



## TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022 AT 5:00 PM

WATERTOWN MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 106 JONES STREET, ROOM 0041

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**In-Person:** Watertown Municipal Building 106 Jones Street Room 0041

**Virtually:** <https://meet.goto.com/827825917> or by calling: +1 (571) 317-3116

**Access Code:** 827-825-917

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. REVIEW & APPROVE MINUTES**

A. Transit Commission minutes from October 6, 2022

**3. BUSINESS:**

A. Review and approve: Taxi fare increase for 2022

B. Review and approve: Capital and Operating Grant applications for 2023

C. Review and discuss: Running Inc. school policy, student vouchers, student pick up, and corner service

**4. SET NEXT MEETING DATE**

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

*Persons requiring other reasonable accommodations for any of the above meetings, may contact the office of the City Clerk at [mdunneisen@CityofWatertown.org](mailto:mdunneisen@CityofWatertown.org), phone 920-262-4006*

*A quorum of any City of Watertown Council, Committee, Board, Commission, or other body, may be present at this meeting for observing and gathering of information only*

## TRANSIT COMMISSION

October 06, 2022

4:30 p.m.

Section 2, ItemA.

The Transit Commission met on the above date and time in person and virtually with the following members present: Michelle Bainbridge, Laurie Grosenick, Cathy Egan, and Ald. Licht. Absent was Tom Hahn. Also in attendance were Finance Director Mark Stevens, Justin Running (Passenger Transit, Inc.) virtually, Bill Hugin (Passenger Transit), and City Clerk Megan Dunneisen.

### 1. Call to order

Egan called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

### 2. Review & approve minutes of March 8, 2022

Motion was made by Ald. Licht to approve minutes of March 8, 2022, with adding that he was absent for the meeting, seconded by Grosenick and motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

### 3. Review of ridership/financial statistics

Reports reviewed. Acknowledged that ridership is up.

### 4. Business

- A. Review and approve: CPI Annual Rate Increase.** Grosenick made a motion to approve the CPI Annual Rate Increase for 2023, seconded by Egan. Dunneisen gave briefing on the 8.3% increase to the rate for 2023. Finance Director Mark Stevens gave information explaining that the increase will drastically change the local share portion of funding for the transit system and that the number is set by the state. Motion to approve the increase carried by unanimous voice vote.
- B. Review and approve: Exercise of Option year three contract renewal for 2023.** Ald. Licht made a motion to approve the Exercise of Option year three, seconded by Bainbridge. Discussion made on the bid process and although the city is able to go out again for bid, the state allows the option to enter into option years for 3, 4 and 5. Every 5 years the State requires the city to do a RFP. Discussion that the City Local Share has gone from around 60k to around 80k with the CPI increase. Stevens spoke about the possibility of increasing fare rates to help with the funding of the transit system. Stevens presented a rough idea for what the fare increase could be based on comparable of other like municipalities. The Commission discussed that the city just went through this process to increase fares in 2021. Hugin, Manager at Passenger Transit, talked about the possible effect it would have on rideshare. School bus routes and vouchers were also discussed. With the rate increase, the hourly amount goes from \$28.87 to \$31.27. The commission agreed that the rate increase was fair as it is consistent with economic and market conditions (CPI). Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
- C. Review and discuss: budget process and estimates for 2023.** Commission discussed the 2023 budget year. Justin Running reminded that the fare increase has a state statute to follow for procedure and that a lot of municipalities are going this route due to the increase in CPI. The Commission directed Dunneisen to add the fare increase to the next transit meeting. Stevens said he would be presenting the increase at the Budget Finance Meeting next week. Hugin mentioned that there could be negative feedback with a rate increase but that is expected for any change. Bainbridge spoke on the circumstance being unfortunate since the last fare increase was just last year. Grosenick spoke on how the city could get negative feedback but that outweighs not having a transit system at all if the city can't afford to fund.

Bainbridge left meeting at 5:30pm

- D. Review and approve: 2021 and 2022 Capital Award Vehicle Procurements.** Grosenick made a motion to approve the 2021 and 2022 Capital Awards for new taxi vehicles, seconded by Egan. The commission, along with input from Hugin and Running, discussed vehicle options. Hugin would like to

see a non-ADA minivan purchased. The 2021 application was for a minivan and the 2022 was for a minibus. Funds were not released by the state for 2021 due to vehicle shortages and are allowing municipalities to use the funds now. The only vehicles available through the state procurement are ADA complaint. The concern on wheelchair lifts vs ramps were also discussed. The Commission directed Dunneisen to look into changing the project for 2021 from a minivan to the Ford Transit. Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote to approve the 2021 and 2022 Capital Grant awards and to purchase two Ford Transit vehicles via the state procurement process.

- E. Review and discuss: vehicle disposals.** Hugin explained the process to dispose of vehicles using the Wisconsin Surplus site and that Bus 84 has been successfully sold and picked up.
- F. Review and discuss: Capital and Operating Grant applications for 2023.** The Commission discussed looking at purchasing a non-ADA minivan for the 2023 Capital Grant Project and if that process would result in the city doing their own procurements. Ald. Licht mentioned the city trying that before and did not get good results. Dunneisen was directed to look into and to put back onto next Transit Commission.
- G. Review and discuss: Running Inc. school policy, student vouchers, student pick up, and corner service.** The submitted letter about change in policy at Passenger Transit affecting kids was discussed. The policy change was the ability to call the night before to schedule a ride. Staffing was part of the deciding factor and Hugin reported that so far there has been no complaints to them about the change and they are doing the best they can to get the kids to school on time. The commission directed Dunneisen to reach out again to the school to see if they could attend a meeting to explain their taxi policies they have for the district.

## **5. Review citizen communications received by city**

Commission discussed the Facebook post made by a Passenger Transit employee about another co-worker. Hugin spoke on how the situation was handled internally.

## **6. Set next meeting date**

The next meeting date will be October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm or October 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:30.

## **7. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Grosenick to adjourn meeting at 6:07 p.m., seconded by Ald. Licht and motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Megan Dunneisen, City Clerk

DISCLAIMER: These minutes are uncorrected; any corrections will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved. Complete minutes are open for public inspection in the office the Finance Department.

September 13, 2022

Honorable Emily McFarland  
Mayor, City of Watertown  
P.O. Box 477  
Watertown, WI 53094

Tony Arnett  
President, Watertown Unified School District  
111 Dodge Street  
Watertown, WI 53094

Greetings:

I am writing to alert you to a potential problem regarding the transportation of students to the Watertown schools, especially for those students who are from households with limited incomes and rely on the Watertown taxi service for transportation. Since the school year has just started, the depth of the problem cannot be fully assessed but from input we have received from parents, community resources and a school, we foresee a potential problem that may expand as we enter late fall and winter.

There are some potentially critical issues that will need to be addressed with the Watertown taxi service.

- Due to a procedural change this year, parents may not be able to make an appointment for a taxi the night prior. This creates a problem with parents whose workdays start earlier the start of the school day and when the taxi service starts receiving calls. Their caregivers may be unable to make a reservation. This change to the taxi service policy for this school year places an added burden on families preparing students for school in the morning.
- The cost of taxi service is cost prohibitive for families who are not provided with bus service and have limited resources. The cost can be up to \$30/week/student even if the family pre-purchases vouchers if the children need a ride to and from school for five days. It is even more costly to pay an individual fare per child, per trip. It has been reported that free vouchers may be available through some schools, but the information concerning them and availability does not appear to be consistent across the community.
- The reliability of the taxi service is spotty. It has been reported that like most industries, hiring enough qualified drivers is an issue at this time.
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It is important for all children to arrive at school on time and ready for the school day including the opportunity to access free and reduced school breakfast services.

Since the Watertown taxi service is a part of the system that provides transportation to students, especially those who have limited resources, we ask that the City and the School District investigate the issues raised and work to provide a solution or solutions that meet the needs of our students before it intensifies as a problem.

Thank you for your kind consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

  
Carleen Schloemer

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Watertown, WI 53094

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