

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT  
December 8, 2008

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Armenta called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in the MST Conference Room.

Present:	Karen Sharp	City of Carmel-By-The-Sea
	Kristin Clark	City of Del Rey Oaks
	James Ford	City of Marina
	Libby Downey	City of Monterey
	Vicki Stillwell	City of Pacific Grove
	Thomas Mancini	City of Seaside
	Fernando Armenta	County of Monterey
	Maria Orozco	City of Gonzales (Ex-Officio)
Absent:	Sergio Sanchez	City of Salinas
Staff:	Carl Sedoryk	General Manager/CEO
	Hunter Harvath	Asst. General Manager/Finance & Administration
	Michael Hernandez	Asst. General Manager/Chief Operating Officer
	Robert Weber	Director of Transportation Services
	Lyn Owens	Director of Human Resources
	Kelly Halcon	Human Resources Manager
	Sonia Bannister	Office Administrator/Marketing & Sales Specialist
	Michael Gallant	Planning Manager
	Kathy Williams	Accounting Manager
	Tom Hicks	CTSA Manager
	Kathy Medina	Human Resources Assistant
Others:	Dave Laredo	DeLay & Laredo
	Heidi Quinn	DeLay & Laredo
	Leslie Llantero	City of Seaside
	Dawn Withers	Salinas Californian
	Bob Parks	ATU Local 1225
	Doug Wallace	ATU Local 1225
	Alma Almanza	CCCIL
	Rena Weaver	Blind and Visually Impaired Center
	Kim Mitchell	
	Patricia Calgrove	
	Leah Veile'	MPUSD
	Carmelita Garcia	Pacific Grove resident
	Raul Estrada	Coach Operator

Margaret Osborne	Del Monte/TA
John Slobodin	Pacific Grove resident
Jim Fink	Salinas resident
Jim Wright	Marina resident
Bill Martin	MPUSD

***Apology is made for any misspelling of a name.***

#### **4-1. – 4-7. CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda items consisted of the following:

- 4-2. Adopt Resolution 2009-11 recognizing Raul Estrada, Coach Operator, as Employee of the Month for December 2008.
- 4-3. Disposal of property left aboard buses.
- 4-4. Minutes of the regular meeting of November 17, 2008.
- 4-5. Financial Report – November 2008.
- 4-6. Adopt 2009 meeting calendar.
- 4-7. Authorize Chair to appoint ad-hoc Nominating Committee.

**Director Downey moved to approve the items on the consent agenda. Director Clark seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **5. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

Robert Weber, Director of Transportation Services introduced Raul Estrada, Coach Operator, as Employee of the Month for December 2008. On October 23, 2008, Raul performed the Heimlich maneuver on a co-worker who was choking on a food item. From all reports, the employee had a fully obstructed airway and was in severe distress. Raul's intervention helped to dislodge the obstruction – avoiding what could have been a truly tragic event.

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jim Fink, Salinas resident, said for three months in a row, the DART from Edgewater doesn't show up when scheduled – even though he has called ahead. The Dispatch for DART need to be handled by MST. Communication on DART from their dispatchers to DART drivers needs to be in English and not in Spanish so that passengers can understand what is being relayed to the drivers.

## 7. COMMITTEE REPORT

The Board accepted and filed the MST Legislative Committee Minutes – November 17, 2008.

## 8. BIDS/PROPOSALS

None.

## 9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mr. Harvath, Assistant General Manager for Finance & Administration gave a brief presentation on the proposed fare increase and possible service adjustments. He reported that in response to severe reductions in state funding and local transportation funding uncertainties, MST is proposing to increase fares for both its fixed-route and MST RIDES paratransit services as follows. These changes, if adopted by the Monterey-Salinas Transit Board, would go into effect in January 2009.

### **Proposed Service Reductions & Route Eliminations Effective January 2009**

<b>Route</b>	<b>Service Reduction or Route Elimination</b>	<b>Affected Days</b>
Peninsula DART	Route Elimination	Daily
Line 1x Asilomar/Lovers Point Express	Route Elimination	Daily
<b>OR</b>		
Lines 1 & 2 Pacific Grove	Route Elimination	Daily
Line 7 Monterey-Carmel via CHOMP	Route Elimination	Weekdays
Line 9 Fremont-Hilby	Service Reduction	Saturdays
Line 10 Fremont-Ord Grove	Service Reduction	Saturdays
Line 11 Edgewater-Carmel	Route Elimination	Daily
Line 20 Monterey-Salinas	Service Reduction	Saturdays
Line 27 Watsonville-Marina	Route Elimination	Weekdays
Line 28 Watsonville-Salinas	Service Reduction	Daily
Line 29 Watsonville-Salinas	Service Reduction	Daily
Line 41 East Alisal-Northridge	Service Reduction	Sundays
Line 42 East Alisal-Westridge	Service Reduction	Sundays
Line 43 Memorial Hospital	Service Reduction	Saturdays
Line 49 Northridge	Route Elimination	Daily

**Proposed Fare Increases  
Effective January 2009**

	<b>Current</b>		<b>Proposed</b>
MST Fixed Route Bus			
Base Fare (per zone)	\$2.00		\$2.50
Discount Fare	\$1.00		\$1.25
Transfer	\$0.25	No	\$0.25
Discount Transfer	\$0.10	Change	\$0.10
DayPasses			
Single Zone	\$4.50		\$6.00
Single Zone Discount	\$2.25		\$3.00
All Zone	\$9.00		\$12.00
All Zone Discount	\$4.50		\$6.00
Monthly Passes			
Single Zone	\$62.00		\$75.00
Single Zone Discount	\$31.00		\$37.00
All Zone	\$124.00		\$150.00
All Zone Discount	\$62.00		\$74.00
Book of 20 Tickets			
Regular	\$40.00		\$50.00
Discount	\$20.00		\$25.00
MST RIDES Paratransit			
Base Fare (Per Zone)	\$2.50		\$3.50
Book of 10 Tickets	\$25.00		\$35.00

A total of seven public hearings were held to receive public comments on the proposed fare increase and/or service change. In addition to in-person comments received at the meetings, MST also received comments via email, regular mail, and fax. Two petitions in support of line 1X were also received.

Nineteen comments supporting the fare increase and an additional 19 opposing the service reductions were received. Two comments support cutting service and not increasing the fares. Three comments were received opposing both the fare increase and the service cuts. Two people support both the fare increase and service reduction. Eleven ideas were submitted such as eliminating transfers, not operating service on holidays, etc.

For MST RIDES, comments support the fare increase; however, don't increase past \$3.50 per zone.

As a result of the public comments received, staff recommends the following: 1) adopt \$0.50 base fare increase for fixed route; 2) adopt \$1 per zone fare increase for MST RIDES; 3) return to using ultralow sulfur clean diesel fuel until biodiesel is financially competitive; and 4) implement height-based free fare for passengers under 46”.

Director Stilwell asked about the pros and cons of eliminating transfers. Mr. Harvath commented that eliminating the transfers would basically double the cost for those trips within one zone. However, the longer trips using only one bus would only pay once. The system is designed to force people to transfer at the major transfer points.

Chair Armenta opened the public hearing at 10:46 a.m. to receive public comments on the proposed changes.

Nancy Hamilton, Pacific Grove resident, commented about this meeting being held during the day. It should have been in the evening at the Monterey Public Library. The other meetings in Seaside and Salinas were in the evenings and along bus routes.

Regarding fareboxes in the mini-vans, the fareboxes need to be lower. Drivers cannot see over the farebox. Just going from Pacific Grove to Carmel resulted in her using three buses. Eliminating transfers would cause her to pay for her fare three times. Cutting service will result in fewer passengers. Many people decide where to live based on bus routes. The Riders Guide cover could be done more cheaply than using full color glossy covers. With regards to Biofuel, she suggested hitting up conservation groups to subsidize the fuel costs. She urged staff to hit up major employers to subsidize certain routes (Aquarium, CHOMP).

Alma Almanza, CCCIL, supports the fare increase to MST RIDES; however, not by \$1. She urged the Board to consider raising it to \$0.50 cents. The \$1 increase would make it harder for the disabled community – who are already on a fixed income and don't have the luxury of picking up more hours with their employment. The fixed route fares are increasing by 25% and MST RIDES is increasing by 40%. Increase the fares by \$0.50 cents.

Rena Weaver, Blind Center, supports the MST RIDES fare increase; however only by \$0.50 cents. She requests keeping line 1X intact. Her clients are mostly seniors on fixed income.

Kim Mitchell is upset about getting rid of line 11. This line in the morning is always full of passengers. Eliminating this route would cause her to take three buses to get from Pacific Grove to Carmel. The drivers on line 11 allow people to take up two seats.

Nancy Hamilton, Pacific Grove resident, made a choice to ride the bus last year. She is upset that MST is suspending the biodiesel fuel program. She uses line 1X. If this route is gone, she will have to walk one mile to the nearest bus stop.

Patricia Cauldgrove, has been using the bus most of her life. The bus service to Carmel is unacceptable.

Jim Wright, Marina resident, wants DART to stay. He uses these buses to get to his doctor appointments. He suggested putting questionnaires on the buses to find out which buses are being used the most. Do not eliminate lines 7, 1X and 11.

Leah Veile', Chief Business Officer for MPUSD, commented that the school districts within California are not receiving any additional funds that are being cut from public transit. The State is backfilling so that the school receives the same amount as previous years. She is receiving less than \$1 million to transport students on school buses. The school district is using money allocated for classroom supplies and are supplementing their transportation program by \$2 million annually. They appreciate what MST is doing in transporting the students to/from school.

Margaret Osborne asked if the trolley program would continue. Staff responded that it is fully funded by the City of Monterey and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Jim Fink, Salinas resident, said to keep up with inflation, the base fare should be \$2.60 and it needs to go up. Fare increases are needed; however, it is not enough and they need to be raised them higher.

Seeing no one wishing to comment, Chairman Armenta closed the public hearing at 11:09 a.m.

Director Downey said there should be a discount for ticket books for MST RIDES. She suggested approaching CHOMP, MPC, and the hospitality industry in subsidizing routes serving their facilities. She would like to reduce the discounts offered to students.

Director Ford understands the \$0.50 cent increase in MST RIDES. He does not support eliminating the youth discount. In addition to using the bus to get to/from school, many of the students rely on public transit to get to/from their jobs and extra curricular activities after school.

Director Mancini prefers raising the fares instead of cutting service.

Director Sharp would like to offer more incentive for 10 tickets for MST RIDES to give RIDES clients a bigger discount.

Director Clark urged the members of the public to write to their elected officials to try to get more funding for public transit.

Director Orozco thanked staff for their presentations during the public hearings. She supports the fare increase and wants to keep existing service.

### **10-1. FARE INCREASE AND/OR SERVICE REDUCTIONS**

Staff recommends the following: 1) adopt \$0.50 cent fare increase to fixed-route; 2) adopt \$0.50 cent per zone fare increase to RIDES; 3) return to ultra low sulfur clean diesel until biodiesel is financially competitive; 4) implement height-based free fares at less than 46"; 5) fast-track "smart" farebox procurement; and 6) maintain youth discount – revisit for FY 2010 budget.

Director Downey moved to have staff re-evaluate the various requests regarding the fare increases and not cut service and to report back to the Board with updated proposed fares. Director Stilwell seconded.

After further discussion, Director Stilwell removed her second to the original motion. The original motion failed due to lack of a second.

**Director Mancini moved to accept the staff recommendation and within the next 90 days, staff may come back to the Board with any potential modifications based on the State Budget. Director Ford seconded and the motion carried with Director Downey opposed.**

Director Orozco left at 11:36 a.m.

### **10-2. FRANK J. LICHTANSKI MONTEREY BAY OPERATIONS PROJECT**

Mr. Hernandez, Assistant General Manager/Chief Operating Officer, gave a brief update on the Frank J. Lichtanski Monterey Bay Operations project. Modifications have been made to the sizes of the offices and some of the open space in the Maintenance section.

There are some outstanding issues with the current site. MST is unsure if Monterey County would allow 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be closed off, and there currently is no water allocated to the site. Staff recently learned of a habitat conservation plan that has not been completed. There are two species – a plant and a salamander that would be affected. County staff has indicated a perceived conflict with the gateway to the Equestrian Center and the Veterans Cemetery.

In November, Monterey County staff approached MST with the notion of possibly moving to another site called Whispering Oaks located along Inter Garrison Road. This area is zoned for light industrial use with water allocation. There is potential for MST to be master developer for unused parcels of land. Some concern is there is a large gas line directly under the site, landfill approximately ¼ mile from the site, and sewage issues.

MST has already been spent \$400,000 in developing the original site. Expenses related to building design are transferrable; whereas expenses directly related to the site are not transferrable.

### **10-3. LINE 55 UPDATE**

Mr. Gallant, Planning Manager, provided an update on line 55 Monterey-San Jose Express. Ridership on this line has been growing exponentially with over seven passengers per hour in August 2008.

Passenger surveys reflect that overall, 90% of those surveyed reported that they were very or somewhat satisfied with this route. Only 4% were unsatisfied. The primary trip purpose is to visit friends and family. If this route was unavailable, 37% of passengers would not have made the trip. This demonstrates a significant demand for this connection between Monterey and the bay area.

John Slobodin has ridden this route and it's a very good service. He suggested increasing the fares outside of Monterey County to match VTA fares.

Jim Fink said the times listed on the timetables do not reflect current running time. It's always in Morgan Hill slightly ahead of schedule. The times listed are not realistic for actual traffic conditions.

### **11-1. 2009 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

Mr. Harvath reported that at the federal level, Congress will continue to implement the final year of the Transportation Authorization bill (SAFETEA-LU) including provisions related to funding transit operations and capital programs, as well as programs designed to fund transit in rural areas, to increase access for the disabled, to protect transit vehicles and facilities, and to support intelligent transportation systems.

At the state level, MST will continue to push for the restoration of transit funds that have been diverted to other purposes and identification of legislative remedies that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of transit service.

Given the financial situation MST has had to face with reduced funding, staff will look at converting MST from a Joint Powers Agency to a District. This would allow MST to pass its own tax to be used for public transit.

The Board directed staff to: 1) add the conversion to a District to the Legislative Program; 2) research costs associated with becoming a District; 3) continue as appropriate with Board direction; and 4) bring back to the January Board meeting for adoption.

**12-1. – 12-5. REPORTS & INFORMATION ITEMS**

The reports consisted of the General Manager/CEO Report; Washington DC Lobbyist Report – November 28, 2008; Letters rejecting the Governor's proposal to eliminate the 2008-09 State Transit Assistance program; Board Referrals; and Staff trip reports.

**13. COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

Director Downey would like to see more lead time when staff is asking the Board to make major decisions.

**14. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**2. CLOSED SESSION**

The Board adjourned to Closed Session to meet with legal counsel regarding General Manager/CEO performance.

**15. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

**Upon returning to open Session, General Counsel Laredo announced that no reportable action was taken by the Board.**

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Armenta adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

PREPARED BY:   
Sonia AR Bannister