

**PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Local Transportation Subcommittee**

*Minutes of Public Meeting  
September 24, 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  
Lawrence Gress

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

*Visitors:* William Waldack

*Absent:* Robert Kollmar

**Commissioner Schnell** called the Local Transportation Subcommittee Meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. The minutes for the September 10, 2003 meeting were approved as corrected.

Inserted "Emission" page 3

**Motion to approve the minutes:** Mr. Mueller

**2<sup>nd</sup> Motion:** Mr. Gress

**Motion Carried: 4:0**

She continued to explain the intent of the meeting this evening is to discuss the Charter Service.

**Mr. Balicki** agreed the focus for the meeting this evening is the Charter Service. He focused on the cost revenue analysis. Charter services help subsidize the Commuter Shuttle operations. He feels we could continue operating the Charter service. Another component reviewed were the rates. (Charter Rate Survey July, 2002 Attached) The village could operate both systems the Charter and Commuter Shuttle.

**Commissioner Schnell** asked if the commuter charge were decreased how would this affect the charter services.

**Mr. Balicki** quickly checked basic budget numbers available. For comparison, the amendments to the charter fee were estimated that Charter Fees would be up about \$40,000 for this fiscal year. With changes to the commuter fares it was estimated there would be a net increase of \$70,000. He explained it would have to be figured out how to roll the rates into the charter rates.

**Commissioner Schnell** asked if there were any other thoughts. The cost increase affected the commuter services drastically. We lost riders.

**Mr. Mueller** agreed and added we need to get the commuters back.

**Mr. Gress** suggested a good slogan would be “Back to the Bus” or “Get back on the Bus”. What would we be doing to increase the Charter Service and how do we Market the Charter Service.

**Mr. Balicki** explained advertising is limited to an ad in the yellow pages. The strength of our charter business is by word of mouth. We do not have an active campaign. With the number of staff and equipment available we would not be able to drastically increase the charter service schedules. We book 1000 charters per year.

**Commissioner Schnell** explained increasing the charter rates by 10% we could reduce the other rates by 10%.

**Mr. Gress** agreed this could raise revenue.

**Mr. Balicki** stated at this time of year the charters are winding down. He continued to discuss the maintenance schedule problems and working full compliment.

**Mr. Gress** inquired about making the charters a minimum of 5 hours.

**Commissioner Schnell** suggested a good will campaign for advertising.

**Mr. Balicki** explained in eliminating the Charter there would not be a great savings for the Village. The expenses eliminated would only be roughly 25% of the total budget.

**Commissioner Schnell** inquired about selling buses if the Charter Services were eliminated.

**Mr. Balicki** replied he had looked at eliminating buses. The commuter service would only require five buses. The fleet could be reduced keeping one bus in reserve as a backup for the commuter service. To continue providing service to Bristol Club six buses would be needed. It was determined a smaller bus or even a van would be suitable for the Bristol Club route.

**Mr. Waldack** inquired about the use of smaller buses.

**Mr. Balicki** agreed smaller buses would help lower the fleet maintenance costs. He would have to look further into the matter of the smaller buses.

**Mr. Gress** asked about the number of buses requested for a single charter.

**Mr. Balicki** believes there have been requests for as many as six buses at one time for a single charter.

**Mr. Gress** stated that would end the discussion on reducing the size of the fleet if the charter service is continued.

**Mr. Balicki** explained situations where all eight buses are running during the commuter period.

**Mr. Gress** asked about the rates listed.

**Mr. Balicki** explained the rate structure \$40 per hour, not for profit organizations within Downers Grove; \$50 per hour for trips within DuPage County; \$55 per hour for all trips outside the County.

**Commissioner Schnell** explained she believed the different rates were decided to recognize other entities within the community and the fact that it is a government funded enterprise.

**Mr. Gress** asked if other communities listed had a similar discounted rate for non-profit organizations.

**Mr. Balicki** replied other communities do not offer a discounted rate for non-profit organizations. Another option is to have a single rate for all groups.

**Mr. Gress** stated he was in agreement with a single rate and in favor of modifying the rates.

**Mr. Balicki** will contact the Village Clerk, April Holden, for records going back to the original discussions in early 1970's.

*In preparation for the final report Mr. Balicki will prepare a cost sheet reflecting increased rates for the Charter Service with a 5-hour minimum.*

*\$40 to \$45*

*\$50 to \$55*

*\$55 to \$60*

*Another option is to charge a single rate for all.*

**Commissioner Schnell** suggested a review of the operating budget yearly be included in the recommendation. This will allow a yearly increase in smaller increments if needed to cover operating costs. This will allow the revenues to be utilized appropriately and decrease the cost of the commuter service rates.

**Mr. Gress** recommended offering not for profit organizations a 4-hour minimum \$55 rate for charter services.

**Mr. Balicki** explained the buses fully depreciated in April 2002. All of the buses are 1992 models. He will prepare a cost sheet for the next meeting.

He continued the discussion with the proposed commuter run schedule presented by Mr. Kollmar at a previous meeting. Additional expenses incurred would be approximately \$37,000 per year.

**Commissioner Tully** asked with the numbers presented, it would be necessary to increase ridership by 52 additional riders.

**Commissioner Schnell** added it was suggested to increase the charter service cost and decrease the commuter service cost. It could be conceivable if it is marketed properly. It would not occur overnight, but in time.

**Commissioner Tully** inquired about the loss decreasing the cost from \$3 to \$2.

**Mr. Balicki** felt the loss would be between \$5,000-\$10,000.

**Commissioner Tully** expects the advertising revenue could offset the loss.

**Mr. Balicki** stated it is assumed the advertising revenue would bring in between \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. He mentioned the attorneys have sent the approved advertising policy to PACE and they are discussing this with Viacom. The three parties shall be meeting to finalize the agreement in the near future.

**Mr. Gress** inquired if a representative could be available to attend one of the meetings to discuss the advertising.

**Mr. Balicki** agreed to make arrangements or to have the information available.

**Commissioner Schnell** inquired about slowly adding new routes such as one early and one late route, if the increase would be the same and would there be a financial break.

**Mr. Balicki** stated he would have to review this in more detail. The cost over a full year does not appear to make that much of a difference. It is going to take time to make the public aware that the service is available and for it to be utilized.

**Commissioner Schnell** suggested incorporating the proposal of *adding three new routes to the proposal for council*

**Commissioner Tully** inquired about the information from PACE.

**Mr. Balicki** stated the information from PACE is not available. He has been working with them.

**Commissioner Schnell** suggested an action plan as to when certain things will be instituted. The presentation to council is set for the fourth week in January.

**Mr. Balicki** added the next meeting is scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup>. He asked about further discussions.

**Commissioner Tully** mentioned the report, which is in outline form and suggested everyone start adding text to the document.

**Mr. Balicki** suggested the committee forward any comments via e-mail and he will compile the information for further review.

**Commissioner Schnell** stated it would be beneficial getting the information from PACE and having them available at the October 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Mr. Balicki** agreed. However PACE is working on a very tight schedule. He will see what he can do.

**Commissioner Tully** asked for additional information on CNG options.

**Commissioner Schnell** asked about the cost for smaller buses CNG and integrating them into the fleet.

**Commissioner Tully** inquired on the progress for grant opportunities.

**Mr. Balicki** replied staff could research available grant opportunity information and cost savings. Sue Brassfield stated she needs to do some research. The basic grants available are through CMAQ as discussed at an earlier meeting. There is also a federal program coordinated through the states. Two or three options are available that we are currently aware of. There may be some non-profit groups or entities that we are not aware of and we may need to broaden our research. Sue is thorough and may come up with some options.

**Commissioner Schnell** stated there is a definite need in the community for a small bus.

**Commissioner Tully** inquired asked if there is enough information available for another meeting to continue discussing vehicle replacement.

**Mr. Balicki** does not feel further information for vehicle replacement would be needed to discuss at future meetings. The cost information on replacing vehicles could be provided by staff.

**Mr. Gress** asked about a plan for vehicles that are no longer operating.

**Mr. Balicki** stated there is no plan for replacing vehicles no longer operating.

**Commissioner Tully** stated there is no long-term capital plan for replacing any of the buses.

**Mr. Gress** inquired about the budget process deadline.

**Mr. Balicki** explained the items included in the budget for next year will include the costs for providing the same services provided at this time. A cost proposal for the changes in the service are considered separately from the baseline budget submitted.

**Mr. Gress** raised his concern on properly budgeting for replacement vehicles and discussions that took place at past meetings.

**Commissioner Tully** replied fundamental discussions began two years ago on whether to continue the service.

**Mr. Balicki** stated if buses are purchased similar to what is in service presently, writing specifications, bids, and building the buses could be a 12-16 months process. A smaller vehicle is much easier to purchase. He inquired on making available different category costs.

**Commissioner Tully** stated costs are on the list.

**Mr. Gress** asked to include CNG Bus costs.

**Mr. Balicki** has access to the necessary information. He feels based on this information it may be necessary to further discuss fleet replacement.

**Commissioner Tully** agreed the next meeting would include fleet costs, CNG options, PACE information if available and draft a report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Commissioner Tully** continued the meeting with information from an Internet article that Metra projects a 1% increase in ridership on the BNSF line. This confirms our information of more riders at the Main Street Station. Add article to packet.

**Mr. Balicki** stated as a follow up to the article discussions are planned with the Village of Woodridge regarding possible establishment of additional Park & Ride locations.

**Commissioner Tully** asked if there were any public comments. No public comments.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Mr. Gress

Seconded: Mr. Mueller

Motion Carried: 4:0

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 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.