

The special combined meeting of the Joint Administrative Board (Transit Board) and St. Louis Ithaca Pine River Transit Authority (SLIPR) Board was called to order by Kurt Giles on Monday, October 18, 2021, at 11:00am. Meeting was held via zoom conference.

Note: Actions that are specific to the St. Louis Ithaca Pine River Transit Authority (SLIPR) Board will be specifically indicated as SLIPR business and will only include the Roll as applicable to the SLIPR membership.

**Members Present:**

- Kurt Giles - St Louis City Manager/SLIPR Member – Board Chairperson
- Kevin Beeson - Pine River Township Supervisor/SLIPR Member – Board Secretary (joined the meeting at 11:05am)
- Jamey Conn - Ithaca City Manager/SLIPR Member
- Jennifer Cook – Member At Large
- Audra Stahl – Alma City Commissioner

Members Absent: None

**Others in Attendance:**

- Brett Baublitz – Director Alma Transit Center (ATC)
- Bobbie Marr – Recording Secretary
- Marilyn Carey – Transit Accountant

**Approval of SLIPR Minutes**

Motion by Member Conn, supported by Member Giles, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021, Special Meeting as presented.

Yes: Conn, Giles

No: None

Absent: Beeson

Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Member Beeson, supported by Member Conn, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021, Special Meeting as presented.

Yes: Beeson, Conn, Cook, Stahl, Giles

No: None

Motion carried.

**Presentation and Discussion**

Director Baublitz presented data regarding capital funding opportunities. One of these opportunities aligns with ATC plans for an additional building for fleet operation and storage. The ATC has outgrown its existing building and with future plans of expanding the fleet to accommodate the addition of SLIPR, and perhaps other communities, a building would reduce exposing vehicles to potential theft, weather elements, and animal-related damage which all cause additional maintenance and lower resale values.

The proposal is for a facility costing roughly \$3 Million, with the funding to be 100% funded through section 5311 Rural Transit Funding.

Baublitz also presented information regarding staffing. The biggest threat to daily operation being the ability to attract and retain fully trained, qualified drivers. Wage comparisons were provided showing ATC base wage below other area transit/schools. Current starting base wage equals \$13.11/hr. Comparable wages listed \$15.77 to \$20, some with signing and incentive premiums or bonuses. The \$2/hr hazard money provided by CARES act has helped to get base wages at least to the bottom of other scales, however, does not help in attracting workers. ATC would like to increase the base pay and then add the \$2 hazard pay to help remain competitive with other agencies. This can be done currently within budget approved with MDOT. Further discussion held on board concerns of wanting to sustain the pay scale ongoing and trying to make sure we keep those wages after the additional funding is no longer available and sustainability issues short term and long term while the ridership fluctuates and hopefully levels out or increases on trend (without COVID complications).

**Recommendation for Wage Increase.**

Motion by Member Conn, supported by Member Cook, to increase starting driver wage to \$15.11 per hour, and to continue to add \$2 hazard pay component to all driver wages through September 30, 2022.

Yes: Conn, Cook, Beeson, Stahl, Giles

No: None

Motion carried.

**Recommendation for Grant Application.**

Motion by Member Beeson, supported by Member Conn, to continue to pursue the grant for a new transit facility through Section 5311 Rural Transit Funding.

Yes: Beeson, Conn, Cook, Stahl, Giles

No: None

Motion carried.

**Advertising Information.**

Director Baublitz reported that the City of Alma has been contacted by a potential customer for advertising on Buses. This is of significance because similar customers have been suing various other transit agencies that have not put their ads on the buses. The advertisements have been denied because they are offensive by the advertising guidelines. The marketing company that ATC works with, and legal council will be working on the details of this request, just mentioning so that we are aware since it has caused issues for others.

**Regular Meeting Dates.**

Organizational documents call for quarterly meetings. Can consider the annual meeting required with the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) as one of those meetings. It is optimal that meeting be held in early December so that recommendations for budget with MDOT, that is due in January, can be filed timely.

Motion by Member Cook, supported by Member Conn, that regular quarterly meetings be scheduled the second Monday of the month at 11:00am, beginning December 2021.

Yes: Conn, Cook, Beeson, Stahl, Giles

No: None

Motion carried.

**Meeting Schedule Information.**

- December 13, 2021 – This meeting will be held with the participation of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) and will be held at the Child Advocacy Center – 515 N State Street, Alma.
- March 14, 2022 – Annual Organizational meeting for both SLIPR/Transit Board will be held at St. Louis City Hall – Community Room
- June 13, 2022 – Location TBD
- September 12, 2022 – Location TBD

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

Member Beeson motioned for adjournment, supported by Member Cook. There were no objections. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Bobbie Marr, Recording Secretary