

MINUTES
STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
StarTran Conference Room 2
February 25, 2010

Members Present: Beatty Brasch, Kim Phelps, Karen Moritz, John Baylor, Kory George

Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Larry Worth, Mike Weston, Scott Tharnish, Kitty Miller, Brian Praeuner, Connie Thoreson

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

A. **Review/Accept Minutes of January 28, 2010 Board Meeting**

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Mitch Paine, an Advisory Board candidate for appointment, was in attendance, and introductions were made.

B. **Patrons to be Heard**

Ms. Nancy McClelland, a HandiVan patron, expressed her thanks to StarTran staff for the implementation of a voicemail system that enables patrons to call in 24 hours a day with cancellations. Ms. McClelland also acknowledged the signs placed on the HandiVan's with general rules patrons need to know. Beatty Brasch, StarTran Advisory Board Chair, thanked staff as well.

C. **Marketing Report - Kitty Miller**

Kitty Miller reported on the following Marketing issues:

- The AVL kickoff is approaching and will most likely be in summer.
- The StarTran RSS feed/email notification has been promoted on 5CityTV, signs have been placed on all buses, and a new image is on the front page of the StarTran website. There are currently 45 registrants. The RSS feed is also available on StarTran Facebook page.
- The February 25¢ fare has been publicized on Facebook. StarTran staff are currently conducting a survey in which patrons indicate if they are first time riders and if they plan to continue to utilize StarTran services.
- Service to Technology Park began February 1st with six patrons per day utilizing the service.
- StarTran began operating a booster service between a Highland pickup point and Schoo Middle School on February 22, 2010, recording one patron per day in the first three days of service.
- Signs have been posted on all HandiVan vehicles notifying patrons of their responsibility to be ready and watching for the arrival of the HandiVan 15 minutes prior to pick-up time and that they may bring a companion on the HandiVan with them, with notification given at the time of reservation. The sign also notes the availability of the 24-hr cancellation line. The HandiVan brochure is in the process of being updated and will be made available to all patrons via the League of Human Dignity at the time of registration as well as being placed on all HandiVans. The Advisory Board asked to see the final updated brochure.
- The UNL Spring Game Shuttle Services notification has been distributed to the registered private charters with the response deadline March 8, 2010.
- Ms. Miller is beginning preparations for the Stuff-the-Bus event and the youth summer bus pass, the "Star Pass".

John Baylor asked that all current ads be brought to the Advisory Board meetings for the Board to see.

D. Operations & Planning Report - Larry Worth

Larry Worth reported January, 2010 UNL ridership is 2% lower than January 2009 and 10% lower year-to-date. Ridership on LPS booster/deviation service is slightly higher than last year.

Mr. Worth reviewed the new Schoo MS booster service requested by the Mayor's office, noting that StarTran will report ridership. If the service is pursued as a booster "route", the Board will be scheduled to review/act on such additional service.

The JARC and New Freedom programs are both in progress with all issues cleared.

Allocation of the 2009 ARRA funds have been amended at the federal level to allow 10%, or \$379,000 to be programmed as operating money. This is being integrated in the draft F.Y. 2010-11 operating budget..

HandiVan discussion...

- Mr. Worth reviewed changes in HandiVan procedures per the Board Report noting the HandiVan cancellation voice-mail availability 24 hours/day. Suggestions were made to make patrons aware of this 24-hour voice-mail system, to include an alert sent on the RSS feed, put on the StarTran website, and Facebook as well as placing in the League of Human Dignity's newsletter. It was also suggested that, when possible, the HandiVan Dispatcher and HandiVan Operators pass this information along also.
- Mr. Worth noted that one of the issues discussed at the January meeting was the difficulty in patrons having the morning reservation line answered by staff, particularly between 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Although not a solution to this issue, a survey was conducted of HandiVan patrons as to if they preferred their calls to placed on hold with responses in order received, or if patrons wanted to dial multiple times. Slightly more people surveyed suggested that StarTran continue the multiple-call process. Mr. Worth noted, however, that this survey was not going to solve the morning reservation line capacity issues. Greater capacity in available slots, upgrades in dispatching software, and associated increased numbers of reservationists have been identified, and will need to continue in the future. A report will be given in April on possible solutions to this concern expressed by the Board.
- Mr. Worth summarized the ADA-defined "turn down" guidelines per the Board Report and noted that there have been no ADA-defined "turn downs" since 1992. Mr. Worth also noted that the HandiVan Dispatcher has been tracking calls from February 18-24, 2010, with results as follows...
 - 750 calls were taken in the five day period, with 721 patrons receiving their requested trip time, 17 patrons offered and accepted negotiated trip times within the "two hour window", and 12 while offered a trip within the "two hour window" did not accept the negotiated trip time offered to them and made other arrangements.
- It was acknowledged by staff that a patron may directly request service from Transport Plus, but at a significantly higher fare cost than if riding Transport Plus through the HandiVan Brokerage Program. The patron fare for the HandiVan or Brokerage Programs is \$3.50/ride. But if the patron directly arranges a ride with Transport Plus, their fare is \$22/ride. Ms. Brasch asked that Transport Plus be invited to attend the next Advisory Board meeting.

- Board requested a HandiVan tutorial/report to include costs, number of HandiVans, policies, etc.

Mr. Worth noted that the Low Income Bus Pass Program is now a “self-certifying” program.

John Baylor asked that information indicating the success of accommodating the majority of HandiVan requests be posted for staff.

It was noted that the bus wrap advertising proposal is being reviewed by the City Law Department. A sub-committee will be formed to track the progress of this proposal. John Baylor, Kory George, and Kim Phelps will sit on this committee.

E. Ridership Report - Scott Tharnish

Scott Tharnish compared January 2009 to January 2010 ridership showing a decline of 3.7% and also a decline of 5% YTD. Decreases are seen in cash fare and full price passes more than other fare devices.

February Quarter Fare Promotion Discussion...

- For the first two weeks of the February quarter fare promotion there has been a 16% increase in ridership. Mr. Tharnish will be compiling the final February results when the month is over, which will include estimates on an annual program, and he will present this report at the March 25, 2010 StarTran Advisory Board meeting.
- Mr. Worth was asked to forward a “thank-you” letter to Thought District for all their efforts promoting the quarter fare.
- Discussion took place with regard to implementing quarter fare on a permanent basis. StarTran staff asked that the Board review the report Mr. Tharnish is compiling before making a formal proposal. It was agreed the issue will be an agenda item for the March 25, 2010 meeting.

F. New Business - Evening Service

It was agreed that the issue of “Evening Service” will be addressed at a later date, making the quarter fare a priority.

G. Old Business - None

H. Miscellaneous Information

Scott Tharnish noted the Big Red Service report has been completed and included in the Board Report.

Mr. Worth clarified that the previously discussed \$379,000 of 2009 ARRA funds being reprogrammed to operating purposes is being included in the F.Y. 2010-11 operating budget. Such is not “new” unaccounted for money. Mr. Worth declined a request by Mr. Baylor to present an overview of the proposed F.Y. 2010-11 StarTran budget. He noted that departmental proposals will be at “staff” level for consideration by the Mayor until the Mayor releases his City of Lincoln budget proposal to the City Council and public in June. After several hearings, City Council acts on the budget in mid-August, with the approved budget going into effect the end of August.

Beatty Brasch requested future StarTran Advisory Board Agendas reflect special reports first (i.e., quarter fare, HandiVan procedure issues, bus wrap proposal). Ms. Brasch asked the Board to review the Board Report prior to the monthly meeting in order to accommodate very limited staff summaries, leaving the majority of the meeting time for the special report issues.

The next StarTran Advisory Board meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m., March 25, 2010, in the StarTran Conference Room 2.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.