materials about the A2Chelsea and Night ride services were provided.

**Blake Transit Center**

Staff outlined the procurement process that resulted in the selection of National Building Inspection Services to perform an inspection of the Blake. The inspection process is one part of the overall approach to determine what is needed to improve the Blake Transit Center. Staff outlined a customer-oriented data gathering process to explore the wants and needs of our customers that use the Blake.

Additionally, staff expressed a willingness to explore the opportunity to use the Blake center to demonstrate, showcase, environmental initiatives as another way to position our service within the context of our communities' values and interests in green thinking and doing. Discussion about allowing convenience retail in the facility was mentioned as a mechanism to provide enhanced customer services and possibly generate revenue for the Authority. The committee is looking forward to hearing about the contractor's report at our next meeting.

Updates

The Committee received updates on the following issues.

Service Adjustment Public Meeting Process

Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail

Curb Your Car Month Activities

Wally

Ann Arbor Connector Study

Respectfully submitted,  
Eli Cooper  
P & O Committee Chairman