

**Transit Advisory Board**

**Thursday, December 13, 2018**

**Alvarado Transportation Center – 2nd Floor**

**100 1st St. SW, Alb. NM 87102**

**MEETING MINUTES**

(Amended)

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 11:52 AM**

Brendan Miller, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:52 a.m. Mr. Miller then took roll call and asked everyone what their mode of transportation was. The attendees responded (see below) and the meeting started. A quorum was established with roll call.

Board Members

In Attendance:

Brendan Miller, Chair (walked), Bob Tilley (walked), Orville Pratt (drove), Lucy Birbiglia (SunVan), Rachel Hertzman (Uber), Nancy JonesFrancis (walked), and Israel Chavez (drove)

Members of the Public

In Attendance:

Will Maus (drove), Coby Livingstone (SunVan), Michael Waller (drove)

ABQ RIDE Staff

In Attendance:

Ernest Apodaca; Administrative Assistant (drove), Andrew de Garmo; Principle Planner (bus)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION**: Mr. Miller moved to accept December’s agenda as presented and the attending TAB (Transit Advisory Board) member’s unanimously approved the motion by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2018:**

**MOTION:** Mr. Miller moved to accept the minutes of November 8, 2018 as presented. The minutes for November were approved via voice vote by the TAB members provided they are amended to better reflect November’s meeting agenda.

Changes made were as follows: corrected Brenden to Brendan in all instances, removed the word “almost $3.00 dollars” and replaced with “$3.00 dollars.” Corrected JonesFrances to JonesFrancis in all instances, removed “experienced” and replaced with “all drivers.” Corrected BRT statement for better clarification, added “she would make” to Patricia Salisbury’s Statement, changed “adopt” to “adapt,” changed some full names to Mr. or Ms., added page numbers, changed Orville Pratt to Bob Tilley under Director’s report and corrected “Tilly” to Tilley under TAB Resolution/Discussion.

**Public Comment:**

Ms. Livingstone started public comments by stating she is a PTAB Member, it is helpful for people who are visually impaired and hard of hearing to identify TAB members. She suggested the TAB members say their name when commenting and raise your hand when voting.

Mr. Waller noticed covered bus stops that looked like they may have been vandalized, one of the stops was the Lomas route in front of True Value Hardware, and the other is on the #1-Juan Tabo route north of Lomas. Both these locations tend to be dark. Mr. Waller expressed how a lot of people stand in the narrowest part of the bus, they seem to be oblivious to the needs of new riders getting on and getting past them. Mr. Waller added people talk extensively with the bus driver and the driver should say “I can’t talk.” Mr. Waller then discussed various complaints and general behavior of people riding on the bus. Mr. Waller wanted to know what the status of ART (Albuquerque Rapid Transit) was and when it will be completed.

Mr. Miller responded to Mr. Waller by stating about two weeks ago the Mayor of Albuquerque had the ART buses go thru inspections and they found severe mechanical problems with them. There were not safe to operate on our streets and were returned back to the manufacturer; that the city is taking the company to court and getting buses that will be diesel instead of electric vehicles.

Mr. Chavez added to Mr. Waller’s comments about vandalized bus stops and his various complaints and general behavior of people riding on the bus. Mr. Chavez stated it is super helpful in his opinion that you let 311 know, so they can create a ticket and maintenance can start working on those issues. Mr. Chavez used an example where a downtown parking garage elevator was broken. He called it into 311 and it was fixed within a day.

Mr. Tilley add to Mr. Chavez’s response that he agrees with him. He then discussed how ART buses are just a small part of the ART project. There were sidewalks, streetlights, and safety improvements done as well. Next, Mr. Tilley talked about how the buses at Fort Collins in Colorado use center stations similar to our ART stations and the current buses in Albuquerque cannot use those stations because of ADA (Americans with Disability Act) issues.

Mr. Miller joined the conversation by stating maybe you could heighten the current bus doors to reach the ART stations.

Ms. JonesFrancis added to Mr. Wallers comments by stating not only can you call 311 but you can use their 311 applications on smart phones to report issues.

Mr. Waller recently visited Aurora, Colorado where he heard a salient announcement telling people to keep their feet off the seats while riding the bus.

**TAB Resolution and Discussion:**

Mr. Miller started the TAB resolution and discussion by talking about a possible change of time for the TAB monthly meetings. He is thinking sometime between 4:15pm or 4:30pm with the meeting ending before 6pm.

Mr. Chavez responded to this discussion by asking do we have to change the meeting time entirely? Can there be some meetings that we have in the evening? His original plan was having community meetings with transit members so we could actually talk to people who can’t come during lunch. Mr. Chavez doesn’t think people are going to go crazy over the fact that we don’t meet at the exact same time every time.

Mr. Miller answered Mr. Chavez by stating he had a meeting with Transit Director Bernard Toon on his own time and Director Toon said “5pm to 6:30pm would work best for him.” Mr. Miller then supplemented his answer by saying “that’s how this all came about.”

Ms. Birbiglia added to the discussion by stating there is a better chance of Director Toon making the TAB meetings but there’s going to be times when he’s out of town like today and that’s something to think about. Also, we did try having evening meetings a couple of years ago and the public didn’t come to them. “It was just us.”

Mr. Tilley entered the conversation by saying “similar to transportation, consistency is important,” and then talked about having outreach once a year, twice a year where we maybe go to a different part of the city to have TAB meetings. “Whatever we do, I think consistency is important.”

Mr. Miller joined the discussion stating he agrees with Mr. Tilley, having something between where we are now and where we meet at a part of the city is good as long as it’s well-publicized.

Mr. Chavez agreed with Mr. Tilley and said “we need to find a rhythm,” and then talked about how the TAB meetings are not very well-publicized because we don’t use social media or have an outreach email list of folks interested in attending these meetings.

Ms. JonesFrancis added to the conversation by stating other agencies within the City of Albuquerque create events and have a presence on Facebook. When she was chair she would tweet about the meetings on Facebook and would get public social calendars to add the meetings to their calendar.

Ms. Hertzman added to the discussion by asking “what is the goal for public comment?” She then added if making these changes is to satisfy the open meetings act, that’s one thing, but if its engagement and involvement we want, we could come up with just a list of simple criteria or goals.

Mr. Miller responded to Ms. Hertzman by stating the open meetings act doesn’t really require public comment other than it requires public attendance and that’s the language it uses. We definitely want to be more about engagement and outreach.

Mr. Tilley joined the conversation by stating there’s more than one way to engage these meetings then just attending them. You can send emails or a letter and it will get entered into public comment. “I think a lot of people forget that.”

After Mr. Tilley was done with his conversation, there was a brief discussion among the TAB members regarding the attendance for upper management of the Transit Department. The discussion was similar to what has been discussed in previous meetings about upper management not attending TAB meetings regularly.

Ms. Hertzman redirected the conversation back to the change of the meeting time and stated she likes the 4:15pm or 4:30pm time slot. She said “I’ll still make the meeting even if we don’t change the time.”

Mr. Chavez entered the discussion stating he likes the idea of quarterly meetings with Director Toon and a meeting monthly is hard for anybody to do. We can both satisfy the concern we have, folks can attend, and TAB members are more accessible to the public. We’re “also keeping that stability that we’ve had in the past.”

Mr. Miller then added he likes Central and Unser/Patrick Baca Library for an alternative meeting location on the Westside of Albuquerque. He also likes the Manzano Mesa Community Center on the Eastside of Albuquerque because both these locations are on or near Central Avenue.

Mr. Chavez reminded the TAB attendees that he would like to see the bus routes run later or be extended across the board. This would help people make the meetings easier and believes from his perspective that if the buses don’t run, people won’t ride them.

**MOTION:** Mr. Miller moved to approve the time change to 4:30pm and the attending TAB member’s approved the motion by voice vote. Mr. Pratt was the only member to oppose the motion.

Mr. Miller then commented the next step will be to create a resolution and the new time will start possibly in February 2019.

**Presentations:** There were no presentations.

**Director’s Report:**

Mr. de Garmo, who is standing in for Director Toon started the Director’s Report by discussing ridership is down 3% for November 2018. This is a continuing pattern that’s been going for a while, and weekend ridership increased during this same time period. “It’s been kind of a long-term trend that weekends tend to perform better.”

Mr. Miller commented on the ridership report by stating he’s part of that trend because he works in Santa Fe. He is off on Mondays and tends to ride the city bus on the Weekends.

Mr. de Garmo then updated the TAB attendees about the ART project, stating it sounds like everyone is up-to-date on what’s happening with ART. “I really don’t have an update other than what I read in the paper along with everyone else.”

Mr. Miller asked Mr. de Garmo “Do you know how much it would cost us (taxpayers) taking BYD (Build Your Dreams) to court?” “What’s the worst or best case scenario?”

Mr. de Garbo replied “I don’t know.”

Ms. JonesFrancis joined the conversion asking “Do you have a date when you think the (new) buses will arrive and when we will see a potential start of ART?”

Mr. de Garmo answered Ms. JonesFrancis questions by stating we have 10 buses on order with New Flyer. They are clean diesel with the best technology available today and we are expecting a pilot bus in late spring 2019. This test bus will run the ART route and make sure everything comes out correctly with the bus specifications we requested. If all goes well, we will then put the rest of the bus orders into production, and its only 10 buses that are in this order. Potential partial ART service could begin in fall 2019.

Ms. JonesFrancis then inquired about what is the turnaround time from the time the buses arrive to training bus drivers on using them?

Mr. de Garmo responded saying “It’s two to three months.”

Mr. Chavez added to the discussion stating it’s his understanding that new buses have to go through FTA (Federal Transit Administration) testing and training in another state of America.

Mr. de Garmo responded to Mr. Chavez explaining these bus type models from New Flyer have already gone through FTA testing.

Mr. Pratt questioned how you can have clean diesel and why we’re (City of Albuquerque) going down from electric to diesel vehicles.

Mr. de Garmo started by saying he’s not a mechanic, but from what he understands something is injected into the exhaust that takes out more of the pollutants and then there’s a secondary system that removes it all together. “It’s an improvement over the buses we have right now, half of our fleet is compressed natural gas and the other half is diesel electric hybrid.”

Ms. Birbiglia then asked a follow up question to Mr. Miller’s questions regarding the best or worst case scenarios regarding the possible law suit between BYD and the COA.

Mr. de Garmo replied by saying “I will relay the information to Mr. Toon to get that information for you.”

Mr. Miller added to the discussion stating he’s concerned with the fact the company (BYD) wasn’t going along with our concerns and some issues were blown out or proportion.

Mr. de Garmo supplemented the concern by saying “why didn’t you (BYD) just fix them?”

Mr. Chavez then joined the conversation saying he spoke with the Mayor, learned how Albuquerque is like a valley and the electric buses we had weren’t going to make it up the hill. “We have to wait until the technology catches up and it won’t be far.”

Mr. Chavez then went on to discuss the possibility of shaving down the concrete of the ART stations to make them ADA compliant so the current buses can use those bus stops.

Mr. de Garmo responded to Mr. Chavez’s question stating there’s no way to bridge that horizontal gap and it’s got to be three inches or less to be ADA complaint. The ART platform is in the way of the ramp because of how it’s been designed and the ramp just can’t come out all the way. Another issue under safety of operations is the ART stations are extremely close to signal lights and stop lights. Mr. de Garmo then explained the current buses don’t have the required signal priority technology installed to operate the new ART stop lights.

Mr. Miller suggested adding Rapid Ride bus stops near or at the current locations of the ART stations and perhaps extend the Green Line bus on Central Avenue to reach the Westside Unser Boulevard area of Albuquerque.

Mr. de Garmo replied to Mr. Miller’s comment about the Green Line bus. He stated we have looked into that idea and the problem is that it does add a bunch of buses to the route. Also, we cannot use ART funding for the Green Line since it’s separate from the ART bus route.

 Mr. Tilley commented on the fact we can’t use any of ART’s money to help out the existing bus routes and “one of the many benefits of ART was doubling the service to the Westside.”

Mr. de Garmo responded stating it’s money that was spent on construction and buying the buses. We also have money for congestion mitigation, air quality and were going to be using the funds to help pay for the first few years of ART operations. “Its three years to be specific.”

Mr. Tilley added to his comment stating ART is a concept of increased transportation; if the idea is making transportation better along this corridor, why is it tied specifically to these buses. He then talked about how bus ridership is declining and you can say its gas prices but overall there’s a bigger issue that’s happening. Mr. Tilley just came back from a multi thousand mile trip, while on this journey he used public transportation only and noticed how clean the buses were compared to Albuquerque’s vehicles.

Ms. JonesFrancis piggybacked off of Mr. Tilley’s comments stating she too recently went on a trip up north in America and noticed how clean the buses were in those cities she visited. It “just really (was a) pleasant experience and everything was on time.”

The TAB members then had a brief discussion of how infrequent in general the buses run in Albuquerque, how clean the buses in Santa Fe are and how evening buses don’t run late enough.

Ms. Hertzman responded to the discussion stating your comments are certainly valid, improvements need to be made, and there has to be a way to validate legitimate complaints. This “issue doesn’t have to be rehashed like every couple meetings because I’m not sure what we’re accomplishing.”

Mr. Chavez reminded the attendees saying “I do think it is our job as an advisory board to bring up those issues as much as we have to until there not issues.” He then redirected the discussion and talked about receiving a note from somebody regarding the ATC (Alvarado Transportation Center) Customer Service office being indefinitely closed. There was no notification and people were unable to buy their one day bus passes as a result. Mr. Chavez feels that people should be able to go to City Hall and get the help they need when something like that happens. He feels day bus passes need to be available somewhere else and it needs to be noted on the customer service windows where they are obtainable.

Mr. de Garmo replied to the comment stating customer service was closed due to bedbugs.

Mr. Apodaca added to Mr. DeGarmo’s comment by stating customer service was closed for three days due to bedbugs. It was sudden; we had to wait for environmental health to clear the area and we should have come up with a better system to deal with the crisis.

**Unfinished BUSiness:**

Mr. Miller started unfinished business by asking for an update on weekend service at the 12th St. northwest area. He requested a slight decrease in frequency to balance out the funding to make the suggested change a reality.

Mr. de Garmo responded to the question stating we have looked at that and you’re correct that it is feasible. Another way we can do it to avoid a decrease in frequency is to interline Routes #8 and #5. “The 5 doesn’t need quite three buses, so were kind of making them one big loop to get by with buses between the two of them.” Mr. DeGarmo then mentioned another way to make this work would be to interline Route #11 and have it run every 40 minutes to accommodate the additional loop over to the 12th St. northwest area.

Mr. Miller said to Mr. de Garmo that Route #8 does have higher ridership, so if we have to cut frequency on any route, the #11 would be a better one to do it too. He then asked the TAB members what their thoughts are on the suggested changes to the 12th St. northwest area.

Mr. Tilley responded to Mr. Miller stating studies have shown that anything more than twenty minutes as a headway is not usable for choice riders. “People who are going to use that (route) are people who literally have no choice.”

Mr. Miller then starting talking about how it’s important to put more money into the Rapid Ride routes and support Rapid Rides on Coors Boulevard. He always felt the #790-Rapid Ride/Blue Line was left out of the party by being kept on Central Avenue only and leaving this route on Central Avenue affects the ART project. The ART project road lanes should include the red and green bus lines.

Mr. Tilley added that people aren’t riding on the weekends because there’s no service or you’re waiting forty-five minutes for a bus to arrive. What Albuquerque needs to do is become more like the City of Houston; offer more frequent bus service everyday instead of reduced service on the weekends. “This city is not a Monday through Friday, nine to five city.” And “we need to run our service to accommodate people.”

Mr. de Garmo responded to the discussion by stating there are underlying attributes that can make a bus route work or not work. There are also underlying demographics and land use that play into whether it has good ridership or not. The differences of land use characteristics will make a route successful or not. He also mentioned how ridership on Route #790 has been declining since the year 2013.

Mr. Miller next discussed his proposal of making the #12 bus route an all-day route; having it run from the ATC to the Uptown area and the VA area. He then wanted to know how much funding would be needed to make this proposal happen.

Mr. de Garmo responded to his proposal by stating he just received this request a few days ago. “I’m working on the cost estimate for you and for your January meeting we should have cost estimates.” He also mentioned we should have the cost estimates for the Uptown circular as well.

Mr. Miller then inquired about having Route #36 put back on 2nd Street and having Route #37 run on 5th or 6th Street to cover the loss of service on the west side of Downtown.

Mr. de Garmo answered Mr. Miller’s inquire by stating we wanted to come back to 5th, but there were some turns the buses couldn’t make. Also moving Route #36 to 2nd Street would decrease service in that part of the Downtown and potentially make the route more confusing for bus riders. My recommendation would be to stay with the routing the way it is.

Mr. Miller then asked for an update on the Central and Unser Transfer Center (CUTC) construction project because he heard about apartments going up there.

Mr. de Garmo replied to the question by first talking about the Uptown area. He commented that we are sending out advertisements to get developers who are interested in signing up and doing a joint development project to improve the Uptown location. He then added that the CUTC Park and Ride near the area is slated for an apartment development. It might be 75 apartments and I don’t know if there’s commercial development yet in that area. We are a few weeks behind and it should be mostly complete by late January or early February.

Ms. JonesFrancis commented on the Uptown area, asking if we could get an update on that project next month along with more information for the CUTC area.

**New BUSiness:**

Mr. Miller started new business by discussing the possibility of renumbering the current bus routes to five hundred numbers. He got the idea after looking at other transit systems and would like feedback from the attending TAB members.

Mr. de Garmo responded to Mr. Miller’s discussion by asking “Do people associate the (route) number with anything or is it like a name?”

Mr. Chavez joined the discussion stating that as an infrequent bus rider, he doesn’t look at the bus route number because the color of the route is the most helpful thing for him and shows him where the route goes.

Ms. Hertzman entered the conversation by asking “does that (change) make a difference in terms of data organization for transit operators and whoever’s managing the data?”

Mr. Miller suggested the change would help free up bus route numbers to make sense, for example: the 12th St. bus would be Route #12 instead of Route #36.

Mr. Tilley commented on the discussion stating he likes the idea because it would designate a commuter route number. Riders will know the difference between a commuter and an all-day bus route.

Ms. JonesFrancis added to the conversation stating the interstate system works on a similar numbering system where they add a number the closer you are to a city. “I think it would be something that we could consider here to do that.”

Mr. de Garmo responded to the renumbering suggestion stating we would need to replace all our bus signs, reprogram the buses internally, and this idea has a major cost implication for the City of Albuquerque.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.**

**Next meeting: 11:45 am, January 10, 2019 at the ATC.**

**Meeting minutes written with strength, honor and wisdom by:**

**Ernest Apodaca**

**ABQ Ride, Administrate Assistant**