



Minutes of Board Meeting

Held on Friday 16th September 2011

At 10.30am at NTA Offices

Present: Mr John Fitzgerald (Chairperson), Mr Gerry Murphy (CEO), Mr Hugh Creegan (Director of Transport Planning and Investment), Mr Frank King, Ms Valerie O'Reilly, Dr Berna Grist, Mr James Deegan, Mr Damian Usher, Mr Daithí Alcorn, Ms Linda Saunders.

Apologies: Mr John Tierney (Dublin City Manager), Ms Margaret O'Shaughnessy.

Staff in attendance: Mr Philip L'Estrange, Director of Finance (Item 3); Mr Jeremy Ryan (Item 4); Ms Anne Graham, Director of Public Transport Services (Items 4 and 5) and Mr Karl Seeber (Minutes).

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1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 July 2011 were agreed subject to the substitution of "updated" for "undated" in the second paragraph under item 6 (AOB).

On matters arising from the minutes, the Director of Transport Planning and Investment confirmed that the National Household Travel Survey is to be undertaken by the Authority. However, the Authority has been liaising with the Central Statistics Office with a view to that Office undertaking future surveys.

2. CEO Report

A decision on future funding levels in respect of subsidised public transport services is awaited. In the interim the Authority is proceeding on the basis of estimated figures. On 1 January next the performance schedules under the Public Service Transport Contracts will be extended to cover additional items (e.g. cleanliness, websites) and a new tool will be introduced that will enable the Authority to better assess performance against targets and determine whether penalties should be imposed.

A decision on future capital funding is also awaited. Progress on major infrastructure projects such as Metro North, DART Underground and Luas BXD has been scaled back significantly pending a decision on funding.

The Authority's expertise in relation to land use and transport planning is increasingly being sought by local authorities outside the Greater Dublin Area. The Authority has recently accepted an invitation to participate on the Cork Area Strategic Plan Group.

The roll-out of real-time passenger information is continuing. From late September customers will be able to access real-time information online for all (approx.) 5,000 Dublin Bus stops in the Greater Dublin Area on the *TransportforIreland.ie* website and this will be supplemented by a text service. Later in the year customers will also be able to access real-time information for Luas and Bus Éireann services on the website.

The Board discussed a number of issues arising from the CEO update including the continued delay in finalising the Authority's draft Pension Scheme, the upgrading of major rail stations and the provision of off-street coach parking facilities in Dublin, traffic management arrangements in the vicinity of Samuel Beckett Bridge in Dublin and the appointment of a statutory Advisory Council for the Authority. The CEO noted the views expressed for follow-up action as required.

The Chairperson updated the Board on his meeting with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, which the Director of Transport Planning and Investment also attended in the CEO's absence.

3. Audit Committee & Finance update

The better than anticipated outcome on the administrative budget to date was mainly due to savings in consultancy, accommodation, communications and staffing costs.

Works are underway to upgrade the Authority's computer links between its offices on Erne Street and Harcourt Lane. Preparations are also underway to develop a disaster recovery strategy for the Authority's computer systems.

The Comptroller & Auditor General's audit of the Authority's 2010 Accounts is nearing completion. The Accounts will be published and circulated as soon as possible thereafter. The Director of Finance clarified that a decision had been taken to publish the Authority's 2010 Annual Report earlier in the year as it was clear at that stage that the audit would not be completed for some months. The Board considered that it is desirable that Annual Reports incorporate some financial information regarding a preceding year's audited accounts and the Authority will consider how that can best be achieved.

The Chairperson noted that a planned Audit Committee meeting had been postponed and will be held at a later date to be arranged.

4. Presentations on Galway Public Transport Study and Intercity Rail Fares Study

Mr Ryan gave a presentation on the outcome of a study which examined the organisation of urban and regional bus services serving Galway City and makes recommendations for improvements. Board members welcomed the outcome of the Study. While noting that the Study could provide a model for similar reviews in other regional cities they raised a number of specific points for further consideration with respect to the current study.

Ms Graham made a presentation on a study to develop a simplified fare structure for intercity rail services. The Board welcomed the Study and noted that the Authority will now enter into detailed discussions with Irish Rail on its implementation. The Board also raised an issue with regard to the Free Travel Scheme for further consideration by the Authority in conjunction with the Department of Social Protection.

5. Update on Integrated Ticketing

Ms Graham updated the Board on the status of the integrated ticketing project. Although the project is making good progress a software problem has been encountered affecting Dublin Bus ticketing equipment. While efforts to resolve the problem are continuing, it is clear that it will impact on the planned October launch date.

6. Update on Taxi matters

The CEO outlined the legal reasons that the Authority is required to revoke existing regulations relating to the duties of drivers of Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) including the requirement that a driver behave "in a civil orderly and respectful manner" and the requirement to be in constant attendance on the vehicle and the requirement under Regulation 52(4)(d) to be "clean in person and of decent apparel".

The Board also considered the proposal to amend the technical standards for wheelchair accessible taxis to address the availability of Type Approval facilities in the State. Having discussed the matter the Board agreed unanimously that the Authority should make the proposed regulations for these purposes as soon as possible. However, it also requested that urgent attention be given to the development of robust alternative arrangements for regulating the duties of SPSV drivers.

The CEO advised that the wheelchair accessible taxi grant scheme will commence operation shortly. A report on the outcome of the vehicle standards consultation exercise is expected to be circulated in advance of the next Board meeting.

The CEO drew attention to Judicial Review proceedings in the High Court against the Authority arising from a decision by it in May to suspend certain taxi licences. This challenge could have significant implications for the Authority and the Board agreed that the Authority's external legal advisers should be involved and that they should engage with the relevant persons in the Authority and handle the proceedings. In doing so, the Board noted the CEO's reminder of the procurement process arrangements that applied in relation to the engagement of the legal advisers and the inclusion of judicial review expertise as part of that engagement.

The CEO indicated that, earlier in the year, the Board had already considered the execution of the Abtran contract and that he had placed it on the agenda again unnecessarily. The Board agreed again to the execution of the contract.

7. Any other business

It was agreed that future agendas for Board meetings should include an agenda item dealing with the declaration of interests by Board members as a matter of course.

Next Meeting: Friday 21 October 2011 @ 10.30am at NTA Offices.

Signed: _____

John Fitzgerald, Chairperson

Dated: _____