

City of Lawrence
Public Transit Advisory Committee
May 12, 2015 minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Black, Heather Thies, Marian Hukle, Jane Huesemann, Mark Hurt
MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Pavision, Lyle Hettinger
STAFF PRESENT: Robert Nugent, Serena Pearson , Danny Kaiser, Kristina Maude
PUBLIC PRESENT: None

1. Call to Order

Marian Hukle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:10. No quorum yet. Committee will discuss non-action items until more members present and a quorum is met.

2. Introductions

Kristina Maude introduced herself as the new Transportation Coordinator at KU on Wheels, although not official yet. Everyone introduced themselves to Kristina.

4. Student Summer Bus Pass

Serena Pearson passed out Student Summer Bus Pass flyers that were given to students at middle and high schools in Lawrence by library staff. The library will be purchasing 100 summer bus passes for the students participating in the summer reading program again this year. All Lawrence Parks and Recreation Community Centers and both pools will be selling the summer bus passes this year. They are good for June, July and August. Our hope is that each year more students will use the student passes. Heather Thies said that her daughter will be using the summer pass and will really free up her time spent driving her daughter around. We decided to sell these passes through Parks and Recreation and City Hall for better tracking, plus these locations are convenient for kids and their parents to access. Bob Nugent stated that the summer pass is a good marketing tool to show the value of riding the bus for both the students and their parents.

Serena Pearson made a suggestion that the City Commissioners take a bus ride with the PTAC Committee, similar to how they are taking a bike ride today with the Bicycle Coalition. It may be something that we could campaign for – perhaps a Dump the Pump Day, or Try Transit Day. We would also invite the public.

3. Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2015 (Action Item)

Quorum met. Minutes were looked over by the committee. There were two changes. Jane Huesemann did not approve number 6 (changes to route 5.) Also, James Cannaday is no longer on the board, so he needs to be deleted from the minutes. Heather Thies motioned to approve the minutes for last meeting. Mark Hurt seconded. All in favor - no opposed.

5. Request for Free Passes for Lawrence Summer Food Program (Action Item) – Bob Nugent (18:50)

Per Bob Nugent, there is a movement that has come to us, going through the Mayor first, to provide free summer bus passes for kids to get them to the summer food program. We normally don't give away passes for free. If we do provide free passes, they are usually single ride passes such as what we do for the community shelter. Transit is paying for these tickets. There are other passes that the city is purchasing and agencies are purchasing. Bob is not sure if they are requesting that the city pay for the Summer Bus Passes. We are now in a budget cycle so he is not sure if this will get folded into an outside request. Jane Huesemann suggested that USDA could purchase a few bus passes to give to kids in the program. Bob stated that the Student Summer Bus Passes are already deeply discounted. The Library purchases 100 passes each year. We have set a precedent that there are no free Student Summer Bus Passes, so we would not like to make an exception to this. It would not be fair to agencies that have purchased them. Jane Huesemann suggested that in the future, the city could underwrite bus passes and pay for a portion of them. Alan Black noted that the Mayor has a personal interest in this, since he is CEO of Just Foods. Mark Hurt made a motion to keep the passes at \$10.00 and no free passes for Summer Lunch program. Alan Black seconded. All in favor - no opposed.

6. Changes to Passenger Rider Rules (Action Item) – Bob Nugent (Staff will present proposed changes to Passenger Rider Rules)

Bob Nugent stated that the proposed change is a rule not allowing e-cigarettes on the bus. It is difficult to enforce rules since so many people are moving in and out of the bus. Eating and drinking is not allowed and drivers try to enforce it. Heather Thies proposed to add the e-cigarette rule to the passenger rules. Jane Huesemann seconded. All in Favor - no opposed.

7. Route 15 – Bob Nugent

The Peaslee Center and the USD 497 training center will be completed in August and the Lawrence Workforce Development Center has already moved into the existing structure at 31st and Haskell location. Bob Nugent said that the new Route 15, starting May 18th, will serve several purposes. For one, it will service the 31st and Haskell location, including the new Peaslee Center. It will also give us an opportunity to provide direct service to East Hills and Downtown, linking the community shelter and downtown so people will not have to make a transfer. It will also increase service at East Hills to every 30 minutes (both routes 5 and 15 will go there now). General Dynamics has requested more frequent bus service to get people to work on time.

8. Quick Updates:

A. Transit Center – Bob Nugent said that he went to the City Commission meeting two weeks ago and had a brief five minutes to educate the Commissioners about Transit and our critical issues. He told them that the Transit Center and 30 minute service are our two most pressing issues. Since there is so much involved in the budget issue, the Transit Center issue may be postponed until July. Jane Huesemann asked how the 7th and Vermont location is working. Bob said that it is not a safety issue as much as that there are many events that happen downtown that interfere with our bus service. As they continue to build downtown, there are less and less opportunities for us to relocate our bus hub in case of a downtown event. The Borders bookstore is not an option anymore since it has already been sold.

Bob emphasized that we need to have the opportunity to educate the new City Commissioners on transit related issues. There may be an opportunity on June 2 at a study session before the regular commission meeting. He thinks that Commission wants to have an opportunity to talk about these things among themselves, so he is not sure if

we will have the opportunity to talk to them at that time. PTAC could possibly send a letter with bullet points to show what has been done so far on the Transit Center. The offer of donated land for the Transit Center from KU Endowment may expire, so we may want to act fast on this. Alan Black made the point that the City Commission may want to wait until a new City Manager is hired before this is decided.

B. 30 Minute Service – City Commission showed an interest in seeing service increase to 30 minutes. It will be in the 2016 budget. If they want it to start in January 2016, it may be problematic since our Transit Guide comes out in August. The three routes that need to be increased to 30 minute service are routes 5, 7 and 10.

8. Public Comment:

None.

Further comments by PTAC:

Jane Huesemann would like to commend a paratransit driver in her neighborhood for being courteous and helping a woman in a wheelchair get to her door.

Heather Thies also commented that Cottonwood had a Driver Appreciation Day with cards and care packages for the drivers that service their facility. The passengers really appreciate their drivers and many develop friendships with them. They plan on making this an annual event.

9. Next Meeting (Proposed):

July 14, 2015

10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

-Submitted by Serena Pearson