



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission  
Thursday, November 24, 2022 12:00pm  
In-Person at 25 Messenger Drive and via Webex

### In attendance:

Paul Walsh	Chairperson
Ian Froude	Vice Chairperson/City Councillor
Lynn Zurel	Commissioner
Tolulope Akerele	Commissioner
Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Finance & Administration
Kevin Breen	City Manager
Ron Ellsworth	Commissioner/City Councillor
Maggie Burton	Commissioner/City Councillor
Judy Powell	General Manager
Mark Chancey	Marketing & Information Services Manager
Donna Power	Administrative Assistant

### I. PROCEDURAL

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:04 PM.

### II. AGENDA

**MOTION:** To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Ellsworth; seconded by Commissioner Zurel. Motion Carried.

### III. MINUTES

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the October 27, 2022 regular meeting as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Zurel; seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth. Motion Carried.

### IV. BUSINESS ARISING

#### 1. Stop Announcements – alternative supports

In the October regular meeting, Commissioner Akerele inquired about possible alternative supports for people to use Metrobus while awaiting the installment of a stop

announcements system. The General Manager brought the request to staff for further exploration. Mark Chancey, Manager of Marketing and Information Services, joined the meeting to present two options.

1. Interior cards can be developed to provide information similar to the *New to Metrobus* section of the website. These would include information about planning a trip, paying fare, and other helpful tips to make the ride more enjoyable and efficient. These cards would be placed on each bus.
2. Current route schedules can be redesigned to more effectively match information that would be provided by a stop announcement system. Rather than listing each street the bus travels, the schedules would be based on stop ID's and stop names, categorized by checkpoints (A, B, C, D). These checkpoints would tie into the map of the route, and the scheduled stop times.

Commissioner Akerele expressed thanks for these options and added that developing a short video on how to use the system may also be beneficial. She also volunteered to assist with this project. Chair Walsh noted that this would be helpful for individuals who may require options other than printed information.

(K. Breen joins the meeting at approximately 12:11pm)

(M. Chancey leaves the meeting at 12:13pm)

## **2. Revenue and Ridership**

As a follow-up to the discussion at the last meeting about ridership trends as compared to revenue, the Finance Manager has put together some charts showing the trends in 2022 compared to 2019. The charts indicate that they are both moving together.

Commissioner Zurel inquired if all revenue is represented in these charts. The General Manager confirmed this to be true. All revenue, including revenue from the Province, is included.

K. Breen, referencing the Monthly % Change chart, noted the significant increase in October and questioned what has caused this. The General Manager commented that October is typically the busiest month of the year due to student usage. The General Manager also noted that ridership under the provincially funded programs, as a percentage, has remained steady, indicating that it is increasing as ridership increases.

Commissioner Ellsworth noted that sharing this information with the Province throughout the year would be beneficial. The General Manager commented that data is shared regularly.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. General Manager's Report

RFP – GoBus Service:

- Vice Chair Froude inquired how the transition to a new service provider for GoBus is progressing. The General Manager commented that the Manager, Accessible Transit Services, has been in constant contact with both MVT and Tok Transit and things are going really well.
- Chair Walsh inquired about the status of the new paratransit buses. The General Manager informed that the latest update indicated arrival between mid-December and mid-January. Once they arrive, it will take up to two weeks to make them road-ready (exterior design and technology installation).
- Commissioner Ellsworth noted that it is important to return to and maintain the full complement of vehicles in the fleet (18) rather than operating with less.
- The General Manager also noted that MVT has requested a waiver related to a contract item which requires buses to be returned in a road-worthy state. This is a reasonable request, and the work is underway with Legal.

Accessibility Plan:

- Commissioner Zurel, referencing the comment about demand on staff, inquired if we currently have the right complement of staff in terms of skill sets and number. The General Manager commented that the skill levels are there but workloads are challenging at times, particularly in the area of training. With high levels of recruitment for operators, things like travel training and driver refresher training have been compromised due to limited resources. Additionally, as more projects come onboard, additional resources may be required.
- K. Breen, noting the stated Dec 2023 deadline, inquired if it will take a year to develop the plan, meaning no actions are realized until 2024, or if it is possible to complete the accessibility plan in 6 months? The General Manager commented that Dec 2023 is the deadline identified within the legislation and she will consult with Donna Power to determine appropriate timelines.
- Vice Chair Froude expressed feeling confident with the Terms of Reference as presented but suggested having it reviewed by the Paratransit Working Group and the Inclusion Advisory Committee may also be beneficial.

**MOTION:** To refer the draft Terms of Reference for the Metrobus Accessibility Plan to the Paratransit Working Group and the Inclusion Advisory Committee for their input.

Moved by Vice Chair Froude; seconded by Commissioner Burton.

Motion carried unanimously.

## 2. Executive Summary Report

Vice Chair Froude inquired if the eligibility assessments for existing GoBus customers have ended. The General Manager confirmed that they have, noting that those indicated on the report were scheduled prior to the end of the contract and were completed as scheduled. No further assessments for existing customers will be conducted.

K. Breen inquired what feedback was heard at the recent Youth Forum pertaining to public transit. The General Manager informed that a *What We Heard* document was received earlier this day.

**ACTION:** The General Manager will share the Youth Forum's *What We Heard* document with the Commission for their review.

K. Breen inquired if the ridership for GoBus is a year-to-date percentage. The General Manager commented that it is for the month of October only. GoBus ridership has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

## 3. Financial Statements for October 2022

Commissioner Zurel questioned why GoBus passenger revenue is so low compared to the budgeted amount. Chair Walsh suggested this is likely attributable to a relatively high proportion of paratransit users availing of government funded passes. The General Manager noted 465 active LIFT cards (utilized by GoBus customers) is a high number.

Commissioner Zurel commented that even though charter revenue is returning, it does not perform well financially and perhaps it is time to consider a rate change. The General Manager informed that a fuel surcharge was introduced this year. The rate is priced to make a small profit and it is higher than competitors' rates. It is still offered as a service to fill a void in the market but can be reviewed and priced depending on the business model the Commission chooses.

## VI. OTHER

### 1. Next meeting – December 15, 2022

The meeting will begin at 11am and the annual Christmas luncheon will begin at noon.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

Business concluded at approximately 12:38 PM.

**MOTION:** To adjourn the November 24, 2022 regular business meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission.

Moved by Commissioner Ellsworth. Meeting adjourned.