

**San Benito County
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING**

January 15, 2009 6:30 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Botelho, Director De La Cruz, Director Edge, Director Emerson, Director Gomez

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Executive Director, Lisa Rheinheimer; Transportation Planning Manager, Mary Dinkuhn; Transportation Planner, Betty Li; Secretary, Monica Gomez

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tony Mercado, MV Transportation

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Botelho called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

A. ACKNOWLEDGE Certificate of Posting

Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Edge, the Directors unanimously acknowledged the Certificate of Posting.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Botelho stated for the record that public comment for this meeting was received and noted in the Regular LTA meeting minutes.

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. County Express Service Reduction Public Hearing – LiOwen

- a) Receive** Report on County Express Service Reductions
- b) Open** Public Hearing
- c) Close** Public Hearing
- d) Direct** Staff to Implement Preferred Service Reduction Effective February 1, 2009

Transportation Planner Betty LiOwen reported that due to the State of California's budget deficit, the Local Transportation Authority will be receiving less funding for County Express bus operations. As a result, a service reduction must be considered.

Staff is currently estimating a shortfall of \$100,000 to \$200,000 in State Transit Assistance. The 2008/2009 budget included \$1,373,915 for County Express Operations. There is a \$500,000 reserve available in Transportation Development Act funding. However, in order to preserve funding, cuts are necessary.

Director Gomez inquired if staff has had discussions with Gavilan College regarding a potential interest in allocating funds for the Intercounty service, since cuts to the Intercounty service (to Gavilan College) can affect enrollment and attendance at the College.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that there have not been discussions regarding some sort of a partnership with Gavilan College, however because colleges and schools are receiving cuts as well, they may not be able to build a partnership at this time.

Chair Botelho opened the Public Hearing.

Public Comment

Lupe Quiroz

Mr. Quiroz stated that he cannot drive anymore and will not have transportation if the 4th Street Line is cut. Mr. Quiroz stated that it is a 2 ½-mile walk into town for him and a lot of the times the Dial-A-Ride service is too busy. Mr. Ortiz stated that he uses the bus at least four times and is okay with increasing rates. Mr. Ortiz requested that the 4th Street line not be cut.

Catherine Farnham

Ms. Farnham stated that she was advocating for the needs of women and children in the community. Ms. Farnham expressed concern for women and their children not being able to get back from their doctor appointments in an appropriate fashion. She inquired about the Fixed Route service cut between 11 a.m. – 2p.m. and noted a concern for mothers not being able to get home to feed their children during this period. Ms. Farnham asked if there was data to support the service cut times that were selected.

Chair Botelho closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and asked staff to respond to the speakers concerns.

Ms. LiOwen responded to the inquiry about the Fixed Route service cut between 11a.m. - 2p.m. Ms. LiOwen stated that the cut was based on ridership numbers that were pulled randomly on random months. Staff observed that between 11am -2pm ridership was low. Ms. LiOwen noted that the Dial-a-Ride service is still available for these women and children; they may have to wait a little longer due to the increase in Dial-a-Ride service.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that staff understands that people will be impacted; however staff did their best to minimize this impact to the greatest extent.

Chair Botelho stated that it is unfortunate that these cuts are being made, however, due to the State Budget cuts, it is necessary. Staff has to prepare in order to be able to provide some type of service to the community.

The Board questioned some of the Intercounty Route (Gavilan) cuts that were being proposed.

Director De La Cruz inquired about Jovenes de Antaño and what cuts were being proposed.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that staff was not proposing cuts to the Jovenes de Antaño service however; she mentioned that she spoke with the Executive Director to see if she can make some internal cuts to help save the budget.

Director De La Cruz suggested using some of the funds that are in reserve to continue some services to church, especially because of the tough times that everyone is currently going through.

Board members shared Director De La Cruz's sentiments; however the current State Budget crisis is uncertain and noted that the proposed cuts may not be enough.

Discussion about fares and fare increases continued between the Board and staff.

The Local Transportation Authority Board of Directors directed staff to implement service reductions for County Express, effective February 1, 2009. The February 1, 2009 service reductions were:

- No weekend Dial-A-Ride service
- No Sunday Intercounty Greyhound service

- No Fixed Route service between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Ending weekday Dial-A-Ride service one hour earlier
- Impose strict holiday service for various holidays and breaks for Intercounty Gavilan and Fixed Route service
- Elimination of runs with low productivity on Intercounty services

The Board noted that they made their selection based on the fact that the proposed service reduction impacts the least amount of people and generates the most in savings.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Edge, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors approved the implementation of the preferred service reduction (noted above) effective February 1, 2009, with Director De La Cruz voting no.

Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Edge, the Director's unanimously voted to adjourn the LTA meeting.

ADJOURN TO REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 19, 2009. AGENDA DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 10, 2009 AT 12:00 P.M.