BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION MINUTES
(Virtual Meeting)
June 10, 2022 at 8:30 AM

Operations Committee Members participating via Zoom

Rose Windmiller, Chair
Derrick Cox – Absent
Irma Golliday – Absent
Vernal Brown
Terry Beach

Other Commissioners participating via Zoom

Herbert Simmons
Fred Pestello – Absent
Nate Johnson
Sam Gladney
Debra Moore

Staff participating via Zoom

Taulby Roach, President and Chief Executive Officer
Brenda Deertz, Director of Executive Services
Barbara Enneking, General Counsel and Deputy Secretary
Myra Bennett, Manager of Board Administration
Thomas Curran, Executive Vice President – Administration
Charles Stewart, Interim Executive Director Metro Transit / Executive VP Organizational Effectiveness
Kevin Scott, General Manager Security

Others participating via Zoom

Tera Briggs, ASL Interpreter
Loretto Freeman, ASL Interpreter

1. **Open Session Call to Order**
8:30 a.m. Chair Windmiller called the Open Session of the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. **Roll Call**
8:30 a.m. Roll call was taken, as noted above.

4. **Approval of the Minutes of the March 18, 2022 Operations Committee, Open Meeting**
8:32 a.m. Chair Windmiller noted that the minutes of the March 18, 2022, Operations Committee, Open Meeting were provided in the Committee packet. A motion to approve the

minutes was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Simmons. **The motion passed unanimously.**

It was noted that Item #3 – Public Comment had inadvertently been overlooked.

3. Public Comment

8:32 a.m. Chair Windmiller asked Myra Bennett, Manager of Board Administration, if any speaker cards have been received for today's meeting. Ms. Bennett noted that one public comment was received, and read the correspondence, as noted below:

Name: Shannon Villa
Representing: Self and the general public and transit users
Topic: Unacceptable 70 Grand Service, Detours During Special Events That Defeat Purpose of Transit

Comments: I have 2 areas of concern regarding MetroBus operations:

1. 70 Grand Poor Operations After 6pm All Days Leading to Upwards of 2 hours gap in service and buses up to 1 hour or more behind schedule
2. Detours during times of heavy traffic- Affected Route 90 Hampton in Forest Park and 34 Earth City around the Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre

1. 70 Grand poor operations after 6pm every day is of primary concern. As you are well aware, the 70 Grand has historically been Metro's heaviest ridership and most productive bus line as a total route, per hour of service, and per mile of service. The route seems to have ample running time to allow for nearly 100% on-time performance. However, and especially after the reduction of the route to 30 minute frequencies after about 6pm daily, this route has suffered tremendously amounting to as much as 2 hours of time between buses. BOC attempts to try to make buses get back on schedule with very little success and the times they do make a bus run "Special" or "Drop-off only" there is not always a bus following within 5 to even 10 minutes, doing many times requires a very long wait for riders bypassed due to a bus going "Special" or "Drop-off only." Last night on Thursday 6/2 I have a specific example when this should not have been done, leading to a 1 hour and 47 minute gap at Loughborough Commons northbound. The operator made to "Special" to Broadway-Taylor TC was actually rightfully hesitant to Special himself knowing there would be passengers missed.

I believe there needs to be a dedicated mobile TSM for the 70 Grand and since I know TSMs don't have laptops they should use https://www.transsee.ca/routelist?a=stlouis from a mobile device to see where buses are at, schedule adherence, and service gaps. The TSM would then be able to adjust service as needed as well as notify riders at key stops of service delays or cuts in service. An alternative would be to divide 70 Grand into 2 segments with a 70N and 70S, as you would guess 1 route would run from Grand Station north to Broadway-Taylor TC and 1 route would run from Grand Station south to Loughborough Commons. 1 bus would be needed for each. There would also be a 70 that would run the entire route end to end. 70N and 70 buses can be run with 60 foot buses while the 70S would have to be a 40 foot bus due to being unable to recharge at Broadway-Taylor TC. Resource requirements would remain at 3 buses after 6pm although a 4th bus can be added for improved frequency or as a strategic bus to fill in service gaps as needed.

2. Detours during times of heavy traffic- Affected Routes 90 Hampton and 34 Earth City
These routes are routinely detoured without notice to passengers with no alert on the Metro website or Transit app, and no notice at affected stops. As you know, with a workforce shortage, the Forest Park Trolley has ceased operations ever since 2020. The route was created to allow for reliable 90 Hampton service to bypass Forest Park on weekends during the day until about 7pm. With the discontinued route, 90 Hampton buses are being routinely detoured away from Forest Park. Exact detours are not always followed with most operators using Forest Park Parkway versus the prescribed use of Lindell to Skinker and vice-versa for northbound trips. However, with this change passengers have no reliable service in Forest Park particularly during high demand days like last weekend with the African Arts Festival at the World's Fair Pavilion. I attended this and had to wait for 90 Hampton buses outside the park. 34 Earth City also is frequently detoured due to traffic in the area of the Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre. Detouring around high traffic areas while keeping a bus on-time causes riders to be stranded or have to walk to another stop which in many cases is over 30 min away. My suggestion is to not detour buses around heavy traffic as it skips stops most key for riders both for dependent riders and riders Metro wants to attract.
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This e-mail was sent from the public comment form on bistatedev.org

Chair Windmiller noted that the Board would postpone Item #5 until later in the meeting, as Kevin Scott, General Manager Security, the presenter for that item, was encountering technical difficulties. The Committee proceeded to Item #6.

6. Cooperation Agreement for the Operation and Maintenance of Cortex MetroLink Plaza and Bike Path Located within the Brickline Greenway

8:38 a.m. A briefing paper was provided in the meeting materials, requesting that the Committee accept, and refer to the Board of Commissioners for approval, a Cooperation Agreement for the Operation and Maintenance of Cortex MetroLink Plaza and Bike Path Located within the Brickline Greenway, with Cortex and the Great Rivers Greenway District. Chuck Stewart, Executive Director Metro Transit, provided an overview of this issue.

Commissioner Simmons asked if there is a specific dollar amount associated with this agreement. Mr. Stewart stated that he does not have a figure at this point; however, he could provide that information prior to the Board of Commissioners meeting. Chair Windmiller expressed concerns regarding approving this item, without the dollar amount attached. Mr. Stewart noted that the primary reason for the agreement is to outline the specifics regarding maintenance of the Plaza and Bike Path. Commissioner Moore asked if the Committee should defer this item, until all of the information is provided. Chair Windmiller expressed the same concern, but posed questions regarding whether deferment of this item would delay maintenance. Mr. Stewart noted that this agreement has already been delayed; however, Barbara Enneking, General Counsel, noted that the cooperative agreement will allow Cortex to provide landscaping maintenance of the Plaza, since Cortex is already maintaining the adjacent Cortex Commons; therefore, decreasing the cost to the Agency for greenscaping services. Commissioner Gladney asked Ms. Enneking if the Committee could approve the outline and framework for the agreement without the dollar amount. Ms. Enneking stated that, due to the concerns noted, this item could be deferred to the June 24th Board of Commissioners Meeting. Chair Windmiller asked if the item would need to go back to the Committee, before proceeding to the Board. Ms. Enneking stated that, since the agreement has been presented today to the Committee, it could go forward to the Board for approval at its next Board meeting in two weeks, once the additional information is provided to the Board.

A motion to postpone this item until the June 24th Board of Commissioners Meeting to allow time for staff to provide additional information, was made by Commissioner Simmons and seconded by Commissioner Moore.

The motion passed. (This item will be postponed until the June 24th Board of Commissioners Meeting.)

5. **Law Enforcement Services Agreement between Bi-State Development Agency and St. Clair County, Illinois for Services Provided by the St. Clair County, Illinois Sheriff's Department**
8:48 a.m. A briefing paper was included in the meeting materials, presenting to the Operations Committee, for discussion, acceptance, and referral to the Board of Commissioners for approval, a Law Enforcement Services Agreement between Bi-State Development and St. Clair County, Illinois for law enforcement services provided by the St. Clair County, Illinois Sheriff's Department. Kevin Scott, General Manager of Security, gave an overview of this item, outlining the details of the agreement, including staffing, costs, and time frames for the different terms. Mr. Scott noted that there is a variation in the time frame for the terms, in order to align the expiration of terms of all three of the law enforcement agreements (St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Clair County). Chair Windmiller asked if the three law enforcement agreements line up financially. Mr. Scott stated that there are different pay rates, based upon the pay rates for each agency. Commissioner Simmons asked if there is a percentage increase. Mr. Scott reported that there is a 3.8% increase, not including fringe benefits. Commissioner Simmons asked if the Agency has influence with the scheduling of Police staff. Mr. Scott stated that the Agency does have influence regarding scheduling of Police, and the Agency works closely with its Police partners regarding these matters. Chair Windmiller asked if the alignment of the three contracts is something that will help logistically, or if it will be used in negotiation of contracts. Mr. Scott stated that aligning the contracts will help logistically. He noted that there are different costs, based on each department's pay scale, and the Agency will use the alignment of the contracts in order to look at the cost impacts, as well as logistical impacts. Chair Windmiller asked that Mr. Scott provide additional information at the June 24th Board of Commissioners Meeting, regarding how these agreements are currently structured.

A motion to approve this agenda item, as presented, was made by Commissioner Simmons and was seconded by Commissioner Moore.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Unscheduled Business**
8:59 a.m. There was no unscheduled business.

8. Operations Report

8:59 a.m. An operations report for Metro Transit was included in the Committee packet. Charles Stewart, Executive Director Metro Transit, addressed the concerns noted by Shannon Villa under Public Comments, reporting that Mr. Villa has previously voiced concerns to the Agency. He noted the following written response to Mr. Villa's concerns:

> Mr. Villa,
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> Thank you for your feedback, and your patience as we investigated the specific incidents in your comments.
>
> Regarding the #70-Grand, we are unfortunately still experiencing some missed trips – corrective actions that should help improve the specific issue of some missed evening trips on #70-Grand, which as you note is a very important route in our network. We do have managerial resources assigned to the #70 and although we cannot have a manager solely stationed or floating between bus stops only on this route, there are absolutely personnel dedicated to monitoring the #70. We are continuing to explore creative solutions to the workforce issues we're facing that impact this and other routes, and so we welcome you sharing your experiences to help us improve.
>
> As for the recent experiences you report regarding detours of the #90 and #34, we do work closely with partners around the region when there are events that create reroutes of our service. We strive to keep this information as up-to-date as possible and to communicate it in a timely manner to our customers. Our standard practice is for rider alerts to be posted electronically, and if we are given enough notice by the external partner, we will get rider alert signage posted at the impacted bus stops. We appreciate you calling attention to these particular cases and are looking into resolving any inefficiencies that may have occurred, since we want to get information out to customers as soon as we can.

Mr. Stewart provided an update to the Committee regarding ridership and status as it relates to the workforce shortage. He noted anticipated adjustments to be made to the system on June 13th, stating that some services will be added back into the system, and some services will be moved to adjust to ridership needs. Mr. Stewart noted that a group has been convened to address retention of employees, and reported recruitment activities being implemented to attract new employees.

Commissioner Gladney posed questions regarding the number of applicants versus the number of new hires and trainees, asking if there are stringent requirements that are filtering out potential hires. Mr. Stewart reported that the Agency is losing many potential employees during the scrutiny of the background checks, and are losing approximately half of the new hires after they obtain their CDL's. He stated that competition is intense, and many will leave for other positions. Mr. Stewart stated that the Agency is working with the unions in its efforts to attract new employees, with enhanced recruitment and a focus on retention. Commissioner Brown asked if the new hires go through an orientation process with the union, and Mr. Stewart noted that the union is involved in the orientation process. Commissioner Moore asked if new hires are required to reimburse the Agency for hiring incentives received, if they leave the organization. Mr. Stewart noted that there are time frames involved for the new hires to receive the incentive pay. Commissioner Moore asked the number of new hires the Agency has lost, and Mr. Stewart stated that he would get that information for the Commissioners. Commissioner Moore asked if the Agency is seeing more success in certain types of recruitment activities. Mr. Stewart noted that the Agency seems to have the most success at the job fairs held by the Agency itself, as when job fairs are held with multiple employers, it faces the issue of increased competition for the prospective employees. Commissioner Simmons posed questions relating to the recent employee awards that were given, asking if this was only advertised internally, or if these activities are noted to the public, and asked if Commissioners could be made aware of these events, in advance, so that they could attend and show their support. Mr. Stewart stated that he would address these issues. Chair Windmiller thanked Mr. Stewart for the monthly reports, but asked if the Board could be provided with figures for the year, to get a better overview of the recruitment and retention efforts. She also posed questions as to why the Agency is losing approximately 60% of the new recruits. Mr. Stewart reported that many of the new hires that leave, begin demonstrating absences early on, then just stop reporting for work. Commissioner Brown asked the hiring age for drivers. Mr. Stewart stated that employees must be 21 in order to receive their CDL; however, the Agency is also recruiting individuals 18 and older, who may be able to be placed in a different positions, but later move forward into an operator position. Commissioner Gladney stated that it may be appropriate to look into some type of incentive for new hires, once they obtain their CDL, to increase retention, since this is the time many of them leave the organization. Mr. Stewart stated that he will look into this suggestion.

9. President/CEO Report

9:24 a.m. Bi-State Development President/CEO, Taulby Roach, addressed the committee, noting that an update regarding the expansion of MetroLink will be provided at the June 24th Board of Commissioners Meeting. Mr. Roach noted that the FY2023 Budget is moving through the Ways and Means Committee for the City of St. Louis, and will be addressed at the St. Louis County Council meeting on Tuesday. He reported that Tammy Fulbright and Chuck Stewart are working out details of budget negotiations with St. Clair County.

Commissioner Simmons posed questions regarding the North/South MetroLink connection, asking if there have been any deviations from the original alignment. Mr. Roach noted that there have been some adjustments to the alignment, based upon the changing needs of the St. Louis region. He noted that the original study was completed in 2018, and there have been changes to the region since that time, including development of the new Soccer Stadium; therefore, some adjustments to the 2018 study were needed. Commissioner Simmons also posed questions relating to the budget negotiations with St. Clair County, asking if an agreement will be reached by the deadline. Mr. Roach stated that there are some issues yet to be quantified; however, he is hopeful that an agreement will be reached before the deadline.

10. Call of Dates for Future Board and Committee Meetings

9:30 a.m. Myra Bennett, Manager of Board Administration, advised the Committee of upcoming meetings, as follows:

Tentative schedule:

Board of Commissioners Meeting:	Friday, June 24, 2022	8:30 AM
Safety & Security Meeting:	Thursday, August 11, 2022	8:30 AM
Operations/Audit, Finance, Administration:	Friday, August 19, 2022	8:30 AM

11. Adjournment

9:31 a.m. Chair Windmiller asked if there was any further business, being none, Commissioner Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gladney. Unanimous vote in favor taken. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:31 a.m.

Myra G. Bennett

Assistant Secretary to the Board of Commissioners
Bi-State Development