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LA COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES - FEBRUARY 28, 1996

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Larry McFarland, Chairman  
Neil Bjornsen  
Nathan Chroman  
Mike Dickerson  
Sean McCarthy  
Joyce Perkins  
James Seal  
Seymour Rosen  
Howard Sachar  
James Seal  
Charles Stapleton

**SPEAKERS**

Joseph E. Drew, MTA Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Art Leahy, MTA Executive Officer, Operations  
Jeff Johnson, MTA Director, Equipment Engineering

**STAFF PRESENT**

Ray Harris, MTA Government Relations  
Audrey Noda, MTA Government Relations  
Fe Alcid-Little, MTA Government Relations

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

The was meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m. by CAC Chairman Larry McFarland.

**II. Committee Reports**

S. McCarthy reported that the Construction Committee report included cost overruns with MTA Red Line contracts and that any further delays means costs of \$100,000/day.

H. Sachar introduced MTA Board Member Raul Perez and MTA Alternate Joe Dawidziak. Mr. Perez stated that he would like to address MTA's Construction issues at the next CAC meeting.

**III. Remarks by MTA Executive Officer, Operations Art Leahy**

A. Leahy reported that the MTA Board of Directors authorized the following recommendations at the MTA Board meeting today:

- a. reaffirm the **Alternative Fuel Initiative (AFI)** policy;
- b. issue a bid for 200 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and a request for proposal (RFP) for up to five Hybrid Electric Buses;
- c. convert three Ethanol/Methanol buses to diesel engines to assess the technical, air emission cost and reliability impact;
- d. continue to evaluate, working industry and other technical resources and seek to improve the performance of the ethanol/methanol engines;

- e. continue to improve the MTA emissions profile;
- f. work with interested parties on evaluating the conversion of Ethanol/Methanol buses to diesel; and
- g. continue to be an industry leader by pushing the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB) and Hybrid Electric Buses.
- h. Secure dual bids for both 200 & 250 buses
- i. Authorize the purchasing 294 CNG powered buses.

MTA is continuing to seek and find solutions to improve the performance of the current methanol/ethanol engines and is working with industry and other technical experts to do this. The MTA is looking at low cost solutions to rebuild the engines for the buses. The MTA is also working with the public to evaluate the conversion of Ethanol/Methanol buses to diesel.

He reported that there are 24 mechanics within the Operations Department working on rebuilding the methanol engine operation fleet.

He invited the CAC to visit both the RRC and the eco-TRANS facilities to view the conversion of Methanol gas engines to CNG.

He said that he will be meeting with Joe Drew to free up some 50 buses.

A. Leahy reported that purchasing CNG buses has been on the discussion table for 15 months since July, 1994.

J. Johnson, MTA Director, Equipment Engineering explained about the usage of methanol. Methanol is corrosive. MTA has converted most of its methanol fleet to ethanol with the hope that ethanol engines will last as long as the diesel engine. Ethanol fuel costs more than methanol.

C. Stapleton inquired about the warranty of the engine.

J. Johnson replied that there is a warranty on the engine. The MTA has stretched out the one year warranty to three years through Detroit Diesel.

N. Chroman asked what MTA is doing about disability buses.

J. Johnson explained that most cities don't have the capacity of accommodating disability buses because, disability buses decrease the capacity of passengers. MTA has the capability and could accommodate the same capacity with disability buses. MTA still supports ramps because it is more convenient to lower the ramp for disabled passengers. He said that disability buses are a part of the prototype of the ATTB.

H. Sachar asked what is the MTA doing about the conversion of these buses, keeping in mind the high cost of technology.

J. Johnson reported the Cost Containment Committee had already agreed to buy CNG buses.

because MTA is experiencing major cost and reliability problems with the methanol buses converting them to ethanol will save money with the lower cost of engine repairs.

IV. **Remarks by Joe Drew, MTA Interim Chief Executive Officer**

Reported that the MTA has made progress on the problem with the Hollywood Community and residents regarding construction.

He stated that at the MTA Board Meeting, during the "CEO Report" he reported to the Board the following:

"L. McFarland, CAC Chair and Vice-President of the Outpost Homeowner's Association met with Stan Phernambucq and his staff to discuss the impacts of the tunneling of the residents of Outpost and the Hollywood Hills. Also, Dr. Eisenstein made a presentation to the CAC and discussed the modifications of the Yaroslavsky tunneling plan which was adopted by the MTA Board.

Larry relayed this information to the Outpost Homeowners Association Board, including the statements by Dr. Eisenstein, an independent expert, that the tunneling project will use state of the art equipment and will be closely monitored.

Based on these assurances, at this time, the Outpost Homeowners Association Board voted not to fund the litigation against the MTA which Robert Nudeman and Lawrence Teeter are proposing."

He discussed the Methanol/CNG issue. Converting our fleet to CNG will create more jobs. CNG buses will create a more cleaner environment and meet the current clean fuel requirements.

He discussed his successful trip to Washington, D.C. on February 27, 1996. The MTA led by Mayor Richard Riordan and Board Representatives were joined by a bi-partisan Congressional delegation to display a show of strength for transportation to Congress. The MTA is seeking a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) of \$158.8 million for final design and construction on three extensions of Segment 3. The MTA also requested funding for operations, bus capital the ATTB and LANI projects. He reported that in 2 weeks, Gordon Linton will host all the properties involved in the ATTB project in Washington, D.C.

He announced that the Metro Red Line, Wilshire Segment opening will be on July 13, 1996 and invited all CAC members to attend.

He emphasized that he has **5 major goals** while he is the Interim Chief Executive Officer and jokingly mentioned that in fact he is the "Chief Executive Operator".

1. Product/Service is the priority - There are a lot of things we must do better with what we got. Product objective is to significantly improve the maintainability and reliability of MTA'S fleet. He also mentioned that there will be operator training to enhance the quality of service for the public. He mentioned visiting Division I and seeing the condition of some of MTA's dirty buses. His priority is working with all the divisions to improve the cleanliness of all the buses not only the exterior but most importantly the interior as well. Because of the MTA's commitment to excellence to the community, by doing this the MTA will give the public the kind of service they are expecting from the MTA.
2. Partnership - means that MTA is willing to go out and listen to the reaction of the community. He also said that we have 3 partners: the citizens/community, Municipal Transit Operators, and federal, state and local elected officials.
3. Understanding Capital Resources - This means dealing with community capital as well as the political capital.

4. People - We have got to improve morale. Show the people that we have the chance to prove that MTA is willing to provide good service, good service delivery and do a better job with public affairs. He said he is pushing empowerment among the MTA employees and that we are committed to quality services and solving problems.

We must make sense of policies, lead people, lead organizations and manage projects.

We must update our pay classification system. Change our structure of our benefits plan.

The Community will react well if given courteous service as their first priority.

5. Process - The MTA has a real functional Inspector General which is an enormous resource. He mentioned that he just hired Anthony Padilla as the new Internal Auditor.

He spoke of service/service delivery as the top priority for the MTA public and wants all employees to understand about this.

The issue of character is irreproachable. We must create a system where we are not burdened by bureaucracy.

- S. McCarthy raised a question about construction versus public affairs.

J. Drew responded that Public Affairs has all the intelligence but has no authority. We have hired a consultant to reshape MTA's Communications Division. This issue is high on his agenda. We've put together an insurance plan for the Outpost, Hollywood Hills area. We're doing different things with joint development. But we must always keep the vision of the 20 year plan out in front of us. He would like it posted at the MTA Board Rm.

M. Dickerson raised the issue of the lack of signage in the Gateway Building, kiosk, buses and Metro-Rail. There is no public map or bus maps in the bus that are user friendly.

J. Drew responded that he is aware that this is a major problem and is high on his priority list.

J. Drew encouraged the CAC to come to the MTA Board Committee meetings and wanted to make sure that groups such as the CAC were involved.

- V. Public Comments: H. Watt - asked that bus riders receive agendas - J. Drew responded that he will make sure it happens.

- VI. Adjournment Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.