

**MINUTES**  
**STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**StarTran Conference Room 2**  
**May 31, 2012**

Members Present: Kim Phelps, John Baylor, Beatty Brasch, Mike DeKalb, Linda Carter, Steve Speicher

Staff Present: Larry Worth, Mike Weston, Kitty Elliott, Glenn Knust, Brian Praeuner, Scott Tharnish, Mike Foreman

**I. REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Chairman Kim Phelps, noted the Open Meetings Law, and Patron Conduct Notice posted on the north wall.

**A. Patrons to be Heard**

None

**B. Review/Action Items**

- May 3, 2012 StarTran Advisory Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted by majority vote with Mr. Speicher abstaining.

**C. Operations Report**

Ms. Brasch had a question on Page 3, Operations Report, from the May 3 board meeting about Mr. Baylor indicating he would pursue with Administration, the issue for pursuing grants to offset an increase in the low income fare. Mr. Tharnish said he had made progress on seeking non-city grant money to offset the cost difference of the low income fare devices by working with Barb Baier. He said the Mayor made it clear, however, that he did not want to raise the low income fare. Mr. Baylor indicated that he had talked with Rick Hoppe in this regard. Mr. Tharnish said he was contacted by Rick, and sent Rick an email summarizing this idea, and has not heard anything since. Mr. Baylor felt they had the green light to go on this, but Mr. Tharnish stated this was not the case. Mr. Tharnish indicated Mr. Hoppe was not enthusiastic about this as they are not interested in increasing the cost of the low income passes. Mr. Speicher asked Mr. Tharnish if he explained that agencies would be assisted in pursuing grants so they could purchase the passes at whatever price is set and distribute to their clientele as they see fit. Mr. Tharnish stated that he did indicate that to Mr. Hoppe, noting that there is potential grant money available (i.e. Woods Foundation, some churches, United Way). He felt this combination of a low income fare increase, with grants offsetting the additional agency costs was a means to secure more revenue for StarTran.

Mr. DeKalb asked if it would be appropriate that we follow-up on this proposal. Mr. Worth said the question has been asked of the administration and no one has responded, and felt this will be considered through the budget process. Mr. Tharnish stated he perceives that the Mayor's Office does not want to set the policy to increase the low income fare, because if the grants were to fail, then the low income price would have already been increased and the low income patrons would be affected. Mr. Speicher continued to question why the Administration would not support an increase for StarTran revenue through these grants to supplement the low income fare loss.

Mr. Baylor asked Mr. Phelps if he could possibly ask a couple of questions that he was interested in because he had to leave the meeting early. Mr. Phelps suggested we continue on with the operations report and see where we are on time at that point.

Mr. Worth said ridership continues to be up by 10%, and UNL ridership up 6%. He said the StarTran/UNL Transportation Agreement will be scheduled for first reading by the City Council on

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Monday, June 4, as well as a Pre-Council scheduled prior to that; with Public Hearing on June 11 and approval on June 18. The Regents are scheduled to act on this agreement on June 8. Once both approvals occur, StarTran can begin procuring the additional buses and equipment, and later in the summer hire 7 additional drivers and one supervisor.

Mr. Worth noted that StarTran is receiving an Environmental Award, for the use of alternate fuels, presented by the Health Department. Mr. DeKalb congratulated StarTran on this award. Mr. Worth reminded everyone that StarTran previously was presented an award by Blue Skyways, for the use of alternate fuels.

Mr. Worth announced that 48 drivers are being recognized at Safety meetings today and given a safe driver pin for their record of no preventable accidents within the last year. Mike Kennedy, another driver, was awarded the Monthly Mayor's Award of Excellence for assisting a gentleman in a wheelchair who was stuck in the mud.

Mr. Worth addressed a couple of issues he had received by email from members. One being the bus advertising contract, which will be extended until September by Purchasing. Another issue was StarTran goals, which are scheduled to be addressed in June. Mr. Worth also mentioned the sidewalk repair article which was in the news. He stated this was capital FTA money, requiring a 10% match. The funds were transferred to the sidewalk department, to help replace sidewalks within ½ mile of all bus routes to improve accessibility to the bus services. This was actually done two years ago, with work set to begin this summer. Mr. Speicher asked who determined the sidewalks to be replaced with these funds. Mr. DeKalb felt he would like to see Public Works prioritize that money for sidewalk repairs according to the bus routes. Mr. Praeuner stated that the repairs are on bus routes and/or in proximity along the bus routes, which were developed from a priority list.

Lastly, an item asked of Mr. Worth was about the 'Taking Charge Survey', with reference to StarTran. StarTran was required to submit items to the Mayor's Office for potential budget cuts. Two were selected by the Administration and placed on the survey for the public to vote on their importance: 1) To reduce the use of Handi-Van service down to 3/4 mile from all bus routes, as Federally required, rather than citywide. This would affect about 12 ADA eligible individuals with 3-4 of those utilizing the service routinely. Most other transit agencies serve only within that 3/4 mile boundary. 2) Cutting 2 hours midday, from 12-2p, for several routes. In response to a question, Mr. Tharnish stated the routes that would be affected on the midday cut, if approved, are Bethany/Normal, Arapahoe/Arnold Heights, Belmont/Salt Valley, University Place/College View, SouthPointe and Vet's Hospital. Mr. Worth stated that if these budget reductions were to be pursued, they would be included with the budget development, and he distributed a schedule for the Mayor & City Council discussions, public hearings and actions regarding the 2012-14 budget process.

Mr. Baylor questioned the delay on producing a new RFP for the bus advertising contract and asked if we could invite Vince or someone from Purchasing to the next board meeting to talk about this contract. Mr. Worth said he would ask and Ms. Brasch asked if they could not come if the board could be notified ahead of time.

Mr. Baylor wanted to clarify his understanding of the UNL contract, in that the UNL revenue will offset the additional costs and that UNL is paying the operating and capital expenses, with the bottom line being this will be neutral revenue and costs. His understanding was confirmed by Mr. Worth.

Mr. Baylor asked for an update on the deadheading of routes, as to if StarTran has realized any savings and the affect of this on passengers. Mr. Tharnish explained that we actually did not cut as many routes as originally planned and that we have not really had complaints after the initial adjustment by our patrons.

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Mr. Baylor stated that he felt now would be a good time to put forth any suggestions the board may have in regards to the advisory board's authority, as currently it is only addresses routes and fares. Mr. Baylor suggested that they ask for greater budget authority so that the board can submit recommendations and input in regard to the budget. After discussion, Mr. Baylor made a motion to ask the City Council to adopt the audit consultant's suggested third option (c), which would expand the board's role to include budget, service and performance oversight with more direct ties to the Council. Motion was passed unanimously.

### D. Other Business

Ms. Elliott distributed a list of StarTran's bus pass outlets as requested from the previous board meeting, and said these listings would be posted on the buses soon and the downtown kiosks if room allows. She also reported that signs would be sent to outlets for posting that StarTran passes are sold at their location. Ms. Elliott also shared two thank you letters sent to drivers by Mr. DeKalb, on behalf of the advisory board.

### E. Patrons to be Heard

None

### F. Adjournment

Chairman Phelps adjourned the meeting.

The next StarTran Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2012, 8:00 a.m. in the StarTran Conference Room.