

POLICY COMMITTEE
KANKAKEE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (K.A.T.S.)
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (M.P.O.)
MINUTES
MAY 12, 2008

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Grimsley	Aroma Park
Mayor Green	Kankakee
Mayor Kent	Bradley
Mr. Kruse	Kankakee County
Mr. Hinderliter	River Valley METRO Mass Transit District

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Regel, Mr. Yohnka, Ms. Dugan, Mr. Hoffmann, Ms. Wilson, Ms. Brutlag and Ms. Bentley; River Valle METRO Mass Transit District, Mr. Lammey and Mr. Piekarczyk, Kankakee County; Ms. Dick, SHOWBUS; Ms. Podeschi, Illinois Public Transit Association, Ms. Dugan, State Representative and Mr. Provost, Journal

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kent called the meeting to order at 12:02 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

TRANSIT FUNDING ISSUE

Chairman Kent asked if the Governor's office had been invited to the meeting. Mr. Hoffmann stated that they had been invited but that there had been no response. Ms. Podeschi stated that a meeting between IPTA and the Office of Management and Budget is scheduled for May 13 in Springfield.

Mr. Hoffmann explained the documents that had been sent to the Policy Committee, including the language regarding the 65% of eligible expenses that was questioned at the May 7 Policy Committee meeting. He showed the amount of funding contributed to the Downstate Transit Operating Assistance fund from Kankakee County at around \$14 million for the current year, and the funding level authorized in the Transit Bill of \$2.7 million.

Mayor Green asked about the current percentage funding level, and Mr. Regel stated that METRO has never been funded at up to 55%, which is the current legislative funding level. Mr. Hoffmann stated that the current level is 51%.

Chairman Kent asked about the funding level in the Transit Bill passed in January, and Mr. Regel stated that a little over \$1 million in supplemental funding (above the current funding

level) was authorized. Mr. Hoffmann stated that the issue in the supplemental funding is that without the allocation of the \$1 million, no expansion can take place of METRO service levels. Ms. Podeschi stated 22 transit systems had expansions in their requests for funding and only 6 systems were approved, with METRO not being one of those systems. Mr. Regel stated that retroactive funding for FY 08 was in the bill, and no method of acquiring that funding had been put in place. He stated that FY 09 expansion was another issue of concern.

Mr. Hinderliter asked if FY 09 funding is likely to be allocated. Ms. Podeschi stated that 6 new properties (including Kankakee County) are recommended for addition to the list of communities that have access to Downstate Operating funds. She further stated that she still hopes that the meeting on May 13 would allocate funding to have all properties funded for the 65% level in FY 08.

Chairman Kent asked if a budget shortfall is the reason for the lack of allocation of funding. Ms. Podeschi stated that the funding has been deposited in the Downstate Operating fund, and that in the future (FY 09 and after) it can only be spent on transportation. Mr. Hoffmann stated that there is currently \$27 in the fund, and at the end of the fiscal year, this can be “swept” into the General Revenue Fund. Mayor Grimsley stated that our goal should be to freeze this funding before it can be “swept”.

Ms. Podeschi explained the rationale for the requests for funding for individual transit properties (bringing everyone to the 65% level, with a mandatory increase of 10% each year, and bringing rural transit properties into the funding stream for the first time). Mr. Hoffmann stated that the method IDOT uses to determine funding does not allow for any expansion of services. Mr. Regel stated that the lobbying efforts to get transit funding to match service to be provided this year resulted in a fair Transit Bill, and that no action has taken place after the passage of the legislation.

Mayor Grimsley asked if other Transit Boards in Illinois were affected as METRO has been, and Ms. Podeschi stated that others were also affected. She stated that IPTA is contacting legislators on the issue, but that there has been no active media blitz of IPTA membership.

Representative Dugan stated that she has legislation drafted to release the supplemental funding authorized in the Transit Bill, and will introduce when she feels other alternatives have been exhausted. She stated that Representative Jay Hoffman told her that the issue will be straightened out. She further stated that State Comptroller Hynes informed her that checks are waiting to be cut.

Mr. Hoffmann stated that if the supplemental funding is indeed allocated, new contracts for FY 09 will be required. Mr. Regel stated that the initial contracts for FY 09 sent by IDOT were incorrect, and that METRO changed the numbers to the Transit Bill funding and sent the contract back, but IDOT would not sign.

Representative Dugan stated that the figures in the Transit Bill are clear, and that she would work toward getting those dollars allocated. She stated that she has some “leverage” with the Governor’s office. Ms. Podeschi stated that the Transit Bill requires that IDOT have a session

with transit operators and grantees to explain the rules of the new Bill, and that the session is scheduled for May 22.

Mayor Green asked of the \$27 million left in the fund, how much would be taken out if everyone got what they wanted from the Transit Bill. Ms. Podeschi stated that she believed the figure was \$9 million for those requests. She further stated that she will know more after the meeting on May 13. Mayor Grimsley stated that we don't want the \$27 million to disappear.

Representative Dugan stated that a letter writing campaign will obtain results in Springfield.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kent adjourned the meeting at 1:08 P.M.