

MINUTES – JUNE 27, 2024

Meeting of the St. John’s Transportation Commission
Thursday, June 27, 2024 12:00 PM
In-Person at 25 Messenger Drive and online via WebEx

REGULAR

In attendance:

Lynn Zurel	Chairperson
Tolulope Akerele	Commissioner
James Greey	Commissioner
Josh Smee	Commissioner
Derrick Hutchens	Commissioner
Ron Ellsworth	Commissioner/City Councillor
Maggie Burton	Commissioner/City Councillor
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Finance & Corporate Services
Judy Powell	General Manager

Regrets:

Kevin Breen	City Manager
Donna Power	Administrative Assistant

I. PROCEDURAL

Chair Zurel called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 pm.

II. AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Hutchens; seconded by Commissioner Smee. Motion carried.

III. MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the May 30, 2024, regular meeting as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Akerele; seconded by Commissioner Burton. Motion carried.

IV. BUSINESS ARISING

1. Heat on Buses

At this time there is little to be done to address the summer heat on buses, other than opening windows to allow more airflow. The cost to retrofit is prohibitive. The new buses arriving in the Fall will have air conditioning, as will all future new buses.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Decision Note – RFP – Third Party Assessments for Paratransit Eligibility

In response to this RFP, three bids were received, all meeting specification. After evaluation the highest scoring bid was from Telus, who is the current provider. The new contract rate is \$88 per assessment for a two-year contract.

MOTION: To approve award of the contract to Telus as described above and recommended by management.

Moved by Commissioner Ellsworth; seconded by Commissioner Greey. Motion carried.

2. Decision Note – Transmission Parts Contract – Sole Source

In light of numerous issues with quality and wear/tear of aftermarket parts in Allison transmissions, a sole source procurement process was undertaken to secure a contract with Wajax Power Systems to purchase OEM Allison parts at a cost of \$242,537.

MOTION: To approve award of a sole-source contract to Wajax Power Systems for the purchase of OEM Allison parts until Dec 31, 2025.

Moved by Commissioner Ellsworth; seconded by Commissioner Smee. Motion carried.

3. Ratification of E-Poll – Amended 2023 Audited Financial Statements

A vote was conducted on June 10, 2024, to approve an amendment to the 2023 audited financial statements after an over accrual of \$94,632.38 was discovered related to ICIP funding. The statements were amended to reflect a decrease in the Government Transfer amount and a decrease in Accounts Receivable. The motion was carried.

4. Long’s Hill Bus Stop

Recent public notice about the closure of the bus stop at the top of Long’s Hill has generated some questions and negative feedback from the public. The intention of

today's discussion is to inform the Commission about the rationale and decision-making processes related to this closure.

Moving bus stops or shelters is something that is rarely done and typically results from a route change, environmental change, or safety issues. This stop has been problematic for some time for a few reasons. Safety concerns have increased with passengers trying to board at the red light and often becoming aggressive. There are safer options in the area. As well, given the configuration of the intersection at Long's Hill/Harvey Rd/Freshwater Rd, missing the green light creates delays of a few minutes. Additionally, placing bus stops on the far side of intersections is considered best practice in the transit industry.

Discussion:

- How information is communicated to riders is very important and it may be helpful to develop a process for any similar situations in the future.
- Usual practice is to place notices directly at bus stops, at least two weeks in advance, so as to immediately reach those who use the stop. In this instance the standard notice was not utilized, which would have included additional information, such as directions to nearby stops.
- The Commission suggested that including the rationale in the posted notification would be helpful. It's also important that staff have accurate information to share with the public.
- This area of the city presents many challenges and requires a careful approach to resolving safety issues. Taking away an amenity when something is not working should not be the first response. It is important to keep a broader discussion open about the growing safety concerns being seen lately.
- It is standard practice for Metrobus staff to work with City traffic engineers to explore alternatives for bus stop placement and ensure compliance with applicable standards.

5. Reports

i. General Manager's Report

Stop Announcements: The RFP for stop announcements has been with the procurement department since February. Commissioner Coffey will request an update from City staff and follow up with the Commission. The delay puts installation in 2024 at risk. This project is a priority of the

Commission, and efforts will be made to complete the work as soon as possible.

Service Plan: A suggestion was made to conduct some public engagement to hear how the community feels about the plan. However, given that the public was consulted in advance of creating the plan, the Commission felt this is not necessary. Additionally, changes are not planned until 2025 so there is time to release the plan and receive feedback from the community along the way.

Fareboxes: There has been a delay in the arrival of the equipment. It is now expected in August. The smart card reader equipment is also expected in the fall.

Shelters: Maintenance of shelters is becoming more challenging as more work is required to keep them clean and in good repair. As more shelters are added, additional staff will be required to maintain them. The goal is to install six new shelters each year for the next few years.

ii. Executive Summary Report

On Time Performance (OTP): A request was made to include the OTP data comparative to the previous month to provide better perspective.

GoBus Feedback: In order for customers to receive trip notifications from offline taxis, the taxis would have to be equipped with technology that directly connects them with the GoBus dispatch software. At this time, that is not possible.

On Demand Service: Ridership has increased recently by 10-15%. Marketing staff have engaged with some downtown hotels, as well as the City of St. John's Visitor's Centre. Care was taken to inform each that this would not be a viable option for cruise ship visitors as it could overwhelm the service. Advertising is also targeting select airport arrivers who are staying downtown without vehicles.

iii. Financial Statements for June 2024

No discussion.

VI. OTHER

Chair Zurel encouraged commissioners to connect with staff anytime they have questions related to the General Manager's, Executive Summary or Financial reports, or any other operational matters.

The next meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission will take place on July 25, 2024, at 12:00 PM.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Business concluded at approximately 1:00 PM.

MOTION: To adjourn the June 27, 2024, regular business meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission.

Moved by Commissioner Akerele. Meeting adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Commissioner Coffey will request an update from City staff regarding the status of the RFP for the stop announcements system and follow up with the Commission.
2. Begin adding OTP data from the previous month to the Executive Summary Reports.