

**BATTLE CREEK CITY COMMISSION  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
TRANSIT BUILDING  
Wednesday January 8, 2020  
10:00 AM**

**Committee Members Present:** Commissioners Baldwin (teleconference), Faris, Gray and Flores (teleconference)

**Committee Members Absent:** None

**City Staff Present:** Ted Dearing, Assistant City Manager; Mallory Avis, Transit Director; Alicia Greene, Deputy City Clerk

**Call to Order:** Commissioner Baldwin called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

**Organizational Issues**

Approval of July 19, 2019 Public Transportation Committee meeting minutes.

Commissioner Baldwin asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of July 19, 2019.

A motion was made by Comm. Gray, supported by Comm. Faris, to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2019 Public Transportation Committee meeting. All yes, none opposed. Motion carried.

**Discussion Items**

**Transit Updates**

Ms. Avis provided and the Board discussed a presentation on Transit updates for FY 2020 outlining; Major Achievements, Major Projects, Ridership & Budget and Fare Increases. Ms. Avis also reviewed the Transit Master Plan recommendations.

Comm. Gray suggested looking into partnering with Sophomore Future Track, which offers job shadowing and career track training to area 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

Ms. Avis clarified for Comm. Flores the Calhoun County Coordinated Mobility Pilot will move forward with partners Community Action Agency and Aequitas (provided Aequitas resumes business and still wishes to participate).

The Board discussed proposed fare increases.

Ms. Avis shared the City has not increased fares since 2003 with expenses continuing to increase, noting to the best of her knowledge, the voters have never been asked to support a millage for transportation.

Comm. Gray suggested a periodic review of fares to avoid big increases and is concerned with the loss of ridership with implementing a 40% increase.

Ms. Avis stated a majority of riders pay a reduced fare with the average fare being \$0.727. Further noting the Master Plan projected a minimal loss of ridership at 3% and supports the increase of fares over the reduction or elimination of routes. Ms. Avis stated the goal was to generate additional revenue instead of cutting expenses which would result in a reduction of services.

Comm. Flores noted a 40% increase is not unreasonable based on past practices.

Comm. Faris spoke in support of the new proposal, stating riders would not likely want to see increases every year.

Ms. Avis informed the Board updates to systems and materials each time changes are made also have additional costs to be considered.

Comm. Gray stated messaging around the fare increase needs to be crafted letting riders understand and know what they are getting in return.

Ms. Avis reviewed the ADA/Paratransit increase noting the FTA requires the charge be no more than 2x the general fare, which would be \$3.50, the suggested increase is slightly lower at \$3.00.

Mr. Dearing noted this is an effort to balance a fare increase and operating expenses while sustaining existing services.

Comm. Gray agrees she doesn't want to see a reduction in service, however would like to see a smaller increase to riders.

Comm. Baldwin stated the increases are not out of line with previous increases and is supportive of the revised proposal.

Ms. Avis noted the increase will be spread across the entire system.

Ms. Avis stated, and Mr. Dearing agreed, a public comment period and public forum will take place prior to sending the proposal to the commission for consideration.

Ms. Avis is projecting an April 1st implantation if all goes as planned.

**Transit Master Plan:** Ms. Avis reviewed the recommendations developed working closely with Foursquare.

**Transit Master Plan:** Key Recommendations were reviewed and discussed by the Board.

- Increase revenue and expand funding sources
- Realign fixed route services
- Marketing/Branding
- Passenger information and wayfinding
- Service hours and frequency
- Fares, passes and payment media
- Passenger amenities and signage
- Technology deployment

Comm. Baldwin questioned the demographic of riders and best way to reach them.

Ms. Avis reviewed several ideas for marketing, noting BCT ridership age range is 36-64 years old, with the national average age being 16-36. Ms. Avis stated limited advertising dollars would be used to attract new business, wanting the system to appeal to those who have a choice.

Comm. Baldwin requested additional ridership information for similar size programs.

Ms. Avis will reach out to Jackson, Holland and Grand Haven to see what their ridership consists of.

Ms. Avis reviewed new proposed maps making things more user friendly.

Ms. Avis shared information on existing bus shelters and future upgrades, including mobile ticketing with the ability to schedule and manage your trip online.

Ms. Avis stated the 2017, 2018 and 2019 grant awards are being used to purchase a new Computer Aided Dispatch System, estimated at \$460,000. In 2021, grant awards will be used to purchase 3 additional smaller transit vehicles and 2022, 2023 and 2024 grants will be used to replace the fare box system at an estimated cost of \$500,000 to \$600,000.

Ms. Avis noted the Capital Avenue route detour was made permanent due to popularity and the next route to be examined for realignment is Columbia Avenue.

Ms. Avis is looking to the future with the possibility of smaller van size buses and technology improvements with ease and access to 600 stops and 20-25 shelters.

A motion was made by Comm. Faris, supported by Comm. Gray, to send the Transit Master Plan to the City Commission for approval. All yes, none opposed. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Comm. Faris, supported by Comm. Gray, in support of sending the revised fare increase proposal to the City Commission. All yes, none opposed. Motion carried.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Member Comment**

Comm. Baldwin, Comm. Faris and Comm. Gray commended Ms. Avis on her work and knowledge of the transit system.

### **Adjournment**

Comm. Baldwin adjourned the meeting at 11:29PM.