

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF Monday, November 19, 2007 MEETING

Board Members Present: Thomas Deller, Chairperson; Robert Batting, Vice-Chair; William Kennedy and Chuck Alves.

Also Present: Alfred J. Moscola (General Manager); Lori Caron Silveira (Outside General Counsel); Andrew Prescott (Outside Labor Counsel); Henry Kinch; Deborah Dawson; Maureen Neira; Mark Therrien; Ellen Mandly, and other members of RIPTA's senior staff and members of the public whose names are listed on the meeting sign-in sheet.

Agenda Item 1: Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2007 Meeting

Mr. Deller opened the meeting and requested comments regarding the minutes of the September 24, 2007 meeting. Hearing none, a motion was made by Mr. Kennedy for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Batting seconded Mr. Kennedy's motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 4: Rosa Parks' Day Proposal

Mr. Deller recognized the members of the public in attendance to hear the discussion on the Rosa Parks' Day Proposal and decided to address that agenda item before convening the executive session.

Mr. Deller summarized recent actions taken to memorialize Rosa Parks beginning with the passage of a resolution by the senate in June that urged RIPTA to make public transportation free each December 1st. The RIPTA Board subsequently discussed the resolution and received comments from supporters of the resolution at the September 24th board meeting. At that time, the Board also reviewed cost estimates associated with implementing the resolution this year on December 1st and in the future. Mr. Deller stated that the matter was included on the agenda for a vote, and asked for comments.

Mr. Batting stated he had received a letter on the issue written by transit advocate Almas Kalafian. He read the letter and asked that it be made a part of the minutes of the meeting. The letter is attached hereto.

Mr. Kennedy responded to the letter saying that he has a great deal of respect for Ms. Kalafian. He continued by commending Rosa Parks' courageous actions, indicating that in his opinion, Ms. Parks' actions were a turning point in the civil rights movement. Mr. Kennedy stated that he feels it is appropriate to honor Ms. Parks, and made a

motion to adopt the senate resolution as written which states that Rosa Parks' Day be celebrated on December 1st each year with free service for all passengers. Mr. Deller noted that Mr. Kennedy had made a motion that the RIPTA Board ratify the senate resolution on Rosa Parks' day as written and asked if there was a second to Mr. Kennedy's motion. There was no second on the motion.

Mr. Batting opined that RIPTA has serious financial concerns, which are included in the General Manager's report, scheduled for discussion by the Board later in the meeting. He stated that RIPTA is facing budget deficits, escalating fuel/energy costs, and he noted that a high percentage of RIPTA's riders are already riding for free. Mr. Batting agreed that Rosa Parks was a courageous individual, but cautioned the Board that there are numerous worthy causes in the community, and by doing so RIPTA would be subject to other similar requests. He continued that RIPTA is not in a position to sustain any loss of revenue.

Mr. Kennedy responded that he is aware that RIPTA must carefully monitor every expenditure, and acknowledged that implementing free rides on Rosa Parks day would be a financial burden. Mr. Kennedy continued that in light of the finances, sometimes it is necessary to put cost considerations aside, and simply do the right thing.

Mr. Deller said he also feels that honoring Rosa Parks is important, however he agrees that this could set a precedent for other

organizations to ask for similar recognition. He suggested that this year RIPTA recognize Rosa Parks Day with free service on the first Sunday in December and that the issue be revisited annually by the Board to determine if it is financially feasible. Mr. Deller asked Mr. Kennedy if this compromise would be acceptable to him and Mr. Kennedy responded that it was not, and he maintained the position that Rosa Parks' Day be recognized on December 1st annually as stated in the senate resolution.

Mr. Deller asked Mr. Alves for his opinion. Mr. Alves said he was in favor of recognizing Rosa Parks' Day on December 1st this year only and revisiting the matter annually as Mr. Deller suggested.

Mr. Deller asked if there were any public comments and recognized Bill Bateman of the Rosa Parks' Day Human Rights Committee. Mr. Bateman said the changes being considered had caught him by surprise, but he was agreeable to RIPTA recognizing Rosa Parks' Day this year only on December 1st. Mr. Bateman added that they would be willing to help find the money to finance the free rides in the future, but for now would take what was being offered. Next Mr. Deller recognized Brother Everett Muhammad who stated that he was insulted by some of the comments contained in Ms. Kalafian's letter. The Reverend feels that Ms. Kalafian did not understand the concept of Rosa Parks' Day and that honoring Rosa Parks was not about honoring people of color, but acknowledging Rosa Parks for her contribution to civil rights for all people. He then cited an incident

demonstrating that racial discrimination still exists and that “resegregation” is now occurring. Brother Muhammad said he was glad Smith Hill was watching and hoped RIPTA would adopt the resolution and set an example.

Mr. Deller reiterated that Mr. Kennedy’s motion was still on the floor and asked again for a second to the motion. No second was made. Mr. Deller asked if there were any other comments and recognized Joyce Sylvia from the George Wiley Center. Ms. Sylvia said that the goal was to honor Rosa Parks and she urged the Board to vote to accept the compromise proposed by Mr. Deller and honor Rosa Parks this year on December 1st with free rides. Ms. Sylvia said it was her hope that the economy would be better next year so the resolution could be enacted for the long term.

Mr. Batting commented on the letter from Almas Kalafian that he had read into the record of this meeting. He stated that he received the letter and Ms. Kalafian’s request that he read it at the meeting, since she was unable to attend the meeting. He offered Reverend Everett a copy of the letter, and went on to say he would do the same for anyone if asked. Mr. Batting moved to honor Rosa Parks’ Day on December 1st of this year with free service, subject to renewal for next year. Mr. Alves seconded the motion. Mr. Deller voiced his approval and Mr. Kennedy remained silent. The Rosa Parks’ Day proposal passed, as amended, with a majority of 3 votes.

Agenda Item 2: Executive Session

Mr. Deller moved that RIPTA adjourn to an executive session, as noticed on the agenda, under sections § 42-46-5(a)(1) and § 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussions of labor and personnel issues. Mr. Kennedy moved to adjourn and to convene an executive session; Mr. Batting seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken on the motion to convene to executive session. All Board members voted to convene the executive session.

Following the Board's return to open session, Mr. Kennedy moved to seal the executive session minutes. Mr. Batting seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3: General Manager's Report

The General Manager reported that the cost of fuel as of November 16th was \$2.96 per gallon. The average price per gallon for the current fiscal year is \$2.63 versus a budgeted price of \$2.40. The lowest price this year was \$2.31 in August and the high was a record \$3.01 on November 9th. Mr. Moscola expressed concern about the continual rise of fuel costs. Mr. Batting referenced page B3 of the General Manager's report and asked why there was a negative variance on salaries with wages being off approximately 7 – 8% for the first 3 months of the year. Maureen Neira explained that the variance was a result of overtime incurred while training employees

on the new efare system and that RIPTA would be reimbursed for the cost of such training. Additionally, she explained the concept of vacation accrual and cited employees out on long term leave as adding to the cost. She pointed out areas where RIPTA is under budget, and Mr. Moscola added that expenses are also down. Mr. Alves asked who would reimburse RIPTA for the training to which Ms. Neira replied that it would come from a federal grant. Mr. Deller asked when the reimbursement would be sought, and Ms. Neira replied that it was already in process. Mr. Deller requested that the reimbursement be brought to the Board's attention when it is received.

Mr. Batting asked about reporting of fare categories on the graph on page C4 and Mark Therrien explained that efare is impacting the data reported in this category. Mr. Batting asked if Providence students were using an electronic pass and Ms. Neira replied that they were using monthly passes. Mr. Batting asked if on ozone days the federal reimbursement was equal to the cost of lost ridership and Ms. Neira replied in the affirmative, stating that RIPTA provides an estimate of the lost revenue for reimbursement

Agenda Item 5: 2008 Board Meeting Schedule

Mr. Deller moved on to the next agenda item, proposed dates for Board meetings for the 2008 calendar year. Mr. Alves moved that the 2008 Board meeting dates be approved as presented and Mr. Batting

seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: RFP 08-04 Uniform Rental

Roger Mencarini addressed the Board to discuss the next agenda item Uniform Rental Services. Mr. Mencarini explained that the contract includes the rental and cleaning of uniforms, floor mats and shop rags. This is a recurring item and staff recommends awarding a contract to G & K Uniform Services, which will cost approximately 20% less than the current contract price. Mr. Batting noted that on page B5 of the budget there is a current overage in the uniform cost. Ms. Neira said the drivers have a six-month window in which to purchase their uniforms. The overage will decrease over time. After the discussion Mr. Alves moved to award the contract to G & K Uniform Services as recommended by staff. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 7: RFP 08-05 Towing Service

Mr. Mencarini discussed the next procurement for Towing Services saying there were two bidders and staff recommends the award of the contract to the low bidder, Town Line Towing and Recovery. Mr. Mencarini said the estimated cost of the contract is \$75,000 annually, which is higher than usual due to fuel costs. After a brief discussion, Mr. Alves moved that the contract be awarded to Town Line Towing and Recovery as recommended by staff. Mr. Kennedy seconded the

motion, which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 8: RFP 08-10 Graphic Design Services

Mr. Mencarini discussed the final procurement for Graphic Design Services stating that the contract would provide for the design of such items as brochures, signs and maps. This is an on-call contract and last year RIPTA spent \$18,000 on graphic design service. Staff recommends the award of the contract to Cogen's Printing Services. Mr. Kennedy moved to award the contract to Cogen's Printing Services as recommended by staff. Mr. Batting seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deller added that Chris Wilhite of the Sierra Club had emailed him a letter with suggestions for improving RIPTA signage and brochures.

Mr. Deller forwarded the email to Mr. Moscola and asked that Mr. Moscola review the suggestions and discuss them with staff.

Agenda Item 9: Public Comment

Mr. Deller requested public comments. No public comments were received and Mr. Deller moved on to the next agenda item.

Agenda Item 10: Adjournment

Mr. Batting moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Kennedy seconded the

motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Secretary to the Board

Speaking as a retired, Providence social studies teacher and lifelong mass transit rider who has been totally blind for 11 years, much more needs to be considered before the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority Board of Directors votes on a free-fare, "Rosa Parks' Day" as described in Bruce Landis' Projo article of September 23rd.

A tribute to Rosa Parks and others who struggled to expand equality for all when using means of mass transit is recognized and celebrated each day. While Parks' primary goal was to permanently end discrimination against Blacks when riding on busses, the struggles she endured might have been similar to what others experienced in wheel chairs when given access to transit by being

raised onto lifts at the back doors of busses. Often the general public can't inhale the discrimination being felt by individual transit riders. Untill 2004 nothing relieved ongoing struggles experienced by wheel chair users travelling near the backs of busses and vans. Cries of pain were heard until they were lifted and tied down near fronts of newly designed vehicles.

Heroes like Parks made it somehow possible for the totally blind, developmentally disabled, physically fragile and very elderly to travel independently and equally, too. I really never heard that the opportunity to ride free was ever their goal when fighting for causes. Therefore, to rightly honor Parks' legacy, we should ALL need to be urged by our Black community to come out and celebrate her powerful message to ride equally, not to ride free.

Still, more can be said about our wonderful state when addressing struggles achieved by Parks. Vast numbers of minorities have been hired by RIPTA during the last 4 years to drive busses and vans. Parks had no way of knowing that in our state her quest to ride equally would be splendidly expanded into an equal opportunity to be employed, also. We would be hard pressed today to find another RI agency or department having anywhere near the same percentage of minorities hired.

Voting for a special day to honor Parks would be wonderful as long as free-fare is not attached. What she accomplished is all that

needs to be kept alive in ALL of us.

Almas Kalafian