

MINUTES
STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
4:00 p.m. Friday, July 27, 2012
Aging Partners @ 1005 "O" Street

Members Present: Linda Carter, Stephen Speicher, Kim Phelps, Mike DeKalb, Don Herz, John Baylor
Members Absent: Beatty Brasch
Staff Present: Larry Worth, Brian Praeuner, Mike Weston, Scott Tharnish, Glenn Knust,
Kitty Elliott

I. Public Hearing on the following F.Y. 2012-14 Budget Proposals:

Proposed Fare Revisions for F.Y. 2012-13:

	Current	Proposed
Regular 31 Day Passport	\$45.00	\$16.00
HandiVan 31 Day Passport	\$90.00	\$32.00
Star Shuttle Fare	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.50
Transfers	Free	\$ 0.25

Proposed Fare Revisions for F.Y. 2013-14:

Increase the fare for the Big Red Shuttle Service that operates at all UNL home football games from \$4 to \$5 per trip.

Two emails received from citizens and distributed to the Board Members

Mr. Phelps brought the meeting to order noting the Open Meetings Act and Patron Conduct notices. The Board Members introduced themselves. Chairman Phelps reviewed the budget proposals and called the first person to speak.

Mike Foreman, President of ATU felt the passports were drastically cut and that cutting two-thirds was too much. He did not want the Star Shuttle raised to fifty cents, said last time this shuttle was increased in fare, half of the ridership was lost. Transfers will be a hassle if we begin charging twenty-five cents, he said it would be better to just increase the cash fare to \$2.00.

Regarding Big Red Express being increased in F.Y. 2013-14, he felt we are wringing the golden goose's neck, and did not want it increased. Said if we had to increase it, he felt it should be \$5.00 one way and \$9.00 round trip.

Diane Kimble misunderstood the proposal, as she thought we were not going to offer the Low Income Passes anymore and she wondered if we had lost the grants that subsidized this program.

Kathryn Johnston was all for the fare changes and said that this would make the bus service better. She is in favor of helping the low income patrons.

Sharon Johnson she, too, was confused with the proposal as she thought the current fare was increasing not lowering. She is glad about that but she also thought the reduction in 31-day passes might be too much. Last time she rode the bus and had to transfer she did not like having to pay for the transfers. If we have to charge for transfers, she thought maybe we should have a transfer pass which would just be used for that purpose.

Marilyn Kruger likes lowering the fares although it is extreme, but also may increase riders. She expressed concurrence that it would be better to increase the cash fare to \$2.00 rather than charging twenty-five cents for a transfer. She said only about 3-4% of patrons actually utilize transfers.

Nancy Carpenter just wanted to thank StarTran for the proposal to reduce prices.

Pat Schreurs asked the StarTran Advisory Board members if they had any questions for the passengers.

There being no other patrons to speak the Public Hearing was closed.

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II. Regular StarTran Advisory Board Meeting

A. Patrons to be Heard

None

B. Review/Action – StarTran Advisory Board Recommendation on F.Y. 2012-14 StarTran Budget Proposals per 7/27/12 Public Hearing.

Discussion took place with regard to the proposed fare structure being sustainable and how it would be measured to prove it successful or unsuccessful. Mr. Tharnish responded that it is unknown at this time but StarTran would promote the new fare changes in September which would be effective October 1, with additional promotion follow-ups. Mr. Worth said we should wait a year to judge the effects of approved fare changes, through all seasons, school in and out, to get a more accurate assessment.

Mr. Baylor asked what is the estimated increase of revenue StarTran anticipated to gain with the increase in the Star Shuttle and transfers fares. Mr. Tharnish said the charging for transfers are estimated to gain \$10,000, and the Star Shuttle \$2,000, each per year. Mr. Baylor felt that the Star Shuttle fare should stay at a quarter since the increase in revenue would only be \$2,000.

Mr. DeKalb suggested that the transfers remain free and the Star Shuttle fare stay the same but increase the 31 day pass from \$16 to \$18. He felt that the proposed reduction in the 31 day pass from \$45 to \$16 is too much and asked how that \$16 figure was determined. Mr. Tharnish noted that the proposed \$16 is twice the amount of the \$8 low income fare. Most other agencies, if they have a low income fare, are half of the regular fare.

Mr. Phelps said if the transfers remain free and the Star Shuttle fare stay at a quarter, the farebox revenue would be \$12,000 short so they would need to find a way to make this up.

Mr. Worth was asked as to why these fare revisions are being proposed. He responded that early in the year each department is given direction by the Budget Office as to budget decreases and revenue increases needed to be reflected in upcoming budgets. Staff provided various service changes and fare increases to meet the directive, and the Mayor's Office decided which to include in the Mayor's proposed budget. No service changes were proposed – only fare revisions, which seemed to be consistent with rate and fare changes being proposed in other departments.

Mr. DeKalb appreciated that there were no cuts to routes and the service hours remained the same.

Mr. Phelps suggested the 31 Day pass be raised to \$17 and the HandiVan 31day pass to \$34 which would be intended to offset the \$12,000 revenue lost by not increasing the transfer and Star Shuttle fares. Mr. Baylor made a motion that the StarTran Advisory Board recommend rejecting the increase in the Star Shuttle fare keeping it at a quarter; keep transfers free; and amend the proposal for the Regular 31-Day Pass to go from \$45 to \$17, with the HandiVan 31 Day Pass to go from \$90 to \$34. This recommendation is based on the discussion with staff and the input expressed by the public at this public hearing. Mr. DeKalb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by those present; Ms. Brasch being the only member absent.

Separately, Mr. Baylor made the motion that the board recommends accepting the proposed increase of the Big Red Express shuttle from \$4 to \$5 each way, per person, in F.Y. 2013-14. Mr. Herz seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-1; Mr. Speicher voting against and Ms. Brasch absent.

C. Patrons to be Heard

None

D. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.