

**Minutes of the Metropolitan Taxicab Commission Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 11, 2003**

**9:00 a.m., in the Auditorium at 100 North Tucker Boulevard**

(Meeting began at 9:15 a.m., due to traffic/parking problems because of a gas leak in a nearby section of Olive Street.)

Meeting was chaired by Lou Hamilton, due to the absence of Tom McCarthy.

Mr. Hamilton called the meeting to order. The roll call followed; present were: Vincent Bennett, James Harris, Lou Hamilton, Dave McNutt, Mike Morgan, Basil Rudawsky and Solomon Tadesse. Absent were: Tom McCarthy and Larry Satz.

**Per the Agenda:**

Item 1. Approval of the meeting Minutes of August 8, 2003. This item will be deferred until next month, since the Minutes are not in the format which the Board prefers.

Item 2. Overview of the meeting's procedures. Mr. Hamilton welcomed audience participation, and outlined the procedures for doing so. To address the Board, speakers must sign in.

Mr. Hamilton stipulated that this is a business meeting, thus no disruptions or lack of courtesy will be tolerated.

Item 3: The Director's Report. MTC Director Mike Tully provided an overview of what has been accomplished in the 90 days since the MTC began operating. He then outlined what MTC intends to achieve in the near future.

Mr. Tully provided a summary of the activities performed by the MTC Staff, and enumerated, by class, the numbers of new and replacement licenses issued.

Mr. Tully stated that the MTC has recently begun its billing process, and on last Friday, September 5, it sent out the first of several series of invoices.

Furthermore, several special mailings have been accomplished, detailed as follows:

On August 18, a letter was sent to hotel operators reaffirming our operating procedures.

On August 25, a letter was sent to Premium Sedan owners, stipulating the new requirement for physical examination and drug testing of drivers; this letter also advised that strict enforcement of the MTC Vehicle for Hire Code would commence on September 1.

Company owners were made aware that proof of insurance is required and that if a car is taken out of service, all identifying markings must be removed.

Mr. Tully enumerated the incidences of "red tagging" of vehicles by MTC enforcement agents and airport police; reported the suspension of one driver for a 7-day term; and detailed the numbers of warnings, summonses, and actual arrests enforced at the Airport.

Mr. Tully then introduced Sgt. Tim Sampson, head of the Airport enforcement squad, and commended him for the support and cooperation he has extended to the Commission and its staff.

Mr. Tully enumerated several investigations he has conducted, concerning Airport shuttles, and vehicles for hire which are not licensed by the MTC. He found there are more than 10 companies which have no license whatsoever. There followed an explanation of how Airport vehicles for hire are "staged," plus an acknowledgment of the prohibition against two-way operations for airport cabs.

Mr. Tully then recommended that this Commission adopt a new category encompassing "commercial vehicles for hire."

Mr. Tully also relayed a complaint from a visiting businessman who recently rode from the Airport to downtown in a cab which had no operating air conditioning. This passenger wrote a letter of complaint to Airport Deputy Director Slay. As a result, Mr. Tully stated he has met with the Airport "starter" agents and instructed them to check and "red-tag" vehicles which are not air conditioned; once repairs have been made, the vehicle must be brought to the MTC office for re-inspection.

Mr. Hamilton asked Mr. Tully to explain to the assembly what "red-tagging" means and consists of. Mr. Tully did so, adding that his office had just last week received a new supply of stickers. Once a vehicle has been "red-tagged," MTC monitors the vehicle; if it comes back and attempts to operate prior to clearance by the MTC, the driver is subject to penalties escalating to arrest.

Mr. Tully then explained that the St. Louis School Board had contacted the MTC concerning a license it felt was questionable. He explained the requirements and stated the owner was required to call in all his cabs; the MTC agents have verified the cab numbers/VIN numbers, and this investigation is continuing.

Mr. Tully concluded his report by stating that last month, he was asked to review allegations of suspensions being imposed at the Airport as soon as any violation occurred. He investigated the matter and found these allegations to be unfounded.

In closing, Mr. Tully stated that at the August meeting he was also asked to look at stretcher vans and medical transport vehicles for possible inclusion in our Vehicles for Hire Code, and his investigation is continuing.

A question was raised by Mr. McNutt, as to whether a "red tag" can be placed on both sides of the vehicle? Mr. Tully replied, "Certainly." Mr. McNutt suggested the MTC stipulate this be to be done. Immediately, Mr. Hamilton suggested that the date and the license number be marked on the tag so the particulars are visible to everyone. Mr. Tully indicated that 2,000 of the current style are already on order, informing passengers how to contact the MTC for questions, complaints or compliments about their ride. Mr. Tully stated this placard is to be placed on the interior of the left rear door of the vehicle.

Mr. Hamilton asked, what is the general response of companies and drivers since the strict enforcement has just begun (on September 1)? Mr. Tully replied that they have been extremely cooperative to him and to the MTC enforcement agents.

Mr. Hamilton then asked Mr. Tully: "You indicated there were 7 tickets issued by the Airport police for violations of the MTC Code – will there also be a separate enforcement made by the County Courts?" Mr. Tully replied, "Yes, and we are in full cooperation with that aspect."

Mr. Hamilton asked if there were any questions, comments to Director Tully concerning his report? None was offered, and his report was concluded.

#### Next item: The Financial Report

Mr. Hamilton acknowledged that "Last month, we had promised that the Chairman would provide a financial overview at today's meeting – the Chairman is not here and apparently will not be joining us, so I will provide a brief overview." Mr. Hamilton then did so.

Mr. McNutt interjected, "I have recently met with Karen Wittkoetter of St. Louis County Public Works department, and verified our figures." Mr. Hamilton acknowledged that St. Louis County has been tremendously helpful in managing the MTC's payables and receivables.

Mr. Hamilton asked whether there are any other items of old business to be covered? The unanimous response was, "No."

#### New Business

Mr. Hamilton stated there will be a discussion about Commercial Shuttle licensing, and called on Mr. McNutt, who stated "It is very clear to me that the MTC does have the authority to regulate these airport-to-hotel shuttles. As of now, they are not under our umbrella, and we do need to ensure that they operate as they are intended to." He asked MTC agent Billie Joe Bollinger to relate details of a recent altercation among some drivers; Mr. Bollinger did so.