

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF Monday, November 21, 2011 MEETING**

**Board Members Present: Thomas Deller, Chairperson; Jerome Williams; Stephen Durkee; Michael Lewis; Maureen Martin, Anna Liebenow; Mayor Scott Avedisian; and Margaret Holland McDuff.**

**Also Present: Charles Odingbe, Chief Executive Officer; Todd Gleason, (Outside Counsel); Andrew Prescott, (Outside Counsel); Ellen Mandly; and other members of RIPTA's staff and members of the public whose names are on the sign-in sheet.**

**Prior to the start of the meeting Board Chair Thomas Deller requested a moment of silence on behalf of bus operator Bradford Oxnard who took ill while in service and passed away. Mr. Deller had kind words about Mr. Oxnard and expressed condolences on behalf of the RIPTA Board of Directors to the Oxnard family.**

**There was a moment of silence for Bradford Oxnard.**

**Agenda Item 1: Vote on October 26, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

**Mr. Deller called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and asked if the Board members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the**

meeting held October 26, 2011. The Board members indicated that they had and Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting as presented. Mayor Avedisian seconded the motion. The minutes of the meeting held October 26, 2011 were unanimously approved.

**Agenda Item 11: Executive Session Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or Action Related to Collective Bargaining and Discussions Relating to a Personal Injury Claim**

Mr. Deller read the law to convene an executive session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or Action related to Collective Bargaining and relating to a Personal Injury Claim. Stephen Durkee made a motion to convene the executive session and Michael Lewis seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to convene to executive session passed unanimously.

Following the Board's return to open session Margaret Holland McDuff made a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item 2: Public Comment**

Mr. Deller asked for public comments and recognized Don Rhodes.

Don Rhodes was recognized and commented that RIPTA should ask

**the legislature for more money as Senator Tassoni recently suggested.**

**Bill Legere of Northwest Transportation and Valley Cab wondered why agenda item # 4 regarding the status of health and human services transportation was on even on the agenda. He described his business and participation in human services transportation and said private providers such as his company could be of service to the state. He offered his assistance to the Board in this regard.**

**Mr. Deller recognized former RIPTA Board Chairman Bob Batting. Mr. Batting said he attended recent Streetcar hearings and he is against this project. He said \$1 million has already been spent on consultants and he feels this is a waste to Providence who paid the match. There is a report on this issue that he urged the Board to read. He said this project will cost \$128 million which he feels is outrageous.**

**Barry Schiller a former RIPTA Board member and long time transit advocate spoke next he said the RIPTA needs to reduce costs, attract more riders and find a new, sustainable funding mechanism. He then described the difficulty accessing RIPTA from the Providence train station and asked that this issue be addressed. Mr. Schiller also asked for an enclosed bus stop near the state house and better bus schedule information at the Providence Place Mall. He said the cold weather is upon us and asked that RIPTA be diligent in shoveling out**

around stops and shelters. Finally he said the proposed streetcar routes are already serviced by the bus.

Almas Kalafian a transit advocate spoke next who asked that the RIPTA Board members pay closer attention and be more responsible with their board duties. She said she is blind and she notices a lot of inefficiencies.

Caroline Medeiros the Director of the Alliance for Safe Communities commented on the Open Doors Program that RIPTA had test piloted and while she thinks the CEO instituted it with good intentions; she feels the decision to employ drivers with violent criminal records is wrong. She said drivers need to be carefully screened before they are exposed to the riding public.

Joe Cole a RIPTA bus operator spoke next and referenced brake drums which were on last month's agenda. He thinks we have brake drums on the shelves that should be used instead. He said any cut in service would be a hardship on riders and operators. Mr. Cole then talked about lost service which he feels is occurring due to cuts in standbys and said lost service means lost revenues. He contradicted the CEO's contention at last month's meeting that lost service was due to the high amount of employee's out sick.

Lucy Bettencourt a RIPTA bus operator spoke next and referenced the RIPTA mission statement affixed to the wall and read it aloud.

**She noted that the word safe in in the mission statement and said in her opinion the Open Doors pilot program was in contradiction to the mission statement. She took the hiring of these drivers as a personal affront to her integrity as a driver.**

**Paul Harrington, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union spoke next and referenced the Providence Journal article he mentioned last month and said that in his opinion RIPTA is at an all time low. He questioned RIPTA's need to use lobbyists, voiced opposition to the Open Doors pilot program and said he received an email from a non-RIPTA bus driver who drove prisoners in a previous job, but allegedly could not get hired at RIPTA. Mr. Harrington said he received information that later in the day two legislators would be releasing press statements opposing the Open Doors pilot program. He then discussed the TV report about the pilot program and said he personally finds the pilot program sad and an embarrassment to RIPTA and his members.**

**Mr. Harrington finished his remarks by discussing lost service and said it is because of mismanagement and he finds this unacceptable. He asked that some action be taken on what he perceives as mismanagement regarding the issues he raised. Mr. Harrington said his membership took a vote of no confidence in the CEO.**

**Randall Rose from the RIPTA Riders spoke and said his group is not happy with the cutbacks that have occurred in 2012. Mr. Rose said**

**we need the cooperation of the Board and management to get more sustainable funding for RIPTA. He said his group is growing internally and wants to help RIPTA by advocating at the State House and with individual legislators to push for more and sustainable funding for public transit. He said the strategic plan should be put forth as a policy proposal.**

**Abel Collins of the Sierra Club and the RIPTA Riders spoke and said it is the Board's responsibility to lobby for RIPTA at the State House and he feels we should also reach out to individual cities and towns which we serve to seek assistance. Mr. Collins said he is circulating a petition to "Save RIPTA" and he asked the Board members to sign.**

### **Agenda Item 3: Chief Executive Officer's Report**

**Mr. Odimgbe deferred his CEO Report and asked Mark Therrien to give the ATMS status report. Mr. Therrien spoke briefly regarding ATMS and said everything was on schedule. He then spoke briefly on the ridership figures contained in the CEO report.**

### **Agenda Item 4: Health and Human Services Transportation Update**

**Mark Therrien and Anne LeClerc addressed the Board to give a status on health and human services transportation (HST). Mr. Therrien described human services transportation as service specifically designated for older adults, individuals with low incomes and**

persons with disabilities. He said RIPTA and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) completed a Human Services Study in 2010. The objective of the study being to understand how HST is provided in Rhode Island and to develop broad recommendations on how this service could be managed organized and delivered more effectively. They then discussed the cost of said services detailed on the handout the Board received.

Anne LeClerc said everything is currently being drive by Medicaid which is by far the largest source of funds available to EOHHS and there are over 300 agencies providing transportation. She said Medicaid costs are rising exponentially with costs having risen from about \$4 million in 2007 to nearly \$22 million currently with half of that, about \$11 million, funded with state resources. Ms. LeClerc said most of the funds are spent purchasing services from private wheelchair van companies and a smaller amount spent on the Rlde Program administered by RIPTA. She said other human services transportation programs are also increasing, though more slowly. In recent years the EOHHS and DHS have been faced with increased demand for service and faced funding constraints in part due to the state's budget crisis.

Ms. LeClerc described the Rlde program as a brokerage and said riders eligibility must be confirmed which is a time consuming process. She then discussed other issues such as the federal regulations the program must adhere to, the billing process, and the barriers to Rlde being the statewide provider, such as prohibitions

against self-referring trips. Mr. Therrien said reimbursement is also a major concern as other agencies get reimbursed at a higher rate than RIPTA.

Mr. Odimgbe opined that there is a change taking place in how human services transportation will be provided in Rhode Island and he wanted to get out ahead of this issue early and engage the board in discussions. He said everything currently is speculative, but RIPTA is working with other concerned state agencies to develop solutions. Mr. Deller asked if there is the potential that RIPTA's Ride Program could be reduced and Mr. Odimgbe said that is a possibility. Ms. Holland McDuff expressed concern about the effect to RIPTA's budget. Mayor Avedisian recalled that when the Ride Program was instituted it caused a lot of upheaval.

Mr. Therrien and Ms. LeClerc answered additional questions from the Board then said they would be back before the Board at future meetings with status updates on this important issue.

#### **Agenda Item 5: FTA Required Delegation of Authority for Grant**

Lilly Picchione presented the next board report and said the Board is requested to approve an authorizing resolution delegating authority to the Chief Executive Officer and/or his designee for administering Federal Transit Administration Grant Programs in accordance with federal regulations.

**Ms. Picchione went over some of the details in the board report then Mayor Avedisian made a motion to approve the delegation of authority for the grant as requested by staff. Mr. Durkee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

#### **Agenda Item 6: FY 2013 Budget Assumptions**

**Ms. Neira addressed the Board and discussed the FY 2013 Budget Assumptions. She reminded the Board that the Authority requested and received an extension to submit the budget until the end of November. Now that the Finance Committee is fully staffed, Ms. Neira would like to have a meeting prior to the December Board meeting to discuss the FY 2013 preliminary budget prior to presenting it to the full Board at the December meeting. She noted that the information in the CEO Report is now being presented differently and information is listed by department which is being prepared by each department. Also, the previous budget was a rolling budget and the new budget is zero based. These changes are being implemented by department over time and eventually all financial information will be presented in this manner.**

**Next Ms. Neira gave an overview of all of the information contained in the FY 2013 Budget Assumptions Board report namely a general overview, revenue assumptions, and expense assumptions she commented on each line item.**

**Ms. Neira said she'd received a letter that day from the Department of Revenue and they are projecting our gas revenue to be \$300,000 lower than expected. She said the Department of Revenue will make projections again in May and this figure could be revised, but at present this adds to our deficit. Mr. Durkee asked Ms. Neira to put together a document illustrating how much the gas revenue has fallen in recent years.**

**Ms. Neira elaborated on assumptions such as federal funds, fuel, passenger revenues and expressed concern that our debt service has almost doubled. Mr. Williams added his concern that GASB 45 remains unfunded. Mr. Odimgbe said he too is concerned about continuing to use the bond process to procure vehicles and said we need a new method. A brief discussion of bond debt ensued with the CEO and Ms. Neira answering questions and with this Ms. Neira completed her report.**

#### **Agenda Item 7: IFB 12-07 "Genuine" Chevrolet Parts**

**Roger Mencarini discussed the procurement of "Genuine" Chevrolet and General Motors parts and said staff recommends the award of a contract to Hurd Auto Mall of Johnston, RI to supply and deliver parts for RIPTA's Chevrolet and General Motors vehicles. The estimated annual cost is approximately \$150,000. This is a one year contract with up to four annual renewals.**

**Following this discussion Mayor Avedisian made a motion to award the contract to supply and deliver Genuine Chevrolet parts to Hurd Auto Mall of Johnston, RI at a cost of \$150,000. Steve Durkee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 8: IFB 12-09 “Genuine” Ford Parts**

**Mr. Mencarini next discussed the procurement of “Genuine” Ford parts and said staff recommends the award of a contract to Tasca Ford of Cranston, RI to supply and deliver parts for RIPTA’s Ford vehicles. Based upon historical usage the estimated annual cost is approximately \$350,000. This is a one year contract with up to four annual renewals.**

**Following this discussion Mayor Avedisian made a motion to award the contract to supply and deliver Ford parts to Tasca Ford of Cranston, RI at a cost of about \$350,000. Steve Durkee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 9: IFB 12-11 Thermal Rags**

**Roger Mencarini discussed the final procurement for Thermal Rags and said the Board is requested to award a contract to Universal Gold of East Providence, RI to supply and deliver thermal rags to the Authority at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$21,334. This**

**is a one year contract with up to two annual renewals.**

**Following a brief Q & A Michael Lewis made a motion to award the contract to supply and deliver thermal rags to RIPTA to Universal Gold of East Providence, RI at an annual cost of \$21,334. Steve Durkee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Agenda Item 10: Board Committee Assignments**

**Next Board Chair Thomas Deller discussed populating the RIPTA subcommittees of the Board. Mr. Deller said the Board members determined that a new committee was needed thus a Labor Relations Committee has been formed. In recent months Board members were asked to consider and volunteer for seats on the subcommittees, namely: Strategic Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and the newly formed Labor Relations Committee. The Executive Committee is fully staffed as it is made up of three of the four Board Officers: Messrs Deller, Durkee and Williams. In May vacancies on the Joint Pension Board due to Board member term expirations were filled immediately as that Committee hears pension requests monthly and the business of the Committee needed to continue without interruption. The vacancies were filled by Messrs Williams and Durkee.**

**Following discussion the Board subcommittees were populated as follows:**

**Finance Committee**

**Michael Lewis – Chair**

**Thomas Deller**

**Jerry Williams**

**Margaret Holland McDuff**

**Strategic Planning Committee**

**Steve Durkee – Chair, RIPTA Board member**

**Michael Lewis –RIPTA Board member**

**Maureen Martin –RIPTA Board member**

**Kevin Flynn (Statewide Planning)**

**Steve Devine (RIDOT)**

**John Flaherty (CTC)**

**Christopher Kearns (Governor’s Office)**

**Paul Harrington (ATU)**

**Everett Stuart (RI Association of Railroad Passengers)**

**Michael Walker (EDC)**

**Labor Relations Committee (New)**

**Thomas Deller**

**Jerry Williams**

**Mayor Scott Avedisian**

**Agenda Item 12: FY 2012 Deficit Reduction Initiatives**

**Mr. Odimgbe said he would prepare additional documents relative to the FY 2012 deficit reduction initiatives for discussion and vote by the Board at the December meeting. Mr. Durkee thanked Mr. Odimgbe for all his hard work in dealing with this issue.**

**Mr. Odimgbe briefly addressed the issue of the Open Doors pilot program and subsequent media interest and said this partnership was begun by RIPTA in cooperation with the Department of Labor and the intention was to assist in the rehabilitation of previously incarcerated individuals who were working with agencies both public and private to assimilate back into the community. He said that due to public protest it is obvious we are not ready at this time to continue with the pilot program therefore it has been discontinued. He said he takes full responsibility for any concern this program caused. Mr. Deller asked that this issue be put on the agenda for the December meeting.**

### **Agenda Item 13: Adjournment**

**Mr. Durkee made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Martin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Ellen M. Mandly**

**Recording Secretary**