

# **RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **MINUTES OF February 8, 2010 MEETING**

**Board Members Present: John Rupp; Jerome Williams; Michael Lewis; and Rochelle Lee.**

**Absent: Alfred Moscola**

**Also Present: Andrew Prescott (Outside General Counsel); Henry Kinch; Maureen Neira; Mark Therrien; Edward Scott; James Dean; Bernie Harwood; Victor Santos; and Ellen Mandly.**

**Motion: Minutes of the December 7, 2009**

**Chairperson Rupp convened the meeting at 1:10 and asked if the members had reviewed the minutes of the RIPTA Management Committee meeting held December 7, 2009. The members indicated they had and Mr. Williams moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion and the minutes of the meeting were unanimously approved.**

## **Discussion: Candidate Consultant Companies**

**Mr. Rupp reported that he has received recommendations on candidate consultant companies that have assisted RIPTA in the past and/or other state agencies and transit properties. He also received a recommendation from Victor Santos for the Mergis Group located in Providence.**

**Mr. Rupp has made initial contact with the companies being considered. He said that at present the cost is unclear, but it will likely be tied to a percentage of the position salary. Mr. Williams asked if we need an RFP or if we should ask for a scope of services. Mr. Rupp said we should ask for a scope of services, but he is conferring with Andrew Prescott and Richard Licht on next steps.**

**Mr. Lewis asked who the consultant's point of contact would be and Mr. Rupp said the Management Committee the point of contact. The Management Committee can form a search committee and identify a point of contact for the consultants on that committee. He suggested Management Committee determine the scope of work and get Board approval of the scope and identify one or two consultants to recommend for approval at the March Board meeting. Mr. Lewis asked who would make contact with the successful consultant and Mr. Rupp said Management Committee would, with the assistance of Counsel. The Committee agreed with these suggestions.**

## **Discussion: Foundations for the CEO/COO Formats**

**Mr. Rupp said some legislative revision to the enabling act may be required to amend the title of General Manager, but noted the Board is empowered to appoint all General Manager's. He said Counsel has been consulted and they do not believe amending the act will be a problem. He said it might be best to speak to the consulting firm first for assistance with the CEO/COO formats vis a vis the existing General Manager/AGM format.**

## **Discussion: Public Comment**

**Next Mr. Rupp said he was adjusting the chronology of the agenda and moved ahead to agenda item # 6 for public comment. Mr. Rupp asked for public comment and hearing none moved on.**

## **Discussion: Senior Management Personal Review**

**Mr. Rupp moved on to agenda item # 5 senior management personal review. He explained that the Committee had reviewed RIPTA's organizational charts to better understand how RIPT0A works on paper and today's discussions with the General Manager's direct reports will help them understand how RIPTA works functionally. Today's discussions will focus on the job responsibility descriptions provided by each senior manager and he asked that each person speak for a few minutes and give them a better understanding of the**

**scope of their job outside of the job descriptions and how the reporting functions work.**

**Henry Kinch went first and asked how the Committee wished to proceed and Mr. Williams responded that he should give a 5 – 10 minute overview of what he does day to day and his direct reports.**

**Mr. Kinch said he is head of administration and as such he is involved in a multitude of issues as RIPTA is large and has many facets besides just putting over 200 buses on the street every day. He coordinates the various directors and departments to ensure they work together to accomplish RIPTA's mission. In addition he is directly responsible for the marketing and environmental departments and he proceeded to give a brief overview of these departments.**

**He said great strides have been made with environmental issues in recent years and he described some of RIPTA's environmental reporting requirements. He said Tom Clupny is the Director and only employee in that department and he handles the filings. Mr. Kinch said he also handles special projects such as the major performance audits.**

**Mr. Williams asked about the functions of the marketing department and if there was an annual marketing plan. He replied that the marketing budget is small and much is done via federal grants. The**

department has two employees and much of what was previously done by the marketing firm of Rivers & Doyle is done in-house saving a great deal of money. The marketing department also handles bus and bus shelter advertising and Kennedy Plaza functions such as fare products and lottery sales.

Mr. Kinch said that his current focus is coordinating ARRA projects and the new paratransit building construction has taken up much of his time. He added that project coordination is one of his strengths. He also is very involved in the procurement department.

Mr. Kinch answered questions regarding marketing grants and elaborated on RIPTA's photo ID program which he is reviewing in an attempt to generate additional revenue from other state agencies.

Maureen Neira addressed the Committee next and discussed some of her day to day responsibilities such as oversight of payroll for over 850 employees, accounts payable and receivable and discussed the employees who handle these functions. She explained some of Lilly Picchione's functions and said when Lilly is on maternity leave and she will oversee her grant responsibilities which generate a lot of paper work. A temporary ARRA program manager has been retained to assist during Lilly's leave.

Ms. Neira is responsible for fare collections and the money room and answered questions about those functions and those employees who

are in ATU 618 and 618A. The money room cashier reports to Ms. Neira and the money room clerk reports to the transportation department. She said her other employees are members of Local 808 and described the job functions of the senior accountant.

She answered questions on treasury functions and investments which are limited per FTA rules and regulations and discussed RIPTA's banking relationships.

Mr. Lewis asked who would oversee the payroll department in her absence and Ms. Neira said the payroll clerk would cover the department. She said in most cases another employee covers for the absent person, except in the case of the senior account, and often times she covers the excess work. Ms. Neira discussed employee turnover and cross training the department.

Ms. Neira handles all budgeting responsibilities and reconciliation. She said a big concern is finding the money to pay the bills on a weekly basis. Mr. Lewis asked if she consults Messrs Moscola or Kinch in this area and she said no and explained her thought process on how she decides what vendors to pay and how she pays for it. Ms. Neira described special projects she handles such as audits and some functions of the Director of Finance.

Mr. Lewis asked if she could wave a magic wand, what she would do differently. She responded it would be helpful to have an economist

or a budgeting person which would allow her more time to run the department day to day. Mr. Lewis asked what method the General Manager and senior staff use to plan for the long term and big picture. Ms. Neira said some planning meetings are held, but more are probably needed.

Mr. Rupp asked if other state agencies could assist and Ms. Neira said she sometimes consults with the state budget office, but their focus is the larger concerns of the state.

Next Mr. Rupp asked about the issuance of bonds and Ms. Neira said the state budget office handles the issuance of the bonds, and the tracking and payments of the invoices.

Ms. Neira informed the Board that the Governor's budget eliminated RIPTA's bond request. She explained the bond referendum process and said the bond proceeds were intended for bus purchases in 2012 and 2013. When she realized the bond had been eliminated from the budget she spoke with the budget office and she believes they mistakenly thought ARRA funds could be used for the bus purchases. Ms. Neira said the removal of this bond will adversely affect RIPTA's vehicle replacement plan and substantially increase RIPTA's future maintenance costs.

She said the bond requests were never removed in the past and a letter has been drafted for Mr. Moscola's review and signature to send

to the Governor and the House and Senate explaining the adverse implications and requesting the bond be reinstated. Mr. Rupp asked if ARRA funds could be used to replace the bus purchase match and Ms. Neira said federal funds have already been programmed for this purchase and ARRA funds can only be used if federal funds were not previously programmed.

Mr. Therrien briefly described the current program of bus purchase grants. He added that he is very concerned about his bond issue. Mr. Williams said missing this bond opportunity will push the program out two years and it's important to stay with the bus replacement program.

Mr. Lewis asked that staff give him a one page document on the bus replacement program and bond structure.

At this point Rochelle Lee arrived.

Mr. Therrien spoke next and said he has 11 distinct areas and 15 employees, most of who report directly to him. He called the planning the department of innovation for RIPTA and said everything begins with transportation services in Ride, Flex and fixed route.

He said there are three different areas of federal grants planning and explained how these play into RIPTA purchasing things such as fareboxes and said he does the planning of grants in tandem with

**Finance. He handles the creation of the transportation improvement program (TIP) and works with FTA to do this and also works with FTA on other grants and programs.**

**In response to the Committee's request to identify gaps, he said there are two unusual areas the first being transportation security which Anne LeClerc has responsibility for. She attends meetings with RIEMA and ESF1 and applies for the security grants. The other oddball area he identified is commuter resources, which is a federally funded car/mode sharing program. He said it is a customer outreach program that's worked well since implementation in 2002 and programs like Keep Eddy Moving, UPass and Ecopass fall under it.**

**Mr. Therrien handles the data analysis that supports the grant side and the farebox data and automatic passenger counting that effects service adjustments.**

**Mr. Williams asked about his responsibilities relative to RIdc and Flex and he responded that he hosts a weekly meeting where he goes over day to day operations with Ed Scott who is in charge. He said there is tremendous community interaction associated with RIdc via the human services agencies and he is in the field with his staff dealing with these agencies. He and Ed Scott share responsibilities at the meetings and he takes a broad look at the program. Mr. Therrien conducts a similar quarterly meeting for fixed route.**

**Mr. Lewis asked the magic wand question and Mr. Therrien responded that he is spearheading too many projects, partly due to Tim McCormick's departure. He said his department does not have much depth and his staff is overwhelmed leading him to be too closely involved in day to day minutia.**

**Mr. Rupp asked how Flex goes from concept to operation. Mr. Therrien said he and Anne LeClerc develop solutions to problems such as in Burrillville/ Zambarano. Mr. Rupp asked how he prioritizes said problems and he said they prioritize the routes on flex the same way as fixed routes by demographics. He said the capital purchase plans for flex vehicles is more reactionary than planned. He said Ed Scott's group does the daily scheduling and Ms. LeClerc develops the service parameters.**

**Ed Scott addressed the Committee next and said his major job responsibility is as his just as his title implies, he manages the specialized transportation program which includes the administration managed by Doug Wood and the delivery of service which is managed by Liz Harvey. He has a total of 178 Ride employees. He elaborated on the weekly meeting described by Mr. Therrien and remarked that Anne LeClerc is a valuable asset.**

**Mr. Scott also oversees the IS department which has four employees and the customer information and complaint department which has seven employee's, five answering phones giving general information**

and two who handle the complaints. He also handles the procurement and distribution of fixed route operator uniforms; this is handled by one employee who is also his secretary.

Mr. Scott answered questions relating to the hours of operation of the phone room, customer complaint volume, and the system for handling and following up on comments and complaints.

Mr. Rupp asked Mr. Scott to give a history of his assuming responsibility for the Information Services department and also an explanation of how he manages the technology consultants. Mr. Scott said he began work in IS and on the proposed ATMS system in 2004 when the first began putting together the specs for the software.

At that time the software in the paratransit division was expiring and there was no outside support available so that project was fast tracked and he went on to describes that procurement process. He said overall the system in place now is spectacular and everyone is happy with it.

Next he described the ATMS procurement for fixed route and said a consultant was used to compile the specs and talked a bit about that consultant Steve Mueller from Macro and the various RIPTA personnel involved in the procurement process.

Mr. Rupp asked if Mr. Scott could identify another state agency whose technology expertise might be sought for assistance. Mr.

**Scott said he did not believe there was another agency that could provide the particular assistance RIPTA needs. He added that we are at the end of the major expenses associated with the ATMS procurement.**

**Mr. Rupp asked if we could offer our expertise to another agency such as school departments. Mr. Scott responded that the paratransit system could be used to book and monitor school bus service and track students and the monitoring could be done by the school departments. He said we can track anything that moves trucks, buses, police cars, etc. and briefly described how.**

**Mr. Rupp asked him the magic wand question and he responded that he too could use a second in command to help him oversee the various aspects under his authority. Mr. Williams asked how many employees he has and he said 200. Mr. Scott reports directly to the General Manager.**

**Mr. Scott answered questions relative to future staff turnover, succession planning and the soon to be hired ITS Manager to oversee the ATMS project.**

**Next was Assistant General Manager of Transportation James Dean who oversees the fixed route system. Mr. Dean said his major responsibility is to provide service and ensure the 182 pullouts and 3200 trips that occur each day. He also handles customer service**

**and responds to complaints, monitors bus operators for ADA compliance, and maintains good labor relations with ATU.**

**Mr. Dean has 388 full and part time bus operators, 21 street supervisors, 7 managers and 12 clerks who report to him. When asked to describe his typical day he said most days start with him calling to check in on the pullouts and manpower before he arrives. Once here he addresses problems such as misses and book offs and works to maintain service throughout the day by addressing issues like equipment failure, unscheduled absences, etc.**

**During the course of the day Mr. Dean mainly interfaces with Chief of Street Operations, Al Ponterelli, Lead Supervisor Frank Adamo, General Superintendant Dave Browning and Newport Division Superintendent Kevin Carmody. Mr. Dean reports directly to Mr. Moscola.**

**Mr. Williams noted reducing overtime is a major task and asked how Mr. Dean has addressed this issue. He said great strides have been made in this area by working to plan the spare operator board efficiently and double-checking overtime claims and he described this process. He said reducing overtime is a top priority. He described the factors that lead to scheduled and unscheduled overtime and average absentee figures.**

**Mr. Dean described the job responsibilities of Safety and Security**

**Officer Doug Brown and completed his report.**

**Bernie Harwood Assistant General Manager of Maintenance addressed the Committee and said he reports directly to the General Manager and at times Mr. Kinch. He oversees the 7 buildings that make up RIPTA and approximately 450 vehicles and support equipment and has about 155 employees under him.**

**He said there are about 244 vehicles on fixed route, 135 paratransit vehicles and various RIDOT vehicles which RIPTA services and his key function is maintaining the fleet and reporting on same. His focus is not on what is working properly, but what is not working and why. He monitors equipment issues, collects data from the foreman, checks roll calls and job order summaries, and other daily maintenance reports to keep the fleet in good working condition. He discussed inspections, MDBF, MDBSI and other checks and balances which are report cards on the fleet. He said sometimes failure is due to the operator and he will report this to Mr. Dean to get the operator additional training.**

**He discussed scheduled maintenance which is easy compared to unscheduled maintenance such as broken mirrors and the like which constantly need addressing and prioritizing when managing a 24/7 operation. He described the day and night shifts and impacts such as accidents and snowstorms.**

**Mr. Harwood talked about the fleet plan and how he implements it and answered questions on same. He said daily maintenance and implementation of the fleet plan is cyclical and he described the process.**

**Mr. Lewis asked the magic wand question and Mr. Harwood responded that the age of the fleet is an issue and described the lengthy bus procurement process. He said he looks forward to getting the vehicles Mr. Moscola is currently procuring and described how they will get folded into the fleet.**

**He answered questions regarding the automation of the maintenance schedule, and the importance of keeping information like mileage and completed scheduled maintenance up to date. He finished by discussing the successful RIDOT fleet repair plan, which could be expanded with more manpower.**

**Noting the time and his recent presentation in executive session, Mr. Rupp told Mr. Santos he was excused from presenting today.**

**Motion: Executive Session Pursuant to 42-46-5(a)(2) to Discuss Collective Bargaining and Litigation Matters**

**Mr. Rupp asked for a motion to convene an executive session as noticed on the agenda under 42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss Collective Bargaining. Mr. Lewis made the motion and Mr. Williams seconded.**

**A roll call vote was taken and the motion to convene to executive session passed unanimously.**

**Following the Board's return to open session Mr. Lewis made a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session. Ms. Lee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**Motion: Adjournment**

**There being no further business Mr. Rupp said he would entertain a motion to adjourn and Ms. Lee made the motion. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion to adjourn and it passed unanimously.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Ellen M. Mandly**

**Recording Secretary**