

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday February 10, 2011

PRESENT: Dee Evans, Charlotte
Terry Lansdell, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
George Schaeffer, Charlotte
WALTER HORSTMAN, MATTHEWS

STAFF: Theron Barrio, Duretta Weicken, Larry Kopf, Ramond Robinson, Ed Pullan, Kirk Scott, John Trunk, Chuck Juliana, Tom Livingston, Dietrich Brown, Joe Wormer, Judy Dellert-OKeef, David Murphy

MEETING TIME: 4:00-5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Approval of the January Meeting Summary

Co-Chairman Terry Lansdell called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., quorum was not met to approve the January meeting summary.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no comment from the public.

III. Information Items:

A. Diesel Fuel – How it is Bought Edward Pullan

Edward Pullan CATS Senior Procurement Officer gave a summary of CATS fuel Management. The presentation gave an outline of the historical method of fuel purchasing by CATS, its research into more progressive methods of fuel purchasing by other transit agencies, the implementation of those methods by CATS, and the varied influences on prices which need to be accounted for when making decisions regarding implementing fixed price agreements.

Walter Horstman asked if CATS does forward buying when purchasing fuel. Edward stated CATS does forward buying of fuel at fixed prices when it is advantageous to the transit agency, (slightly over half consumption is at fixed prices) and floating price at other times.

Walter asked if CATS and Mecklenburg schools bought fuel together to help with the pricing. Edward stated CMS had previously declined to participate in a joint fuel purchasing agreement.

Terry asked if CATS ever makes a mistake when purchasing fuel. Edward stated everyone was caught off guard when the last fuel prices jumped.

Terry stated as CATS moves forward in the next few years and are not expanding bus routes, does that help with fuel purchasing. Edward stated that consistent fuel consumption levels helps somewhat but we must still be actively involved in tracking prices to purchase whatever volume of fuel is required for operations.

Walter asked how much of a savings there is with CATS anti-idling policy. Larry Kopf stated he did not have the numbers at this time but those savings show up on the miles per gallon calculations.

Terry asked if there is a price tipping point for the cost per gallon. Edward stated there have been some market experts that say if you get to \$92 per barrel then that is an indication of prices rising further, but each fixed price purchasing agreement is made on its own merits and the fuel price budget levels that we need to work within.

Walter asked when a barrel gets to a certain number of gallons, is that when CATS starts buying. John Trunk answered saying CATS manages to figure within its budget to reduce budget volatility.

Walter asked if there were enough dollars saved last year to keep from having to do drastic things this year. Larry answered saying CATS gets a new budget every year so operating budget dollars cannot be carried over to the following year. CATS' has to operation within its budget each year separately.

George Schaeffer asked if money would be saved if CATS buys futures in the open market. Edward stated that due to the NCGS 159-30 the City cannot directly purchase options, futures or other financial instruments to implement an in-house hedging program. That would require a legislative initiative through the NC General Assembly to change that restriction. Otherwise CATS will continue to "forward-buy" through our fuel supplier.

B. Van Pool Update

Dietrich Brown

Dietrich Brown Manager of Van Pool gave a presentation of CATS Van pool. Dietrich explained the Van pool goals are to provide safe reliable transportation, superior customer service, and to increase active vanpool

numbers. Dietrich explained each driver of a vanpool goes through a driver training course provided by the Smith System Driver Improvement Institute. CATS' staff responds to van pool customers needs 24 hrs a day and the van pool vehicles receive regular preventive maintenance. The top four Van pool counties are Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Lincoln and Iredell which provide more than 600 daily riders for the top four destinations of Charlotte Airport, uptown Charlotte, University and Arrowood. Dietrich explained the vanpool fare structure and the cost shared by the riders. CATS' strives to recoup as much of the operating expenses as possible while providing safe reliable service.

Walter stated CATS customer service help desk is a 24 hour line, is Van pool staff working 24 hours as well. Dietrich stated Van Pool staffs are available to Van pool drivers 24 hours per day.

Walter asked if van pool vans run on diesel fuel. Dietrich stated the vans run on gasoline.

Scott Jernigan asked if van pool vans run in the middle of the night. Dietrich stated there are some van pools that do run on the third shift.

Walter asked if CATS pays tax with the fuelman system. Dietrich explained there are some taxes but not as high a tax as a normal pay system.

Walter asked since Charlotte helps workers from Forsythe County get to Charlotte, does Forsythe help Charlotte people on the Forsythe end. Dietrich stated they do but whether they help or not the goal of Van Pool is to lessen traffic to Charlotte to improve the air quality which in return lessens air pollutions.

George asked how the economics work out for the whole program. Dietrich stated there is about 63% of the overall budget recouped. Larry stated van pool has the highest percentage of recouped dollars than any service CATS has.

George asked if CATS ever thought of adjusting fixed costs. Dietrich stated CATS' has been considering fixed costs for the next fare increase.

Walter asked what the preventable accident rate is for van pool. Dietrich stated last year there were 2 accidents but so far this year there have been 4 preventable accidents.

Terry asked how easy is it to get people into van pool and how does CATS promote van pool. Dietrich stated CATS does presentations at public meetings and major employers. Once interested people are recognized, CATS staffs help them with the process.

C. Bus Scheduling

Chuck Juliana

Chuck Juliana Manager of Bus Scheduling presented the process of developing bus and rail schedules. Chuck stated the process begins after presenting service changes at a public hearing. Vehicle schedules are developed, from there Crew schedules are created, and runs are developed. And rosters are created which will be used in the sign up. Draft schedules are sent to the Union for a 2 week review. Schedules are then officially posted for operators for a week and then the operators pick is conducted for 6 days.

Walter asked how often the AVL does not work. Larry stated the AVL system works 92% of the time every day.

V. Service Issues

All

George stated he tried calling the Customer Service line around 6:05pm when a bus was late and the call was never answered. Larry stated he would check into it to make sure there is not a problem.

Walter asked if the dome lights are not working on the express bus could it be fixed. Larry stated Maintenance would need to know what bus it was, and if there are any to report they should be sent to Larry and he would report it to maintenance to check out.

Terry stated the display boards on the buses should be reported as well.

Walter asked if the 65X was being canceled. Larry stated there has not been any decision on the 65X as CATS is getting started on the Independence corridor. Ramond stated the project would get started in September of 2012.

Dee Evans reported that when a bus has the Garage sign in the kiosk drivers are confused about whether the bus is going to be making stops or not and some have almost hit the bus. Larry stated buses that are going to the garage will still let riders off as they head to the garage so drivers should beware that the bus will still be stopping.

VI. Chairman's Report

Terry Lansdell

Terry reported that Rick had attended the last MTC meeting and he himself was not at the last MTC meeting he encouraged the committee to read the minutes when they are available.

VII. Operations Report

Larry Kopf

Larry Kopf CATS Chief Operations Officer reported to the committee that Charlotte has been picked for the location of the Democratic National Convention and that CATS will be providing special service to Delegates and Hotels. CATS' is currently looking for extra buses and drivers and the FTA is helping with that. Larry continued saying when the convention is in town, it will affect the CTC and there will be changes that will be announced at a later date. Larry continued saying that CATS' is requesting help from TSAC members who ride the buses to audit the annunciation system as CATS is required to call out stops along the route for individuals with sight impairments. CATS is asking members who ride the bus to do checks to see if time points are being announced, either by the bus automated system or by the operator. CATS will supply the members with a short form to record the needed information at a later date.

NEXT TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY MARCH 10, 2011 4:00 PM