



Utah Transit Authority

Board of Trustees

MEETING MINUTES - Draft

669 West 200 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

Thursday, September 23, 2021

2:00 PM

FrontLines Headquarters

Budget Work Session

Present: Chair Carlton Christensen
Trustee Beth Holbrook
Trustee Jeff Acerson

Also participating were members of UTA staff.

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Christensen welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Christensen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Safety First Minute

Bill Greene, UTA Chief Financial Officer, provided a brief safety message.

4. Discussion Items

a. Budget Work Session Follow Up Discussion

Mary DeLoretto, UTA Interim Executive Director, and Mr. Greene introduced the process for answering the board's questions during the meeting. The question would be presented and then staff would proceed to respond with an answer.

The board asked the question of what was being contemplated to improve communications methods with front-line employees and when will UTA see that roll out? Mr. Greene responded to the question by giving information on the new platform that is being selected and the timeline of implementation for the employees to begin receiving communications from it. Discussion ensued.

The board asked to better understand the increases in fringe numbers on the proposed budgets and asked if the percentage of increase is consistent with prior years, or if there is a cost that is driving the percentage higher. Mr. Greene responded by giving information on how the extreme numbers of the fringe budget came to be, noting particularly that insurance use was making changes to the numbers. Mr. Greene offered to follow up on the budget process for these numbers to make sure there was understanding on this question.

Chair Christensen asked follow up questions about insurance rates. Alisha Garrett, UTA Chief Enterprise Strategy Officer, responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked how UTA will get information from non-customers who don't normally use the transit system, in reference to the customer assessment mentioned in the 2022 goals. Mr. Greene responded that the intent of that goal was to focus on UTA's internal customers and not external customers. The goal was meant to assess and aid in work flow moving both up and downstream within UTA.

The board asked follow up questions about defining internal customers, defining external customers, and communicating to potential new customers. Staff responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked if there was a process to be able to name UTA buildings in a way that would be helpful to those outside of the organization. Ms. DeLoretto responded by explaining the naming process by using the campuses, landmarks, and numbers. Discussion ensued about changing some of the existing names of buildings that are not currently following that structure.

The board asked about the anticipated timing of when the onboarding process for new employees would be evaluated for the 2022 goals, and if there was a way to expedite the timing of the evaluation. Mr. Greene responded by informing the board of the current use of dashboards and the creation of long term measures to track success and progress. Ms. Garrett explained the initiatives that are already in place to assist employees and managers. Chair Christensen clarified that he was asking about new employee onboarding. Linda Watts, UTA Director of Talent Development, responded that her department had received feedback on the gap that exists in the new employee onboarding and is working on a new outline that will be rolled out in 2022 that will focus on benefits training for new employees.

Chair Christensen asked a follow up question on if there is a checklist for onboarding new employees and also for employees who are exiting. Greg Gerber, UTA Director of Talent Acquisition, provided information on the new onboarding checklist pilot that is currently being tested with a select few. The checklist will then be available for use agency wide. Ms. Garrett provided information on the exit process, defining that the exiting process happens strictly with HR and not managers. Discussion ensued.

The board asked for understanding on who will be tracking and focusing on UTA's Protect Our Environment goals and how those efforts will be measured for communications to the public. Mr. Greene reported that there is a lack of communication about the emissions work that UTA is doing to protect the environment and a new initiative is being rolled out that addresses communication moving forward.

Chair Christensen asked if the communication will be outward facing for the public. Mr.

Greene responded in the affirmative. Trustee Acerson asked if there could be an internal way of tracking how employees engage with and use transit. Trustee Holbrook made comments on air quality and the communication of UTA metrics to cities. Discussion ensued.

The board asked if there is anticipation of purchasing more CNG busses to take advantage of the current investment being made in new CNG capable facilities. Eddy Cumins, UTA Chief Operating Officer, responded that yes, as the Depot District is being built there is a substantial amount of electric charging stations and CNG fueling capacity in Salt Lake City.

Trustee Holbrook asked if there will be a time in the future to bring these changes to the other counties. Mr. Cumins responded that it is being looked at for future projects.

The board asked who is Capital Accounting and Grant Reporting answering to and does it help maintain financial independence if a fiscal question should arise. Mr. Greene informed the board of controls that are in place. There is a safety aspect and a financial aspect and looking at both will create a synergy across the information that is collected for the assets. The separation of duties lies with the Comptroller where a check in from Maintenance will be accounted for with Accounting. Project managers will manage the project while accounting will manage the funding.

Chair Christensen made comments about project budgets and the need for separation of duties and reporting lines. Discussion ensued.

The board asked if there are differences between business units that are contributing to the differences in the accident ratios. Mr. Cumins noted that there are trainings and campaigns to reduce the accident ratio in every business unit. Reasons that Salt Lake Business Unit's numbers are higher is due to largely to the tenure of employees. The accident rate in a driver's first year is different than when they're past their three year mark. It was noted that boardings per mile is also a risk factor. Timp has stations where busses don't need to merge back into traffic as frequently as they need to in Salt Lake. The congestion of downtown Salt Lake also plays a role when it's compared to the other business units which have more rural routes accounting in their numbers.

The board asked questions on if there is a way to equalize the number formula and if elements of training can be shared between business units. Mr. Cumins responded.

The board asked what employee engagement opportunities are anticipated at the Timpanogos Business Unit, and are they similar to what is being done in other business units. Mr. Cumins responded that employee engagement surveys have been done, and each business unit has been working on an employee engagement plan. Timp had been doing weekly stand up meetings and monthly meet and greet lunches between the employees and the General Manager, but had to stop due to COVID. Those meetings are now being brought back.

Chair Christensen asked if these things are also being done in other units. Mr. Cumins responded that the units speak to each other to find what will work for their units. Ms. Garrett offered to put together a summary of the action plans that are currently taking place in the business units.

The board asked if the new employee suggestion program being using in the Mt. Ogden Business Unit was being used in other business units. Mr. Cumins responded that best practices are shared between all the GM's and they are regularly speaking to each other about programs that are working across the board.

The board asked if there is a plan for the land utilization of the "bus graveyard" next to Riverside and if there is an environmental impact. Mr. Cumins responded that the vehicles have not been on that land for long. The area will be improved by installing a ramp so a crane won't be needed to move the vehicles out when they're sold. David Hancock, UTA Acting Chief Service Development Office, will engage engineering to create that ramp. Mr. Hancock informed the board that employees are frequently checking for oil leaks to make sure they're not happening.

Chair Christensen asked how inventory on that lot is being managed. Mr. Cumins responded that some busses are being used as parts, but most of the vehicles are being sold. Those that are difficult to get rid of will be sold for scrap. The intent of that area is not to be used for long term storage.

The board asked about the status on the seat replacement in Light Rail. Mr. Hancock responded that a moratorium on travel was in place due to COVID and the contractor could not travel to Utah to work on the seats. The plan is for half of the seats to be replaced and then engineering decisions can be made from there.

The board asked about the timing of getting them replaced and if the contractor will be able to meet their obligation. Mr. Hancock responded that the process will go into 2022 but the contractor has been doing work on the engineering. Discussion ensued.

The board asked what the long term strategy for UTA on demand is and where it should be located from a management perspective. Nichol Bourdeaux, UTA Chief Planning and Engagement Officer, responded that it's not clear where the program will belong in the future. The plan is to continue to deploy and evaluate while continuing coordination with operations, as well as outside innovative mobility. Currently there are no regulations for microtransit and right now it's a contract that's being managed outside of UTA.

Trustee Holbrook asked if there is a timeline in deciding how to handle these decisions, who is evaluating the use of the system, and where in the UTA system microtransit can work. Ms. Bourdeaux responded that it's in the 5-year plan and it will continue to be reevaluated. Discussion ensued.

The board asked if there are KPI's to show if UTA buildings and/or equipment need to be replaced because they are no longer able to be repaired. Mr. Hancock responded that there is a 10-year facilities plan. UTA's capital and project control department are doing inspections and gathering data on facility buildings, stations and platforms, park and ride areas, and equipment to be able to anticipate budget needs for the next ten years.

The board asked about tracking maintenance, seismic capabilities, and if those concerns are incorporated. Staff responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked if property maintenance is being tracked within UTA's real estate management, and how does UTA avoid circumstances where a property needs to be reported due to issues. Paul Drake, UTA Director of Real Estate and TOD, informed the board that a full time specialist used to monitor the properties on the corridors and worked to facilitate the remedies for issues on the properties. This process proved to be ineffective. Currently there are three property administrators who work under procurement who will each have their own area to supervise to report and address issues in a timely manner.

Chair Christensen asked about the time frame of monitoring the properties, who is contacted when issues arise, and how does UTA check that remedies have been followed through. Staff responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked about UTA's ability to act on opportunities for right of way preservation. Mr. Drake responded that there are different efforts for right of way preservation happening currently, and that opportunities are being sought in each county. Funding needs to be identified as opportunities become available and, if needed, UTA can demonstrate an eminent need for the properties. Communications should be happening with developers to find opportunity for purchases for future projects. Ms. DeLoretto mentioned that the FTA frowns upon getting too far ahead of future projects with property purchases, outside of corridor preservation.

Chair Christensen asked about an opportunity fund. Mr. Hancock responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked how UTA can implement bus stop improvements at a faster rate, and if the new budgeting process will facilitate quicker implementation, as well as if there are specific goals in this area and how measurements are being tracked toward those goals. Mr. Hancock responded that UTA is not delivering on the amount of bus stops that need to happen to stay within the state of good repair, but it is currently in the 5-year budget to work on this goal. Community Engagement has been working on plans for stops that need improvement with the process to create the designs in the winter and construct in spring through fall. The winter of 2021 will plan for bus stop construction through 2022. Ms. Bourdeaux provided information on how priorities are

being established and plan packages are being prepared for capital construction to address the construction portion.

Trustee Holbrook asked if it's viable to do the smaller bus stops and about staffing. Staff responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked about how the new People Office FTE requests will look in a detailed org chart. Linda Watts, UTA Director of Talent Development, presented the proposed org chart structure and identified where the new FTEs are located.

The board asked what the timing of the Employer of Choice rollout will be and what will be accomplished by it. Greg Gerber, UTA Director of Talent Acquisition, responded that the rollout will be launched in the beginning of 2022. It is meant to gain an understanding as to why people come to work for UTA and why they want to stay long term. The plan is to then market outward to those types of people.

Chair Christensen asked if media buys can also work with employer of choice. Mr. Gerber responded that customer communications and employee communications will begin to mirror each other. Discussion ensued.

The board asked for further discussion on the targeted plan for Community Engagement. Ms. Bourdeaux responded that in 2022 a consultant will be in place to help build the community engagement plan. The key initiatives of the plan will focus on inclusive and meaningful engagement and processes within UTA and how those align with stakeholders, core community engagement programs, and community events. UTA will continue to be part of sponsorship and membership programs. Questions that will be asked are how many people are being reached and what was the quality of engagement; do people feel connected to UTA. The plan will look for diversity of partnerships as well as new partnerships to help expand UTA's reach, and will incorporate community input in the decisions of UTA and focus on how two way communication should look.

Chair Christensen asked how to communicate issues with stakeholders and/or the community. Ms. Bourdeaux responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked how success and milestones in initiatives like the apprenticeship program and talent development will be measured, as well as the talent development project. Stacey Palacios, UTA Manager of Training and Development, responded that they are looking to deploy common core curriculums to bring all transit modes together for training. This will bring synergy and break down silos between the crews of the different modes. They plan on the first graduates of this apprenticeship in 2024. Graduation and retention numbers will be assessed to help measure the success of the program. Mr. Cumins stated that training will go beyond the classroom with an application process in the shop, so metrics will also be able to be measured by the amount of calls needed. Ms. Watts gave information on leadership training, including

internal classes that are already happening within UTA. Retention of those graduates, if they stay with UTA, if they promote within UTA, and if they engage better with their team are metrics used for measuring the program.

The board asked questions on if the measurements of the shop can also be measurements of the program, about operator training, and about tracking internal promotions. Staff responded. Discussion ensued.

The board asked what the biggest challenges of the budget are, and does the executive team feel they have the resources necessary to address them. Mr. Greene feels the slowdown in the economy affects UTA the same as it affects everyone else. UTA has been conservative and is prepared. Program delivery is a challenge but Service Development is working on it and headed in the right direction.

The board asked for a review of contingencies and emergency budgets. Mr. Greene responded that Operations reupped the budget for supplies with a million dollars in reserve for unanticipated needs. The service contingency will be better understood next year as ridership continues to develop. Microtransit funds will fall into a contingency fund depending on the ridership numbers. The agency general contingency has been reduced overall as the funds were not frequently used. Mr. Greene will receive another sales tax forecast and will be able to give an update moving forward once he has that.

The board did not have further questions.

5. Other Business

- a. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

6. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Acerson and seconded by Trustee Holbrook. The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Transcribed by Stephanie Tomlin
Executive Assistant to the Board

This document is not intended to serve as a full transcript as additional discussion may have taken place; please refer to the meeting materials, audio, or video located at <https://www.utah.gov/pmnn/sitemap/notice/704665.html> entire content.

This document along with the digital recording constitute the official minutes of this meeting.

Approved Date:

Carlton J. Christensen
Chair, Board of Trustees