



Minutes of Board Meeting

Held on Friday 28th January 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, Ms. Linda Saunders, Mr. James Deegan, Mr. Damian Usher, Ms. Margaret O'Shaughnessy.

Apologies:

Mr. John Tierney, Mr. Daithí Alcorn.

In attendance:

Mr. Philip L'Estrange (Director of Finance), Mr. Karl Seeber (Corporate Affairs & Policy Division).

Introduction

The Chairperson noted that the Minister for Transport had recently appointed Mr. Daithí Alcorn to fill the remaining vacancy on the Board.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were agreed subject to the addition at the first sentence of item 6 of the words "and fares" after "quality of service".

The CEO is still awaiting a formal response from Irish Rail on issues concerning the Dublin-Cork rail service raised at the last meeting.

2. CEO Report

The CEO briefed members on developments since the December meeting as follows:

Revised schedules to the Public Transport Contracts should be in place next month following consultations with operators as required under the Contracts.

The backlog of applications for bus licences inherited by the Authority is being worked through. Some new applications have been received and are being processed in accordance with the Guidelines approved by the Board.

The Authority is in the process of finalising a programme of public transport service reviews to be undertaken during 2011. Following some discussion, the CEO confirmed that Board members will be canvassed for their suggestions of matters to be reviewed.

The Minister for Transport has designated the Authority as Ireland's national enforcement body for the purposes of EU Regulation 1371/2007, which concerns rail passenger rights. Information for rail users will be published on the NTA website in the near future. During the discussion under this item, the CEO advised that the Authority has raised the issue of anti-social behaviour on public transport with operators and he undertook to brief the Board in due course on the outcome.

A detailed breakdown of the 2011 capital budget of €240 million will be available next month. The remit of the Quality Bus Network Office is being expanded to include all of the Greater Dublin Area. This will add greatly to the Authority's resources in delivering sustainable transport improvements.

The launch of the pilot real time passenger information system for buses will take place next month. The full system incorporating a website and text messaging service will be rolled out in the following months.

In the area of planning, the Authority had withdrawn its appeal to An Bord Pleanála regarding the proposed commuter centre at UCD in light of undertakings obtained from the college authorities.

The Department of Transport has given the Authority responsibility for managing and prioritising the capital programme for bus priority and park and ride projects in the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. As the Authority does not have any statutory functions in this regard it will be acting as the Department's agent.

On Corporate matters, the Authority understands that the second round of staff reductions will result in the cumulative loss of 16 posts across the Authority (including the Taxi Regulation Directorate) notwithstanding the additional responsibilities that have been given to the Authority.

3. Finance Update

Mr. L'Estrange gave an update on the Authority's 2011 budgets for administration, subvention payments and capital works and provided clarification on matters raised by members.

Board members stressed the need to maximise efficiencies arising from the integration of taxi regulation into the Authority. The CEO noted that significant preliminary work in this regard had been undertaken towards the end of last year in preparation for the dissolution of the Commission for Taxi Regulation. This work had identified the scope for efficiencies, which were reflected in the budget. The Authority will intensify this work during 2011.

The funding position of the NTA over the longer term was discussed briefly.

The Authority's Administrative Budget for 2011 was approved.

4. Current Issues

Transport Strategy

Mr. Creegan made a presentation on the draft Strategy. He noted that the Strategy will cover a 20-year period. It is hoped to proceed to public consultation at the end of February. This will last 6 weeks following which any amendments and revisions will be brought to the Board for consideration in April prior to delivery of the final draft Strategy to the Minister for Transport for approval.

Board members raised some specific issues concerning the draft Strategy. The Chairperson indicated that members should email their views or suggestions concerning the contents of the draft Strategy to the CEO.

The Chairperson noted that once the Transport Strategy has been approved, the Authority will proceed with the preparation of an integrated Implementation Plan, which will identify projects in the Transport Strategy to be progressed in the short to medium term.

Taxi Regulation

The Board noted the CEO's proposal to seek the views of the Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles concerning proposed changes in the requirements relating to small public service vehicles. The CEO will revert to the Board following receipt of those views.

Metro North

The Board endorsed the CEO's proposed course of action with regard to the Railway Procurement Agency's proposal to commence major enabling works for Metro North during 2011.

Fares

The CEO gave a brief presentation concerning Dublin Bus' request for a fares increase and the fares that had been approved, which was due to be announced following the Board meeting. The CEO noted that the fares increase had been prompted by the reduced subvention available in 2011 and the continuing decline in passenger carryings.

An information note explaining how the Authority arrived at its decision will be published on the Authority's website.

Irish Rail and Bus Éireann have also sought fares increases.

5. Corporate Governance

Ms. Anne Graham, Director of Corporate Policy joined the meeting for this item. Ms. Graham outlined the obligations of the members of the Board under the Ethics Acts and the deadline for compliance.

6. Any Other Business

In view of the Authority's national remit, the Board discussed holding its May or June meeting in one of the regional cities.

Next Meeting Friday 18th February 2011 @ 10.30am at the NTA's offices.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

John Fitzgerald, Chairperson