

EASTERN PANHANDLE TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Monday, January 19, 2016

The Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority (EPTA) met on Monday, January 19, 2016 at 446 Novak Drive, Martinsburg, WV. The following were present at the meeting: President, Nic Diehl; Secretary, Gene Pearson; Jim McGowan; Brenda Orndorff; Sherry Bartgis; Mike Ferrari; and Jennifer Brockman. Board members Charles Hall and Brent Wolfingbarger were absent. EPTA staff members present included: Doug Pixler, Elaine Bartoldson, Kim Smith, Laura Funkhouser, and Amanda Malcolm. Elaine Mauck representing the Berkeley County Council and Jim McVey of the Journal were also present.

The Board Members monthly packet included the following: Monthly Meeting Agenda; December 14, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes; Financial Reports for December 2015 and the Audit Report; and Departmental Reports from Operations, Human Resources, and Marketing.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 PM.

There were no appointments.

Jim McGowan offered a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 14, 2015 Board Meeting. Sherry Bartgis seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Kim Smith addressed the Budget Variances report and the Financial Reports for December 2015. The agency annual audit was completed and there were no findings. Gene Pearson offered a motion to approve the Financial Reports for December 2015. Brenda Orndorff seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Doug Pixler spoke from the Operations Report. We are working on a marketing campaign called the "Orange Blitz" to increase ridership on the Orange Circulator in Charles Town. To introduce riders to the service, the circulator bus will be offered free daily from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM for the period of January 18th to March 15th. The circulator runs from Kohl's in Ranson, through shopping areas in Charles Town, then to Harpers Ferry which includes many medical offices; the loop takes about 50 minutes. The "Orange Blitz" marketing includes a new brochure for the circulator. The Circulator decreases our daily mileage as it stays in Jefferson County rather than making multiple trips back to the train station. To meet the demand for access to the Veterans Administration, we added the Orange Express which provides the Circulator driver with a lunch break and brings passengers to and from the VA in route.

Doug Pixler reported that the other route realignments are going well, with ridership averaging out across the lines. The ridership has increased since last year, this time. Amanda Malcolm has updated the ridership statistics for the second quarter which reflect the increase.

Doug Pixler met with Kevin Cerrone at the County Commuter in Hagerstown to view their vault system. He recommended the Board consider making a fieldtrip to Hagerstown to view their operating system in the near future. We are hoping to purchase a compatible vault system for our buses which would make connecting with the Commuter in the future a fluid transition.

Doug Pixler spoke with Bill Robinson with the WV State Transit Department. He indicated that the State will allot 5339 funds in the amount of \$98,000 and combine our FY15 and FY16 funding to

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EPTA which will allow for some major updating. For this funding request, Doug listed our critical needs for six new buses, a new smart vault system, and the updated Zonar software with tablets for all buses. Doug noted that the daily vault revenue is often greater than the ridership numbers from the drivers; they were at times being overwhelmed making the count inaccurate. Doug was willing to see the vaults updated piecemeal; targeting the major lines first and adding as funding allowed. The new smart system provides accurate statistics for both ridership and fares. Our problem is that EPTA has grown into a Small Urban system but are still operating with the equipment of a Rural system! Doug Pixler commented on how supportive the transit agency's in Hagerstown and in Louden County have been.

Doug Pixler noted that the Berkeley County funding request was submitted on time as a result of a combined staff effort. We requested an increase in funding reflecting the increase in service. The budget request for Martinsburg is due February 5th.

Doug Pixler met with the MPO for a meeting concerning the bus transfer station study in Berkeley County. He distributed a Bus Transfer Station handout to the Board and noted that Option 2 was recommended by the study. The property is owned by the County which has no plans for its use; it is centrally located in Martinsburg on West Stephen Street near the Sherriff's office. The assessed value of the property can be credited as match money! The handout also included an artist's concept of the Transfer Station. Doug has walked the property several times and agrees that is a great location with opportunity for growth. The MPO will presenting their findings to the Berkeley County Council on January 28th. Due to the location of several historical sights nearby, the property use will require clearance with the Historical Preservation Society.

Old Business

With Greg Reed's departure from the Board in December, there was a vacancy for Vice-President. Gene Pearson offered a motion to nominate Sherry Bartgis as Vice-President. Brenda Orndorff seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Not all members had opportunity to study the Code of Ethics for Employees. Sherry Bartgis asked to table discussion of this document until the February Board Meeting. The Board agreed.

At the end of 2015, the FTA began transferring its grant monitoring system from TEAM to the TRAMS system; it is in the process of being accomplished. Until EPTA is notified, it will operate under the 2015 Certificates and Assurances. Doug Pixler has already contacted the Berkeley County Counselor as to our need for the 2016 document once the update is accomplished.

EPTA's lead mechanic, Tracy Cornwell, finished his last day last Friday. Beginning January 20, William Dorsey, a current driver, will transition into that open position. William, retired from the State of Maryland, is diesel engine certified and has procurement experience. Doug Pixler said that William is a quality individual.

With the approval of the sick day policy at the December meeting which doubled the number of sick days accrued annually from five to ten, Mike Ferrari was concerned how the new policy would impact driver availability? Laura Funkhouser reported that we now have four on-call drivers to cover.

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Elaine Mauck asked about the availability of buses and the willingness of EPTA to provide vehicles for special events. The President indicated that his only concern was not to be in competition with the private sector. In the absence of impact on the private sector, EPTA buses are available to support special events.

Gene Pearson offered a motion to go into Executive Session to address the selection of a new Executive Director. Jim McGowan seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Mike Ferrari offered a motion to come out of Executive Session. Gene Pearson seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Sherry Bartgis offered a motion to select Doug Pixler as Executive Director, at a salary of \$50,000, for a three month trial period. Jim McGowan seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

The president offered a motion to create the position of Assistant Director. Gene Pearson seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Elaine Bartoldson was called in to meeting and apprised of the decision.

Jim McGowan offered a motion to pay the Assistant Director \$40,000 per year. Jennifer Brockman seconded the motion and the motion was approved. Elaine Bartoldson left the meeting.

Doug Pixler was called into the meeting and apprised of his selection as the new Executive Director, with a three month trial period. Doug asked that the title be just "Director." At the end of the 3 month trial period, the Director's salary will be increased to \$51,000 and on July 1 it will increase to \$52,000.

Gene Pearson offered a motion that the Director's salary for Doug Pixler be retroactive to when he began acting as Director. Brenda Orndorff seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

The president volunteered to call the two runners up for the position of Executive Director to apprise them of the Board's selection.

Gene Pearson offered a motion to adjourn the Board meeting. Jennifer Brockman seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.