

Meeting Minutes

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY MEETING

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met on March 28, 2006 in Council Chambers, Third Floor Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Rafael Ortega
Commissioner Tony Bennett
Commissioner Toni Carter
Commissioner Jim McDonough
Commissioner Jan Parker
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
Commissioner Janice Rettman

OTHERS PRESENT: Connie Catlin, Robert Clarkson, Art Coulson, Kathy DeSpiegelaere, Jo Haberman, Ken Haider, Bonnie Jackelen, David MacMillan, Jane McClure, Steve Morris, Angie Taylor, Alicia Vap

Chair Ortega called the RCRRA meeting to order at 10:37 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. Approve minutes from March 14, 2006 RCRRA meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner McDonough, to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2006 RCRRA meeting.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

2. Ratify Partial Payment No. 19 in the amount of \$13,201.95 to Metropolitan Council for professional services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 study for January 2006

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner McDonough, to ratify Partial Payment No. 19 in the amount of \$13,201.95 to Metropolitan Council for professional services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 study for January 2006.

Roll call vote was taken; Commissioner Rettman voted no:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 1
Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has contracted for the professional consulting services of Metropolitan Council for the purpose of conducting the Central Corridor Phase 2 study; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council has satisfactorily completed portions of the work identified in the referenced agreements, and provided detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued through January 20, 2006; and

WHEREAS, submittal of invoices and payment documentation to the Rail Authority for ratification at the next scheduled meeting following staff approval of invoice documentation is required; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council Invoice No. NCV-4528, Partial Payment No. 19, in the amount of \$13,201.95 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due Metropolitan Council through January 20, 2006; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to Metropolitan Council in the amount of \$13,201.95 for services rendered through January 20, 2006, is hereby ratified.

3. Ratify Partial Payment No. 24 in the amount of \$14,231.71 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 study for December 2005

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner McDonough, to ratify Partial Payment No. 24 in the amount of \$14,231.71 to DMJM+Harris, Inc. for consulting services on the Central Corridor Phase 2 study for December 2005.

Roll call vote was taken; Commissioner Rettman voted no:

Ayes – 6, Nays – 1
Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has contracted for the professional consulting services of DMJM+Harris, Inc. for the purpose of conducting the Central Corridor Phase 2 study; and

WHEREAS, DMJM+Harris, Inc. has satisfactorily completed portions of the work identified in the referenced agreements, and provided detailed invoice documentation for services and costs accrued through December 23, 2005; and

WHEREAS, submittal of invoices and payment documentation to the Rail Authority for ratification at the next scheduled meeting following staff approval of invoice documentation is required; and

WHEREAS, DMJM+Harris, Inc. Invoice No. 6013313, Partial Payment No. 24, in the amount of \$14,231.71 attachments thereto, provide the correct documentation of payments due DMJM+Harris, Inc. through December 23, 2005; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, Payment to DMJM+Harris, Inc. in the amount of \$14,231.71 for services rendered through December 23, 2005, is hereby ratified.

POLICY AGENDA

4. Legislative Update—Kathy DeSpiegelaere

Kathy DeSpiegelaere discussed the federal appropriations request that was previously passed by the RCRRA, which included \$10 million for Central Corridor and \$8 million for Union Depot. Ms DeSpiegelaere commented that Congresswoman Betty McCollum will seek \$12 million for Union Depot and asked that the Central Corridor request be withdrawn.

Ms DeSpiegelaere noted that a new resolution was drafted with this change and asked RCRRA to consider approving the request.

A motion was made by Commission McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Parker, to approve the revised federal appropriations request as presented.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0
Motion accepted.

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Congressional delegation has recognized the importance of transit improvements to Minnesota and advocated successfully for funding for the improvements in previous years; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority requests federal 2007 appropriations for:

(1) Union Depot: Engineering, property acquisition, construction, to facilitate the implementation of the multi modal transit hub.

Amount of request: \$12 million

(2) The Central Corridor request for 2007, previously \$10 million, is being withdrawn. The 2008 Central Corridor federal appropriation request is anticipated to be approximately \$50 million.

Support item: St. Louis County request for Depot renovation in Duluth

Amount of request: \$1.3 million

Support item: Environmental work on the Duluth/St. Paul transit corridor

Amount of request: \$1.3 million

5. Central Corridor Update—Steve Morris

Steve Morris reported that the City of St. Paul held two workshops on Transit Oriented Development on March 20, 2006, both of which were well attended. He also noted that on March 21, 2006, the Minnesota House held committee hearings on Central Corridor and Union Depot.

Kathy DeSpiegelaere referred to a meeting with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) representatives. FTA indicated they are prepared to release the Central Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS); she noted they are still waiting for the formal sign-off and anticipate that happening soon. Ms DeSpiegelaere stated RCRRA is now seeking permission to set up three public hearings during a 45 day comment period after FTA officially signs off on the DEIS. Ms DeSpiegelaere also commented that the DEIS document will help determine which transportation mode will go into further study. The modes under consideration include the current bus system, bus rapid transit and light rail transit.

Commissioner Rettman requested clarification regarding the forty-five day comment period. Ms DeSpiegelaere confirmed that the comment period begins after the document has been issued in the Federal Register.

Commissioner Rettman also requested that the language of the resolution be changed from “...three hearings...” to “...at least three hearings...”

Commissioner Carter asked if public comments could be gathered in ways other than the public meetings; Ms DeSpiegelaere commented that receipt of comments in forms other than public meetings is required.

Commissioner Reinhardt requested clarification regarding the use of the words “public hearing” and the implications and responsibilities associated with those words. David MacMillan, Ramsey County

Attorney, noted that it was his understanding that a public hearing requires a list of witnesses and the opportunity for the public to speak. Ms DeSpiegelaere commented that in the past, this type of hearing included a moderator and translators, as well as a sign-in sheet, for the public.

A motion was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Parker, to authorize RCRRRA staff to set a forty-five day comment period and schedule at least three public hearings for the Central Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement upon receipt of formal approval for release of the document from FTA and in accordance with federal regulations.

Roll call vote was taken:

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0
Motion accepted, as amended.

WHEREAS, An Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) has been completed for the Central Corridor; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has stated that they will approve the AA/DEIS for publication and public hearings; and

WHEREAS, The Central Corridor Coordinating Committee will conduct these hearings on the AA/DEIS; and

WHEREAS, The public hearings on the AA/DEIS will further identify issues of importance to the public and public preferences for transit options on the corridor;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that staff is authorized to set a forty five day comment period and schedule at least three public hearings for the Central Corridor AA/DEIS upon receipt of formal approval for release of the document from FTA and in accordance with federal regulations.

6. New Starts Information—Kathy DeSpiegelaere

Kathy DeSpiegelaere talked about her recent attendance at the New Starts Information session hosted by FTA. Ms DeSpiegelaere noted that at the meeting, FTA said they would be looking for the Regional Travel Demand Model much earlier in the process, in the AA/DEIS. Ms DeSpiegelaere also commented that FTA is also looking to see that a project has a significant portion of the non-federal funding in place.

7. Introduction of Public Communications Manager for the Regional Railroad Authority

Kathy DeSpiegelaere introduced Art Coulson, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's new Public Communications Manager. Mr. Coulson gave a brief history of his background.

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.