

Minutes of the Metropolitan Taxi Commission
Friday, November 12, 2004
1:00 p.m., in the Auditorium at 100 N. Tucker Blvd.

(Note: there were 9 attendees in the audience today)

Meeting was called to order at 1: 10 p.m. by Vice Chairman Lou Hamilton

Roll was called; all Commissioners were present except Messrs. McCarthy and Bennett.

* Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 4 meeting; motion was seconded by Mr. Rudawsky, and passed by unanimous vote.

Old Business

- Mr. Tully reported he had an October 8 meeting with the Department of Revenue. He showed everyone another specialty license prototype which the DOR designed *after* the members had been polled about their design preferences from among several choices.

Director Tully said we are now awaiting final approval from the Director of the DOR and from the Superintendent of the State Highway Patrol.

Mr. McNutt again emphasized his belief that the design should require that the annual renewal sticker be placed in the *center* of the license plate, to thwart theft of the stickers by breaking off the corners of licenses where they are positioned in the various current designs.

- Director Tully reported that the MUTT (Missouri Uniform Traffic Tickets) forms have been delivered and are being used by all authorized entities; the majority of violators have elected to just plead guilty and pay the applicable fine, he added.

New Business

After consulting a calendar and a brief discussion among the members, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Friday, December 3, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Director's Report

1) Director Tully thanked the Commission for allowing him to attend two recent industry meetings: one, with the new Director of the Missouri Department of Transportation; the other, the annual conference of the TLPA (Taxicab, Limousine and Paratransit Association) – he said the members will receive his comprehensive report about that seminar at the December meeting.

2) Mr. Tully reported that we are awaiting judicial review on two disciplinary hearings.

3) Vigorous enforcement of the VFH Code continues, Mr. Tully said, and is achieving favorable results:

a) Our Enforcement Agents were at Busch Stadium during the recent Cardinals playoff games and World Series home games

b) Enforcement Agents were in the field on Election Day (Nov. 2), tracking the dispatch of taxis which were transporting people to various polling places

4) Our first session of “taxicab court” will occur next Thursday, November 18. All such cases will be handled on the *first* and *third* Thursdays of *every* month, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

5) Our Enforcement Agents have just concluded (on October 31) the inspection and licensing of the Premium Sedan classification; for the first time in our history, we have a true census and the total number of vehicles has been verified as being 70, Mr. Tully reported.

- 6) In the Commissioners' folders today is a comprehensive report from our Coro Leadership Fellow, Ms. Mackinnon Webster, who completed her 'government agency rotation' with us on October 8. Her observations are very favorable - these, plus her findings and recommendations, are now being disseminated to the members for their review.
- 7) A preliminary meeting was held with a view to providing a 401(k) plan to our personnel. More information will be forthcoming.
- 8) Mr. Tully has met with the representatives of AFLAC Supplemental Insurance, who had attended last month's public meeting to make a sales appeal to owners/drivers.
- 9) As directed, we sent our annual notification letter to all certificate holders encouraging them to start sending their drivers in to apply for their 2005 licenses. In that vein, we have just hired Kim Hinton as a temporary employee to assist our licensing clerk for approximately 90 days.
- 10) Director Tully is in the process of revising our 'wish list' to the Missouri Legislature for their consideration when the Legislature convenes in January.
- 11) Mr. Tully announced that several parties have contacted him, requesting that the moratorium be lifted only for the premium sedan classification. There were not enough premium sedans for the recent World Series events, he said, and a major concern is adequately servicing the demand for the upcoming NCAA Final Four Basketball tournament.

Treasurer's Financial Report

Since our Treasurer, Mike Morgan, had been asked to chair today's meeting, he had not prepared a financial report to deliver from the dais; he did, however, distribute an informational financial spreadsheet to the board members without making any remarks.

Mr. Morgan assured the Commissioners that he will have the preliminary 2005 budget ready for their review at the December 3 meeting.

Mr. Hamilton then surveyed the members for additional items/questions/comments. Mr. Shiferaw directed a question to Director Tully, concerning the proper appellate procedures for a request to approve some logo changes/repainting of airport cabs. Mr. Tully acknowledged having received, and denied, the initial request and asked the MTC Counsel for his legal opinion. Mr. Patrick McCarthy stated that he will prepare such an opinion to present at the December 3 public meeting.

Public Comments

Speaker #1) Mr. Michael Davis, a former driver of A-VIP Limo

Speaker alleged that due to 'MTC politics' he hasn't worked in two weeks. He said the company once had 6 drivers for its 2 vehicles but now the MTC will allow only those 2 vehicles to be licensed - the speaker stated the MTC is barring it from expanding its fleet and professed not to understand what has occurred or how to resolve the perceived impasse.

Mr. Patrick McCarthy explained the complaint is tied to a pending disciplinary matter whereby the company was issued 6 provisional licenses; subsequently MTC staff learned A-VIP was only entitled to 2, thus the other 4 were revoked. He added that he discussed this with the attorney for A-VIP just last week and the company now fully understands our position to impart to its drivers.

Speaker #2) Mr. Donnell Durley, also of A-VIP Limo

Speaker reiterated Mr. Davis' concerns, adding he had understood that a decision would be made by the board *today*.

Mr. Hamilton stated that before taking action, he wants a full report / specific recommendations from the MTC staff.

Mr. Harris emphatically stated there is still not enough enforcement being done and until he sees evidence of greatly increased enforcement, he is personally opposed to granting *any* more permits/lifting the moratorium even for premium sedans only.

Mr. Tully invited premium sedan operators to contact him, and pledged that his report at the December meeting will reflect their concerns as well as MTC staff's report/recommendations.

Speaker #3) Mr. Stan Kooman, of Metro Limousine

Speaker stated he represents a new company which is attempting to become licensed and which intends to comply with all MTC regulations. He said he has buses and limos but has no premium sedans; he appealed to the board 'loosen the reins' to allow him to expand his business.

A discussion followed, with Commissioners again citing the paramount need for additional, vigorous enforcement; Mr. Hamilton stated we also need the owners/drivers to help us eradicate the illegal operators and to uphold the VFH Code in support of all those who do pay their fees and who do abide by our regulations.

Mr. Hamilton asked that someone make the *motion to adjourn; Mr. Satz did so, Mr. Morgan seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.*

-- minutes taken by Judith Cannon / Office Administrator

