

SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

SPECIAL Open Session Minutes- Board of Directors

October 11, 2005

A SPECIAL Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District met on Tuesday, October 11, 2005 at the Santa Cruz County Government Building, 701 Ocean Street, Room 525, Santa Cruz, CA.

Chair Keogh called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

SECTION 1: OPEN SESSION

1. ROLL CALL:

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Jan Beautz
Dene Bustichi
Stephanie Harlan
Michelle Hinkle
Mike Keogh
Emily Reilly
Mike Rotkin
Dale Skillicorn
Pat Spence
Mark Stone
Marcela Tavantzis

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Ex Officio Wes Scott

STAFF PRESENT

Mark Dorfman, Assistant General Manager
Steve Paulson, Paratransit Administrator
Elisabeth Ross, Finance Manager
Robyn Slater, Human Resources Manager

Judy Souza, Acting Operations Manager
Tom Stickel, Maintenance Manager
Les White, General Manager

EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO VOLUNTARILY INDICATED THEY WERE PRESENT

Ellen Aldridge, Avery & Associates
Kate Flanigan, SWCJ at UCSC
Mark Forester, UTU Retiree
Bruce Grobman, UTU
Lisa Johnson, Cabrillo Voice
Paul Johnston, MBCLC
Susan Kipping, Felton Resident

David Lucier, UTU Retiree
Bonnie Morr, UTU
Robert Norse, SCFR Broadcaster
Julian Posadas, SWCJ at UCSC
Lisa Saunders, wife of METRO bus driver
Mark Saunders, UTU

2. REVIEW OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION: District Counsel

Mark Dorfman reported that there would be a discussion with METRO's Labor Negotiator regarding labor negotiations with UTU.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING CLOSED SESSION

David Lucier, UTU Retiree, spoke in favor of General Leave and commented that it was created to solve the District's problem of what to do with drivers who are not needed during summer months and also to create a "reservoir" of experienced drivers.

Bonnie Morr, UTU, reported that UTU has not received a response to its 3-year proposal submitted to METRO approximately 2 weeks ago. Ms. Morr also said UTU will not negotiate in a public arena or through the media and made the following requests of the Board:

1. appoint and give authority to a negotiating team,
2. schedule additional Board meetings in order to approve negotiations developments in a step-by-step process,
3. that substantial progress be made prior to the bus operators returning to work

The bus operators want to come back to work as quickly as possible and know there is an ability to do that as long as both sides can work together through good-faith bargaining.

Director Bustichi asked what UTU kind of progress UTU needs to see to get the bus drivers back to work. Ms. Morr replied that there needs to be substantial, good-faith effort by the District and said UTU will not negotiate in public and invited Board members to attend.

Susan Kipping, a Felton resident, commented that she is disappointed in politicians in general and in the county leaders for allowing the strike to strand people and destroy lives. She feels the current Board is evil, inept, and a failure and should be held criminally responsible for not approving the tentative agreement, and that they should resign or be let go and the new Board should be transit users.

Kate Flanigan, Julian Posadas, and another person, representatives for SWCJ at UCSC, said they were in Mike Rotkin's UC office recently to ask questions and pressure him to do something about the strike and said that on Friday they had a march from the campus to the METRO Center in support the drivers and then marched to the Sentinel to complain about its biased reporting. A prepared letter was read to the Board regarding the effects the strike is having on the community, accusing the Board of negligence and mismanagement for not approving the signed state-mediated agreement reached by its negotiation team, and urging the Board to end the strike.

A Santa Cruz Letter Carrier, also a union worker, spoke in support of the drivers and commented that the Board needs a new negotiating team, expressed her disappointment over the Board rejecting the tentative agreement, said she cannot afford to live here on \$23 per hour, and urged the Board to end the strike today.

Paul Johnston, MBCLC, said he believes that the District wanted a strike so there was no sincere bargaining, which was the Board's first mistake. Mr. Johnston said the Board made a second mistake by not accepting the tentative agreement and said the public has a right to know how the Board voted on it. And the third mistake was prolonging the strike by refusing to bargain with the strikers. Mr. Johnston said it is time for the Board to change its course and undo its mistakes by directing its negotiating team to return to the table and not leave until a settlement is reached.

Robert Norse, SCFR Broadcaster, said the community deserves to know how the Board voted under the Sunshine Act. Mr. Norse spoke about the impact the strike is having on the community and said he will hold a radio show about the strike from 6:00 – 8:00 on Thursday on 101.1 FM and invited the Board, the union and the public to call in or come in during the show.

Lisa Johnson, Cabrillo Voice, asked the Board to confirm if the District is saving money during the strike and asked for the number of Board members who voted yes and the number that voted no on the tentative agreement with UTU.

Bruce Grobman, UTU, read Sections of METRO's Bylaws regarding Emergency meetings, Board conduct and responsibilities and said these paragraphs don't mean anything and are just a bunch of "Blah, blah, blah."

Lisa Saunders, wife of a METRO driver and daughter of a retiree, welcomed Chair Keogh back and said that on Sunday there was a solidarity walk from Watsonville METRO to Santa Cruz METRO and said the Board can break their bank accounts but will never break their spirit.

Mark Forester, UTU retiree, relayed to the Board a personal story about how he had used the Drop-a-Day benefit to get his mother to the Stroke Center, which gave her independence back and she lived for ten more years. Mr. Forester urged the Board to reconsider the benefits they have eliminated.

Mark Saunders, UTU, urged the Board to consider keeping the buses ready to roll during the strike in case of an emergency like an earthquake, because the bus drivers are among the first to respond and they would leave the picket line in a heartbeat if needed.

SECTION II: CLOSED SESSION

Chair Keogh adjourned to SPECIAL Closed Session and reconvened to SPECIAL Open Session afterwards.

SECTION III: RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

4. REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION IF ANY

None.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Keogh adjourned the SPECIAL meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

CINDI THOMAS
Administrative Services Coordinator