

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

Minutes of Special Meeting of the  
Board of Directors of the District

November 2, 1973

Upon notice duly given, the Directors of the Southern California Rapid Transit District met at a Special Meeting in the District Board Room, 1060 South Broadway, Los Angeles, California, at 1:35 p.m. on November 2, 1973, at which time President Thomas G. Neusom called the meeting to order.

Directors Arthur Baldonado, George W. Brewster, Victor M. Carter, Byron E. Cook, A. J. Eyraud, Jr., Adelina Gregory, Don C. McMillan and Thomas G. Neusom were present. Directors Julian Burke, Hugh C. Carter and Jay B. Price were absent from the meeting.

Also present were General Manager Jack R. Gilstrap; Manager of Operations George W. Heinle; Assistant General Manager for Administration Jack Stubbs; General Counsel Richard T. Powers; Controller-Treasurer-Auditor Joe B. Scatchard; Chief Engineer Richard Gallagher; Secretary Richard K. Kissick; representatives of the news media and the public.

President Neusom announced that the first item on the Agenda was consideration of personnel and labor matters as a result of the illegal work stoppage by approximately 600 of the

District's bus drivers on October 24 and 25, and entertained a motion to recess and discuss the matter in Executive Session.

Board of Directors Recessed in Executive Session at 1:37 p.m.

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board of Directors recessed in Executive Session at 1:37 p.m. to consider personnel and labor matters.

Director Hugh C. Carter entered the Meeting at 1:40 p.m.

The Meeting was reconvened at 1:50 p.m. with Directors Baldonado, Brewster, Hugh C. Carter, Victor M. Carter, Cook, Eyraud, Gregory, McMillan and Neusom responding to Roll Call. Directors Burke and Price were absent from the Meeting.

Report of General Manager

President Neusom announced that at this time the General Manager would present his report and recommendation regarding the matter under consideration, following which those in the audience wishing to speak on the matter would be permitted to do so.

General Manager Gilstrap presented his report to the Board which contained a detailed background and history of events leading up to the illegal work stoppage on October 24 and 25, on which dates a total of about 600 bus operators called in sick over the two-day period. His report stated that the District staff had been weighing for many days the issues at hand, the matter of consideration of the employees who stayed on the job, the

remedial steps which had been taken by the District, the Mayor and Police Department of the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and it was his recommendation that the District not exercise its rights to seek disciplinary action as provided under the terms of the labor contract with the United Transportation Union. The report concluded with a statement that the ultimate solution must be a community solution, not a transit solution, and we must look forward to our law enforcement agencies, political leadership and the community in general to aggressively come to grips with the problem we all share.

A copy of the General Manager's report dated November 2, 1973 is attached to these Minutes as Exhibit I.

Following the General Manager's report and recommendation, President Neusom stated that those in the audience wishing to appear before the Board would now be given the opportunity to make their statements and introduced Los Angeles Mayor Thomas Bradley.

Mayor Bradley outlined the actions that he and other City representatives had taken with respect to the problem at hand and that everyone concerned have an obligation to provide the maximum degree of safety and security for the drivers and the bus passengers. He stated he was pleased by the General Manager's recommendation for amnesty for the drivers, supported the recommendation and urged the members of the Board to adopt it. He

concluded his remarks by pledging his and the City's support to continue to work together to provide maximum security for the drivers and passengers. A transcript of Mayor Bradley's statement is attached to these Minutes as Exhibit 2.

Next to appear was Mr. Earl Clark, General Chairman of the United Transportation Union, who stated that the Union joined with the Mayor in requesting that the Board adopt the recommendation to grant amnesty to the Union's operators, and to join together to implement certain protection for the drivers as soon as possible. A transcript of Mr. Clark's statement is attached to these Minutes as Exhibit 3.

The last appearance was Mr. Howard Watts, 1021 North Mariposa Avenue, Los Angeles, a private citizen. Mr. Watts stated that he was sorry that the District law provides that employees may strike and that he was opposed to granting amnesty to the operators who participated in the work stoppage. He felt that the drivers and passengers should have better protection and felt that the Mayor and Police Department have done nothing to help solve the problem.

Board of Directors Recessed in Executive Session at 2:22 p.m.

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board of Directors again recessed in Executive Session at 2:22 p.m. to further discuss the matter at hand.

The Meeting was reconvened at 2:53 p.m. with Directors Baldonado, Brewster, Hugh C. Carter, Victor M. Carter, Cook,

Eyraud, Gregory, McMillan and Neusom responding to Roll Call. Directors Burke and Price were absent from the Meeting.

President Neusom stated that he would entertain a motion with respect to the matter concerning disciplinary action.

After discussion, on motion by Director Cook, seconded and carried, the following resolution was adopted, with Director Baldonado voting "No":

RESOLUTION NO. R-73-319

RESOLVED, that this Board of Directors hereby accepts and adopts the recommendation of the General Manager, as contained in his report dated November 2, 1973, that no disciplinary action be imposed on the nearly 600 bus operators of the District who participated in an illegal work stoppage on October 24 and 25, 1973, with the understanding that the action taken by the Board is a one-time consideration only and not to be construed as a waiver to any future disciplinary action for any similar incident.

Agenda Item No. 2 Carried Over to Next Meeting

President Neusom stated that due to the lateness of the hour, Agenda Item No. 2, reading as follows, would be carried over for discussion at the next Meeting:

"Consideration of proposal by the Southern California Association of Governments to engage a consultant to perform an evaluation of transit guideway system technologies; and to consider proposal by SCAG to investigate relationship between source of SB 325 tax money and level of service with the service area of the Southern California Rapid Transit District."

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

  
Secretary



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

1060 SOUTH BROADWAY • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015 • TELEPHONE (213) 749-6977

JACK R. GILSTRAP  
GENERAL MANAGER

November 2, 1973

To: Board of Directors

From: Jack R. Gilstrap

Subject: Status Report on Violence and Vandalism on Public Transit  
in Los Angeles

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On Saturday, October 13, 1973, RTD bus driver Edward Cusiter was shot and wounded by an unknown assailant as he operated bus number 7026 on the Watts-Sierra Vista Line. This tragic incident brought into sharp focus for the general public a serious community problem wherein Transit District bus drivers are the target of senseless attacks on their lives. Assaults such as the one of October 13 are unfortunately not unusual. Police officers, firemen, school teachers and others in positions of authority as well as the general public--with two and three year old children--are frequent targets of such attacks.

The violence in the community, particularly among juveniles, has escalated dramatically in the last ten years. Police Department statistics reveal that since 1963 crime in Los Angeles has increased by 71 percent while the population has grown only by approximately 15 percent. Juvenile violence is particularly alarming. The number of arrests of those under 18 years of age have increased by 41 percent. From all indications this under 18 group is the one causing the vast majority of the problems on our buses.

These statistics clearly indicate that violence and crime on RTD buses is symptomatic of a much larger community-wide problem.

In the mid 1960's the District experienced a similar crisis over attacks and robberies of bus drivers. At the height of the problem in 1967 a total of 376 robberies occurred on RTD buses in one year. Through increased police surveillance and by equipping several hundred of the buses with voice radios and silent alarm systems, these robberies were virtually eliminated. We have gone from an average of over 200

robberies a year down to less than 8 per year. It should be noted that the District was in the forefront of the transit industry nationally in the development and use of silent alarm systems in transit buses. These positive steps, followed by the initiation of an exact fare program which removed from the operators any responsibility for carrying money, eliminated attacks on drivers where robbery was the motivation. It is significant to note that during the period of these armed robberies, the union and management worked closely to resolve their common problem. The solution to this complex and dangerous situation was accomplished without a work stoppage by the union nor disruption of service to the riding public.

The violence in recent months is in many ways more aggravating and senseless than the robbery problems of earlier years. Since January 1, 1973, violence and vandalism toward the drivers, patrons and RTD property, has risen at an alarming rate. There have been 95 separate assaults on operators through 10 months of 1973. This number exceeds the total for all of 1972 and is greater than the combined total for the years of 1970 and 1971. To combat this problem, the District has, on an ongoing basis, been working to deal with violence on buses. Evidence of this effort is that the District only purchases new buses which are radio equipped. At the present time 200 RTD buses have radios with silent alarms and 220 other buses are equipped with radios without the silent alarm. Thus, 420 of our buses have means of communication with the dispatcher in time of need. A retrofit program to install radios in all older model buses is underway. Another program to improve safety on our buses is to paint large numerals on the roof of our buses to serve as an aid to police helicopters in locating buses in need of help. Emergency radio procedures have been effected which help provide the quickest possible response to an operator in trouble. Even though many of these practices have been in effect for several years, it is apparent that more must be done in face of the rapidly escalating crime problem.

The District's security force is primarily employed to investigate all traffic accidents involving RTD equipment, handle disturbances on buses, supervise loading of students on special school bus trips, and protect District property. In recent months, this special agent force has been working closely with the local law enforcement agencies to help curtail violence in the critical areas.

It is appropriate to recount the events of the past few weeks starting with the shooting incident of October 13, 1973. On the day of the shooting, Operator Edward Cusiter started traveling south from the vicinity of the County General Hospital at 6:40 p.m. At approximately 7:15 p.m. he picked up 15 to 20 youths at the 7th and Spring Street stop. At approximately 7:38 p.m. Mr. Cusiter called the dispatcher to report that he had an unruly group of youths on the bus but indicated that he did not need help. Upon receiving the call, the dispatcher notified the special agents of a potential problem on the bus. The special agents started traveling toward the bus. The next communication with Operator Cusiter was at 7:48 p.m. when he reported "I have been shot." In a matter of minutes units of the Los Angeles Police Department, District special agents and an ambulance arrived at the scene to administer to the wounded operator.

On Monday, October 15, a joint RTD-UTU press conference was called to request assistance in identifying the shooting suspects and to publicly deplore the increasing number of acts of violence against the operators. In the week immediately after the shooting, RTD representatives, union officials and local law enforcement agencies began intensive discussions concerning steps to prevent these unprovoked assaults. As a result of these meetings, the Los Angeles City Police Department and County Sheriff's Office initiated greatly expanded police surveillance in the critical areas. The complete program of increased police protection was placed in full operation on October 20, 1973. The LAPD established a task force of officers which were assigned in the affected areas. The merit and effectiveness of the increased police surveillance was borne out by two incidents which I have previously reported, where in one situation the police apprehended the suspect and sent the bus on its route within four minutes after the call was received by the dispatcher. In another case the response time was only seven minutes before the bus was cleared. These two occurrences are indicative of the quality of the coverage that the Police Department provided. Despite this impressive police department performance, the District learned on Monday, October 22, that a special union meeting of Local Lodge 1607 was to be held that evening by the drivers to discuss cessation of operation south of Olympic Boulevard. Even though there had been no incidents of violence in the previous 48 hour period-- that is two full days after measures by the District and local law enforce-

ment agencies brought a halt to the violent incidents--the sick-in began.

On the next morning, Tuesday, the District called for an emergency meeting with the UTU leadership to discuss the threatened discontinuance of service south of Olympic Boulevard. Local law enforcement agencies joined with the union and District representatives. At the meeting further positive actions were initiated to enhance that protection already afforded those operators required to work in the more critical areas at certain times of the day. The District re-instructed the operators and dispatchers regarding radio procedures on buses where there was an indication of pending violence so as to expedite action in an emergency situation. Further, the District issued instructions to shift to the critical areas the few remaining radio equipped buses not already operating there. Three hundred of the approximate 400 radio equipped buses owned by RTD had long been utilized in these areas.

The Los Angeles Police Department agreed to double the manpower on the special task force which had already been assigned to provide surveillance and reaction capability in the critical areas for District buses. It was further agreed to provide within the District's Radio Dispatch Center during select hours, police officers to coordinate the police surveillance force with District operations as well as to expedite reaction to reported incidents. The County Sheriff's Department agreed to provide similar priority treatment for the District's operations through areas for which they were responsible. The District pledged to again review its assignment of special agents so as to maximize their availability in the critical areas during key times of the day.

The District announced a program to provide an emergency flasher alert system as approved by the Highway Patrol on all buses. The use of such a system is to be coordinated with local law enforcement agencies providing both surface and helicopter units with a visual means of locating a bus in trouble.

The union representatives indicated their support of these steps and it was our understanding that they would urge the membership not to take any steps which would adversely affect the spirit of cooperation

exhibited by these actions--at least not until an adequate opportunity to evaluate these actions had been completed.

It is important to note that Chairman Earl Clark, speaking for the United Transportation Union leadership, made it clear that the UTU was not authorizing a strike or work stoppage. At a joint news conference with the District, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Mr. Clark encouraged the drivers to return to work and fill their assignments.

On Wednesday, October 24--the first day of the sick-in--322 drivers reported that they were unable to fulfill their assignments. Most of the sick reporting was centered at only one of the District's ten operating divisions. Many of the scheduled runs that were to be filled by the drivers reporting in sick were completed by their fellow operators who worked overtime in order to provide transportation service to the riding public. During the second day of the sick-in the number of operators reporting in sick climbed to 472. It is believed that much of this increase can be attributed to the coercion by the group of dissident drivers. While service to the public on Wednesday was reasonably well maintained by the extra efforts of many of the drivers, Thursday, the effect of the disruption was more severe.

The Board Personnel Committee met in emergency session on Thursday in order to be briefed on the current efforts of the staff and law enforcement officials in providing enhanced protection for the operators in the troubled area.

Later the same day, the dissident operators called a mass meeting. Prior to the mass meeting, Mayor Bradley brought together the various parties involved to review the developments in this matter. Gathered at this meeting were union officials, dissident operators, law enforcement officials and the District representatives. At this time the steps taken to enhance the protection of the drivers were explained. Following the meeting of the principals in his office, the Mayor made an appearance at the mass meeting of the drivers and asked that they return to work. This action by the Mayor was instrumental in causing the dissident drivers to return to work. On Friday, all District buses

were rolling and the service was back to normal.

As I have described on numerous previous occasions, the District is making an all-out effort to do everything we can -- working in concert with the law enforcement agencies of our community -- to control violence and vandalism on RTD buses.

But in addition, all of us here at the District have been weighing for many days the other difficult issues involved in the recent illegal transit work stoppage.

We have spent hours upon hours of soul searching in an effort to find a fair and equitable resolution of the key question of how to treat those 600-some employees who walked off their jobs and, in turn, those 3,900 other employees who stayed and continued to provide transit service to the community.

On one hand, there are those operators who, as concerned citizens and employees -- truly fearful for their own and their passengers' safety -- participated in this illegal work stoppage to dramatize the seriousness of the problem; while on the other hand, there are those who participated in this walk-out who appear to be pure opportunists interested in little more than using this serious matter as a springboard for their own personal, internal union political ambitions.

As public servants, RTD must look to its responsibility to maintain the bus operation which is a vital public service to the people of this metropolitan area; and yet, we are equally responsible for our fellow employees' safety and well-being.

We have struggled with the question of fairness -- fairness because, after all, many of those 2,200 of our 2,800 operators who stayed on the job volunteered to operate their vehicles in the so-called troubled areas, while their colleagues deserted their assignments. Those who volunteered to fill in did so because they felt, in their hearts, their responsibility to the people who depend upon RTD for transit.

We understand that those who participated in the sick in did so primarily because of fear for their lives, but of the 600 operators who did not report for work, approximately 50 percent did not have scheduled runs in the troubled area.

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Another matter that has received most serious consideration has been the fact that this agency has never had an illegal work stoppage. Thus, it is necessary to seek a resolution of this situation which must not set a dangerous precedent for the future.

Frankly, there is no perfect, perhaps even a good, solution to this array of conflicting concerns; nevertheless, a decision is required.

Therefore, after weighing all of these and many other factors, it is my judgment that the District should not exercise its rights to seek disciplinary action as provided under the terms of the labor contract with the UTU.

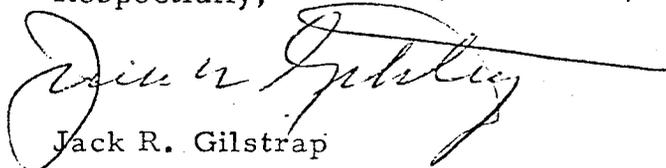
We believe and have confidence that our employees, our customers and the general public will recognize this as the proper course of action.

We pledge to continue our current efforts and to completely follow through on the many programs now in motion to quell violence and vandalism on the RTD.

But make no mistake, the ultimate solution must be a community solution, not a transit solution. In this regard, we must all look to our law enforcement agencies, political leadership and the community in general to aggressively come to grips with this problem we all share.

Finally, we believe that this unfortunate situation has not only set in motion a more effective program in the community to insure security on the District buses, but it has also pointed up the need for closer and better communications within the District and all our employees. The District reaffirms its pledge to work hard in the weeks and months ahead on this matter. In turn, I would call upon all District employees to look to the tremendous challenges ahead of us to improve our bus service and to build the kind of rapid transit system this community must have. Now's the time to get on with the job.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jack R. Gilstrap", written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jack R. Gilstrap

Transcript of Statement by Mayor Thomas Bradley at  
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors on November 2, 1973

Mr. President, Members of the Board, I thank you for the chance to come and speak to you this afternoon. All of us share a concern about providing an adequate, safe and efficient public transportation for the needs of this community. We also have an obligation to provide the maximum degree of safety and security for the drivers and for those who are the riders. I am pleased that the District has responded in this matter to deal with the complex and very difficult task that faces us. I am satisfied that the efforts which we are now making to provide additional safety and security, to secure the best equipment that we can to meet these needs, to secure the cooperation of all of the governmental agencies that are involved and the public will produce a much better service and a much better climate for the customers and the drivers. We, in City Hall, for example, have worked closely with you as Jack Gilstrap has just outlined to provide as much police security as we can. We will continue that effort. We are also in the process of appealing to the federal government for funding for a variety of equipment needs, including the emergency call system, the identification of these buses and a bus locator that will help us in the identification of the trouble, and then to quickly dispatch the units to give them help. Beyond that, I think that the communities must get involved and we have already started some efforts in that regard. I think that the one issue that remains to be resolved as we move on in this matter is what is going to happen to the drivers who went out on an unauthorized work stoppage. I think that the circumstances in this case were unusual, were unique, did call for special consideration, ignoring a provision in the contract and then not taking punitive action against them.

I talked to all but two members of the Board by telephone over the course of the last week. I talked on several occasions with Jack Gilstrap. I think out of it has come what I think is a constructive and I think realistic recommendation.

I am pleased that Mr. Gilstrap has recommended to you that there not be any punitive action and that amnesty be granted. I think all of us are going to benefit from it, and by taking this option. I am sure that we are not saying that we authorize any further such unauthorized work stoppages, or that we will give any carte blanche authority to do that without some kind of penalties being invoked in the future. We are simply saying that there are certain conditions here that would clearly justify this action at this time. I support that.

I strongly urge you, the Members of the Board, to adopt that recommendation of amnesty, and I believe that with that having been done, we can then continue to work together to provide for maximum security for the drivers and the customers of the Rapid Transit District.

Thank you, and I pledge my support and that of City Hall's in this effort.

Transcript of Statement by Mr. Earl Clark, UTU Chairman, at  
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors on November 2, 1973

Mr. Gilstrap, Members of the Board of Directors, the United Transportation Union joins with the Mayor in requesting that the Board of Directors adopt the recommendation to grant amnesty to our operators and our members. We also say let's join together now and make sure that the police protection that is being afforded our operators, our members, continue and that the demands the union has made on the District to implement certain protections for our drivers be implemented as soon as possible.

We strongly urge this Board to please accept that recommendation and grant amnesty to our members. Thank you.