



COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES MINUTES Monday, September 21, 2015 5:30 PM

FIFTH FLOOR LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL,
3900 MAIN STREET, RIVERSIDE, 92522
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 951-826-5427

MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the Commission on Disabilities is to promote greater awareness of, respect for, and the total participation of individuals with disabilities into all aspects of life."

State law restricts the Commission on Disabilities from taking action on an item unless it has been included on an agenda and posted at least 72 hours in advance of a meeting or unless the matter falls within one of the narrow exceptions. Consequently, any item not listed on this agenda will normally have to be delayed until the item can be made part of a posted agenda.

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. Roll Call: Chairperson Vivian Stancil, Robin Treen, Donald Hawecker, Sharron Lewis, Richard Olquin, Vivian Foust.

ABSENT: Lisa Miller (excused)

Keith Nelson arrived at 5:47 pm, Antha Ward Arrived at 5:35 pm, Marsha Gonzalez arrived at 5:35 pm

Also in attendance: General Services Director Kris Martinez, Parks, Recreation & Community Services (PRCS) Director Adolfo Cruz, PRCS Community Services Superintendent Patricia Solano, PRCS Special Transit Manager Ronald Profeta, PRCS Special Transit Supervisor Byron Mayhan.

2. **Introductions and Public Comment Period** - This is the portion of the meeting specifically set aside to invite your comments regarding any matter within the Commission's jurisdiction. Individual audience participation is limited to 3 minutes.
 - a. Resident Shirley Ferrante – Ms. Ferrante presented a petition concerning self defense classes for persons with disabilities.
 - b. Regina Kuruffu – Inland Regional Center Support Specialist was in attendance.
 - c. Resident Mr. Stancil – In attendance in support of Chairperson Stancil.

d. Jennifer Smith – Riverside County Emergency Management Department

3. Minutes for the meetings of July 6, 2015.

M/S Olquin/Ward to approve the July 6, 2015 minutes as presented.

AYES – 8 (Stancil, Treen, Ward, Nelson, Gonzalez, Lewis, Foust, Olquin); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Hawecker); ABSENT – 1 (Miller)

OLD BUSINESS

4. Video Features Update – Increasing Employment Opportunities for persons with disabilities

Commissioner Nelson noted that the Arc of Riverside and their skin care line has potential candidates available. Ability Counts has two married consumers who are making clocks as a micro business.

Commissioner Lewis noted that the Department of Mental Health has a program where people with disabilities are hired to help those in need of recovery. This is a very successful program.

Commissioner Treen noted that his friend who works at Massage Envy is a good candidate for the PSA.

At this point, the COD members who are recommending individuals for the employment video feature must submit an outline or storyboard for the proposed video that can be submitted for video production services.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Fiscal Year 2015/16 to 2017/18 Short Range Transit Plan and Proposed Rate Increase

Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Superintendent Patricia Solano presented this item to the COD. She is responsible for oversight of the Special Transit division. She noted the Short Range Transit Plan is a three year plan, updated annually and submitted to Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC). RCTC reviews the financial health of the organization, evaluates organizational needs, expected growth, and provides an assessment of funding needs, which comes from local, state and federal authorities.

Superintendent Solano presented the history of Special Transit (ST) which has been in operation since 1975. She noted that ridership was steadily increasing and it was difficult to keep up with the demand. The service is growing and expanding to serve 87 miles within the City; there is an agreement with RTA to operate the Special Transit service within the City. Special Transit is a curb to curb service (demand response) and expects to provide 190,000 rides this fiscal year. Aging baby-boomers are increasing the demand for service.

There are currently 35 CNG buses which can transport 16 people at one time. There are currently 2 managers, 5 full time dispatchers, two office assistants, and 37 drivers, 13 of which have been

made full time this year to help bridge the gap between service and requests for service. The service operates 362 days per year.

Short Range Transit Plan

RCTC provides ST with key performance indicators: some mandatory and some discretionary. Last fiscal year, all targets were met. One of the mandatory requirements is a fare box ratio, which means that 10% of operating expenses must be recouped through passenger fares. 90% of operating expenses are subsidized by government sources.

Increased overhead costs include: hiring staff full time, improving infrastructure by installing slow-fill CNG charging stations dedicated to fueling individual buses, an automated phone reminder system for customers, a ride management system, the recently filled manager position and moving into a newly renovated office space. Eleven (11) new buses will be purchased this year and all of this was accomplished with federal funds.

As noted above, operational costs have increased and fares have not increased in 9 years while partner agencies have had increases. While operational costs have increased, fare box revenue has decreased. The gas tax revenue has decreased due to fewer vehicles using gas. They are also affected by a limit to the amount of local transportation funds (LTF). If fare box funds are not increased due to the limit on LTF funds, operations will become very difficult.

Special Transportation should be mimicking RTA rates so that dispatcher and driver salaries are in line with RTA staff. ST provides a special service that is geared specifically to customers who are disabled or elderly. ST does not contract out services, but directly serves their client base.

Commissioner Olquin noted that there were disabled and/or senior riders who schedule multiple rides per day. A 50% fare increase can negatively impact riders who are on a fixed income. Was it necessary to do a full \$1 increase? A lot of people will be upset by this. Superintendent Solano noted that the increase could be done incrementally, but exact change is required. An incremental increase could be considered.

Commissioner Olquin asked if the City had considered any financial assistance for ST such as volume discounts? If someone does have the challenge of a fixed income, is there a federal or county resource to soften the blow of a 50% increase? Superintendent Solano noted that these types of programs would, at this time, interfere with reaching the 10% revenue increase. There were CDBG funds available for a voucher program, but that was available for one time only. Something similar could be considered in the future.

Commissioner Lewis stated that she agreed with some sort of discount for riders because these riders sometimes run out of money before the month is through. Seniors tend to be very proud and private; they might choose to go without medication or food if their funds run short. She understood that the goal was to reach the 10% fare box goal, but the customers are on fixed incomes and you want to get them out of the house and participating in community activities. Change for elderly people is difficult, but you could use a discount incentive to help these passengers.

Commissioner Olquin asked if there was a way for the City to supplement all or part of the 10% or provide additional funds for other sources? He asked how ST is marketing and promoting services to the senior population.

Superintendent Solano noted that the buses will be wrapped so that they stand out, the senior guide, activity guide and senior centers will contain information about the transportation program. The services are going to be rebranded in an effort to serve as many clients as possible. With increased services will come additional revenue.

The Mayor, Parks & Recreation and the Commission on Aging are in support of this fee increase as well as community youth organizations. They understand where the program stands and understand the transportation program's financial need.

Commissioner Nelson noted that the ability to get pre-paid cards for transportation is very important for people on limited incomes and for planning purposes. He also noted that if the hours of operation could be expanded, more people would use the service and revenues could increase. Superintendent Solano noted that there was not sufficient demand for afterhour service. However, now that they were fully staffed, it will be possible to conduct surveys and gather appropriate data to evaluate service level needs.

Commissioner Ward noted that the current transportation hours did not allow shift workers time to use this service. At the increased fare levels, it would be important to broaden the service levels so that various workers and other groups could participate in this source of transportation. The current 5:30 pm cutoff barely covers a regular work day. Extended service would cover other workers. So if the COD was encouraging the disabled workers to go back to work via the PSA project, then there have to be services available to get workers to and from work.

M/S Nelson/Olquin to recommend support of the fare increase along with more communication between Special Transportation and the COD.

AYES – 6 (Stancil, Nelson, Treen, Gonzalez, Olquin, Foust); NOES – 3 (Lewis, Ward, Hawecker); ABSTAIN – 0; ABSENT – 1 (Miller)

6. Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy in Accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964

General Services Administrative Services Manager Cindie Perry presented this item to the COD. It was explained that the Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy mirrors the Americans with Disabilities Act in its coverage with the major differences being that Title VI concerns agencies that receive Federal Funds and the ADA Coordinator must have direct access to the CEO or City Manager.

The City complies with the majority of Title VI program requirements; however, a formal policy is not in place. Therefore, staff recommended approval of a Title VI policy and program pursuant to its requirements.

M/S Nelson/Lewis and unanimous to recommend approval of the staff report to implement a formal Title VI policy and program in the City of Riverside.

AYES – 9 (Stancil, Nelson, Hawecker, Ward, Treen, Gonzalez, Lewis, Olquin, Foust); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 0; ABSENT – 1 (Miller)

7. Annual Review – Code of Ethics and Conduct

This item was noted by the COD.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

8. Commission on Disabilities Goals and Objectives

Chairperson Stancil noted that the COD should attend meetings at the various senior centers, other boards/commissions and various public venues to publicize the existence of the COD and explain the COD's mission and purpose. Pamphlet information needs to be updated and reordered. Promotional items need to be ordered (stress balls, pens, book marks). After attending community events and meetings, report back to the COD about responses and questions.

9. LEGISLATION: ADA-Access Bill Advances

This item was noted by the COD.

10.311 Call Center – ADA Related Service Statistics

This item was noted by the COD.

11. Resignation of Donna Flores

This item was noted by the COD.

12. Items for future Commission on Disabilities consideration

Working with RCC to discuss the low rate of high school graduates with disabilities who continue on with college educations. How many students with disabilities transfer to four year colleges? Commissioner Hawecker will contact RCC to arrange for a presentation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events noted by the COD.

13. Mayor's Commission on Aging meets 1:00 p.m. the second Thursday of each month (October 8, 2015) in the Mayor's Ceremonial Room.

14. Inland Empire Disabilities Collaborative meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 9:30am - 11:30am, October 20, 2015 at Braille Institute, 850 E. Foothill Blvd, Rialto, CA.

15. Riverside's Model Deaf Community Committee (MDCC), third Wednesday of the month (October 21, 2015) at 4:00 pm in the 6th Floor Small Conference Room.

Commissioner Ward invited the COD to attend the MDCC meeting to provide information about how the COD operations and chooses topics to present and discuss.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:00 pm