



MEETING OF THE ST. JOHN'S TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

REGULAR BUSINESS

A meeting of the St. John's Transportation was held on Thursday, October 29, 2020 at Noon at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive, St. John's. The meeting was streamed live via Webex.

Present at the meeting were:

Paul Walsh	Acting Chair
Colleen Galgay	Commissioner
Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
Dave Lane	Commissioner/City Councillor
Debbie Hanlon	Commissioner/City Councillor
Kevin Breen	City Manager
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Financial Management
Judy Powell	General Manager
Linda Ryan	Administrative Assistant

I. PROCEDURAL

- The Chair called the meeting to order.
- L. Ryan recorded the minutes of the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

➤ AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Lane and seconded by Commissioner Galgay that the agenda for this meeting date be approved.

➤ MINUTES

It was moved by Commission Lane and seconded by Commissioner Galgay that the minutes of the September 24th regular business meeting of the Commission be approved.

III. BUSINESS ARISING

1. COVID-19—Update

➤ RIDERSHIP/MAXIMUM PASSENGER LOADS

- Ridership is growing and beginning to stabilize. To date, ridership is currently at 54% of pre-pandemic levels.
- Low Income Pass recipients account for 46.7% of monthly pass riders at this time. Uptake at this level was expected; regular ridership is down, in large part, due to people still working from home and post-secondary learning continuing on-line than if we had all riders on board.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Financial Statements—September, 2020

- The financial statements for the month of September, 2020 were tabled and reviewed.

2. Executive Summary (Regular)

- The Executive Summary for the month of September, 2020 was tabled for members' information. The following item was noted:
 - Recent significant technical problems experienced by Horizon Occupational Health Solutions across the country (for over a week in September) are now resolved, and GoBus eligibility assessments have resumed. Consequently, the number of assessments was down in September.
 - To date, 178 eligibility assessments have been completed and 1,200 are remaining. Additionally, new applications are coming in each month.
 - Because of the substantial backlog, it is expected that the assessment process will not be completed before the end of 2021; the Commission's operating budget for 2021 has been adjusted to reflect this.

3. Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) Virtual Conference

- Every year, CUTA's conference and trade show brings the transit industry together. In this pandemic year, the conference will be delivered to participants virtually for the first time.
- Conference dates are November 16-19 and CUTA promises the same quality programming with more international content, as well as allowing for networking online. Additional information can be found online at cutaactu.ca.
- Members were asked to express their interest in registering for the conference either to L. Ryan or the General Manager via email.
- Member registration is \$350/person; 2020 topics include:
 - Funding and financing your transit system
 - Health and safety on transit
 - Zero emission vehicle (ZEV) technology
 - Diversity and inclusion in transit
 - Technology shaping the future of transit
 - Planning our cities for the future

4. Service Truck Tender

- The General Manager previously informed members that Metrobus' current one-ton truck went into service January, 2013 and is used primarily for sanding and salting our parking lots and shelters, including shelter maintenance work.
- The vehicle is currently underrated for the combined weight of the spreader (784 pounds) and load of salt (2,000 pounds/cubic yard). Whenever the truck leaves the parking lot, employees check to ensure the load does not exceed capacity and remove any salt, if needed.
- The plow on the pickup is 8 feet; whereas a 9.5-foot blade is required to properly clear the lot.
- The Maintenance Manager is recommending replacement of the truck with a 5,500 three-ton series with a 9.5-foot angle V blade and weight to carry the salt capacity with an appropriate load of salt. The larger blade is suitable to clear the tighter areas on the lot and will enable the operator to clear snow closer to shelters without causing damage; as well, the flatbed will be better able to transport shelter glass.
- The current salt spreader was purchased in 2017 and does not require replacement.
- The estimated cost of a replacement truck is \$68,000. The value of the current truck is estimated at \$12,000 to be used as a trade-in for an estimated net cost of \$56,000.
- In a previous e-poll, members unanimously approved funds, not in the current year's budget, to replace the truck.
- A tender for a replacement truck has been issued and closes on October 31st.

5. Oops Productions—Accessibility-NL Documentary

- Acting Chair Walsh informed that Accessible-NL posted on its public Facebook group recently that it was filming a documentary on board Metrobus with respect to accessibility of the transit system.
- Metrobus was unaware of the event and prior permission to film on board was not requested by either the production company or the member of the accessibility group (Ann Malone) who posted the notice in reference to the documentary.

5. Oops Productions—Accessibility-NL Documentary (Continued)

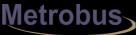
- Some inaccurate claims were made on the page that causes some concern to Metrobus. For example, a statement was made that power wheelchairs cannot be accommodated on board Metrobuses. This is a false statement as power wheelchairs can be accommodated onboard all accessible transit buses in the fleet.
- A rider (Sheldon Crocker) further stated that he was unable to reach the pull cord which prevented him from indicating his stop to the Transit Operator. The customer was seemingly unaware that a button feature, as well as a lowered cord, is located well below the pull cord for this purpose.
- Metrobus has been working with the disability community to provide solutions to accessibility issues and make transit more accessible and inclusive.
- The matter of concern surrounds inaccurate statements made on the public page and resultant negative feedback that could potentially cause an individual who is disabled hesitation to use transit.

ACTION:

- Communication efforts with customer groups will be increased to get out key messaging relevant to accessibility improvements on Metrobus.
- Donna Power, Manager of Accessible Transit will be asked to write group member Ann Malone.
- The Acting Chair volunteered to connect with Sheldon Crocker, who is also a member of the Facebook group.

6. Tender Results—Uniforms

- Two (2) bids were received for the above-noted tender:

 2020 UNIFORM TENDER		
Uniform Works, Ltd	\$59,713.60 + HST	Local supplier
Martin and Levesque, Inc.	\$65,307.40 + HST	Local representative The company's head office is in PQ.

ACTION:

- It was moved by Commissioner Hanlon, seconded by Commissioner Morry and carried unanimously that the tender be awarded to the lowest bidder, local supplier and current provider, Uniform Works, at a cost of \$59,713.60 plus HST.

7. Annual Downtown Santa Claus Parade

- The Annual Downtown Santa Claus parade is normally held on the last Sunday in November. This year, organizers hope to move it to Saturday, November 28th.
- There will be restrictions and limitations in accordance with the Province's pandemic guidelines. Gaylyne Gulliver of Downtown St. John's has advised that the parade will probably be in the form of a drive-by and walk-through event with stationery floats staged along Harbour Drive for viewing.
- Commissioner Hanlon informed that she is the City's lead on the parade committee and nothing has been finalized to date. She further noted that consideration is being given with an accessibility lense in hosting this event. She shared that discussions are still preliminary and more discussion is needed regarding this item.

7. Annual Downtown Santa Claus Parade (Continued)

➤ The General Manager expressed that if the parade were to go ahead as per Ms. Gulliver's announcement, there is a level of discomfort with this decision for Metrobus from a crowding perspective, and as follows:

- 1) On Sundays, Metrobus operates a reduced service. Less transit buses are available for shuttles on any given Saturday when there is full service on the streets.
- 2) Travel to the downtown on parade day will be higher than normal with thousands of people using transit. With severely restricted seating capacity available on transit buses (half the seating availability and no standing loads due to current COVID-19 guidelines), and fewer transit buses available, providing parade shuttles to and from the downtown may create an expectation that transit cannot meet.
- 3) Who will pay for the service?

ACTION:

The General Manager will e-mail members when a final decision and further details is known relevant to this item.

8. New Bus Stop Signs

➤ Because the cost for this item is estimated at approximately \$25,000, a tender is being prepared.

➤ It is expected the physical installation of the new bus stop signs will continue into 2021. In the meantime, 20 signs have been ordered to commence installation.

➤ New stop design features include:

- Stop I.D. number for texting and Google search, etc. for trip planning
- Brief route description
- Accessibility symbols
- Reflectivity at night for increased visibility

V. OTHER (Information/Community)

1. Thanksgiving Food Drive—October 2-13, 2020

➤ VOCM Cares Foundation and Metrobus, in partnership with Sobeys, hosted the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive in St. John's metro and surrounding areas from October 2-13.

➤ Citizens were asked to support the Community Food Sharing Association by donating non-perishable food items at participating Sobeys locations and in food collection boxes installed on Metrobuses.

➤ Because of COVID-19 and health and safety guidelines, the event was scaled back this year, and there was no formal collection from schools as in previous years.

2. Metrobus' 9th Annual Pink Days in Bloom

➤ October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

➤ Metrobus is holding Jeans Days on Fridays and other fundraising activities in support of Daffodil Place throughout October.

➤ L. Ryan noted that pink ribbon decals have been placed on the mirrors of transit buses and Transit Operators are encouraged to wear pink behind the wheel on Jeans Days to elevate breast cancer awareness in the community.

3. Halloween—October 31, 2020

➤ In keeping with the fun spirit of Halloween and within specific guidelines for safety and appropriateness in the workplace, an invitation is extended to all employees, including Transit Operators, to come to work in costume and join in the holiday fun.

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4. Coats for Kids—October 16-30, 2020

- The VOCM Cares Coats for Kids campaign, which has been running for over three decades, was pared down this year with fewer drop-off points. Donation items are being set aside in all locations as per COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.
- A Metrobus was not used this year as a mobile outlet so people could board and select clothing, also in accordance with pandemic guidelines.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further regular business to discuss at this time, the meeting be adjourned at approximately 12:35 PM.
- Live streaming of the public meeting ended followed by an in-camera business meeting of the Commission.
- The next regular business meeting of the Commission will be held at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive on Thursday, November 26, 2020 commencing at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Walsh
Acting Chair

Linda Ryan
Administrative Assistant