

Minutes of the Metropolitan Taxicab Commission
Board Meeting - Friday, March 5, 2004
1:00 p. m., in the Auditorium at 100 North Tucker Boulevard.

Call to order at 1:15 p.m., by Vice Chairman Lou Hamilton, who announced that he will chair today's meeting due to the absence of Chairman Tom McCarthy.

Roll Call was conducted. Present were: Commissioners Hamilton, Harris, McNutt, Morgan, and Satz. Absent, in addition to Mr. McCarthy, were Commissioners Bennett and Rudawsky.

(Note: there were 8 attendees in the audience)

Mr. Hamilton opened the meeting by welcoming our new Commissioner, the appointed successor to Solomon Tadesse, who had resigned in November 2003. He is: Abera Shiferaw, a driver for Gateway Express.

Mr. Hamilton apologized on behalf of the Commission for the abrupt cancellation of last month's meeting (on February 20). Just as that session was about to begin, it was learned a Commissioner was ill - thus we did not have a quorum. Mr. Hamilton explained that our Charter requires there to be present two Commissioners from the City and two from the County in order to hold an official meeting.

Approval of Minutes of January 23 meeting – All Commissioners had been sent an advance copy of the Minutes for review.

Motion to consider and adopt the Minutes was made by Mr. Satz, seconded by Mr. Morgan, passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Hamilton asked if there are any comments or proposed changes to the draft? Hearing none, he called the vote to approve the Minutes. Without opposition, the Minutes were approved.

Old Business

Random Drug Testing – per Mr. Tully, he and Mike Morgan have worked on this program and Mr. Tully now wishes to announce that our implementation date will be July 1, that our target group will be 10% of the driver population, and that a company (BJC Healthcare) has been selected as the provider of this service. The company will maintain the database and they will be responsible to randomly select the drivers and then notify them of the requirement to be tested. Mr. Hamilton suggested the MTC should officially notify all the company owners that they are *required* to comply when selected; he also asked Mr. Tully what penalty will result for failure to comply? Mr. Tully replied that we still cannot assess fines/penalties, we only can suspend and revoke licenses.

Mr. Hamilton stated that if anyone fails to comply, there should be an automatic suspension; Mr. Tully concurred.

Waiting time limitations / use of transponders:

Mr. Tully reported that last week, two separate meetings were conducted by Airport Deputy Director Gerard Slay: one, with the On-Call drivers and owners, the other with the Airport drivers and owners.

Concerning *transponders*, Airport cabs are in 100% compliance; the On-Calls cabs' compliance is very low, yet the consensus of the meeting attendees appeared to be tolerance of that low level.

As to the *waiting time*, which is currently 30 minutes, Mr. Tully reported that Mr. Slay is still considering that issue.

Violation Reports – printing of forms. Mr. Tully reported that these forms (recently redesigned to be 4-part forms) are being printed right now

Ratio of cabs vis a vis the metro population

Mr. Tully reported that, in most cases we've learned that the 'city fathers' of various cities had actually "backed into" their formulae by determining how many cabs they wanted on the streets and manipulated the formulae from the reverse. He added that he has learned that Orlando, Florida has a two-tiered ratio: at the airport, the ratio is one cab per 60,000 deplaning passengers - in the metro area, the ratio is one cab per 1,000 residents. Mr. Hamilton asked what Mr. Tully is suggesting; Mr. Tully responded that he has no recommendation, is merely making a report.

New Business

Mr. Hamilton stated he would again like to recognize and welcome our new Commissioner. The new Commissioner introduced himself as Abera Shiferaw, stating that he is a driver with Gateway Express.

MTC Counsel, Patrick McCarthy, interjected a question, asking Mr. Shiferaw whether he has already been sworn in by St. Louis County. Mr. Shiferaw replied that he was indeed sworn in, earlier this week.

Selection of April meeting date. Mr. Hamilton made the suggestion of Friday, April 2nd. He recommended that the meeting be held early in the month, since the following Friday is Good Friday, and the Friday after *that* is the day after the income tax deadline. The choices were discussed, and Friday, April 2, at 1:00 p.m was confirmed. Mr. Hamilton then instructed Director Tully to notify everyone well ahead of time, to ensure that we will have a quorum.

Advisability of allowing Airport companies to have "reserve" cabs

Mr. Tully stated that he is seeking input and guidance from the Commissioners on this issue.

Mr. Morgan asked what the issue is, and whether the regulation is unclear in this regard.

Mr. Tully replied that there is no regulation about "reserve" cabs for *Airport* companies; there is only one for *On-Call* cabs.

Mr. Hamilton suggested this matter should be discussed with a committee of the Commission; he added that, in the absence of Chairman McCarthy today, he will refer this matter to our Treasurer, Mr. Morgan, for handling.

Commendation of a driver:

Mr. Tully explained that a passenger had called the MTC and requested that we commend a driver who had found the caller's wallet in the backseat of his taxi and returned it to him intact.

Mr. Tully had arranged for a reporter and photographer from the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* to attend today's meeting to cover this upbeat story, however, Mr. Tully has just learned that the driver has recently moved to California and is no longer in town for us to commend publicly.

Mr. Hamilton suggested that Mr. Tully send a letter of commendation on behalf of the Commission to the driver's last known local address, in the hope it will be forwarded by the