



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

### REGULAR BUSINESS

A meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission was held on Thursday, October 28th, 2021 at approximately 12:00 PM at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive.

Present at the meeting were:

Paul Walsh	Chair
Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
Lynn Zurel	Commissioner
Tolulope Akerele	Commissioner
Sheilagh O'Leary	Commissioner/Deputy Mayor
Ian Froude	Commissioner/City Councillor
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Financial Management
Judy Powell	Metrobus General Manager
Joan Mahon	Administrative Assistant

Via phone: Maggie Burton Commissioner/City Councillor

Absent: Kevin Breen City Manager

### I. PROCEDURAL

- The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm. Chair Walsh welcomed Commissioners O'Leary and Froude to the Commission.
- J. Mahon recorded the minutes of the meeting of this date.

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

#### ➤ AGENDA

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

#### ➤ MINUTES

It was moved by D. Coffey and seconded by Commissioner Zurel that the minutes of the September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 regular business meeting of the Commission be approved as distributed.

### III. BUSINESS ARISING

#### 1. COVID-19 - Update

➤ The General Manager reported that ridership on both Metrobus and GoBus has increased to approximately 75% - 80% of pre-pandemic levels. The mask mandate has remained in place on board all buses. The mandatory vaccination policy announced by the City which will be in place on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, will apply to Metrobus. Metrobus is deemed an essential service so the NL Vaxpass is not required on board all buses but is required by employees and anyone conducting business in the transit centre.

#### 2. On-Demand Software Update

➤ The General Manager supplied background information for the benefit of the new commission members. We are in the process of switching the GoBus scheduling software to an on-demand software from Via Mobility. The most exciting feature is that the customer will no longer require a 24-hour window for booking a ride. It is scheduled to go live on November 7<sup>th</sup>. We are currently working through logistics and training with Newfound Cabs who are dedicating four (4) drivers to GoBus full time.

## **2. On-Demand Software Update**

- On November 7<sup>th</sup>, we are also launching an upgrade to our Smart Card Collection System to an account-based system which will enable on-line real time uploads instead of the 24–48 hour system now in place.
- Another benefit of the upgrade to the Smart Card Collection System is that the taxi drivers will have an app on their phones to be able to verify GoBus cards and collect the fare.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Executive Summary – September, 2021**

- The September Executive Summary was tabled for members' information.

### **2. Financial Statements – September, 2021**

- Commissioner Zurel questioned the following:
  - Under Key Performance Indicators for GoBus “GoBus rides on Metrobus” – does this indicate the quantity of rides that a qualified user of Gobus chose to use on Metrobus – the General Manager confirmed this.
  - Route 28 and Route 30 – Commissioner Zurel inquired about routes 28 and 30 as ratios are low. Route 28 is the Community Bus and route 30 is Paradise.
- D. Coffey noted that the Group Insurance was well ahead of budget and wondered if it was a timing issue. We receive our renewal of the group insurance after the budget was prepared and it came in more favorable than expected.

### **3. Tender – Paratransit Fleet**

- The tender has been released with a closing date of November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A vendor requested a 2–3 week extension as the dealers – Ford and GM – have not released their 2022 prices. Most manufacturers use these chassis in their vehicles. We have responded to the buyer at the City's Purchasing Department to extend the date to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as we didn't want to preclude people from the bidding. Delivery date should be late 2022 which we may run into some issues with our current fleet as it will be older than five (5) years.
- These units are gas powered. As part of the electrification plan that is currently being worked on, we will look at the replacement of both fleets to get to an electric fleet.

**ACTION: The General Manager will do an e-poll with the Commission upon the closure of the tender.**

### **4. Terms of Commissioners**

- For the benefit of the new commissioners the General Manager explained that a commissioner is appointed for a two-year term and can be renewed for an additional two years. Chair Walsh and Commissioner Morry are at the end of their second term. As the Chair does not have a specified term until the Commission decides to change the Chair, Commissioner Morry's term is up at the end of December, 2021. Appointments are usually timed to stagger the replacements for continuity purposes which, in this case, most of the current Commission have been on the board for a year or less. Commissioner Morry and Chair Walsh are agreeable to stay on the Commission for an additional year.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Burton and seconded by Commissioner O'Leary that Commissioner Morry's term would be extended to December 31, 2022.

It was moved by D. Coffey and seconded by Commissioner Burton that Commissioner Froude would be appointed Vice-Chair. Both actions were carried unanimously.

## **5. Radio System**

➤ Metrobus rents space on two towers (Kenmount Road and Shea Heights) for the radio systems. The tower on Shea Heights is owned by CBC and is used for Metrobus and the City's Public Works Department. We were notified that they will be decommissioning the tower in April/May of 2022. We are currently testing a "Push to Talk" system which is through Bell Mobility and it is cellular based. This system was tested a few years ago and at the time there were key features that they could not supply. Currently, the feature that they still cannot provide us with but they are working on is our panic button. This is a button that an operator can push which opens up the channel so Dispatch can hear everything that is going on when an emergency arises. It will also display "Call 911" across the luminator sign on the front of the bus. Bell Mobility is working on a solution to which they hope to have available in January, 2022. In the meantime, we are working with our consultant, Norm Cook, to secure a tower to replace the Shea Heights tower.

## **6. Thanksgiving Food Drive**

➤ VOCM Cares Foundation and Metrobus, in partnership with Sobeys stores, hosted the Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive in St. John's metro and surrounding areas in support of the Community Food Sharing Association.

➤ This year's campaign was held from October 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> and involved collection of food donations by schools – 26,450 pounds of food with a value of \$68,770.00 was collected.

## **7. LED Lighting Tender**

➤ A memo was circulated in response to the tender for LED lighting supplies. As the lowest bidder did not meet the specifications, we are recommending awarding the tender to McLoughlan Supplies Limited.

**ACTION:** It was moved by D. Coffey and seconded by Commissioner Zurel and carried unanimously that the LED Lighting Tender be awarded to McLoughlan Supplies Limited.

## **IV. OTHER**

### **1. Service Awards**

➤ The Commission's Annual Years of Service Luncheon was held this month at The Bella Vista for our 2020 and 2021 award recipients.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

➤ There being no further regular business to discuss at this time, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 pm.

➤ The next regular business meeting of the Commission will be held at Metrobus, 25 Messenger Drive at Noon on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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Paul Walsh  
Chair

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Joan Mahon  
Recording Secretary