

AVIATION AND TRANSIT BOARD MINUTES
Tuesday, September 7, 2021

The Aviation and Transit Board met in the Administrative Conference Room at the MET Transit on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Those in attendance included:

Aviation and Transit Board Members

Dan Farmer, Chair
Ron Spence, Vice Chair
Ken Behling
Chuck Tooley
David Hummel, Jr.

City Staff and Guests

Kevin Ploehn, Director of Aviation & Transit
Shane Ketterling, Assistant Director of Aviation & Transit
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Keith Adams, Transit Supervisor

The Board began with a tour of the new El Dorado Buses.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period was offered. No public comments were received.

MET UPDATE

Mr. Logan started with a presentation of a plant tour at the Eldorado National-California plant showing pictures of the build process for new buses, stating that each bus is customized to each different transit facility.

PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCY SAFETY PLAN (PTASP) STAFF TRAINING PRESENTATION

Keith Adams, Transit Supervisor, advised the Board on the driver recruitment challenges MET is experiencing. There is a lot of competition for CDL candidates. Mr. Adams provided a PowerPoint presentation on the MET Transit Training Program highlighting the following:

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Entry Level Driver Training Rule 2022 for base line training requirements.
- Use non-CDL candidates and MET would train to drive the buses in order to look for individuals with good customer service skills.
- New hire training for non-CDL candidates takes 5-7 weeks, with CDL takes 4-5 weeks.
- Transit and Paratransit Company (TAPTCO) online training.
- Pre-trip training.
- Skill courses.
- Route familiarization.
- Mentoring, one week fixed and one week paratransit driving live.
- Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensibility (PASS) training.
- Ongoing training, as well as one week program to bring all drivers current with the new training program, remedial training, and future training.

AIRPORT AND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONS REPORTS

- ▶ Shane Ketterling handed out "save the date" invitations to the Board for the Boards and Commissions Volunteer Appreciation dinner on October 14.
- ▶ Shane Ketterling updated the Board on the following projects:
 - Boeing has been conducting flight tests, mostly in August, with the B 777-900 and the B 737 MAX. The new B 777-900 has a seating capacity of approximately 500+ passengers.
 - The Airport is currently advertising a Request for Proposals (RFP) to move the TSA equipment to the new screening area when completed.
 - The new employee time keeping system is installed and being tested.
 - The Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations project was awarded to Winn-Marion and they will be installing three stations that can charge up to six vehicles.
 - The Fiber Optic Cable is being installed in the Terminal so that the Fiber Optic from City Hall installed in North 27th Street can be connected to it, providing the Airport better connectivity. The City's IT Department will be coming up to help with the switch over and get the Terminal connected by the end of September.
 - There is concrete and paving work being done on the exterior of the Terminal Expansion project. On the interior, subcontractors are installing sheetrock on Concourse A, painting, and bathroom tile work. The contractor has been waiting for insulation to come in so they can complete the roof over in the Great Room, which is holding up a lot of interior work since it is not weatherproof. The piers that support the jet bridges in place have been poured. The siding is on and looks good. There is an updated slideshow of the work progress on the Airport's Website.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn provided information on the Infrastructure Bill that Chair Dan Farmer was interested in, stating that Senator Tester had informed him that the Airport would receive \$19 million over five years. This program has more flexibility than the AIP program as it can be used for items that cannot be funded with AIP funds, such as bag belts, escalators, etc. The Bill has a ways to go yet before being approved.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn updated the Board on the Restaurant/Lounge RFP. The Airport will have many challenges to work through in getting the selected firm up and running.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn advised the Board that the airlines are dropping flights. American is dropping their morning Dallas flight starting in November, which they did not do until January the year before. However, American will bring Phoenix back again this Fall/Winter. Portland is going away on Alaska until next Summer. For the interim, the airlines appear to be making many of their routes into seasonal operations. The COVID impact is just raising havoc with the airlines.
- ▶ Chair Farmer brought up the freight numbers being down, but landing weights have not changed. Mr. Ploehn explained that while people were home due to COVID restrictions, they were doing a lot of online shopping, which brought freight numbers way up. Now that restrictions have decreased, people are now getting out more. The fleet used by the cargo companies remains the same regardless of how much freight is on board, thus the landings remain the same.
- ▶ Mr. Ploehn informed the Board that next week he and Shane would be going to the Montana Airline Rendezvous in Great Falls for a chance to talk with the airlines face to face and see what is going on. Alaska, Delta, United, Allegiant, Sun Country, and Southwest Airlines will all be there.
- ▶ Mr. Logan briefed the Board on the following:
 - Burn the Point went much better this year than anticipated.
 - Ridership increased and paratransit has almost fully recovered to pre-COVID numbers.
 - MET is making some operational changes with the dispatcher group to get better efficiencies out of this area.
 - Currently working on an RFP for Mass Transit Plan, five-year plan.

- Transit conference in Missoula was concentrated on the electrification process that the Missoula fleet is going through (looking to go totally electric by 2035). Noted the pros and cons of electric bus fleets.
- Infrastructure Bill could provide around \$500,000 of operating funds annually to MET.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

There were no items from the Board

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

KP:mdb

cc: Aviation and Transit Board
Chrono
City Administrator
Mayor
City Clerk