

**TSAC Minutes
November 5, 2014**

Present:

Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Mike Caruso
Mr. Joe Dillard
Mr. David Glockzin
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Dr. Margaret Hobson
Mr. Collin Kruger
Dr. Beth McNeill
Mr. Michael Murtha
Dr. Joe Newton
Mr. Robert Pottberg
Ms. Flora Reeves
Ms. Veronica Sprayberry
Dr. Bob Strawser
Mr. Travis Walters
Dr. CJ Woods

Absent:

Dr. Deb Banerjee
Mr. Peter Lange
Mr. Chris Lyons
Mr. Rod Weis

1. Dr. Angie Hill Price called the meeting to order and asked members to review the minutes from October. Mr. Travis Walters motioned to approve the minutes as written, Dr. Margaret Hobson seconded the motion, and all members voted to approve the minutes.
2. Ms. Jolene Sears updated members on a couple of changes to the committee. Ms. Hannah Weger, Speaker of the Student Senate, has appointed Mr. Michael Murtha to serve as her designee. Ms. Veronica Sprayberry has stepped in as the voting member for University Staff Council due to a change in personnel.
3. Ms. Madeline Dillard introduced Mr. John McBeth, President and CEO of Brazos Transit.
 - 3.1. Mr. McBeth introduced his co-worker, Ms. Margie Lucas, who is in charge of administration at Brazos Transit.
 - 3.2. Mr. McBeth said that he would like to continue the established partnership with Texas A&M University. If the ridership from Brazos Transit is combined with Texas A&M, the transit system would be considered a "mass provider" and would classify Bryan/College Station as a "transportation intensive" city and eligible for more federal money.
 - 3.3. In order to maintain the relationship between BTA and TAMU and qualify for federal money, an agreement honoring BTA passes on TAMU buses and TAMU ID's on BTA buses would have to be finalized. BTA already allows riders with TAMU ID's to ride their buses.
 - 3.4. If awarded federal money, it would allow purchase of buses at 20% of cost. Additionally, the 20% cost can be submitted for state money.

- 3.5. The ownership of the buses would be with BTA and TAMU is allowed use of them. The only exception is that the buses cannot be used for charter for non-affiliates of TAMU.
 - 3.5.1. Question: Is there a fee to ride BTA buses? Mr. McBeth said that BTA customers pay a fare to ride. If they qualify as low income or disabled, the fare is half of the regular fare.
 - 3.5.2. Question: If allowing BTA passengers created more demand on our buses and overcrowding, at what point could we get out of the agreement? Mr. Kenny Kimball said in order to get out of the agreement, we would have to return the buses to BTA.
 - 3.5.3. Question: How many people have BTA passes? How do they obtain pass? Mr. McBeth said no more than 50 passes are currently issued. A&M students are also able to ride without a pass, by showing their valid A&M ID. Customers come to BTA to fill out application for pass.
 - 3.5.4. Mr. Travis Walters, a student senate member and a transit driver, observed that most non-affiliates who ride are using routes that go to stores such as HEB, Wal Mart, etc. He estimated less than 1% of riders as non-affiliates.
 - 3.6. Ms. Dillard pointed out that when the 10 buses on order are delivered beginning next spring, we will end up with 5 net new buses, which are larger models with more capacity than the buses we currently have. We will return 5 small buses which were purchased by BTA in 2007 to them.
 - 3.6.1. If an increase in funding from the University Advancement Fee is approved by the Board of Regents, we can use that money to debt the cost of the bus purchase over time and then use reserves to fund refurbishment of our buses and purchase of refurbished buses.
 - 3.7. Dr. Hill Price thanked Mr. McBeth and Ms. Lucas for attending and answering questions for the committee and they exited the meeting.
4. Ms. Dillard covered some proposed improvements for Transit routes for the spring semester. Currently, we run the same number of buses on all routes, all days of the week. We have noticed a trend that shows a significant drop in ridership on Fridays, around a 25% decrease.
 - 4.1. A proposal is to reduce 1 bus from routes with 5 buses on Fridays between the hours of 10:30 am and 2:30 pm.
 - 4.1.1. Question: How much service will be lost? Ms. Dillard explained that we would lose 66 hours of service on Fridays, but would add those 66, plus an additional 35 hours to Monday – Thursday.
 - 4.1.2. Question: Will the reduction on Friday increase the wait time for riders? Mr. Justin Tippy explained that the entire schedule would not be reworked, we would actually just eliminate one bus on the route from running its schedule. Ms. Dillard added that it would allow more buses to be used for charters on Friday, a higher demand day.
 - 4.2. Another proposal is to extend the time of day service to ease overcrowding. Night service now starts at 6:30 and we don't have enough capacity for the crowds between 6:15 pm and 8:30 pm. We would have the routes run another round or two into the night schedule; we do this now as needed but it would be ideal to be able to add it to the schedule so customers know when to expect a bus.
 - 4.3. Route 36 serves the Cottages off 2818 and is currently a highly utilized route. We would increase the buses on the route from 5 to 6.

- 4.4. Route 5 (Bush School), an on campus route, is the longest route and is already overcrowded. When the White Creek dorm opens in Fall 2015, it will add significant numbers to the ridership. The plan is to split Route 5 into 2 routes to make it more efficient.
 - 4.4.1. The new Route 5 will turn around in front of the Centeq building on Discovery Drive and serve the Bush School, Reed Arena, Kleberg and the MSC. 3 buses will serve the route every 8-9 minutes.
 - 4.4.2. The new Route 3 will leave the MSC, serving NCTM, School of Public Health, the new dorm and proceed on Stotzer to Wehner and then back to the MSC. 3 buses will run the route every 7-8 minutes. This will add another route to help clear the congestion at Wehner during class change. In 2016, this route will also serve the Vet School Expansion.
 - 4.4.3. Question: Do you anticipate enough drivers during that time? Yes, we have seen an increase in applications since we raised the starting rate of drivers to \$9.50.
 - 4.4.4. Question: Was transit service affected by the hiring freeze? Yes, we have 6 positions for full time drivers that we were counting on that have not been filled.
 - 4.5. Route 4 which currently serves the Gardens Apartments will be impacted by the Century Square development. Calvin Moore Drive will go away entirely at some point and we are working with developers to get a firm timeframe for the development schedule.
5. Dr. Hill Price asked for other questions or comments.
 - 5.4. Dr. Beth McNeill expressed concern with giving up control of the ridership of the buses; you become vulnerable when you give up control. Hate to see a decision made that can put us in precarious position years down the road.
 - 5.4.1. Ms. Dillard added that there were multiple stops which were eliminated previously due to behavioral issues; for example, the stop on 29th Street near Dairy Queen was attracting high school students and was eliminated. She said although we don't check ID's, we reserve the right to check for proper ID and asking for credentials might reduce trouble makers from riding the bus.
 - 5.5. Dr. Hill Price said we would have to make sure that Brazos Transit Authority pass holders know they must adhere to our rules.
 - 5.6. Mr. Walters asked if there was an update on the used buses from Cap Metro. Ms. Dillard said that is part of the overall refurbishment plan and will depend on funding from University Advancement Fee, if approved.
 - 5.7. Mr. Michael Murtha asked how we make sure students are safe on buses and protect them? Ms. Dillard said that would have to be worked out in conjunction with BTA. Also, we have 8 cameras on all our buses.
 - 5.8. Mr. Walters asked if Route 12 which serves Blinn in Bryan could get an additional bus. Ms. Dillard said it is a possibility; we now run that route to help out students who are on Blinn Team at our expense. We receive no funding from Blinn.