

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
November 21, 2017

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Carmen Libassi	Larry Wynne
	Michael Dougherty	Robert Fiume
	Joseph DeNaples	Timothy Hinton
	Jane Farrell	Douglas Hein
	Mark Gifford	Steve Matassa
	Robert Lesh	Linda Matylewicz
	Gretchen Wintermantel	Evanna Xanthis
	Joan Hodowanitz	Krysten Xanthis

Mr. Carmen Libassi opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Libassi added that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Mr. Libassi requested a Roll Call of the Board Members. Carmen Libassi, Larry Wynne and Michael Dougherty were present. Martha Dougher and Gregg Nieto were excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Libassi tabled the acceptance of the October 2017 minutes because Michael Dougherty and Larry Wynne were not present at the October meeting.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Libassi asked if anyone had questions pertaining to the Income Statements for the month of October, there were none. Michael Dougherty made a motion to accept the financial documents and Carmen Libassi seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Public Comment/Agenda Items

Mr. Libassi welcomed comments from the public regarding agenda items; There were none.

Executive Director's Report

- A. Mr. Robert Fiume presented the ridership reports for the month of October 2017. Mr. Fiume stated that the average daily trips for shared ride in October was 485 trips; which was up approximately 10 trips from October 2016 and up one trip from September 2017. The fixed route average daily ridership for October 2017 was 3,488; which was up approximately 30 passengers from October 2016 and down approximately 30 passengers from September 2017.

- B. Mr. Fiume announced that COLTS will be moving along with the Compressed Natural Gas facility. He expects ground breaking to begin in the spring of 2018. Mr. Fiume also stated that three CNG buses are expected in January and four shared ride vans. Because the CNG facility will not be built to fuel the buses and vans, we will have fuel brought to the sight or we will full up at another station.
- C. Mr. Fiume announced that our annual Stuff the Bus benefiting Toys for Tots would be held on December 7, 2017. Gretchen Wintermantel added that this would be our 8th annual event and we are partnering with the U.S. Marine Corp, ATU and Rock 107. The event will be held at the Lackawanna Transit Center from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and we will have people at the Lackawanna County Courthouse Square from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. In the past COLTS has collected approximately 4,000 toys and \$5,000 in monetary donations.
- D. Mr. Fiume stated that COLTS is working on plans to remodel the existing office space and a new maintenance facility. He said he will provide more information when it becomes available.

Other Business

Mr. Fiume requested a motion to amend the vacation time policy in the Administrative Employee Manual. Timothy Hinton stated that he and Mr. Fiume reviewed the policy, which pertains only to the administrative personnel, not union personnel. They noticed, at the end of the year, there is a “use it or lose it” policy for vacation time. They found that many employees are stacking their vacation time, which makes it hard for COLTS to accomplish all of its services at the end of the year. They are recommending that we allow the administrative employees to carry up to ten days through March 31st. The employees would also have the option to sell back up to five days at their current compensation rate. They are also recommending another change to the board regarding earned vacation time. Mr. Hinton stated that the employees time off allotment is earned on January 1st of each year. Right now if an employee terminates their employment in January, they can receive a payout for all of their time accrued. Mr. Hinton is recommending a change in the vacation policy, for administrative employees, that they will earn their vacation time in 1/12th allotments. If they leave employment, they will receive a payment for unused vacation earned under the 1/12th increment. Michael Dougherty made the motion and Larry Wynne seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Public Comment

Mr. Libassi welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Evanna Xanthis addressed the board regarding the changes to the Highworks bus on Dickson Avenue. She complained that the bus only comes there four times a day. She also said that they are having a problem with some of the drivers with regard to the ramps. She said her daughter is on crutches and when they ask the driver to put down the ramp, they refuse. She feels it should be mandatory that the ramp be put down if someone asks for it. Krysten Xanthis complained about the limited service to Dickson Avenue. She felt it is inconvenient for elderly and disabled passengers. Evanna stated that she has been complaining about this for months and she is being ignored and that COLTS is not passenger friendly. She stated that the bus continues to go to Allied when there are rarely passengers there. Carmen Libassi stated that the reason for the changes were explained at previous

meetings. Mark Gifford stated that he has been working with Robert Lesh for the last few months and he didn't feel that Mr. Lesh has ignored them. Mr. Lesh stated that he has returned their phone calls. Timothy Hinton asked Evanna if she had spoken to Mr. Lesh. She said she spoke with him once or twice. Mr. Lesh stated that the Greenridge Nursing home, which is a further from the bus stop, has several passengers and they aren't having any problems. He also explained that the Carbondale and Greenridge buses would bring them closer to their bus stop. Evanna stated that it was suggested to take the shared ride vans but she thought that was discriminating for the elderly. Mr. Fiume explained that the vans aren't just for old people and he took issue with her saying that COLTS is not passenger friendly, just because they aren't changing the route for them. He stated that Penn Dot just completed a customer satisfaction survey and we had a 95% satisfaction rate. Mr. Gifford also disputed the claim that the driver would not put down the ramp. He stated that COLTS policy is to lower the ramp if it is requested and if they don't, we should be notified. Mr. Hinton asked Evanna if she had any complaints about the drivers. She said no, she did not and she has never had a problem with them. She said she feels bad for them because they have to take the brunt of the complaints. Evanna brought up the complaint about the lack of passengers at Allied. Mr. Fiume asked Mr. Lesh if he looked into that. Mr. Gifford explained that Allied's numbers were 8 to 10 times more than Dickson Avenue. The trips that were added back for Dickson Avenue were the most frequently used. Mr. Libassi stated that when the changes were made, they would continue to see if more changes should be made. Mr. Gifford stated that there were more passengers that rode the Daleville bus than went to Dickson Avenue and we stopped that run. Mr. Lesh explained that the run is full on Saturday's so the service was only cut during the week when ridership was low. Evanna stated that people need the service to get to appointments. Mr. Libassi stated that they are still working on changes.

Joan Hodowanitz addressed the board; Joan commended COLTS on the advertisement in the newspaper to get input on the service. She said that she sent in a suggestion to consider having the Mohegan or Pittston bus go to the airport to avoid paying the parking fee at the airport. Joan also questioned the hiring policy. She discussed the hiring of the maintenance supervisor. She said that the State Auditor General issued a report on the Scranton School District. One of the finding involved this individual, who was not an employee but made a lot of money in the terms of income and benefits. She wasn't sure if anyone was aware of this prior to hiring him. She stated that the Auditor General turned his name over to the IRS to be investigated. Joan pointed out, in one of the newspaper articles, it states that COLTS hired this individual as a maintenance supervisor and COLTS interviewed five people for the job that was posted internally. She felt that, because they are public sector jobs, they should be advertised to the public. Joan thought that he must have been tipped off to the job because it was only posted internally. She felt that, if it turns out he was paid improperly, it would make COLTS look bad. Joan believes that only people qualified should be hired.

Carmen Libassi closed the meeting by wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Michael Dougherty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant