

Metropolitan Taxicab Commission

**March 30, 2010 @ 10:00 am
Commission Headquarters, 2628 Delmar, Hearings Room**

Members present: Commissioners; Tucci, Haile, Reeves, Hamilton, McNutt, Rudawsky, and Satz
Members absent: Commissioners; Asfaw and Bennett

Legal Department: Counselor Tim Ahrenhoersrsterbaeumer

MINUTES

Chairman Hamilton called the meeting to order; the roll was called by Director Klein and Mr. Hamilton accepted a motion by Commissioner McNutt to approve the minutes of the February 25th meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Reeves and there being no discussion a vote was called for and the motion was approved unanimously. Chairman Hamilton then asked for a date to be set for the April 2010 meeting and the Board selected April 12th at 10:00am.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Hamilton started the discussion with regards to the new program of the taxicab meter and inspection program. There was discussion regarding the new codes adopted by the Commission with regards to the requirement of the meters to be certified by the commission as opposed to an outside party. The Director has been putting plans into place for increased inspection activity and certification of meters by the commission. The proposal which the Director has discussed with Commissioner Hamilton is to increase the annual inspection fee, which has been the same since the inception of the commission, \$25 per year for the inspection of the taxicabs prior to the licensing and new licensing. He proposes to increase that fee because of any increased costs of doing business from \$25 to \$35 annually, but that will now include certification of the taxi meters. There will also be a secondary inspection added, to be determined by the Director. The second vehicle inspection would cost \$20 and would include checking the meter. There has been much survey work on licensing and regulatory issues across the country, and while everyone likes to know that we are watching costs and trying to keep the costs of the drivers and the companies down, the standard for the industry is to inspect meters twice a year and for the regulator to be the inspector. While we do not feel good about raising fees, we are below the national standard and this will give the staff additional enforcement tools as the industry matures even more to make sure that we have proper oversight of the vehicles.

Director Klein stated there was an individual who contacted every major metropolitan area in like-size to our area and obtained a copy of their regulatory devices. Our commission went through this information and we are the only regulatory agency that does not certify meters. It's the number one thing which all agencies do uniformly across the country; we found that the agencies certify the meters with greater prices than what we are proposing to our cab drivers. We found the majority of agencies inspect more than twice a year, but we are proposing the inspection of two times per year. We have found in the past, with only one inspection per year, the taxi tends to get cluttered up and in disarray which leads to more complaints, which results in more tickets being issued to the drivers. This second inspection will allow us and the company to be sure the taxi is being kept up.

The Director has had the commission agents certified by the department of weights and measures to inspect and seal meters; but he is contemplating some personnel shifts that would dedicate a full time member of the staff to inspections and taxi meter inspections to free up some monies in the budget for

some additional enforcements. At this time, our enforcement staff is doing the inspections and taking them away from the enforcement area.

Another issue to discuss in the new code is the mandated use of the meter on all runs. No matter what the issue, whether there is going to be a discount, the public must see the meter running at all times. Weights and measures will be setting up a meter course for us and we will go by whatever they determine. Our meters go by time and distance, therefore if the taxi is stuck in traffic the meter will still be running. The fee structure here is based on at least partial recovery for the agency. As a regulatory agency, we need to be certifying meters and we need to be having more than one inspection. The Director made note that he is always looking for ways to offset costs to drivers/companies.

Brief discussion was held on previous meter inspections through St. Louis County.

For the first year of inspections, it will cost the Commission money, then the next several years it will be offset.

Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to increase the annual inspection fee from \$25 to \$35 adding a second inspection for \$20 which would include testing and certification of the meter, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Satz and the roll was taken with all on approval with the exception of Haile being no. Motion was approved.

A brief discussion was held on companies setting own rates, with the Commission setting maximum rate. If the industry needs to raise the cap, they should bring that information in to the Commission for discussion.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Klein reported work has been done on the Rule's Promulgated Progress Report and they are on Chapter 2.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Reeves presented the financial report from February, 2010. He highlighted the Cash position was down due to prepayment of fingerprinting costs, prepayment of insurance and the purchase of a vehicle. The Income statement reflected a loss of \$7,796 for the month, which takes us under budget by about \$24,000 for the first two months of the year. Most of this is due to professional and legal fees. Fingerprinting fees are off budget based on timing, but should even out by July. Last year at this time, airport fees were paid in advance; they have not been billed yet this year. The field audit work has started and is going smoothly.

OLD BUSINESS

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Doug Clemens, Business Representative, Airport Taxi Counsel, addressed the commission regarding the down-turned economy and how the driver's are struggling every day. Asking if we could wait until

the economy starts to improve before raising the costs, Mr. Clemens greatly appreciates all the help the Director and Commissioners have given him towards this matter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

Pursuant to Missouri Statute 620.021, an Executive Session may be held to discuss legal, confidential or privileged matters under §610.021(1), RSMo 1988 Supp.; leasing, purchase or sale of real estate under §610.021(2); personnel actions under §610.021(3); discussions regarding negotiations with employee groups under §610.021(9); personnel records or applications under §610.021(13); or records under §610.021(14) which are otherwise protected from disclosure by law; or confidential or privileged communications with the District's auditor, including auditor work products under §610.021(17).

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hamilton then stated that there being no further business on the agenda he would entertain a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Reeves and seconded by Commissioner Rudawsky the motion was approved unanimously and the Commission adjourned.

*Minutes were interpreted from a transcript by M. Lange.
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