

**Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2013**

Members Present: Sarah Singleton Michael Benson
 Stephen Kunselman Robert Goeddel
 Tom Crawford Eric Sturgis
 LouAnne Bullington (arrived – 8:45 a.m.)

Members Absent: None

Guests:

Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi
Aamer Jumaa, Enter Taxi Cab
Elaf Ernst, Enter Taxi Cab
Mark LaSarge, Select Ride/Yellow Car
Bill Chinchon, Airtran

I. CALLED TO ORDER – 8:36 a.m.

**Mr. Benson moved to call the meeting to order, seconded by Mr. Goeddel.
The motion passed.**

II. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

a. Mark LaSarge, Select Ride

Mr. LaSarge asked whether the Taxicab Board minutes and agenda have been posted online as mention in the last Board meeting. Mr. Kunselman said the question would be answered under the Administrator’s comments.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ms. Singleton asked that the Election of Officers be added to the agenda under New Business, item #2.

**Mr. Goeddel moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Sturgis.
The motion passed.**

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Crawford asked that corrections be made to the minutes under New Business, item d. The last sentence should read “Mr. Crawford said we will proceed with getting the minutes into Legistar as directed by management.”

Mr. Benson asked that a correction be made on page 4 under Administrator Comments. The third paragraph, last sentence should read "Mr. Goeddel seconded" and the motion passed.

Mr. Benson moved to approve the Board minutes from April 18, 2013 with corrections on pages 3 and 4 as noted above. Mr. Sturgis seconded. The motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Mr. Bill Chinchon, Airtran, - Taxicab Company License

Mr. Crawford advised the Board in Officer Adkins' absence. Officer Adkins did not have any issues with the application as submitted. Ms. Singleton stated that an issue regarding the five mile rule as written in the taxicab Ordinance states that a company has to have a physical address within five miles of the city limits. Mr. Chinchon business address on his application is outside of the five mile limit. Mr. Chinchon said his company is based on the South side of town. Staff will verify his address.

Currently, Airtran is operating all limos and primarily works with the hotel and makes mostly airport runs. This will be their first taxicab. He expects to have two drivers. Ms. Bullington asked if the vehicle is wheel chair accessible. Mr. Chinchon said it is not.

Ms. Singleton stated that the vehicle does not have the word "Cab" or "Taxi" in its name. This may pose a problem with the public identifying the type of vehicle it is such as taxicab vs limo or other. Mr. Crawford said a vehicle is not required to have the word "Cab" or "Taxi" on it but is required not to have it on the vehicle if they are not a licensed taxicab. Mr. Chinchon said the vehicle will have a top light.

Mr. Benson moved to approve Airtran application for a company license, Mr. Goeddel seconded. The motion passed.

b. Aamer Jumaa, Enter Taxi Cab – Taxicab Company License

Enter Taxi Cab, also known as Big Blue Limousine came before the Board at the April 18, 2013 meeting and was denied because of the chosen company name "Big Blue Taxi". Mr. Crawford said Mr. Jumaa is currently the only driver for the company. There are several issues involving Mr. Jumaa as a driver that concerns him with whether the Board should approve the company license. The issues involve some existing violations of the taxicab Ordinance where he was operating as a taxicab even though the vehicle is a limo. When stopped, he did not have his driving records with him. Mr. Crawford said the item mentioned was not an explicit reason for denial but it has caused some concern. Mr. Jumaa's ability to interact with the customers in English is also a concern and is required by the Ordinance. Mr. Jumaa was recently involved in a traffic crash and

required someone to interpret to the officer to get his information. Mr. Crawford recommended not approving Mr. Jumaa's company license.

Mr. Sturgis asked if Mr. Jumaa has a meter in his vehicle. Mr. Crawford said Mr. Jumaa has a licensed limo and should not have a meter in his vehicle. Ms. Ernst said her father, Mr. Jumaa, had a meter in the vehicle because he was preparing for approval to operate as a taxi and forgot to take the meter out. Mr. Sturgis asked Mr. Jumaa if he would understand him if he was riding in his cab. He is concern with the language barrier that could cause some issues. Ms. Ernst begin answering for her father and was asked by Mr. Kunselman to allow Mr. Jumaa to speak and answer the question for himself seeing that his ability to communicate clearly is an issue.

Mr. Sturgis stated that from what he has read it seems as though there was an inappropriate gesture made toward someone and maybe it was because she didn't understand what Mr. Jumaa was saying that she took it the wrong way. Mr. Sturgis asked Mr. Jumaa if he could have a conversation with him, such as, "here is how much...", "here's where we're going..."), and/or "what time of day it is." Mr. Jumaa spoke but was not comprehensible.

Mr. Benson said the Ordinance states you have to be approved by the Taxicab Board prior to operating a taxicab in the city of Ann Arbor. Mr. Jumaa was found by an officer in April with a meter in his vehicle. In addition, Mr. Benson questioned the professionalism of Mr. Jumaa due to a picture and complaint filed by a female passenger where Mr. Jumaa asked for a kiss and then another picture with someone else.

Mr. Benson asked Mr. Jumaa the process he would use to deal with any future customer complaint. Mr. Jumaa responded but was not comprehensible. Ms. Ernst interpreted for Mr. Jumaa saying that the female passenger did not want to pay and offered him a kiss.

Mr. Kunselman asked again that Ms. Ernst stop interpreting for Mr. Jumaa. Mr. Jumaa's ability to communication with passengers is the reason for the Board's concern. If there is confusion between the driver and customers because of his inability to properly communicate, the public can be at risk. He said the city have an industry reputation to protect as well as a responsibility to the public.

Mr. Jumaa was asked again by Mr. Benson to explain his company's plan to support customer complaints. The company's application only says they would provide a discounted fare or free fare after a complaint. He wanted to know specifically who would communicate with the customer to figure out what the problem is and to help with the solution.

Ms. Ernst interpreted Mr. Benson's question to Mr. Jumaa and Mr. Jumaa tried to explain but was not comprehensible.

Mr. Kunselman asked the Board to make a motion to postpone the approval of Enter Taxi Cab until the next Taxicab Board meeting so that Officer Adkins could present additional information about the status of the ticket. Mr. Kunselman stated that during that time he hope Mr. Jumaa would get the help he needs to communicate with customers.

Mr. Sturgis said he does not support a postponement because the bigger issue is the communication barrier. He believes the Board should ask for a resubmitted application at a later date, maybe six months to a year. If the issue is postponed until the next meeting, he believes the Board will have the same issue with Mr. Jumaa's inability to communicate.

Mr. Benson said he agrees with Mr. Sturgis but does not want to do disserve to the applicant. He questioned if a month would be enough time for the applicant to resolve the issues before the Board. He has very serious concerns about Mr. Jumaa's professionalism.

Mr. Benson moved to postpone the approval of Enter Taxi Cab until the next Taxicab Board meeting to allow Officer Adkins to update the Board on the status of Mr. Jumaa's ticket or other outstanding violations. Ms. Bullington second. A vote for taken, 4 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Sturgis). The motion passed.

c. Election of Taxicab Officers

Ms. Bullington moved to elect Mike Benson as the Taxicab Board chair, Mr. Sturgis seconded. The motion passed.

Ms. Bullington moved to elect Stephen Kunselman as the Taxicab Board vice-chair, Mr. Benson seconded.

VI. Administrator Comments

Mr. Crawford followed up from the last meeting with information the Board requested regarding publishing Taxicab Board meeting agenda and minutes. Mr. Crawford said staff is still working to get the information into Legistar. The second request was for information on perk hours rates and deregulation. In searching for information, we only found larger cities such as New York and Boston having perk hour rates between \$.50 and \$1.00 additional charge. We didn't find any cities our size that we could compare.

In reference to deregulation, staff met with several communities from around the state, except Detroit, and discussed the taxicab Ordinances, regulations or their deregulation. What we found was our rates are at the higher end of the communities that are setting rates. East Lansing was the only deregulated city. Mr. Crawford said that if the Board would like to try a year of deregulation he

would not have a huge issue with it. Although, from his view, we hear from the taxicab industry that they want higher rates but he doesn't see the problem when he looks at the market data compared to other communities. He asked the Board to look at what we are trying to solve other than responding to the taxicab industry complaints.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

1. Ms. Ernst of Enter Taxi Cab said Mr. Jumaa's car was hit by Amazing Blue cab and did not stop. A police report was filed. Ms. Ernst said they have been here for four years but Mr. Jumaa could not find a job due to his lack of experience. He realized he could drive a taxicab because he did not need a lot of English and could help his family. She was concerned that the application was denied or postpone and the resolve would take a long time.
2. Bill Chinchon from Airtran said he has observed Mr. Jumaa picking up passengers that are hailing his taxicab. He should not be accepting these passengers because he is not licensed as a taxicab.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Bullington moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Goeddel seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.