

Adopted Minutes Special Council Meeting June 26, 2012

Mayor Slavik called a Special Meeting of the Plymouth City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Medicine Lake Room, 3400 Plymouth Boulevard, on June 26, 2012.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Slavik, Councilmembers Wosje, Willis, Bildsoe, Stein, and Black.

ABSENT: Councilmember Johnson.

PACT MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kedzuf and Member Bliss.

ABSENT: Members Gustafson, Scherschligt, and Britton.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Ahrens, Administrative Services Director Callister, Parks and Recreation Director Evans, Transit/Solid Waste Manager Hellekson, Transit Coordinator Maciej, and City Clerk Engdahl.

Transit Report from Plymouth Advisory Committee on Transit (PACT)

City Manager Ahrens stated the Council conducted a joint meeting with PACT on September 27, 2011, and at that meeting, PACT and staff were directed to analyze the current transit system. This review included many areas including defining alternative funding for 2012 and beyond, prioritizing elimination of services, and increasing frequency between park and rides and downtown.

PACT Chair Kedzuf stated since the September 27, 2011 meeting, their committee has had monthly study sessions. They prioritized the transit system in order of services to be eliminated:

1. Dial-A-Ride
2. Local shuttle service (neighborhood route, no fare box)
3. Express tails (local route which is complete connected to an express route)
4. Express Service

The committee identified six proposed service scenarios:

- Plan 1: Service elimination
- Plan 2: Service reduction
- Plan 3: Dial-A-Ride elimination; modest Express Service expansion
- Plan 4: Targeted Express Service expansion
- Plan 5: Express Service expansion

Plan 6: Long range service expansion

She stated PACT voted to recommend Plan 4, and they discussed an option to modify Plan 4 and consider long range service expansion (Plan 6) should the system become more successful in the future. Plan 4 would increase the frequency of service between Station 73 and downtown during peak rush hour service to 15-minute frequency, which is the minimal regional standard. It also meets the expectation of transit users for minimal frequency of service and could assist to minimize congestion between Plymouth and downtown. This plan would cost an estimated additional \$100,000 above the current operating budget annually. The total 2012 current operating budget for fixed route and Dial-A-Ride is \$4,460,850 (fixed route is 75% of the operating budget).

Paul Buharin of First Transit discussed the transit report in detail, specifically, the six service scenarios noted above.

PACT Chair Kedzuf commented the express tails are so valued by the residents. She spoke of the need to market Station 73 and the need for improving its signage. She noted the close proximity of 394/Hopkins Crossroad transit facility that's at capacity.

Councilmember Wosje stated one of the real issues is frequency which is causing a lack of ridership. He asked how much ridership is necessary for a break even point. Mr. Buharin replied the City needs to maintain half full buses.

Councilmember Stein stated what would be ideal is adding two buses to the Plan 4 option for service at Station 73 for an increase of 10 minute frequency versus 15 minute frequency.

Councilmember Willis stated that the City will know the baseline to see what's gained from increased marketing.

The question was raised as to the transit fund reserve balance. Transit Coordinator Maciej replied the fund had a balance of approximately \$4.5 million at the end of 2011. Mayor Slavik asked if those funds could be used for capital projects such as extending the transit service to Northwest Plymouth. Transit and Solid Waste Coordinator Hellekson replied yes.

Mayor Slavik noted that she frequently hears comments from residents that buses are half empty the majority of the time. Mr. Buharin stated it could appear that way at times, but it depends on the time of the day for certain routes.

Discussion was held on marketing efforts by utilizing mailers, the City's newsletter and website, and informing Plymouth riders that might be using the 394/Hopkins Crossroad facility how easy and convenient it is to use Station 73.

Mayor Slavik stated when the Council met with PACT on September 27, 2011, she didn't think the City was looking to expand transit. She noted that with the recent survey, 98% of the riders are satisfied with the current service. Therefore, she doesn't see a \$100,00 solution which is the

additional yearly cost of Plan 4. She stated the problem is that Station 73 isn't full. There's no need to add more buses.

Councilmember Wosje stated PACT isn't looking for a permanent change, but looking to increase frequency at Station 73 which could increase the ridership. Plan 4 is a 18-month concept and will be reviewed to determine if it's successful in increasing ridership and use of Station 73.

Mayor Slavik presented an award to Tim Baldwin from First Transit who is leaving First Transit. She thanked him for his years of service.

Motion was made by Councilmember Stein, and seconded by Councilmember Bildsoe, to approve Plan 4.

Councilmember Willis asked if this plan can be discontinued prior to the end of 18 months if it's not a success. Transit/Solid Waste Manager Hellekson replied this plan would begin January 1, 2013 and the staff would provide quarterly reports to the Council. Staff will begin marketing efforts later this summer.

With all members voting in favor but Slavik, the motion carried.

The Council thanked PACT for their work on the report.

Future Study Sessions

No future study sessions were scheduled.

Adjournment

Mayor Slavik adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.



Sandra R. Engdahl, City Clerk

