

**PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Local Transportation Subcommittee**

*Minutes of Public Meeting
October 8, 2003*

Village of Downers Grove
801 Burlington Avenue
Ante Room

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Martin Tully, Public Services Committee Chairman
Commissioner Marilyn Schnell
Rich Mueller
Robert Kollmar

STAFF: Stan Balicki, Support Services Manager
Megan Dugard, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Mr. Mark Ashby, PACE
William Waldack
Jeff Waxman

Absent: Lawrence Gress

Commissioner Tully called the Local Transportation Subcommittee Meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. The minutes for the September 24, 2003 meeting were approved as corrected.

Correct date to September 24, 2003
Page 2 correct word "do"

Motion to approve the minutes: Commissioner Schnell
2nd Motion: Mr. Mueller
Motion Carried: 4:0

He continued with the agenda item of the Continued evaluation of the Grove Commuter Shuttle Service. The focus for discussion is principally a continuance for discussion with respect to the costs and related issues of future fleet maintenance or replacement including the CNG option. Information has been provided by Mr. Ashby from PACE. We will set another meeting date at the end of this evening for preparing a draft outline to circulate and discuss.

Mr. Balicki has once again provided us with some excellent information to lead discussion for this evening.

Mr. Balicki stated at the September 24th meeting the subcommittee requested information on different vehicle replacement options. He compiled the information and basic maintenance cost incurred. (Staff Report Attachment 1)

He suggested including in the report to Council funding sources available for new vehicles. We should show the impact of the decisions accepting funding and may have to forego the Charter Service. The CNG option is another consideration. We have the fueling station in place. The State of Illinois alternative fuel rebate program offers approximately a \$4000 rebate. We would have to expand our storage facility.

Commissioner Tully inquired would all eight buses be converted to CNG. Would it be necessary to address issues on the storage facility if only one bus were CNG.

Mr. Balicki replied one full sized transit bus would require the village to address the storage facility issue. Another option is smaller capacity buses and the purchase cost is far less.

Commissioner Schnell asked about mixing the vehicles utilizing the buses for spare parts. Additionally we could use the buses within the village for senior program charters.

Mr. Balicki continued with Grant programs available. Attachment 2

Commissioner Tully added in making the recommendations to council need show both sides of the equation. The basic issue is going back to where to get revenue sources to fund the local transportation service. If the charter service is abandoned, how much grant money is available to be awarded. The charter service subsidizes the commuter service.

Mr. Balicki added grant funds, if awarded, are only awarded one time. This is an important question. Another equipment option is to refurbish the fleet. The cost widely varies depending on the scope of work to be performed. Typically engine and transmission replacement is between \$40,000 to \$50,000. Potentially per bus we could be looking at \$50,000 to \$150,000.

Mr. Ashby stated it is more efficient to replace the buses.

Mr. Balicki continued in purchasing new vehicles a rough estimate would range from \$250,000 up over \$300,000 depending on length of the bus and how the bus is equipped. The other option available is vans, similar to those used by the airports. The van cost is around \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Mr. Waxman stated Mr. Balicki put together an excellent report. He suggested using a dial a ride mid-day with the current buses available. In extending the fleet to ten buses through federally funded program this would make available extra buses for charter service.

Commissioner Schnell stated it was previously discussed in purchasing smaller capacity buses mostly for the senior programs.

Mr. Waxman added the smaller units purchased by the state have a life expectancy of approximately seven years compared to the transit bus, which is about twelve years. The village, mileage is low and the buses could go for twenty years. Another option the village could consider in purchasing new equipment is piggyback onto another entities order. He presently is working on specifications for a bid to go out in three months.

Commissioner Tully stated the advantage to this is someone else compiling the necessary information and rely on someone else getting more for the money.

Mr. Waxman added IDOT inspectors would be on line at the manufacturer chosen. This would also make an earlier production available using one of Metra production slots.

Mr. Waldack inquired on the restriction for charter use. If you get double the years, the last half could be utilized for charter service.

Mr. Balicki stated he has not considered this question.

Mr. Waldack added it was mentioned for the smaller bus using the dial a ride. This would be an ideal community service. It would assist in scheduling the start and stop times daily.

Mr. Balicki added he did not have an answer and is uncertain what happens after a bus is fully depreciated. It has been his experience in using federal funds for other projects we are audited. The Federal Government can come in at anytime to ensure the village is meeting the requirements.

Mr. Waldack replied he understands and is not asking to bend the law. His question, if we were allowed twelve years of life on a bus and getting twenty years of life per bus, could the additional years be used for charter services.

Commissioner Tully added this is information worth knowing.

Commissioner Schnell added if it is attractive and we can refurbish a bus and make it look new, people do not care, as long as it is comfortable and reliable.

Mr. Waxman continued that people want a reliable bus on the road.

Commissioner Schnell asked how long a bus is out of service for refurbishing.

Mr. Waxman replied to refurbish a bus it is out of service for twelve weeks.

Commissioner Schnell stated to refurbish an entire fleet would have to be staggered.

Mr. Balicki agreed. The refurbish schedule would have to be staggered.

Mr. Waxman stated one thing he may be able to arrange with ATC Husky Line should the village decide the rehab route, is to lease their available buses during the process.

Commissioner Tully asked if there were any further questions on the report.

Mr. Waxman added in regard to the Rock Island El Dorado bus, it has been his experience that the body rots very easily. At speeds of 45 miles or above, the bus is unstable.

Mr. Mueller questioned the number people occupying charters.

Mr. Waxman replied there are mostly 25 to 30 people on a charter with exception of the Bristol Club, which could handle the smaller bus units.

Mr. Balicki stated there was the discussion on the Jewel charter using our vehicle. The supervisor, Greg Guthrie looked into renting a 15-passenger van. The lowest price he found was

\$900 per week.

Mr. Waxman offered another consideration in the spring. Para-transit buses, which are ready to retire, will be available. They could be transferred to the village as an experiment at no cost. A driver would be needed to pick them up.

Commissioner Schnell stated one area heard from repeatedly is Cameo Complex. The larger buses are unable to get into the lot to pick up the senior residents. The buses are unable to maneuver in the parking lot. The smaller buses would be beneficial.

Commissioner Tully stated it might not be a bad idea to get one or two smaller buses at no cost and use it as expanding the service, heighten awareness, getting support. What is the down side? We have one or two buses we no longer need. We could see if people like it without spending the money to purchase a new bus.

Mr. Balicki asked Mr. Waxman to get the information on the bus transfer for experiment.

Mr. Waxman added if the village desires the purchase of the smaller buses, there is the option to piggyback.

Mr. Waldack added if we could use the smaller bus for twelve weeks, we could refurbish one of the existing units.

Commissioner Tully stated he had a question on the fleet issue. The FTA program fact sheet is part of the clean fuel grant program.

Mr. Balicki explained the Chicago Area is a non-attainment area for ozone. Big metropolitan areas typically are considered non-attainment areas for air pollution.

Mr. Waldack questioned the Ford advertisement funding available through state and local incentives.

Mr. Balicki explained the village is a member of the Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition. Funding resources information is attached. The State Energy Program (SEP) sample of projects is included. There is a list of transit agencies that received funding for CNG fueling infrastructure. Attachment 3

Mr. Mueller inquired about a smaller vehicle fitting the current fueling capabilities.

Mr. Balicki stated he felt a smaller vehicle would fit in better than a shuttle bus fueling capacity. He explained the CNG fueling storage capacity.

Commissioner Tully asked if Mr. Kollmar had any questions.

Mr. Kollmar stated he no questions. The information was very clear and very well done.

Commissioner Tully asked to continue with PACE information.

Mr. Balicki continued in working with Mr. Ashby and PACE staff the cost comparison was distributed for discussion purposes. Attachment 4

One concern PACE has is the affect of the parking deck on commuter service. This could cause a decrease in ridership. It would be beneficial to add a preference in the report to full council for PACE to take over the commuter service, we would have to commit to 3 or 4 years. PACE would have to review its own position throughout not only Downers Grove, but also the whole DuPage area.

Commissioner Tully explained he is appreciative of the information. The only reason this information was necessary was whether or not to recommend to the village council to proceed down the path of an agreement with PACE to take over the commuter service. We have had no sense of what would be involved or the cost if this was something to pursue. This gives us an option idea.

Mr. Waxman questioned the PACE operation cost.

Mr. Ashby confirmed the price of \$412,000.

Mr. Mueller questioned if this was providing additional buses.

Mr. Ashby explained this would be just the operation cost.

Mr. Balicki continued to explain the cost of vehicles is covered through the Federal Funding and grants that PACE acquires. PACE has to cover the costs of operation through fare box recovery.

Mr. Waxman asked about the contractor cost. It is presumed the routes would go out to bid separately or as a package. Would there be a separate contractor each individual route or one contractor for all routes.

Mr. Balicki explained PACE looked at the hourly rates and assigned a number. Some details were not considered.

Commissioner Schnell added the numbers were provided as a good faith estimate.

Commissioner Tully asked in a hypothetical situation should PACE take over the routes, the cost reflected in the comparison and the contractor rate, would those both come into play depending on what the needs were at the time. How does it factor into the charge to the village?

Mr. Ashby asked if the question is how does PACE determine if PACE is going to take the routes or a contractor takes the routes? One reason PACE uses contractors is the garage facility is quite a distance away. The headway cost, to get the bus from the garage to the actual operating service, is a significant cost. He explained this why a contractor is used and it becomes a variable. PACE showed the charges of a contractor to give an idea. More than likely PACE would do the routes since the distance between the garage and the routes is not a problem.

Commissioner Tully asked with respect to the capital expenditures, additional buses to provide commuter service, how would this come into play.

Mr. Ashby stated there would not be an additional cost. There is an ongoing program for replacement costs.

Commissioner Tully questioned service comparison. Based on the service, how would it compare. Would there be changes in the routes or as they run now.

Mr. Balicki stated the service would be as the bus routes run now. We have published stops and flag stops. PACE would be strict in staying with the official stops. Some of our riders may have to make adjustments.

Commissioner Schnell inquired on what type of commitment would the village have to make for PACE to take the routes.

Mr. Ashby replied PACE would not operate the service as it is operated today. PACE would take a look at the structure of the service, the routes, in order to run the service in the most efficient manner.

Mr. Balicki added it is his understanding in conversations with PACE would look at the service overall to this part of DuPage County.

Mr. Mueller added down the road PACE would look at various areas such as Woodridge, Darien, Condominium and apartment complexes that attract riders.

Mr. Ashby added a comprehensive study would determine how to service the most people.

Commissioner Tully added the routes would be different than most people were used to, but in the best interest to change the service to be a benefit to most people.

Mr. Balicki stated there is another issue a more long-term scenario is the DuPage Area Transit Plan. The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference along with the Municipalities are proceeding with submitting grant applications to basically stimulate local planning efforts for transit services in conjunction with PACE. The outcome of these studies will basically be proposals to PACE board members for service changes throughout DuPage County in years to come. The whole area is going to be changing. The intention is change for the better.

Mr. Ashby concurred PACE is embarking on an immediate process of restructuring the PACE service region wide. One principal area is DuPage County and working closely with the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference.

Commissioner Tully asked hypothetically if the village agreed, how long a commitment would PACE want from the village of Downers Grove for PACE to do the service.

Mr. Ashby replied hypothetically, the minimum commitment would be at least 2 to 3 years.

Mr. Waldack stated over that 2 to 3 years the parking deck would be completed and the DuPage Transit Plan would be kicking in as well.

Mr. Balicki stated PACE mentioned at the appropriate time, if this were the course the village chose to proceed, there would need to be discussions between the Mayor and Council Members with PACE Board Members.

Mr. Ashby added if anyone has questions please do not hesitate to contact him.

Mr. Balicki stated that it was mentioned there was a new position or a new employee Strategic Services.

Mr. Ashby stated yes, basically the position is an Assistant Executive Director.

Mr. Balicki added the person hired for the position is a resident of Downers Grove who has a lot of experience. This is a good resource for us.

Mr. Ashby will forward the contact information to Mr. Balicki.

Commissioner Tully asked if there were any questions regarding the PACE information. There were no further questions.

The next meetings are scheduled for 6pm:

October 30th

Tentatively scheduled November 20th will confirm via e-mail

Commissioner Tully continued and requested an electronic form of the documents.

Mr. Balicki stated he does have the documents however he would prefer to compile the outline in draft form and e-mail the information prior to the next meeting.

Commissioner Tully added he appreciates Mr. Balicki offering to draft the outline. Eventually we will need to add an executive summary along with exhibits collected. There is a lot of good information gathered. Come budget time the council will decide and have good resource documents.

Mr. Balicki stated he feels better to provide the draft for review as a work tool.

Commissioner Tully asked if there was enough time to compile the draft material.

Mr. Balicki felt there was enough time to compile a draft outline.

Commissioner Tully stated the subcommittee would need to provide the recommendations.

Mr. Mueller stated he felt one item to supply the council members to base their decision on is the actual out of pocket loss taken on the bus service.

Commissioner Tully asked Mr. Balicki if the draft outline would be available on October 30th.

Mr. Balicki stated he could have a draft outline available October 30th. The subcommittee will be compiling the recommendations to council. The support documentation is not a problem.

Commissioner Tully stated he would like to look at an electronic copy of the draft outline before the October 30th meeting. At the meeting discuss what is missing or needs to be removed. The next meeting will consist of making recommendations.

Mr. Kollmar agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Tully asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Waldack stated as a member of the public he really appreciates the treatment received by the committee and very much the staff. It has been very welcoming. He hopes his input has been useful.

Commissioner Tully thanked Mr. Mueller and assured him his comments have been helpful. He asked if there were any further comments.

Mr. Kollmar stated he has not received any feedback on the schedules.

Mr. Balicki replied the suggested schedules looked very good. He felt the schedules were going to be used as part of the report as ways the service could be expanded. With the budget process starting shortly, he could put together some proposals based off the schedules.

Mr. Waxman added the schedule looked good, however the 7:03 am southwest should be moved up to 7:01 am. The schedule is tight with the school traffic. He will look more closely at the schedule again.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Mr. Kollmar
Seconded: Mr. Mueller

Motion Carried: 4:0

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm

***MISSION STATEMENT
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE***

1. Analyze the continued viability of the commuter shuttle service.
2. Assess benefits of the local system.
3. To investigate potential alternatives for enhancing the self-sufficiency of the transportation fund.
4. Assess local transportation needs and resources such as Municipal, County, State and Federal.
5. Promptly make future recommendations for future action to the Village Council consistent with the above findings.