



**MEETING OF THE  
ST. JOHN'S TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

A meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission was held on Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Noon. 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
Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
Maggie Burton	Commissioner/City Councillor
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 at 12:05 pm.
- J. Mahon recorded the minutes of the meeting of this date.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

➤ **AGENDA**

An addition was made by The General Manager to the New Business portion of the agenda - #6 Tender for Replacement of GoBus Fleet.

It was moved by Commissioner Morry and seconded by Commissioner Akerele that the amended agenda for this meeting date be approved.

➤ **MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Zurel and seconded by Commissioner Morry that the minutes of the March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 regular business meeting of the Commission be approved as distributed.

**III. BUSINESS ARISING**

**1. COVID-19—Update**

- We are currently in Level 2 of the Covid-19 pandemic and saw an increase in ridership at just over 50% of pre-Covid levels. In January our ridership level was at 60%. Capacity is a full seated load of passengers which is meeting the need of our riders.

**2. Transit Priority System**

- The General Manager questioned K. Breen to see where we stood with regards to the suspension of the intersection features which are necessary for our Transit Priority System and the plan to turn them back on for April. K. Breen advised that the recommendation was going before the Committee of the Whole for approval on May 5<sup>th</sup> to reactivate the intersections as indicated by the General Manager.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. 2020 Audit**

Finance Manager J. Hussey provided an overview of the draft audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2020 as approved by the Finance Committee for review and approval by the full Commission. It was noted by Commissioner Zurel that an error stating Total Revenue should have been Total Expenses on Page 18 – note 14.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Korab and seconded by D. Coffey that the audited financial statements for 2020 as prepared by BDO be approved once the error is corrected.

### **2. Financial Statements — March, 2021**

- The financial statements for the month of March, 2021 were tabled and reviewed.
- Commissioner Zurel questioned the Average Fare on page 12 – *Avg fare (Incl. LIFT) of \$2.79 compared to \$1.93 in 2020 and \$1.86 budget.* J. Hussey, Finance Manager, explained that we are seeing a major shift in our average fare because of the Low Income Bus Pass Program (LIFT). The dedicated revenue shares came on board but our ridership dropped significantly due to Covid. The average fare is propped up significantly. Once ridership levels return to normal, it should come back down.

J. Hussey, Financial Manager, left the meeting.

### **3. Executive Summary (Regular) — March, 2021**

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

### **4. Recommendation – RFP For On-Demand Software**

- A memo was circulated to the Commission with regards to the Request for Proposals for On-Demand Transit Service Software with the Review Committee recommending the acceptance of the proposal from Via Mobility.
- Six bids were received – four of the bids that were received were deemed to be non-compliant. Upon evaluation of the remaining two bids, Via Mobility and Spare Labs, the proposal from Via Mobility at a bid price of \$755,000 (over 5 years) is over \$350,000 less than the bid from Spare Labs, is recommended for the Commission's approval.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Morry and seconded by Commissioner Zurel and carried unanimously that Via Mobility's bid be accepted as proposed.

### **5. Shelter Installations**

Following an inquiry from Commissioner Burton with regards to the status of shelter installations - the General Manager recapped the process:

- Challenges are experienced with respect to obtaining approval to move forward on installing a shelter on property i.e. determining who owns the property we are looking to place the shelter on.
- Typically, if it is a commercial property, the request has to go to their head office which can take months for approval i.e. – Costco – head office is in Seattle.
- Once we receive the approval we then have to apply to the City for their approval and to NL Power for cabling and wiring.
- When the City is widening streets or doing sidewalk repair, the Engineering Department will include a shelter installation in the construction plan.
- The more shelters we have installed in the City, the more staff we will need to maintain those shelters. Currently, we are at the maximum number of shelters that our current staff can maintain. When the numbers go up to 70 or 80 shelters, we would have to add another position and possibly a support vehicle, especially in the winter months.
- Considering that the Route 6 to Galway is a pilot route, Commissioner Burton questioned if a shelter should be prioritized for that area. The route to Galway began at the beginning of the Covid pandemic in 2020. The General Manager noted that it is such a cold and windy area that an old shelter that was dismantled from another area and in stock will be installed. The only cost to placing a shelter in that area right now would be for the installation of the concrete pad. The shelter itself will not be wheelchair accessible but the pad will be accessible with a ramp. The

### **5. Shelter Installations -cont'd**

wheelchair would be able to enter the shelter but would not have as much room to turn around. The Chair was concerned about the optics of not installing a wheelchair accessible shelter.

➤ The General Manager indicated that a couple of years ago, the Commission made the decision to install non-wheelchair shelters in stock (that were previously removed from service) on non-accessible routes until they can be replaced. The Commission can revisit that decision, if they would like to reconsider. Note: Route 20 to Galway is not currently an accessible route.

### **6. Tender for Replacement of GoBus Fleet**

➤ The General Manager brought forward to the Commission that approval was given to apply for funding to replace the GoBus Fleet (18 buses) through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (PTIF 2) and is now looking for approval to release the tender as soon as the decision is received.

➤ The wait period for buses now is uncertain as there are at least two plants shut down due to a shortage of parts.

➤ We need to move forward and get our name slotted in on the production schedule as the current fleet needs to be replaced by June of 2022.

➤ Commissioner Zurel commented that the timing to vote seems early and would it make more sense to hold a special meeting before May for that reason. The Chair agreed to hold an E-Vote.

**ACTION:** The General Manager will prepare the tender in anticipation of releasing it once funding is approved.

## **V. OTHER (Information/Community)**

Commissioner Akerele requested ridership data and will forward her request to the General Manager detailing the information she requires.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

➤ There being no further regular business to discuss at this time, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 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 via Webex on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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Paul Walsh  
Chair

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Joan Mahon  
Recording Secretary