

Metro Riders' Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2014

I. Call to Order:

Mr. Ball called the January 2014 meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:31 p.m.

The following members were present:

Ben Ball, Chair, District of Columbia
Barbara Hermanson, Virginia Vice Chair, City of Alexandria
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia Vice Chair, At-Large
Thomas Draths, Arlington, Virginia
Aldea Meary-Miller, Arlington County
Karen Lynch, Prince George's County
Jose Morales, District of Columbia
Robert Pappas, Fairfax County Virginia
Katherine Kortum, Montgomery County
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair
Lorraine Silva, Arlington County
Deborah Titus, Fairfax County
Daniel Turk, District of Columbia
Fred Walker, Fairfax County
Candice Walsh, District of Columbia
Etta-Cheri Washington, District of Columbia
Dexter Williams, District of Columbia
Mary Ann Zimmerman, Montgomery County

Metro staff present:

John Pasek, Assistant Board Secretary, Metro
Mark Schofield, Office of Management and Budget Services, Metro
Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, Metro
Tom Webster, Office of Management and Budget Services, Metro

Other individuals present:

Kurt Raschke, Member of the public

Approved February 12, 2014

II. Public Comment Period

There were no comments from members of the public.

III. Approval of Agenda

Without objections, the agenda was approved as amended to remove the approval of past meeting minutes.

IV. Member Introductions

Mr. Ball then asked members to introduce themselves and tell the group where they were from and which Metro services they used. Members each briefly introduced themselves.

V. Metro Proposed FY2015 Budget and Fare Increases

Mr. Ball then welcomed Tom Webster and Mark Schofield from Metro's Office of Management and Budget Services (OMBS) to provide an overview of Metro's budget process and proposed FY2015 budget and fare increases. Mr. Webster is the director of OMBS and Mr. Schofield is a Senior Economic and Financial Advisor.

Mr. Schofield and Mr. Webster described the investments that Metro would be making in FY2015 including the purchase of new buses, railcars and MetroAccess vehicles, the rehabilitation of station facilities such as platforms, escalators and parking garages, and work to improve system reliability. They also described Metro's plans to implement a customer care program and improve service. Mr. Schofield then provided information on the proposed increases in fares and parking fees and how Metro will be conducting outreach to inform customers about these proposed changes and to solicit their feedback.

Ms. Silva said that she wanted to make sure that someone who spoke Spanish attended the pop-up events. Mr. Schofield noted that the staff teams for the pop-ups include members who can speak the languages that may be spoken in the areas where they are being held. He noted that the event being held the next day in Seven Corners would include staff that can speak Spanish and Vietnamese.

Ms. Walsh asked about Metro's plan to add buses to the fleet. She noted that the new, fabric-covered seats cause problems when it rains. She also asked which routes Metro is considering adding to its Priority Corridor Network. Mr. Schofield said that the 28X Leesburg Pike line would receive targeted investments in signal priority in FY2015, and improvements would also be made to the Q2 Veirs Mill Road line. Mr. Schofield said that he would ask the Council to be provided an implementation plan

In response to a question from Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Pasek noted that members of the public would not be able to call in to the public hearings. Ms. Sequiera-Castillo listed the various ways that members of the public can submit testimony to Metro.

Mr. Sheehan asked for clarifications about how MetroAccess fares are calculated. Mr. Schofield explained that MetroAccess fares are calculated by doubling the fare for the fastest trip between two points, up to a maximum of \$7. He noted that the lowest fare is generally twice the Metrobus fare.

Ms. Washington asked how Metro chose the nonprofit organizations it would be speaking with and whether someone from Metro could come and talk with her organization. Staff said that they would put someone her in touch with Metro staff that is arranging the outreach to community-based organizations.

Ms. Washington asked why the lights in some of Metro's new garages, such as the one at Rhode Island Avenue, would need to be upgraded. Mr. Schofield responded that, for newer garages, the upgrades would likely be limited to replacing existing lightbulbs with LED lighting.

Mr. Turk asked if there is are any specific ways that Metro is allocating resources in its proposed FY2015 budget – such as more money being allocated for bus service or for rail service. Mr. Webster said that staff views the fare increase as modest.

Mr. Schofield explained that the majority of FY2015 budget is its Operating Budget, which is approximately \$1.7 billion; and that the capital budget is around \$1 billion. He noted that Metro needs to maintain service and focus on key areas to improve customer service, with a specific focus on escalator replacement and rehabilitation.

Mr. Schofield noted that members of the public could visit Metro's "MindMixer" tool online to submit comments and have discussion.

Mr. Ball noted that while the budget shows additional funding coming from riders – in the form of increased fares, and jurisdictions – in the form of increased subsidies, in reality, he will be paying twice, since he is both a rider and taxpayer.

Ms. Zimmerman asked for the names of the community groups that Metro would be meeting with as part of its budget outreach and a schedule of its meetings.

VI. Meeting with Board Leadership and Media Policy:

Mr. Ball explained that members of the Council's leadership meet with the Board's leadership on a quarterly basis. He said that this is an opportunity for Council to raise issues, to get feedback from the Board and to give Board members a preview of the issues that the Council is working on.

Ms. Hermanson noted that the discussion at the December meeting covered the policy on interaction with the media. She said that this policy was not the result of a specific incident and

that the Board was very clear that it valued the Council's opinion. She said that the Board wants to hear the perspective of the Council as a whole, rather than the viewpoints of individual members.

Mr. Ball explained that at its December meeting, the Council tabled discussion on this policy and that the item was once again on the table for discussion.

Mr. Morales moved for the Council to disapprove the policy put forward by the Board. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

After further discussion, in which Ms. Walker suggested that the Council didn't have the standing to vote to disapprove this policy, she moved to amend Mr. Morales' motion to incorporate a discussion of the media policy into the Council's review of its bylaws, which would take place in 2014. Mr. Williams seconded this amendment.

Mr. Walker then moved to close debate on this item. Mr. Ball called for a vote.

The Council voted first on Ms. Walker's amendment to refer the media policy to the Council's bylaws committee for review and discussion.

Without objection, and with Mr. Turk abstaining, the amendment was approved.

The Council then voted on the main motion, as amended, which was to incorporate this media policy into the Council's review of its bylaws.

Without objection, and with Mr. Turk abstaining, the motion was approved as amended.

VII. 2014 Workplan Development and Members' Interests:

Mr. Ball explained that this item was intended to provide members with an opportunity of how they would like the Council and its committees structured for the coming year. After discussion, it was suggested that this discussion be included as part of the Council's orientation session.

VIII. Orientation Planning:

Mr. Ball then provided the group with a brief overview of the Council's orientation process. Mr. Pasek asked that a smaller group of members volunteer to help organize an agenda session which would be held within the coming weeks. Several members of the Council volunteered to participate in an orientation planning group.

IX. RAC Outreach/Community Meeting:

Mr. Ball explained that this portion of the meeting provided members with an opportunity to announce any upcoming Metro-related community meetings.

Ms. Hermanson noted that there were public hearings on Metro's FY2015 budget and proposed fare increase scheduled to coincide with the Council's February meeting. After discussion, she moved to reschedule the Council's February monthly meeting to Wednesday, February 12th. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. Without objection, the Council approved moving the date of the February Riders' Advisory Council meeting to February 12, 2014.

X. 2014 Council Elections:

Mr. Ball then called for the election of officers for the 2014 calendar year.

Chair:

Mr. Ball opened the floor for nominations for the position of Council chair.

Ms. Hermanson nominated Ms. Walker for the position of Council chair for 2014. This motion was seconded by Ms. Silva.

Mr. Ball asked for any further nominations for the position of chair. Seeing none, he closed the floor for nominations.

By unanimous acclamation, and with Mr. Ball abstaining, Ms. Walker was elected the Council's chair for 2014.

Maryland Vice Chair:

Mr. Ball then opened the floor for nominations for the position of the Council's Maryland vice chair.

Ms. Walker nominated Ms. Lynch for the position of Maryland vice chair for 2014. This motion was seconded by Ms. Zimmerman.

Mr. Ball asked for any further nominations for the position of Maryland vice chair. Seeing none, he closed the floor for nominations.

By unanimous acclamation, and with Mr. Ball abstaining, Ms. Lynch was elected the Council's Maryland vice chair for 2014.

Virginia Vice Chair:

Mr. Ball next opened the floor for nominations for the position of the Council's Virginia vice chair.

Ms. Silva nominated Ms. Hermanson for the position of the Council's Virginia vice chair for 2014. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Ball asked for any further nominations for the position of Virginia vice chair. Seeing none, he closed the floor for nominations.

By unanimous acclamation, and with Mr. Ball abstaining, Ms. Hermanson was elected the Council's chair for 2014.

District of Columbia Vice Chair:

Mr. Ball opened the floor for nominations for the position of District of Columbia vice chair.

Ms. Washington nominated Ms. Walsh for the position of District of Columbia vice chair for 2014. This motion was seconded by Ms. Ms. Hermanson.

Mr. Ball asked for any further nominations for the position of District of Columbia vice chair. Seeing none, he closed the floor for nominations.

By unanimous acclamation, and with Mr. Ball abstaining, Ms. Walsh was elected the Council's chair for 2014.

XI. Open Mic:

Mr. Ball then opened the floor for the "Open Mic" portion of the evening.

Mr. Sheehan thanked Mr. Ball and the 2013 leadership team for their service.

Ms. Silva told members that Shayyam Kannan, Metro's Director of Long-Range Planning will be holding a discussion on Metro's long-range plans and vision at the George Mason University Arlington Campus on January 23rd from 6 – 8 p.m.

Ms. Hermanson thanked Mr. Raschke for his continued attendance at Council meetings. Mr. Ball noted that he provided a good "reality check" for the Council.

Ms. Walker explained that attending these hearings are good opportunities for Council members to make themselves known both to their Board members and members of the public. Mr. Ball

noted that Council members who attend hearings should listen to the testimony provided and take notes so that they can share that information with the Council.

Ms. Silva asked that members send any questions regarding the presentation on the budget to Mr. Pasek so that he can forward them to the appropriate staff members.

Without objection, the Council adjourned at 8:38 p.m.