



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Room 412 East, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

August 7, 2008

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the August 7, 2008 meeting of the Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Ott called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Al Ott, Chair; Sen. Judy Robson, Vice Chair; Reps. Jeff Stone, Barbara Toles, and Robin Vos; Sen. John Lehman; and Public Members Larry Arft, Len Brandrup, Gary Becker, Gerald Derr, Brett Geboy, Dick Granchalek, Anita Gulotta-Connelly, Richard Johnson, Chuck Kamp, Scott McDonell, Delora Newton, Brian Ohm, Fritz Ruf, Dick Wagner, and Tom Walker.

COMMITTEE MEMBER EXCUSED: Public Member Tim Hanna.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Scott Grosz and Larry Konopacki, Staff Attorneys.

APPEARANCES: Sen. Fred A. Risser, Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Council; Terry C. Anderson, Director, Legislative Council Staff; Art Guzzetti, Vice President-Policy, American Public Transportation Association (APTA); and Stewart McKenzie, Community Planner, and Angelica Salgado, Transportation Specialist, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Transportation.

Opening Remarks

Senator Risser, Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Council, welcomed the committee and gave a brief summary of the Joint Legislative Council. Terry C. Anderson introduced the Legislative Council staff members assigned to work with the committee. He discussed rules for voting and described the process of reimbursement of expenses. He noted that the committee's meetings will be recorded and available on the Internet.

Introduction of Committee Members

Chair Ott introduced himself and welcomed the committee. He discussed his vision for the committee, including his intent to begin the committee's work by gathering information to educate committee members on things such as federal transit funding, state and local funding of transit nationwide, transit services and trends in Wisconsin, and regional transportation authority (RTA) models currently being used around the country. Chair Ott stressed that it is not his intention to have the committee attempt to resolve the various local political issues surrounding the creation of individual RTAs. Chair Ott also asked the rest of the committee to briefly introduce themselves.

Presentations by Invited Speakers

[Note: PowerPoint presentations and other documents referred to by the speakers are posted on the committee's Internet site.]

Art Guzzetti, Vice President-Policy, APTA

Mr. Guzzetti provided the committee with background information about the current state of public transit services and transit funding sources used around the country. Mr. Guzzetti outlined some of the challenges facing transit systems due to high fuel prices and a declining economy. He also explained why there is a great deal of opportunity for transit service growth and offered reasons why governments should be investing in transit.

Mr. Guzzetti described potential sources of state and local funding that could be used to support the capital and operating costs of public transit, provided statistics about relative use of those sources around the country, and gave specific examples of the funding sources used in other areas.

Stewart McKenzie, Community Planner, and Angelica Salgado, Transportation Specialist, FTA, U.S. Department of Transportation

Ms. Salgado provided the committee with a general introduction to the FTA including the agency's structure and functions, the federal legislation that directs FTA policies, the funding that Wisconsin has recently received from the FTA, information about the FTA's varied formula and discretionary grant funding programs, and some of the limitations of those programs.

Mr. McKenzie focused on the "section 5309" capital investment grant programs, which include the "New Starts," "Small Starts," and "Very Small Starts" programs. He discussed the planning process

for major transit capital investments, the FTA's rating process for project funding decisions, and Wisconsin projects that are currently under review by the FTA.

Discussion of Committee Assignment

The committee had a brief discussion of the committee's charge. Representative Vos said that the committee should not focus on new transit services to the exclusion of addressing challenges that transit systems around the state are experiencing with their current services, a point reinforced by other committee members. Representative Stone suggested that the committee's priority should be to identify and support the best way to provide transit services, including the best geographical scale. Senator Robson expressed concerns that the committee stay within the boundaries of its charge so that its recommendations can receive approval of the Joint Legislative Council. Chair Ott noted that if the committee is to create good enabling legislation, it must be sure that local decision-making is not too restricted.

Other Business

There was no other business brought before the committee.

Plans for Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be ***Wednesday, September 17, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 412 East, State Capitol, Madison.*** Tentative additional meeting dates are October 9, November 13, and December 11, 2008.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

LAK:ksm