

Board of Director’s Meeting Summary
Meeting Date/Time: October 22, 2020, 6:30-9:00pm

Location: Remote

Board Member Attendees: Raymond Hess, Jesse Miller, Kyra Sims, Roger Hewitt, Kathleen Mozak-Betts, Richard Chang, Mike Allemang, Ryan Hunter, Sue Gott, Eric Mahler (Chair)

AAATA Staff Attendees: Matt Carpenter (CEO), Bryan Smith, John Metzinger, Forest Yang

Meeting Chair: Eric Mahler

Chairman Eric Mahler called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Discussion Items
<p>1. OPENING ITEMS</p> <p>1.1 Approve Agenda Ms. Sue Gott moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Roger Hewitt. In support of the motion: Mr. Mike Allemang: Not present for this vote. Mr. Rich Chang: Yes Ms. Gott: Yes Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes Mr. Hewitt: Yes Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes Ms. Kathleen Mozak-Betts: Yes Ms. Kyra Sims: Yes Chairman Mahler: Yes</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>
<p>1.2 Public Comment</p> <p>Mr. Jim Mogensen suggested contacting the Office of Community and Economic Development at the County in regard to re-opening public restrooms at the AAATA transit centers. He described needing to figure out how to make service changes with Title VI considerations during a pandemic. He also reported receiving feedback from the public that he can share if requested to do so in regard to the service restoration.</p> <p>Ms. Shirrice Roberson, an AAATA customer for the past three years, raised some concerns that she has been experiencing since the pandemic. She works at the UofM Hospital, a front-line worker who has been working through the entire pandemic. She expressed that the schedule changes made August 30th have caused a lot of stress for her. The routes that she normally takes are the 26 and/or the 29. She described that she can get to certain destinations that she may need to, but has a hard time getting back home. It takes her a lot longer and she is often walking 2 miles to get to a certain destination. She lives on Scio Ridge and shared that NightRide will not come to her address to pick her up at night, so she has to walk a quarter of a mile in the dark without lighting to meet the NightRide driver that will take her to the hospital. In the morning, FlexRide will come to Scio Township and drop her off. She has to take bus</p>

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23 from the UofM Hospital to the Blake Transit Center (BTC) and transfers to the 32 which will get her to a park-and-ride at 7:45am. FlexRide will then take her home. She noted that bus 32 is the only bus that leaves the BTC at 7:15am. If she is late, then that is the only bus available to take someone to the park-and-ride until 3:15pm, Monday through Friday. On the weekends, there are multiple scheduled times for the 32 to go to the park-and-ride from the BTC.

She also shared that when she has doctor's appointments or needs to get to the bank or grocery store, she can get there but cannot get home. When she is driven from the park-and-ride down Maple Rd., she passes right by her physical therapy office, but the boundaries prevent her from being allowed to get to or home from her doctor's appointment. She asked AAATA to expand or release what is currently set up as boundaries. There are boundaries making it such that she can only travel within Scio Township during the daytime. At night, she can only travel within the Ann Arbor parameters. She expressed that this is not helpful for those that need to go between Scio Township, Pittsfield Township, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor. She asked AAATA to open up some of the routes that have been closed down, specifically the 26 and 29 routes, because she does not feel safe walking that distance at night.

Chairman Mahler will have staff reach out to Ms. Roberson to try and help solve some of her issues. She expressed gratitude for that and noted that she has spoken with LaTanya Hargrave of AAATA who was very professional and patient. She went on to describe some poor experiences with the Golden Limousine dispatchers. Her experiences with the Golden Limousine drivers has been good and timely, but she described feeling like a burden to their dispatchers because she has to call every day to arrange rides to and from work, and she has been denied rides because the dispatcher says there are not enough people to provide for each area that they are supposed to be servicing.

- 1.3 General Announcements
None.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Minutes and Committee Meeting Reports

Ms. Mozak-Betts moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Hess.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Ms. Gott: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

3. POLICY MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Committee Meeting Discussion

Chairman Mahler asked the Board for feedback in regard to possibly moving forward with a Board retreat.

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Mr. Hewitt supported the suggested Board retreat topics, assuming that scenario-based service planning is a long-range look at service planning options in a general sense.

Chairman Mahler and the Governance Committee will come back to the Board with recommendations on the Board retreat format, looking possibly at doing two half days with one being for strategic planning and the other being for education topics.

3.2 Board's Work Plan for FY2021

Chairman Mahler reported that the Governance Committee discussed getting past managing the crisis of the day and developing a Board Work Plan that looks to the future, doing more than reviewing monitoring reports, committee reports, budget, and the like. He described some suggested work plan items and asked the Board for their input.

Ms. Mozak-Betts described the importance of getting a handle on ownership linkage. She also expressed that she would like to have a better understanding of how the different contracts amongst the cities work.

Mr. Miller pointed out the topics of social equity and the future of public transportation post pandemic. He shared his interest in discovering what AAATA has learned from the pandemic in terms of which AAATA's riders really do depend on the service, who are the core ridership, and how that might inform the long-range planning and Ends. He expressed wanting to discuss what has been learned about what ridership is during the pandemic; terms used in the past may have a different meaning to the Board than they did before.

Mr. Hewitt expressed that he would particularly like to see reviews of the Ends, resource allocation, and ownership linkage. He hopes that the retreat will lead into some follow-up on those three areas.

Ms. Sims suggested re-examining ridership vs. coverage. She would like to see what data can be pulled together to see who are the core demographic that AAATA is serving during the pandemic.

Mr. Allemang added support to Mr. Miller and Ms. Sims' comments. He expressed that the pandemic has brought back the topic of ridership vs. coverage and the answer could be different now. Ms. Sims suggested that there may need to be a couple more task forces to revisit this and come back to the Board. Chairman Mahler suggested starting in the Committees to determine the framework of the work itself and then deciding if it is a Committee task or task force.

Chairman Mahler summarized the topics of ridership vs. coverage; understanding AAATA's networks and ridership a little bit better from the lessons learned point of view; resource allocation and Ends review coming out of a retreat; and the future of transit. He suggested discussion of the Ends after some of the other topics have been solved first. He noted that retreat topics could be revisiting ridership vs. coverage and taking a deep dive into how AAATA's networks are working and connected to help educate the public.

Ms. Gott suggested that the Board work together in the retreat on ridership vs. coverage, with Committees possibly bringing background. Mr. Chang suggested

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having a discussion around alternative transportation options for getting riders between borders of a particular city.

Mr. Miller suggested prioritizing some Board education topics as preparation for the retreat. He shared interest in the topic of jurisdiction considerations as a Board education topic.

Chairman Mahler will flesh out what should go into the work plan and what should go into the retreat in the next Governance Committee meeting to then share with the Board for comment at the next Board meeting. He suggested that ownership linkage should be an ongoing work plan item.

3.3 Monitoring Reports

3.3.1 Communications & Support to the Board (Policy 2.11)

CEO Carpenter walked the Board through the monitoring report. He pointed out only one area of partial compliance which has to do with not adhering to the schedule for submitting monitoring reports, which was caused by the pandemic.

He also noted the suggestions on the report and policy provided by Governance Coach Rose Mercier.

Mr. Allemang described the report as complete, thorough, and conscientious. He noted that various Board members encouraged the delay of some monitoring reports during the pandemic. In regard to Ms. Mercier's suggestions, Mr. Allemang expressed that some of the issues in terms of whole-ism and not favoring certain Board members over others are quite important and the Board should consider adding those. He suggested that a Committee might review her suggestions and come back to the Board with recommendations within 6 or 12 months.

Mr. Hewitt agreed with Chairman Mahler that this topic should be deferred to the Governance Committee.

The Governance Committee will come back to the Board with a recommendation of whether or not to amend the policy, and how so.

Ms. Mozak-Betts recommended the Board accept the CEO as in compliance except for items noted (B), seconded by Ms. Sims.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Ms. Gott: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion was passed unanimously.

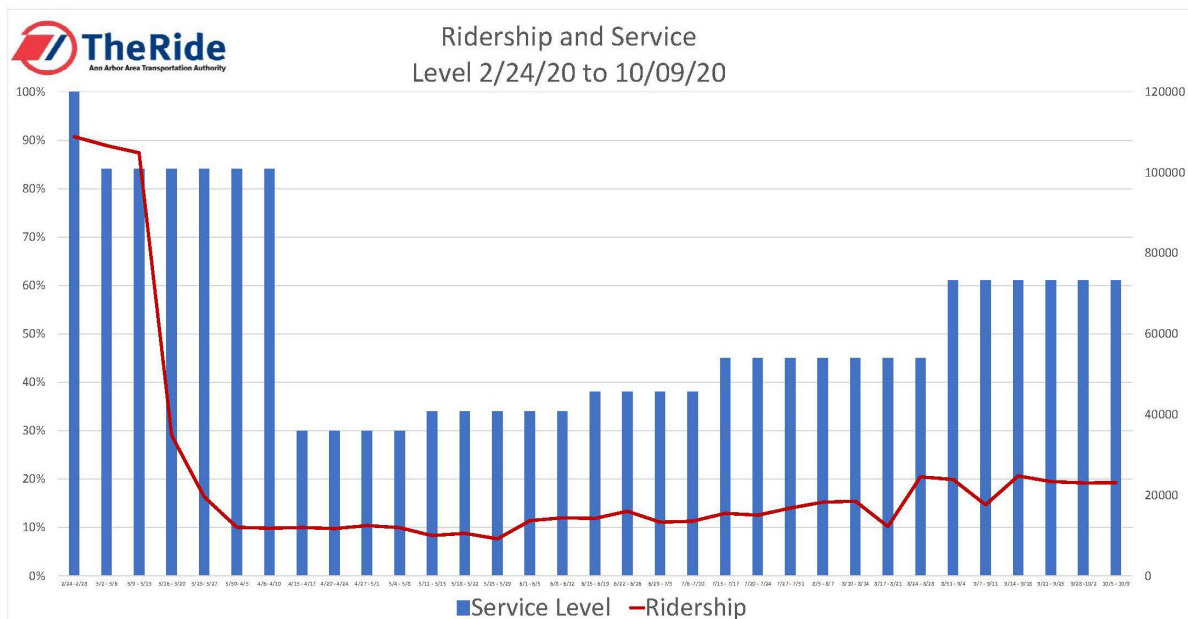
4. STRATEGY & OPERATIONAL UPDATES: CEO

Discussion Items

4.1 Recovery Plan Updates (verbal)

CEO Carpenter reported that the temporary service plan is functioning, but staff are looking to November for some service enhancements. AAATA looks forward to bringing in more services. He also reported that staff communicated out to the stakeholders in advance about the service enhancements. Mr. Smith reported that this will be announced publicly via Town Halls to begin November 4th. CEO Carpenter shared that staff will be sharing information about larger scale recovery to share with the Board over the next month.

Mr. Smith presented the below chart indicating the weekly service levels and ridership, which has not changed since the last Board meeting. 61% of the service is back with ridership remaining flat. There has not been an increase of ridership since the services have increased. CEO Carpenter reported that he has not heard or seen anything on a national or state level to suggest any other transit system is seeing anything different.



Chairman Mahler observed that as the area and country see a spike in COVID-19 cases, only the people that must ride public transit are riding at this point. Mr. Smith noted that AAATA is still broadcasting essential trips only.

Ms. Mozak-Betts asked if there has been an uptick on needing multiple buses to handle any timepoint. Mr. Smith reported that there has not been an uptick in that regard to date.

Mr. Miller asked how FlexRide is appropriated into the ridership numbers. Mr. Smith explained that the numbers in the chart are purely fixed route only but there has been an increase in FlexRide ridership corresponding to the FlexRide level of service. Mr. Smith reconfirmed that extra buses have not been needed to be sent out due to buses exceeding capacity limits.

Mr. Miller would like to review route by route ridership to try and identify changes in ridership patterns due to the pandemic, which Mr. Smith will provide.

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Mr. Allemang requested some magnitude on the FlexRide ridership since it is temporarily replacing some of the fixed routes or portions thereof, information which Mr. Smith will also provide.

Ms. Gott asked what the practice with airflow will be over the winter and if there is a policy about keeping windows open, or not. Mr. Smith reported that windows will be kept open through the wintertime. The fleet air filters have also been upgraded. Operations is currently testing a UV light system in the buses that actually kills viruses, as well as coating surfaces inside the buses with an antimicrobial which kills viruses and bacteria. UV systems are also being installed in the HVAC at each of the facilities. Ms. Gott shared her support for these measures. Mr. Smith also reported that when new Nova buses come in (not on the current pilot bus), they will actually have a fresh air scoop on them so the air will come through the HVAC system and get conditioned some so that the windows do not have to be open.

To Mr. Miller's inquiry of how the operators are feeling about the work they're being asked to do, Mr. Smith reported that the buses have been equipped with dispensers for masks so that it is easy to direct a passenger to put on a mask. Mr. Smith noted that the operator job is a stressful one, even outside of the pandemic. During this pandemic, he expressed that he could not be prouder of the work that AAATA's front-line staff have been doing. He described their appreciation of the safety efforts that have been made. The permanent barrier install has begun, and all should be installed by December. For now, the temporary barriers are up. Staff is doing everything they can to support the operators.

4.2 CEO Report

CEO Carpenter highlighted that AAATA will be reopening the transit centers, and monitoring it closely, working with the City in particular, as well as the head of the County. He reported working with the City on the need for public restrooms. Opening the transit centers will provide a place where people can purchase fares, but also will help the community by providing a public restroom. The number of people in the building at any one time will be limited and monitored by security.

CEO Carpenter also highlighted the launch of the EZFare mobile ticketing system that is up-ticking slowly, but surely, as well as descriptions of transportation funding legislation that are temporarily stopped for the election. He thanked the FTA for allowing AAATA and others to delay the tri-annual review, recognizing that staff capacity is needed elsewhere. Lastly, he shared the arrangement of virtual test rides of the pilot Nova bus for the public.

Mr. Chang suggested that the new buses have placards that indicate where the funding came for them. CEO Carpenter stressed that these are replacement buses for older buses that are wearing out, and one-year worth of replacements has been deferred. The first year's order, however, is already underway.

Ms. Mozak-Betts noted that replacement buses for this year were ordered pre-pandemic, in Fall of 2019. CEO Carpenter added that these are not expansion buses; they are routine replacement buses that are funded primarily by the state and federal government.

5. EMERGENT BUSINESS

None.

Discussion Items

6. CLOSING ITEMS

6.1 Public Comment

Mr. Jim Mogensen expressed his willingness to help with who to contact about the homeless population and managing the reopening of the transit centers. He noted that if enough people at UofM are able to work remotely, parking becomes less of a problem, so park-and-rides may not be needed as much. He also expressed his impression that the public may be expecting service to be restored to the way it used to be, but that some of the changes are happening as a result of policy changes, not just the pandemic.

Ms. Michelle Barney received confirmation from Chairman Mahler that steps are in place to protect operators in cases of threatening situations, and AAATA has a good working relationship with the police to help protect operators as well. She also asked about a timepoint change on Route 45. Staff will be in contact with Ms. Barney for explanation of that change. Mr. Smith confirmed for Ms. Barney that the restrooms at the transit centers will be open starting October 26th.

6.2 Closed Session Briefing (as per OMA)

Chairman Mahler advised that the Board go into a closed session for a briefing. He conducted a roll call vote for this.

In support of the closed session:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Ms. Gott: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The Board went into the closed session at 8:02pm.

Ms. Gott motioned to go out of closed session, seconded by Ms. Mozak-Betts.

Chairman Mahler took a roll call vote.

In support of going out of closed session:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Ms. Gott: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

At 9:23pm, the Board voted unanimously to come out of the closed session.

6.3 Topics for Next Meeting: Board Retreat

Discussion Items

[6.4 Board Assessment of Meeting \(Electronic\)](#)

6.5 Adjournment

Ms. Gott moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Chang.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Ms. Gott: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

Chairman Mahler adjourned the meeting at 9:27pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Keith Everett Book

Approved November 19, 2020