

Minutes of the Public Transport Committee Meeting held in Mauao Rooms, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Building, 87 First Avenue, Tauranga on Friday, 8 February 2019 commencing at 9.30 a.m.

Present:

Chairman: L Thurston

Deputy Chairman: N Bruning

Councillors: P Thompson, J Nees, K Winters,

Appointees: Councillor D Thwaites (Western Bay of Plenty District Council), Councillor T Molloy (Tauranga City Council), Councillor M Gould (Rotorua Lakes Council)

In Attendance: Tauranga City Council: Mayor Greg Brownless, Cr Rick Curach, Cr Larry Baldock, Cr Catherine Stewart, Cr Kelvin Clout, Cr Leanne Brown, Cr Catherine Stewart, Cr John Robson, Christine Jones – General Manager Strategy & Growth, Clare Cassidy – Planning Engineer Transport

Western Bay of Plenty District Council: Mayor Garry Webber

Bay of Plenty Regional Council: Cr David Love, Cr John Cronin, Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive, Namouta Poutasi – General Manager Strategy & Science, Mat Taylor –General Manager Corporate, Garry Maloney – Transport Policy Manager, Tone Nerdrum-Smith – Committee Advisor, Yvonne Tatton – Governance Manager

Other Attendees: As listed in the minutes

Apologies: S Crosby, A von Dadelszen, Chairman D Leeder (Ex-Officio)

1 Apologies

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Cr Crosby, Cr von Dadelszen and Chairman Leeder (Ex-Officio) tendered at the meeting.

Winters/Bruning
CARRIED

2 Introduction by Chairperson

Key Points

- Extended an apology to the community for the current challenges relating to the introduction of the changed bus service, in particular since the commencement of the new school year
- Recognised the impact on the community and the potential loss of confidence in the service
- Noted that the shortage of bus drivers was the main contributor to the difficulties
- Reiterated Council's commitment to address the concerns and to work closely with the service provider, NZ Bus
- Noted Tauranga City Council Mayor Brownless and Councillors and the WBOPDC Mayor, Garry Webber, participating in the meeting
- In the public interest, the agenda would be rearranged as follows:
 - NZ Bus presentation would be held in the Public Section, rather than Public Excluded
 - Public Transport Blueprint Progress update would be covered after the Public Forum
 - Some items might be deferred to the next meeting to allow for increased focus on the discussion regarding the bus service.

3 Public Forum

Deb Turner

Key Points

- Resident of Pāpāmoa, long-term bus user and negatively impacted by the changes
- Public should have easy access to a bus service and she was losing faith in its reliability
- Spoke on behalf of those who were unable to speak themselves
- Gave examples of elderly people who had been waiting for buses for hours and children who were unable to get on the bus as it was already full
- The lack of reliable and available service meant she was unable to continue her volunteer work as it took too long to reach the destination
- Concerned regarding the attitude of some of the drivers who were rude and unhelpful.

Anna Larsen – Welcome Bay Community Centre

Key Points

- Recognised the points expressed by the previous speaker
- Despite concerns, parts of the service worked well and met the needs of the community
- Congratulated Council on the free school bus trial for Welcome Bay students
- Availability of free buses meant more children were able to attend school
- The community had a drive and need for a well-functioning bus service
- Concerned regarding the lack of communication, e.g. school buses were changed to Yellow Hopper Buses; incorrect or missing information in the BoP Times and on the BayBus website

- Concerned regarding the shortage of bus drivers, which did not appear to have been an issue with the previous service provider
- The “Three Cs”: Community – Council – Collaboration.

4 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Late Report: Rotorua Inner City Orbiter Service – Noted that Cr Gould was the Rotorua Lakes Council representative on the Committee and that this did not constitute a conflict of interest.

5 Reports

5.1 Public Transport Blueprint - Progress Update

PowerPoint presentation - Reference A3126183

Fiona McTavish – Chief Executive, Namouta Poutasi – General Manager Strategy & Science, Garry Maloney – Manager Transport Policy and Matt Hunt – Marketing & Communications Advisor presented this item and responded to questions.

Key Points of Presentation

- Why the Network Changed
- What’s happened – Complaints
- Addressing Issues – Key Messages
- Way Forward
- Communication
- School Bus Issues.

Presenters in Response to Questions

- The shortage of drivers had not become readily apparent until the end of January 2019
- Staff were committed to work closely with NZ Bus in resolving the issues
- Had met with Chief Executive of NZ Bus and expressed strong concerns regarding the substandard service being provided
- A number of avenues would be used to communicate timetable changes
- School bus service was a priority
- There were issues around the current reliability of the Transit App
- A number of children used the urban bus network to get to school, rather than travel being limited to dedicated school buses
- There had been a reduction in the number of school buses in the changed service.

Key Points – Members and Attendees

- Noted that the service both had and still did work well for some members of the community
- Using technology/internet to access route and timetable information could be challenging, in particular for elderly users
- Complaints had increased through Facebook and it was important to ensure information about who to contact was well known
- Concerned regarding the indication that reduced services as an interim measure had been agreed to, as this was yet to be discussed

- Considered that NZ Bus was currently in breach of its contract with Council
- Sought larger numbers of printed timetables, as well as face-to-face communication with users as timetables could be difficult to understand
- Suggested the establishment of a phone number where bus time changes/delays/cancellation information was available
- Concerned regarding the amount of time school children were travelling on the buses, e.g. situations where young children had to leave at 6.30am and were not home until 4.30pm.

10.30 am The meeting **adjourned**.

10.45 am The meeting **reconvened**.

Key Points of Presentation - Continued

- More Action – Investigate & Make Changes
- Feedback Avenues.

Presenters in Response to Questions - Continued

- A range of avenues, not limited to on-line options, had been provided to encourage feedback
- There had been signs on the buses at the start of the new contracts informing users how to provide feedback.

Key Points – Members and Attendees - Continued

- Key stakeholders should be involved in the route review
- The changes were intended to provide a faster/straighter service to ensure commuter travel was well supported
- The lack of bus drivers (25% less than projected when NZ Bus tendered for the service), was unacceptable
- Concerned regarding the repeated delay in the agreed delivery of e-buses
- Emphasized the importance of recognising the community as the priority when reviewing the service
- Recognised that the introduction of a changed service and a new provider at the same time as the commencement of the school year was a 'perfect storm' scenario
- It might be timely to undertake a review of how passenger transport was delivered in co-operation between the councils.

Staff Follow-up

- Information regarding bus passenger numbers since December 2018 to be provided to TCC and BOPRC Councillors and Committee Members.

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Public Transport Blueprint - Progress update.**

**Thurston/Winters
CARRIED**

5.2 Tauranga City Council- Public Transport Infrastructure Update

PowerPoint Presentation – Reference A3129819

Christine Jones – General Manager Strategy & Growth, Clare Cassidy – Planning Engineer Transport presented this item and responded to questions.

Key Points of Presentation

- Infrastructure in PT Blueprint PBC
- Additional Works
- Interchanges – Tauriko
- Interchanges – Polytech
- Interchanges – Hairini
- Interchanges – Brookfield
- Interchanges – Greerton
- Bayfair
- Improving high use stops
- Improving access
- Additional Work – Arataki
- Additional Work – Mt Drury
- New stops and shelters
- Additional work – 15th Avenue
- Additional work – Hairini Bus Lane.

Presenters in Response to Questions

- Data on bus delays and congestion points would be collected over the next few months to identify impacts on the infrastructure/network
- Short-term interchange designs at Brookfield had been completed, however land purchase would be required long-term
- The number of transfers occurring at Brookfield had identified the need for an interchange, however discussions regarding key locations were ongoing
- Long-term review was considering the location of the Bayfair interchange, including Maunganui Road
- Feedback from users impacted on the location of permanent new shelters to ensure they met the needs of the community
- Funding for a park-and-ride study was currently being scoped for commencement within the next couple of months.

Key Points – Members and Attendees

- The review of the Greerton Transport project should take into consideration the impact public transport had on the local community
- Queried whether a congested area like Brookfield could accommodate an interchange as it was a connection point for a number of schools with a high amount of foot-traffic
- There was insufficient road space on Cameron Road to justify dedicated bus lanes/clearways
- Community meetings could be arranged to review whether the interchange locations were appropriate
- Concerned regarding inadequate or non-existing bus stop shelters

- There were no facilities in Tauranga CBD for the bus drivers to stay during breaks and encouraged co-operation between councils and NZ Bus in finding a suitable solution.

Comment by BOPRC Staff

- The location of the interchanges was a reflection of ongoing engagement with the community as part of the development of the Public Transport Blueprint.

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Tauranga City Council- Public Transport Infrastructure Update.**

**Molloy/Thwaites
CARRIED**

6 **Presentations (Late Item) - Transferred From Public Excluded**

6.1 **NZ Bus Presentation**

PowerPoint Presentation – Reference A3130833

Claire Neville – General Manager Operations, Ian Gordon – General Manager Fleet and Anthony James - National Commercial Manager, NZ Bus presented this item and responded to questions.

Key Points of Presentation

- Introductions
- NZ Bus in Tauranga
- Current Situation - Driver Numbers
- Performance – Missed Trips
- Current Situation
- Challenges
 - Shortage of candidates
 - Structural factors
- Steps to address the shortage
- Current outlook.

Presenters in Response to Questions

- There were labour shortages in all the key areas of operation, i.e. Wellington, Auckland and now Tauranga.
- Had commenced recruitment six months before the go-live date in December 2018 and had continued recruitment since then, which had proven challenging
- Data was gathered and feedback sought both from users and drivers to address any emerging issues
- Recognised that clear and open communication was a key factor and that they had failed in this regard

- There were differing employment agreements in place, e.g. a flat rate was being paid in Tauranga vs a different pay structure in Auckland
- Recognised that this was 'early days' in the service and that using temporary drivers from Auckland meant they were not familiar with the local geography
- Did not consider that the remuneration packages offered were the cause of the driver shortage
- Some recruits had realised during the training period this was not a suitable position for them and left. However, overall loss of staff was minimal
- Noted that the tender for the service was submitted in 2017 when challenges related to the Tauranga market were substantially less than the current situation.

Key Points – Members and Attendees

- Cautioned against making assumptions that the current employees would remain as anecdotal evidence indicated there was a high level of driver dissatisfaction
- Concerned that inadequate training was provided to the drivers
- It was an unacceptable situation that NZ Bus were unable to provide the service and meet their contractual obligations
- Council had not agreed to a reduction in the contractually agreed level of service provided by NZ Bus
- Although living wage was offered initially, the flat rate applied in Tauranga meant it was not adjusted
- Concerned regarding the loss of confidence by the community in the bus service and by association, the Regional Council.

12.30 pm The meeting **adjourned**.

12.55 pm The meeting **reconvened**.

7 Previous Minutes

7.1 Public Transport Committee Minutes - 9 November 2018

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Confirms the Public Transport Committee Minutes - 9 November 2018**

**Nees/Winters
CARRIED**

7.2 Welcome Bay School Bus Trial

Garry Maloney – Manager Transport Policy provided a brief outline of the report.

Key Points

- The trial had been well received by the community
- Data and feedback would be gathered during the trial and presented to the Committee.

- Free fares applied to the dedicated school buses only, and not urban buses.

Staff Follow-up

- Information regarding the changed Maungatapu service and impact on the school travellers to be further investigated.

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Welcome Bay School Bus Trial.**

**Thompson/Bruning
CARRIED**

8 Acceptance of Late Items

Resolved

That pursuant to section 46A of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the following items be considered at this meeting:

Late Items/Tabled Items (as set out below)

- 1. Open Section: Late Report - Rotorua Inner-City Orbiter Service**
- 2. Open Section: Email from Heather Ramsay regarding the changes to the bus service**
- 3. Open Section: Attendance by representatives of NZ Bus – *Transferred from Public Excluded***
- 4. Public Excluded Section: Public Transport Blueprint Progress Update - *Reason for confidentiality: To carry out commercial and industrial negotiations.***

The reason why these items were not on the agenda was that they were not available when the agenda was issued. Discussion cannot be delayed until the next meeting due to timing.

**Winters/Bruning
CARRIED**

9 General Business

Two items as listed under Item 14: Consideration of General Business.

10 Confidential Business to be Transferred into the Open

Noted that the NZ Bus presentation had been transferred into the Open Section of the meeting.

11 Reports - *Continued*

11.1 Total Mobility Solution

This report was transferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

11.2 Network Planning, Service Delivery and Infrastructure

This report was transferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

11.3 Waihi Beach Trial Service

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Waihi Beach Trial Service;
- 2 Confirms that the decision has a medium level of significance as determined by the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. Council has identified and assessed different options and considered community views as part of making the decision, in proportion to the level of significance.

That the Public Transport Committee recommend that the Regional Council:

- 3 Agrees that the current configuration of the Waihi Beach trial passenger transport service has been successful and endorses its continuation as a permanent two day a week service.
- 4 Allocate additional funding of \$57,000 in the 2019-2020 Annual Plan and subsequent years.
- 5 Confirms that the decision has a medium level of significance as determined by the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. Council has identified and assessed different options and considered community views as part of making the decision, in proportion to the level of significance.

Bruning/Thurston
CARRIED

11.4 Performance of Public Transport Services for July to December 2018

Resolved

That the Public Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Performance of Public Transport Services for July to December 2018.

NAMES

CARRIED**11.5 Other Matters of Interest****Resolved****That the Public Transport Committee:**

- 1 Receives the report, Other Matters of Interest.**

**Winters/Bruning
CARRIED**

12 Consideration of Late Items**12.1 Rotorua Inner-City Orbiter Service**Key Points – Members and Attendees

- Did not support separate consultation of the inner city orbiter service as part of the Regional Council's Annual Plan 2019-20.

Resolved**That the Public Transport Committee:**

- 1 Receives the report, Rotorua Inner-City Orbiter Service.**

**Winters/Bruning
CARRIED**

12.2 Public Excluded Section**Resolved****Resolution to exclude the public**

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General Subject of Matter to be Considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to this matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) LGOIMA 1987 for passing this resolution
Public Transport Committee	Please refer to the relevant	Good reason for

Public Excluded Minutes - 9 November 2018	sections of the minutes	withholding exists under Section 48(1)(a)
Regional Integrated Ticketing System Update	To carry out commercial and industrial negotiations	Good reason for withholding exists under Section 48(1)(a)
Public Transport Blueprint - Progress Update - Continued	To carry out commercial and industrial negotiations	Good reason for withholding exists under Section 48(1)(a)

THAT the TCC Mayor and Councillors and WBOPDC Mayor Webber be permitted to stay when the public is excluded due to their knowledge of the matters under discussion.

**Thurston/Winters
CARRIED**

13 **NZ Bus Presentation**

Claire Neville – General Manager Operations, Ian Gordon – General Manager Fleet and Anthony James - National Commercial Manager, NZ Bus re-joined the meeting.

Key Points

- Reiterated their commitment to work with Council and the community; addressing the concerns raised and deliver a service that met expectations

14 **Consideration of General Business**

Key Points – Members and Attendees

- Noted the invitation to attend a community organised meeting at Maungatapu Marae on Sunday 10 February 2019 at 3.00 pm. The main focus of the meeting was to discuss bus services including infrastructure, however all BOPRC Councillors were invited.
- Recognised the significant effort and commitment of Chairperson, Cr Lyall Thurston and working in a co-operative manner to resolve the issues currently being experienced with the public transport service.

The meeting closed at 2.08 pm

Confirmed 29 March 2019

Cr Lyall Thurston
Chairperson – Public Transport Committee