

CHATHAM AREA TRANSIT  
AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING

OF

July 11, 2008

9:21 A.M.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: I would like to call to order the Chatham Area Transit Authority and I call upon the secretary for roll call please.

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Liakakis

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: here

MRS. CLARK: Dr. Thomas

MRS. CLARK: Ms. Stone

MS. STONE: Present

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Holmes

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Shay

MR. SHAY: here

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Odell

MR. ODELL: here

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Gellatly

MR. GELLATLY: Present

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Kicklighter

MR. KICKLIGHTER: here

MRS. CLARK: okay

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Broker

MR. BROKER: here

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Russell

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Dawson

MR. DAWSON: here

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Oakley

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Rivers

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Butler

MRS. CLARK: Mr. Abolt

Also present at the meeting was Russ Abolt, M. Tyus Butler, Joe M. Rivers, and Patricia Clark.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Okay. Huh thank you. I would like to, Joe

MR. RIVERS: Mr. Chairman, yes I would like to introduce the new board member from Garden city, Mr. Russell. Ah, he's here. Also, it is going to be necessary that we approve Mrs. Patricia Clark as the interim secretary so that when we sign the resolution she will be official.

MR. SHAY: So moved Mr. Chairman.

ALL – second.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: We have a motion on the floor and a second to approve Patricia. Lets go, ah, everybody in favor raise your hand. Motion passes.

MR. SHAY: Welcome Charles.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Umm, everybody was distributed... huh, Charles what we do here is, instead of going on the board, is we raise our hands because we've got additional members of the Authority and that's why when we go to vote on a motion we raise our hands as oppose to ah, you know, going up on our board. Alright. Now, everybody was given the minutes of the last meeting. We need a motion on the floor to approve those minutes unless you have some corrections.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: So moved.

MR. ODELL: Second

CHAIRMAN LAIKAKIS: I have a motion on the floor and a second to approve the minutes of the last board meeting. All in favor please raise your hand. Motion passes. New business. Umm, Joe we have a request for a Board approval for purchase of eleven hybrid buses. You want to go into that.

MR. RIVERS: Yes sir, Mr. Chairman I have a grant in hand and we're putting two grants together to purchase them buses. They will be hybrid buses. In the report they tell you how much they cost, they are \$568,000 a piece. It will bring a new level of efficiency. It will also help with the county going green because we also can you bio-diesel in that if the price is not too much out of line. But if you all tell me to, we will to have to find the money to use bio-diesel which with the bio-diesel and the electric it should keep us off of foreign fuel and begin to improve our efficiency.

MR. SHAY: Mr. Chairman

CHAIRMAN LAIKAKIS: Patrick

MR. SHAY: Joe this is great news. I think the—this is one of those examples of when the idea of trying to become more energy and resource conservative is the market working to our advantage. This Commission is doing everything that it can to be as eco friendly as we possibly can. But this also allows the transit system itself to have a lot more flexibility by being able to choose what kind of fuels are the most efficient. You've provided us with a lot of evidence that was even based on relatively expensive diesel fuel at \$2.40 a gallon that showed that the electric hybrid was already more fuel efficient and more economical in New York City for example. Now that diesel fuel is pretty close to \$5.00, one suspects that those numbers are even more compelling. The idea of using bio-diesel is a great idea. I learned in Europe when I was there this spring, that the city of Graz in Austria actually runs their entire transit system off of recycled vegetable oil which is a bio-diesel fuel. They actually collect that from area restaurants and homes. That might be something that we can look at as we go forward to be able to provide you with a source of basically free bio-diesel so.

MR. RIVERS: Now huh, let me correct that Mr. Shay. Already, we have been talking in the Management Mobility Group. They are talking about outfitting the DOT buses and that part of the fleet with bio-diesel fuel the cost is somewhat a little more expensive, but already the vendors already collecting oil in this city to use in that project. So we are looking at it and they asked us if we would go and buy it in bulk and maybe can get it a little cheaper. We are looking at that, we are considering that. But yet our fuel, diesel fuel cost and the low sulfur emissions make it a little more efficient right now as far as costs go. But if we find the moneys---

MR. SHAY: Okay. Of course the fuel costs for carbon diesel are not very predictable in the future. \$5.00 a gallon diesel fuel right now for all we know; a year from now we might be looking back at those as being the hay—those wonderful days of when it was so inexpensive. But we certainly I think, as a Board welcome this. My understanding is that you've identified the technology and that you are in the process of putting together the various grant applications. I would like to make a motion that we authorize you to proceed with the pursuit of the eleven hybrid buses for the transit system and that when the appropriate funding sources are identified and married that you enter into the final negotiations to bring back that contract for us to vote on at that time.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Helen.

MS. STONE: I know there's a motion on the floor, do we need to make a second before I ask the question? Do we need to have a second?

MR. KICKLIGHTER: I'll second it.

MS. STONE: okay. Umm, in looking at- - you mention these, the cost of these buses were over \$500,000?

MR. RIVERS: \$568,000.

MS. STONE: My question is in looking for this grant are you looking to make up the difference between; I don't know what the price of a regular bus that you purchase, you purchased in the past versus the hybrid and is the grant pick up the difference? Or is the grant - are you asking for the entire cost of the bus?

MR. RIVERS: Okay. \$350,000 is probably the projected cost of the regular diesel. In my hands here, already approved; got my budget already approved. My federal money is in place. My state money should be in place for one of these grants, which this grant here totals fed total is for \$190,000. The other thing that we will mesh with that is another grant. The only hold-up on that grant, that grant is pending, but the feds will not approve that grant because we got \$280,000 on there for the Transit Center and they're not gonna approve anymore money for the Transit Center until we begin to nail things down. Though we're gonna move that money into bus and come back later in a later grant and replace that money for the Transit Center.

MS. STONE: Okay, but I'm - I guess my question is then are you looking at the difference between the 450 and the 560 is that where the grant money comes in?

MR. RIVERS: The total grant money of these two grants that I got in my hand will take care of the federal part of that. One, we got a state contract already on one grant. And we have to seek a state contract on the other grant. I cannot move until I get all these things in place. And then the local money will have to be in place. But it takes twelve to eighteen months to get a bus and by that time calculating we'll either be able, we'll either be able to accumulate that money on hand in the property or we could come to the county and ask yall to advance some of the money that we have in SPLOST to buy buses.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Mr. Chairman.

MS. STONE: Thank you.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: To summarize, to summarize really quickly for the public, looking through here and basically what it looks like to me; and correct me if I'm wrong, we will be getting eleven hybrid buses we will for a total of about 6.3 million dollars and out of grants from the feds and the state we will get 5.8 million dollars from them, so all we're gonna have to pay from local money is somewhere around \$550,000. So -

MR. RIVERS: Give or take \$100,000.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Give or take, I'm mean yeah. I mean we're talking 6.3 million or so here so, it's one heck of a good deal and this is a good way to get moving forward, I mean 6.3 million dollars worth of buses for \$550,000, I mean, excellent. Who can do any

better? We're leading the way with the green so let's approve it and move on 'cause we're suppose to be heading to great the Secretary of the Army here shortly.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Harris.

MR. ODELL: Ah Joseph, umm it will take eighteen months?

MR. RIVERS: Twelve to eighteen months. What will happen, is that we are looking at options rather than bid so if there's a firm out there that has that are buying buses and we can piggy back that, it should allow us with our buses to mesh it with somebody else's' buying more buses and maybe we can get the buses maybe a little cheaper. So we are looking around for those kinds of synergies also that we can piggy back with somebody rather than trying to go out on a separate bid.

MR. ODELL: Good idea. What's the economy per bus as oppose to a hybrid as oppose to a equal size bus assuming running the same mileage each year?

MR. RIVERS: I think, I think we've got that in a report that a study that was done. New York and ah, I think it was New York and; let me see, you should have a report in front of you on those hybrids. It's that piece with the fax thing in front of it. It has a table in there. I'm trying to see if I got mine.

MR. ODELL: Ah, Pat Shay has given it to me and the fuel savings alone are over the expected life experience. Ah, I tend to agree with Dean, ah \$550,000 for 6.3million dollars uh, unless I'm missing something; seems like an excellent idea, considering the fact that we also pick up the fuel efficiency. Who's ringing?

MR. DAWSON: Sorry!

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Dean.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Interesting. The flyer you passed out. Quickly, if we wanted to convert these buses to trolleys, does that mean it keeps the long wear and tear of the average large bus but its, or 'cause I read the report here states that a average regular bus lasts like ah, twelve years another one seven years. So - -

MR. RIVERS: Yeah. These buses are built on – the trolleys are built on the same chassis. But I only gave yall that because the City of Savannah may want to go to the regular bus rather than the trolley. We got two trolleys that we need to get rid of. We got one we send them out in the morning and have to bring them in, in the afternoon because the engines are right up under the driver. So when it gets ninety degrees we gotta get them outta there. So those are rear end, so I was asking the City of Savannah would they prefer the trolley or the buses. Right now the sentiments of the City for those two buses; to get two buses rather than two trolleys. But I had to include that.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: So, is this basically the design of this particular trolley you have, is it designed like a regular bus where the motor is not below the –

MR. RIVERS: Right.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: How much more money would it cost to do a bus like this than the buses we are talking about, a hybrid vehicle like this?

MR. RIVERS: That's, that's hybrid.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Okay how much -

MR. RIVERS: That's the same thing.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Okay how much one of these cost ya?

MR. RIVERS: The same, same thing.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Alright. I think eventually we're talking about changing the appearance and everything of Chatham Area Transit. I think every bus eventually that we have should look a historic Savannah Trolley running, running throughout the entire county. We need to run these trolley's rather than, than CAT buses and, and make it look fun and for people to jump on and –

MR. RIVERS: Look at, and I'm sorry that I didn't pass all these brochures out. But we are gonna change the image because we are going to a European style bus which is changing the image you won't see those box type buses. If you will pick up that bus brochure and look at it you will see a different, more appealing bus there.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Yeah but again, ones a bus one looks like a trolley. Trolleys historical, we're historical, umm city built off tourism everything driven it and, and – this is a great idea - your idea man, take it and run. I mean, this is really good. And it came from you. So -

MR. RIVERS: Listen to me. See, that was for the City of Savannah if they wanted those two trolleys downtown.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: What are yall think about that? I mean eventually we should change over.

MR. SHAY: Let's hash that up -

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Later!

MR. SHAY: Yeah when we can really –

MR. RIVERS: They may not even hold --

MR. KICKLIGHTER: What would this approve today though? Does this approve the purchase of what?

MR. SHAY: What's been recommended today as I understand it; is that we purchase the buses that look like our new fleet is gonna look like all around. And that's the hybrid electric powered European style bus. There are two other short run systems in downtown right now; the CAT shuttle and also the DOT system that's operated by the mobility system. Let's let them weigh in on what they want before we --

MR. KICKLIGHTER: So we're gonna table it?

MR. SHAY: We are not actually gonna vote on the contract today anyway because he's gonna bring it back to us. What we are voting on, my motion was that we move forward with the idea of acquiring the hybrid electric buses and when they were able to identify the funding and marry the funding sources together, then it would come back to us for our final vote.

MR. ODELL: And at that point, we could vote as to appearance which is Dean's question.

MR. SHAY: Well they better get costs on both kinds then, cause the --

MR. KICKLIGHTER: He said it's the same.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: One of the things Joe lets consider, umm have you check into any other transit systems that have used this bus yet?

MR. RIVERS: Yes. Uh, my uh, Director of Transportation just returned from Charlotte. Charlotte is using, Keith Parker, who manages the Charlotte system is a very good friend of mine. We have talked on it. We are gonna do some more due diligence. I'm gonna talk to the people at MARTA. I'm gonna talk to a friend of mine down in Jacksonville to see how many buses they got that they are using. I'll probably end up calling New York and checking on their buses. So.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Okay. But Joe lets make sure that ah you know, you check with a few because these are coming out new. We wanna make sure that ah, because this a great idea because less fuel will save tax payers money. Ah, you know, be more efficient in the operation of CAT and this is great, but ah check, you know with some other systems to make they don't have any specific problems on these um this type of hybrid because it's a number of others but ah that's really important ah because I see everybody, now that we've got this information, you know that it could be a good thing for us; but we need to get all of that information. Now we have a motion on the floor and -- excuse me. I'm sorry. David.

MR. GELLATLY: Joe, when you come forward with this, I think it's really important ah, when we're talking about diesel fuel, ah I think fuel; diesel fuel has changed in the last twenty-five years in of itself. I could remember in the early eighty's why the buses not only had a bad order, but you'd actually get carbon dust on your windshield if you followed 'em. They've changed a lot that needs to be said. Also the filters have been changed a lot. I understand that they take ah up to ninety-five percent of the pollutants ah never get in the air now. I think that when you make the case for these hybrids that its very important to ah articulate that umm diesel has changed over the years, the filters have changed over the years and there indeed ah, ah, a type of fuel that needs to be considered along with all others.

MR. RIVERS: You're right sir. Ah, low sulfur diesel has changed and the filters have changed. Everything in emissions –

MR. GELLATLY: That needs to be articulated if you're gonna bring that forward that you are gonna go to an electrical diesel ah combination fuel. You need to show that that's different from it was twenty - twenty-five years ago. Include the filter.

MR. RIVERS: And it – and you also can convert to bio-diesel 'cause they use bio-diesel twenty.

MR. GELLATLY: All of those things need to be articulated in ah, in ah the simplest of language.

MR. RIVERS: Okay sir.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Dean.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Umm, Commissioner Shay would you possibly consider amending the motion to just include, to say eleven hybrids for that amount requested, the type to be determined later?

MR. SHAY: Sure.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Alright we need a second on that.

MR. ODELL: Who accept it?

MR. BROKER: I'll accept.

MR. KICKLIGHTER: You'll accept? Okay.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: You accept it. Okay fine. Okay, ah all in favor of the motion lets raise your hands. Motion passes. Ah, Joe, we appreciate that additional vote. Ha ha ha.

MR. RIVERS: I didn't, I didn't - I was just ---

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Okay. Alright, ah Joe item two; request Board adopt a Resolution No. 6A – 2008 in support of the Amalgamated Transit Union's request for additional Congressional Transit Funding to offset high fuel prices.

MR. ODELL: Move for approval.

MR. DAWSON: Second it.

CHAIRMAN LIAKAKIS: Do we have a motion on the floor and a second. All in favor signify by raising your hand. Motion passes. Okay, ah meeting adjourned.

Meeting recessed at 9:41 a.m.

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Patricia R. Clark, Secretary, Treasurer  
Chatham Area Transit Authority