



**MEETING OF THE
ST. JOHN'S TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

REGULAR BUSINESS

A meeting of the St. John's Transportation Commission was held on Thursday, January 28th, 2021 at Noon at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive, St. John's. The meeting was streamed live via Webex.

Present at the meeting were:

Paul Walsh	Chair
Debbie Hanlon	Vice Chair/City Councillor
Jamie Korab	Commissioner/City Councillor
Derek Coffey	Deputy City Manager, Financial Management
Kevin Breen	City Manager
Judy Powell	Metrobus General Manager
Joan Mahon	Administrative Assistant

Present via phone:

Maggie Burton	Commissioner/City Councillor
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Absent with apologies:

Kirsten Morry	Commissioner
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I. PROCEDURAL

- The Chair called the meeting to order.
- J. Mahon recorded the minutes of the meeting of this date.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

➤ AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Korab and seconded by D. Coffey that the agenda for this meeting date be approved.

➤ MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Hanlon and seconded by Commissioner Korab that the minutes of the December 17th, 2020 regular business meeting of the Commission be approved as distributed.

III. BUSINESS ARISING

1. COVID-19—Update

➤ RIDERSHIP/MAXIMUM PASSENGER LOADS

▪ Ridership is up to 69% of normal (pre-pandemic) levels. It was noted that other provinces are on the decline but we are remaining in the 60% range.

2. Community Bus Application

➤ The General Manager advised that the application was submitted in December with a follow-up with staff on January 15th, 2021, the date the elections were called. Staff at the Province will update when there is more information.

3. GoBus Assessments

➤ The General Manager stated that a follow-up was completed with Medisys Health Group Inc., the service provider, concerning the rate of "no shows" that are appearing. Adjustments are being made with regards to the procedure that was in place to confirm appointments within 72 hours not 48 hours as previous. If an appointment is not confirmed within 24 hours it will be cancelled and the customer's account (if existing or active) may be suspended until they are heard from. As there was not a provision in their bid under the RFP for a "no-show" fee, it was agreed, going forward, that the St. John's Transportation Commission would be responsible, if the appointments are cancelled the day of the appointment.

➤ K. Breen questioned the time line for the assessments. The General Manager advised that it is estimated that 20% have been completed and that the number of active users has dropped from approximately 1,600 to 1,400. The program will be monitored over the next year to ensure that we are getting the value out of the program. The Manger of Accessible Transit Service, D. Power, and her staff are working on increasing the speed to which the assessments are completed. The General Manager noted that the program will be re-evaluated once the pandemic has ended.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Financial Statements—December, 2020

➤ The financial statements for the month of December, 2020 were tabled and reviewed.

2. Executive Summary (Regular) —December, 2020

➤ The Executive Summary for the month of December, 2020 was tabled for members' information. The following items were noted:

➤ On Demand Service

▪ K. Breen questioned if the tender had been completed for the On Demand service with the General Manager advised that it is near completion. A year would be required to evaluate the pilot project. It will not change the service on the street only the scheduling of that service.

➤ Fuel Burn Rate

▪ D. Coffey noted that the fuel burn rate is down 4.0 L/100 KM from last year and questioned the reason for this. The General Manager stated that it has a lot to do with the quantity of traffic on the roads with less stopping and starting on our part along with the fact that we have had less snow than last year.

3. Appointment – New Commission Members

➤ A sub-committee of the Commission was established and two candidates were recommended to Council which were forwarded to the City Clerk. K. Breen stated that this will be on the agenda for City Council's next meeting on February 1st, 2021.

4. Transit Priority System

➤ For the benefit of the new commission members, the General Manager supplied a synopsis of the Transit Priority System. It is a system where a unit is installed in a bus and at select intersections in the City to give buses priority. The buses are a level down from emergency vehicles. Transit buses do not interrupt a traffic signal but will shorten a red light or lengthen a green light, if a bus is approaching an intersection. There have been 16 intersections identified in the City – 7 are programmed to work at all times with the remaining 9 only if the buses are running five minutes behind schedule. One intersection – Stamps Lane and Freshwater Road has a queue jump. The General Manager noted that the system does not work, only the queue jump because the crosswalk buttons are turned off due to Covid-19. The General Manager played a video which was designed for training purposes, demonstrating how the queue jump would work. A discussion was held with regards to the legal liability, if an accident occurred when a vehicle followed the bus through a traffic light. D. Coffey also stated that another discussion with Council on this item would be necessary.

ACTION:

K. Breen to bring the issue of the activation of the pedestrian walk signals to the Monday, February 1st, 2021 Regular Council Meeting.

5. BlindSquare App - Update

➤ The General Manager reported that after the last meeting in December it was decided to return back to a discussion about the broader application of the BlindSquare app in the community. A lot of work has been done nationally but Covid has had an impact on the roll out in some areas. For example – Via Rail is to test it and pilot it on their route between Toronto and Montreal. When that works, they will roll out the app across the Via Rail System. They have met with Alberta Parks and Service Canada across the country including here in Atlantic Canada. They met with other transit authorities in Ontario – the cities of Toronto and Ottawa. They would like the City of St. John's to be the gateway to open the door to BlindSquare across the province. They have also had discussions with the Inclusion Committee and are meeting with Garrett Donaher, Transportation Engineer and Natalie Godden, Manager of Family and Leisure Services of the City, in early February. If we look at it from a broader city perspective, we might be able to approach it not only from a transit perspective but from city wide in all city facilities. We will participate in that meeting with the CNIB and the City in February to look at it on a bigger scale with transit being a piece.

6. GoBus – On Demand RFP

➤ The General Manger advised that they are close to releasing the RFP for a software provider within the next few weeks.

7. 2021 Vicinity Bus

➤ The General Manager reported that the new vicinity bus is in Montreal and will be shipped on Saturday, January 30th arriving in St. John's on February 2nd. It will take 2-3 weeks to get the bus ready for the road.

8. St. John's Healthy City Strategy

➤ Chair Walsh informed the Commission that Natalie Godden, in both of her roles, Manager of Family and Leisure Services of the City and the Inclusion Advisory Committee, would like a closer relationship with Metrobus staff as the transit piece is rolled out. The General Manager advised that she is in contact with City staff throughout the year and opined that D. Power, Manager of Accessible Transit Services, would be the contact to liaison between public and paratransit.

V. OTHER (Information/Community)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

➤ There being no further regular business to discuss at this time, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:47 PM.

➤ Live streaming of the public meeting ended immediately followed by an in-camera business meeting of the Commission.

➤ The next regular business meeting of the Commission will be held at the Metrobus Transit Centre, 25 Messenger Drive on Thursday, February 25th, 2021 commencing at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Walsh
Chair

Joan Mahon
Recording Secretary