



Minutes of Ridgecrest's City Organization and Services Committee

March 8, 2007
5:00 p.m.

City Council Conference Room
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, California 93555

CALL TO ORDER – 5:02p.m.

PRESENT: Council Members: Mayor Holloway and Vice Mayor Wiknich

STAFF: Harvey Rose, City Manager; Mike Avery, Assistant City Manager; Dennis Speer, Public Works Director; Ron Strand, Deputy Chief of Police; Jim McRea, Public Services Director; Lois Beres, Planning Commissioner; Ann Taylor, Administrative Analyst III; Starla Shaver, Administrative Analyst I; Dewain Cook, Transit Supervisor; Eva Peterson, Executive Secretary

OTHER ATTENDEES: Louis Monterroso, Kern County Fire Department; Chief John Hayes, Kern County Fire Department; Captain Gus Salcido, Kern County Fire Department; John Ciani, Daily Independent; Marilyn Beardslee, KernCOG; Michael Felschow, LSC Consultant; Steve Rowland, LSC Consultant; Glenda Ward, DART

ABSENT: Mike Biddlingmeier, Planning Commissioner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Moved by Vice Mayor Wiknich, 2nd by Lois Beres

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Moved by Vice Mayor Wiknich, 2nd by Lois Beres (correction to minutes under FY07 Budget Process Plan – change to 2008)

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES:

- T. Wiknich was nominated by Mayor Holloway as the Chair for the City Organization and Services Committee. 2nd by Lois Beres.
- LSC Transportation Consultants, Michael Felschow and Steve Rowland provided the committee and attendees with a presentation on their transit alternatives and their recommendations for the Ridgecrest Public Transit System. The consultants began their presentation by providing a handout with their draft goals and objectives for the City of Ridgecrest (see attachment). In addition to the attachment, the following comments were made on the various sections:

Objective 1a: The report recommends that bus routes operate at an average of four passengers per service hour, and if that minimum standard is not met, the service should be reviewed for changes. The Ridgecrest average is 6 passengers per service hour, however, proactive and corrective action needs to be taken to maintain a 10% fairbox.

Objective 1c: A rider survey will be distributed every year in order to obtain input from the system users. On-going comment cards could be an option.

Objective 1d: Prepare a policy manual outlining what is expected by employees. This will also help employees deal with customer complaints.

Objective 2a: Maintain passenger information about weekly ridership and track origins and destinations to monitor service. This will determine where new service may be needed (for future expansion). This information will also assist with requirements for grant monies.

Objective 2d: The Marketing Plan is a key tool for increase ridership. Provide information to people, i.e. sr. center, college, etc.

Objective 2c: Periodic meetings with drivers to discuss ways to improve transit service or perform operations more effectively. D. Speer will review and may combine with monthly safety/training meetings.

Objective 4d: During transit needs assessment meeting for new ideas; i.e. promotional days once or twice a year - - or on election days - - rides to hotels in the community.

LSC Transportation Consultants feel that the current dial-a-ride system is losing ridership – ridership has decreased 60% over the past 6 years. Year 2006 ridership was at 33,000 at a cost of \$844,000 while the cost has increased by 40% over the past 5 years. The existing fleet contains 5 working vehicles with a cost per passenger at \$25.17. The revenue hours in 2006 were 5,899 and the revenue miles in 2006 was at 80,045. Ridership is down – we are not servicing the customer’s needs.

The consultants offered the following options as service alternatives. All of these alternatives would have to be refined, these are just starting points. We will also need an additional 2-3 vehicles added to our fleet.

1. Demand-Response Service - cost of \$1.1M. The disadvantage to this system is it implodes. It cannot make the next time point. The advantage to this system is that it allows a form of a dial-a-ride service.
2. Fixed Route cost is \$1.5M. With this system, you need a 60 minute headway service routing system, which means you have to have a para-transit system.
3. The Flex Route cost is at \$1.3M. With this system there is a 60 minute headway service routing system. You can deviate ADA from route – this system helps wean off of the dial-a-ride system. The disadvantage is that you cannot have too many deviations.
4. The Hybrid cost is at \$1.3. One fixed route and 3 flex routes (decrease in capital cost).

H. Rose stated he feels the new plans presented will not suit the Ridgecrest community. He stated that people will not want to walk in 110 degree heat for a bus. M. Felschow's point is that customers are not happy with our current service, however H. Rose stated customers will really be unhappy if they have to be inconvenienced. S. Rowland stated that if you try to up grade the current dial-a-ride service, it will cost a lot more money. M. Felshow stated the dial-a-ride can only carry "x" amount of rides before it implodes and we already saw that happen 6 years ago.

M. Beardslee stated that Transit is not funded by General Funds and with fare box rates so low, it's possible we could lose our funding in the future.

M. Holloway asked if the fixed route would affect our insurance and S. Rowland stated he was not sure how it would affect our insurance.

S. Rowland asked what direction the city would like to go in – and M. Holloway answered that the Flex Route looked best to him. S. Rowland stated that this route was the recommendation from the consultants. The information will be brought to staff and to committee for review. D. Speer will look at fare structure.

Next Steps:

- Select A Preferred Service
- Develop an Implementation Plan
- Draft a Final Report
- Release Tech Memo #2 in 7-10 Days

Next meeting will take place on March 21st (Un-met needs). Talk to COG.

J. Ciani stated we may want to look at how fast a new system would pay for itself –

- 80-20 split on capital
- 80 state and federal
- 20 community

- T. Wiknich did not bring up LAFCO or the Mojave issues on tonight's agenda since those topics were already discussed at City Council meeting.

Next Meeting - April 12th at 5:00pm.

Adjourned - 6:20p.m.