



MEETING OF THE ST. JOHN'S TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

REGULAR BUSINESS

A meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission was held on Thursday, February 25th, 2021 at Noon at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive, St. John's. The meeting was streamed live via Webex.

Present at the meeting were:

Paul Walsh	Chair
Debbie Hanlon	Vice Chair/City Councillor
Jamie Korab	Commissioner/City Councillor
Maggie Burton	Commissioner/City Councillor
Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
Lynn Zurel	Commissioner
Tolulope Akerele	Commissioner
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Financial Management
Kevin Breen	City Manager
Judy Powell	Metrobus General Manager
Joan Mahon	Administrative Assistant

I. PROCEDURAL

- The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed Tolulope Akerele and Lynn Zurel as the newest members of the Commission.
- J. Mahon recorded the minutes of the meeting of this date.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

➤ AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Burton and seconded by Commissioner Korab that the agenda for this meeting date be approved.

➤ MINUTES

It was moved by Vice Chair Hanlon and seconded by Commissioner Burton that the minutes of the January 28th, 2021 regular business meeting of the Commission be approved as distributed.

III. BUSINESS ARISING

1. COVID-19—Update

- Service was moved to a Summer schedule effective February 15th. There were employees impacted with Covid-19 that either needed to isolate or had a close contact or family member in isolation and needed to be tested. There are currently no positive cases among staff. There was some concern that a full level of service would not be able to be maintained, if more employees were required to isolate.
- Alert Level 5 came in to effect on February 19th meaning that only ten (10) people are allowed on board the buses – nine (9) passengers and one (1) driver.
- Ridership was back up to 60% - 65% of normal levels but has dropped to 25% - 30% since returning to Covid Level 5.
- GoBus is averaging 100 passengers per day - 15% - 20% of pre-pandemic levels. Chair Walsh questioned about the quantity of passengers the GoBuses are carrying. Upon verifying – it was noted that they are carrying two (2) passengers per bus and one (1) driver.

2. Transit Priority System

- For the benefit of the new commission members, the General Manager supplied a synopsis of the Transit Priority System. It is a system where a unit is installed on a bus that communicates with select intersections in the City to give buses priority. The buses are a level down from emergency vehicles. Transit buses do not interrupt a traffic signal but will shorten a red light or lengthen a green light, if a bus is approaching an intersection. There have been 16 intersections identified in the City – seven are programmed to work at all times with the remaining nine only if the buses are running five minutes behind schedule. One intersection – Stamps Lane and Freshwater Road has a queue jump which gives a bus priority at the traffic light. The bus will get a green light (white bar) prior to the other traffic which will enable the bus to proceed through the light before the traffic. This is the only queue jump in the City.
- As discussed in last month's meeting – the pedestrian controls for the intersections have been turned off by the City which prevents the Transit Priority System from working. K. Breen followed up with Garrett Donaher, Transportation Engineer, City of St. John's, and was advised that there is no specific date where the buttons will be made operational.

ACTION: The General Manager will advise which intersections should be made operational for the benefit of Metrobus.

3. GoBus – On Demand Service RFP

- The General Manager advised that it is 99% complete. It should be prepared and released by the end of February, bids due by the end of March with a decision made by the end of April.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Financial Statements—January, 2021

- The financial statements for the month of January, 2021 were tabled and reviewed.
- Commissioner Zurel questioned the amounts paid by the City of Mt. Pearl and Town of Paradise and how they are arrived at – is it based on ridership, revenue or is it a set amount? The General Manager explained that they are charged per kilometer based on the total cost to run the system. They set their service levels and we charge per kilometer based on a rate that is set at the beginning of the year based on the budget.
- It was noted by the General Manager that the variance is more than you would normally see in our statements due to a couple of points – (1) in the Fall budget there was so much uncertainty with Covid-19 that estimates were made as to what ridership would be in 2021 and with the Lift (Low Income Pass) program we had to make estimates on how that program would impact our regular ridership. It will take a couple of years to see how the LIFT program will impact our ridership. This year is not a good measure with Covid-19 so those two pieces together are why there is a variance in passenger revenue this year. The impact on the general ridership from the LIFT pass is not as great as anticipated. (2) The other piece is the diesel fuel. We are above budget – budgeted at \$0.97 a litre and currently it is \$1.06 litre and anticipated that the price may increase more.

2. Executive Summary (Regular) —January, 2021

- The Executive Summary for the month of January, 2021 was tabled for members' information.

3. Committees of the Commission

- Discussion was held with regards to filling positions on various committees within the St. John's Transportation Commission. These are the following committees with vacant seats:
 - Pension Committee (1 vacancy)
 - Marketing Committee (2 vacancies)
 - Finance (1 vacancy)
- Commissioner Burton questioned if a public member should be on the Marketing Committee in order to get an external perspective, if we don't have people on the Commission with expertise.
- Commissioners Korab and Hanlon expressed that they have a marketing background and would like to serve on the Marketing Committee.

ACTION: Chair Walsh will follow up with the Commissioners to determine interest in sitting on the Committees.

4. Safe Restart Program

- In the Summer of 2020 Metrobus did not avail of the funding available in Round One of the Safe Restart Program as we did not meet the requirements.
- Round 2 has not been announced yet but CUTA (Canadian Urban Transit Association) has been advocating that transit should be continued. CUTA will advocate for us if and when it is needed.
- It was agreed to wait and determine our financial status in 2021.

V. OTHER (Information/Community)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further regular business to discuss at this time, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:40 PM.
- Live streaming of the public meeting ended immediately followed by an in-camera business meeting of the Commission.
- The next regular business meeting of the Commission will be held at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive or via Webex on Thursday, March 25th, 2021 commencing at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Walsh
Chair

Joan Mahon
Recording Secretary