

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MEETING

Thursday, July 8, 2004 - 1:30 PM

Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1B

Hartford, Connecticut

1. Approval of the June 3, 2004 meeting minutes
2. Featured speaker: Peggy Hetherington, Vice President of Marketing, MetroPool, Inc.
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

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CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, June 3, 2004

Union Station, Conference Room A

New Haven, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Richard Carpenter  
Tom Cheeseman  
N. Terry Hall  
Morton Katz  
William Kelleher  
Yvonne Loteczka  
David Reed  
Richard Schreiner  
Russell St. John  
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Michael J. Riley

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny  
Carmine Trotta

# CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Minutes

June 3, 2004

(Meeting convened at 1:36 p.m.)

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 6, 2004

Accepted as revised.

Morton Katz commented on an Amtrak trip from Hartford to Delaware, not to Virginia.

### FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS

**MICHAEL J. RILEY**, President, Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, Inc., spoke to safety, taxes and the environment in relation to the trucking industry. In the 1950's, trucking companies were mostly regional and were highly regulated as to rates and tariffs. This ended in the 1980's when Congress deregulated the trucking industry. Drivers began to purchase their own rigs to become independent and pushed themselves and their vehicles to compete with each other. Regional companies were replaced with national ones.

The reputation of the trucking industry began to suffer due in part to tired drivers, safety issues and drug use. Seeing the negative effects, the industry went to Congress and requested drug and alcohol testing for drivers as well as federal motor carrier safety regulations. These regulations include special rules for hours of operation, inspection, maintenance, and hazardous material transportation. As a result, there have been far fewer fatalities per million miles traveled and fewer accidents. Mr. Riley sited speed limit enforcement as a much more important issue than the weigh stations for truck safety.

In regard to taxes, trucks over 26,000 lbs gross vehicle weight pay the State of Connecticut fuel tax and registration income based upon the miles traveled in the state. Connecticut has a diesel fuel tax of 26 cents a gallon and a gross earnings tax that adds an additional 6% to the price of fuel. Also, every truck over 55,000 lbs gross vehicle weight pays a \$600.00 federal excise tax every year to operate legally. The money generated goes into the Federal Highway Fund and the State Special Transportation Fund. Costs associated with license fees, fines, registration fees, and permit fees also go into these funds.

In regard to the environment, in 1991 Congress mandated that diesel fuel be 500 parts per million of sulfur and has since passed legislation that, by the year 2006, diesel fuel can only be 15 parts per million of sulfur. As a result, manufacturers will have to produce vehicles that can operate on that fuel.

Mr. Riley expressed disappointment that the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) recommendations on trucking did not make it into legislation. Other issues he mentioned that the industry is contending with today include insurance costs that have gone up “out of this world”, difficulty finding qualified drivers, and the necessity for many carriers to apply fuel surcharges to their rates to cover the rising cost of diesel fuel. He also cited the shortage of truck rest area capacity in CT as a big problem. Current shortages of 1,200 parking spaces exist every night after all public and private spaces are used. As a result, truckers often end up using K-Mart parking lots and other private facilities as they seek to be in position to make their first delivery of the next day.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES**

Richard Sunderhauf distributed the CTTransit Newsletter which included articles on the success of the new buses in the New Haven area as well as the installation of a new energy-efficient lighting system in the Hartford storage garage and maintenance shop. The new lights will reduce the daily peak electrical demand by 129,000 watts and cut CTTransit’s electrical bill by over \$85,000 each year.

Mr. Sunderhauf reported that CTTransit Hartford/New Haven/Stamford divisions are still in the process of negotiating a new union contract and are currently working under the provisions of the recently expired contract.

Additionally, Mr. Sunderhauf announced that CTTransit has a new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by Lexington Partners.

William Kelleher reported that there will be a petition to the mediation board to negotiate a contract for the 70% of MetroNorth labor groups who have not had a contract for the last 2-3 years.

Mr. Kelleher also reported that there are discussions between Amtrak, MetroNorth and ConnDOT concerning the ConnDOT repair facility. Amtrak is currently the operator of the Shore Line East service. ConnDOT would like to have the equipment servicing work for the Shore Line East service turned over to MetroNorth, leaving Amtrak solely for the operation of the service.

Additionally, MetroNorth has received instructions from MTA to prepare 5% and 10% service reduction budgets for next year. MTA has reported they are \$540 million in the red this year and estimate they will be in the red \$1.3 billion next year for the operation of MetroNorth.

Richard Schreiner reported that the Housatonic Area Transit District (HART) held 4 public hearings regarding a fare increase going into effect July 1, 2004. This is the first fare increase since 1993 and to make the increase more palatable, fare zones were eliminated and discounts for pass purchases have been established. No negative feedback was received.

Fred Riese announced that the next meeting of the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Advisory Committee is scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup> and will discuss alternative levels of service and facilities for commuter rail service between New Haven and Springfield. (Note: since the meeting, the Commuter Rail Advisory Committee meeting has been rescheduled for June 30th).

Mr. Riese also announced that ConnDOT recently released the draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan covering 2004-2030.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Cheeseman reported that during this past legislative session \$2.1 million above and beyond what the Governor recommended for ADA service in the state was sought. Unfortunately, only an additional \$1.1 million has been approved. Therefore, Dial-a-Ride monies will have to be used for ADA services.

Mr. Cheeseman also addressed the issue of the new bus ramps being too steep when they are unable to be deployed onto a curb. This usually occurs during inclement weather and Mr. Cheeseman is greatly concerned with the lack of local administration's efforts to ensure that the bus stops are clear of ice and snow. This also occurs as result of vehicles parking in bus stop areas. Mr. Cheeseman feels stronger enforcement and penalties should be adopted for such vehicles.

Currently, Middletown Transit District (MTD) is designing a marketing plan centered on increased fuel costs. Mr. Cheeseman encourages his colleagues do the same.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Morton Katz received a request from a member of the public for an update on current internal and external rail security measures being taken. Mr. Katz would appreciate any information available.

(Meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.)