

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Kim Hoff, Tom Cruikshank, Debbie Anderson, Gary Korneck, Karen Maruska, Jenny Svihel, David Williamsen, and Brenda Severson.

Welcome. Debbie welcomed everyone. She asked everyone to introduce themselves and explain their reason for being on the committee. Debbie announced there will be a new member on the committee – Silas Patrick. He will be representing the fixed route.

Old Business.

- 1) RAC Email. There was nothing the past month.

New Business.

- 1) Metro Bus Procurement Process. Debbie introduced Gary Korneck, Procurement Manager. Gary stated he has over 30 years of experience in procurement. He stated his responsibilities at Metro Bus include materials procurement (MRO – which means Maintenance Repair Operations) as well as purchasing supplies for office and bus parts, etc. He also manages all contracts such as driver and maintenance uniforms, vending, and leased tires. He also does Capital Asset management which includes buses, facilities, and equipment. He handles insurance claims which covers any damages to the vehicles if they are in an accident as well as liability with passenger injuries. He mentioned that a big part of his job is compliance with Federal, State and agency policies. He stated there are a number of lengthy Federal requirements and policies that are in place to oversee that a fair competitiveness of the purchasing process is done to make sure the agency is getting the best value.

He mentioned the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) has a number of circulars which cover 3rd party contract guidance. The circulars are 165 page documents that are constantly changing. There is also a Best Practice & Procurement manual that the FTA oversees and that's 338 page document. These documents list what the compliance processes are for public procurement for agencies such as Metro Bus.

Other things that Gary is responsible for : 1) Facilities and property regulations and compliance, and 2) rolling stock (buses, staff vehicles, maintenance vehicles).

He explained there are two methods of procuring buses: Large buses (Fixed route) and small buses (paratransit). In the past when we were buying vehicles it was basically handled by the individual agency themselves and it would require a 3rd party contractor to help write the specs, negotiate costs which is an additional expense for agencies. As the role of procurement changed in the public sector, it's switched to more of a cooperative or pooled resource contracting option. The Minnesota DOT partnered with local bus distributors and small bus manufacturers and they came up with the Minnesota Cooperative Purchasing Venture contract. Metro Bus has the opportunity to purchase buses off this contract which are already pre-negotiated. All of our smaller buses are purchased off of this contract. For the large buses, Duluth Transit Authority took it upon themselves to develop a large bus procurement

contract so all of the smaller urban agencies like St. Cloud have the opportunity to purchase off of this contract. On the fixed route side, there are really only two large bus manufacturers in the US which is New Flyer in St. Cloud and Gillig Corp. which is located in California. As far as small buses, we are very limited for low floor options. We've been operating the Arboc and recently the Champion bus. There are only three low-floor manufacturers which makes the options limited. A low floor bus runs about \$200,000 and a high floor (with lift) runs about \$60-70,000.

Federal regulations state that we are to run a fixed route bus for a twelve year period and small buses are typically five to seven years.

Funding: We are at 80% state and 20% local. A lot of agencies have run into difficulty replacing buses after a 12 year or 5-7 year cycle. The federal government has laid out "green initiatives" for agencies like Metro Bus to look into other alternative fuel options such as compressed natural gas. One of the challenges we've faced on the small bus side is to find a manufacturer that will make a CNG bus. It has limited our options.

Safety: Gary mentioned that we're looking at the probability of initiating new wheelchair securement systems on the fixed route buses. The first one is called Q-POD and he feels that we will probably go with this new system on the next group of buses that we purchase. It's not a completely hands-off system but it allows the passenger to be more self-sufficient. The other product that has been introduced is called the Quantum. This is a completely hands-free system (Tom showed a video). The downside to this system is it's a rear-facing securement system which means the passenger will face the back of the bus. Currently both systems are only available for fixed route buses. Gary explained the Quantum is very costly and it hasn't been fully tested in the transit industry. He stated the Q-POD has been available for almost 10 years but the initial cost was astronomical and they've made a number of improvements over the years. The Quantum costs about \$12,000 and the Q-POD is around \$4,000. He mentioned there is a dollar threshold of \$50,000 and above when we have to go out for a competitive bid. This process requires a written specification, public notification, national public notification and getting Board approval.

If anyone is interested in looking at the information on both systems, the Q-Straint website has information.

Gary mentioned that if we went with the Quantum, we would lose two more seats and to retrofit all the buses it could cost up to \$1 million.

Karen brought up the concern of the vinyl wraps on the buses and how it restricts her visually impaired passengers from seeing out the bus. Tom mentioned that the front window behind the entry door needs to be clear for the driver to see out. She mentioned there were sitting on the door side and they weren't able to see out.

- 2) Transit Center Closure. Tom mentioned there will be construction on 5th Avenue from Highway 23 to St. Germain Street. It will be closed from approximately Memorial Day to Labor Day. There is an incentive clause for the contractor to get done early. The sidewalks and streets will be tore up completely. Buses will not be allowed to come in on 5th Avenue because they will also be tearing up the intersection at 5th/1st St. All bus operations will be moving to the Lady Slipper parking lot. The buses will be parking along the street and will be first in, first out. The Transit Center will still be open for bathrooms and customer service representatives will still be there to assist passengers with information and pass sales.

Brenda asked where the Northstar Link bus will be parked. Tom explained that ideally they hope it will be parked on 1st Street South by the Parking Ramp.

Karen asked when the start date would be. Tom said there wasn't a definitive date set yet, probably around Memorial Day. If weather cooperates, they may start earlier. He will be meeting with Berta in Marketing later in the day to start putting together communication information.

Open Discussion. Jenny stated that she has seen an increase of people are getting on the bus and saying they don't have any money. There are also more drunk people. Tom stated these situations are monitored and explained that the drivers are instructed to write up the incident, the person is given a letter and they can be trespassed. If the situation is real bad, it can be turned over to law enforcement, but that's the last resort. If they aren't paying for their ride, it's considered fare evasion and is a misdemeanor in the State of Minnesota. Drivers are instructed to politely ask the passenger for a fare. They should do it a couple of times but not badger the person or make a scene. If the person chooses not to pay, the driver should ask them to sit down. The drivers are instructed to ask the person loud enough so that both the other customers can hear it as well as the video recording.

Tom explained it's not against the law to be intoxicated and ride a public transit bus. When it becomes an issue is when the person is affecting other passenger's safety or affects the driver's ability to safely operate the bus. Drivers are asked to notify a street supervisor if they have someone causing disruption on a vehicle. We try not to remove people from a bus because we don't want a confrontation and we don't know what they will do. It is preferred to get them off of the bus and then deal with the situation.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.