

MINUTES

TRANSIT SERVICES COMMITTEE

OTTAWA-CARLETON REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

FRIDAY 17 DECEMBER 1999

9:00 A.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Loney

Members: M. Bellemare, W. Byrne, L. Davis, C. Doucet D. Holmes, H. Kreling,
J. Legendre

The Committee Chair, A. Loney, introduced Mr. Michel Charbonneau, Mayor of Cantley, a member of the Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO) Board and the STO's Official Observer on the Transit Services Committee. Chair Loney welcomed Mr. Charbonneau to the meeting.

REGULAR ITEMS

1. 2000 TRANSIT SERVICES BUDGET

Mr. Gordon Diamond, General Manager, OC Transpo, provided an overview of the 2000 budget for regular and specialized transit services, and the 10-year Capital plan. A copy of the slide presentation used by Mr. Diamond is held on file with the Committee Co-ordinator. He advised that staff are seeking the Committee's approval for a regular service operating budget of \$198.7 million and a Para-Transpo budget of \$16.4 million. As well, funding approval for the first year of the ten year Capital plan in the amount of \$18.2 million is requested.

Mr. Diamond noted the RMOC's target calls for a 3% ridership increase and funding is needed to meet this target. Staff are recommending a modest fare increase of 1.8%, effective 1 April 2000. The proposed fare increase will produce \$1.4 million to partially off-set the declining revenue situation.

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- Notes:
1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by Committee.
 2. Reports requiring consideration will be forwarded to the Commission at its meeting of 22 December 1999 in Transit Services Report No. 99-17 and to Regional Council in Transit Report No. 2.

The Committee heard from Mr. Jeffrey Alguire, Chair, Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC). He referred to a document submitted by the Council on Aging and he highlighted the one point that summarized his thoughts "Lift the freeze on Para Transpo please!". He read two Motions approved by the ATAC, the first in support of the development of options to better meet demand in 2000, the second requesting that the Commission substantially increase the Para Transpo budget to provide additional service.

Mr. Alguire continued by saying that roughly 35,000 trips will be refused, and this does not include latent demand from persons discouraged from trying to reach Para Transpo. The staff proposal calls for 4,250 one-way trips to be added via the Laidlaw contract, an additional 4,250 trips via the taxi pilot project and a modest allowance for more trips through demand management strategies supported by ATAC. Mr. Alguire pointed out that these methods combined will only provide a total of 8,500 trips, or one quarter of the 35,000 refusals.

Mr. Alguire offered the following scenarios to deal with the situation:

- ⇒ quadruple the numbers in the proposal to account for 17,000 trips from the Laidlaw contract at a cost of approximately \$340,000, or;
- ⇒ allow 17,000 trips out of the taxi pilot project at a cost of \$260,000, for a total expenditure of \$600,000.

Mr. Alguire cautioned that this suggestion may not be realistic in light of the "unknowns" regarding the taxi pilot project. The second option would have taxis provide the same number of trips as in the staff proposal (i.e. 4,250 at \$65,000) and the additional 29,750 trips would be covered by Laidlaw at roughly \$20 per trip for a total of \$595,000. He said he realized that going beyond a certain level of service with Laidlaw would potentially result in higher vehicle costs therefore these numbers may need to be adjusted. Mr. Alguire pointed out these changes would not eliminate refusals altogether but would go a long way towards improving Para Transpo service for those who need it.

Mr. Allan Shain, a Para Transpo user, stated that even though the proposed budget maintains current levels of service, the service he receives is inadequate compared to that which is available to conventional transit users. Mr. Shain advised that, over the last five years, the level of service has declined such that in order to book a ride for the following evening, a person has to call by 7:00 a.m. the day before. Mr. Shain told Committee he is currently performing a one-man comedy show at the Great Canadian Theatre Company entitled "Still Waiting for that Special Bus", a play about the trials and tribulations of having to book your whole life 48 hours in advance. Mr. Shain concluded his remarks by expressing the hope the Committee will approve a realistic budget increase to provide additional service.

Mr. Kevin Kinsella, Coalition for Social Action, said he has recently found employment, but he can't be assured Para Transpo can get him to his place of work because the conditions of his job require that he be available on short notice. Mr. Kinsella related that his wife often rises early to book the service but often bookings are unavailable. He called the system overloaded and under-funded. Mr. Kinsella said he was pleased to learn of the proposed taxi pilot project, as it will help to a certain extent. Having stated this, he noted that many ambulatory people whom the pilot project is designed to help will be unable to use taxis because they need ramps to access vehicles. Mr. Kinsella pointed out there are only three such vehicles in service and often they are unavailable because of mechanical breakdown. He put forward the view that service is a right, not a privilege and a much larger increase is required than the one being proposed. Mr. Kinsella advanced the hypothesis that the eligibility criteria review will only result in persons who really need Para Transpo service not being able to access it.

Responding to a query from Commissioner Legendre regarding accessible taxis, Mr. Kinsella indicated that the former Eastway taxi company owned two vehicles but removed them from service because of their high need for maintenance. In addition, many drivers do not like to take the time to pick up clients in wheelchairs.

Chair Loney pointed out there is currently no contractual arrangement between OC Transpo and private taxi companies for accessible taxis. This means that Blue Line has decided to investigate the option of using accessible taxis on its own.

David Bernhardt, Board President, Ottawa-Carleton Council on Aging

Mr. Bernhardt introduced his colleagues, Michael Kent, Chair of the Council's Transportation Working Group, and Alex Cullen, Executive Director, Council on Aging. The speaker noted that, in 1998, the Council on Aging, as part of an OC Transpo review, expressed concern about the impact to disabled users of a freeze on Para Transpo service levels since 1993. Mr. Bernhardt said he regretted the fact that the freeze is ongoing, opining that this will result in a substantial number of disabled persons being unable to access public transit.

Mr. Bernhardt related statistics about the growing number of seniors in Ottawa-Carleton. He said that, while the Council on Aging supports the eligibility criteria review, it is felt any gains will be wiped away by the force of demographics. Mr. Bernhardt reiterated that the freeze on Para Transpo services cannot be sustained. He urged the Commission to lift the freeze by injecting \$700,000 into the Para Transpo budget. The impact of this increase on the levy for the average income will be an additional two dollars, or slightly more than one-half of one percent.

Mr. Michael Kent, Chair of the Council on Aging's Transportation Working Group, and a member of ATAC, supported Mr. Bernhardt's comments. He said that ATAC, an advisory committee consisting mainly of representatives from the disabled community has unanimously approved a Motion requesting a substantial increase in the Para Transpo budget. Mr. Kent said this was a serious problem Regional Council could no longer afford to ignore.

Mr. Alex Cullen spoke about the staff report, commenting that what is being offered only goes one-quarter of the way to meeting 8,500 trips. At a per trip cost of \$20 dollars, 8,500 trips represents \$170,000, not \$150,000: this will need to be clarified to ensure no trips are lost. Chair Loney pointed out that adding the lesser cost of taxi service to the equation may bring down the average per trip cost.

The Committee then heard from Sr. Marlene Kelly, Spirituality for Social Justice (KAIROS) Group. She began by describing the Bronson Centre and the many agencies and programs housed in that facility. She said KAIROS works with others in a reflective stance to create an awareness of unjust local and global structures and to provide alternatives to these structures. Sr. Kelly said many people at the Bronson Centre struggle daily to find the basic necessities of life. Many find it difficult to circulate because of high transportation costs. Sr. Kelly asked that the Commission work towards transportation costs that are accessible to the entire community.

Mary Kehoe, representing Faith Partners, spoke in support of increasing Para Transpo service to eliminate the trip refusals. The Faith Partners also endorse the recommendations of the Task Force on Poverty as they relate to transit. She asked that the Region approve in principle that all members of the community have universal access to transit services whether their needs are fulfilled by regular or by Para Transpo service.

Ms. Kehoe said reduced bus fares and passes should be made available to low income individuals and families. Commissioner Byrne asked whether Faith Partners has a position on fare increases for conventional transit. Mrs. Kehoe said many people cannot afford the current rates, therefore they will not be able to afford an increase. However, she pointed out that those who can pay taxes should bear the brunt for those in need.

Ken Clavett, representing Labour Community Services, a joint project of the Ottawa and District Labour Council and the United Way of Ottawa-Carleton, said that, as a taxpayer, he has been involved in three initiatives that explored the reality of living in poverty. In all three initiatives, the issue of transportation emerged as a major concern. The lack of affordable transportation is a barrier to community participation first and foremost and a major barrier to finding meaningful employment. Mr. Clavette asked that the Commission find a way to provide low-cost transit passes to persons living in poverty.

Barbara Boreham, Task Force on Poverty, pointed out that 19% of the Region's population is classified as low income. She suggested OC Transpo stop focusing on ridership and focus on the non-working population who want to be able to ride the bus. She said OC Transpo is not just a business, it is there to provide a public service for everyone. By not providing discounts on bus passes to those who cannot afford to pay the full price, OC Transpo discriminates against the poor. Ms. Boreham said the lack of mobility leads to social isolation, mental health problems, and unemployment.

Cliff Gazee, Co-Chair, Task Force on Poverty, a member of Partners for Jobs, and Chair, Somerset West Community Health Centre, spoke about transportation as a tool to improve a person's quality of life. He said there is a concern within OC Transpo that providing lower fares for one segment of the population will result in financial loss. He contended there will be no financial loss, because people who could not afford to get on the bus will be able to do so at reduced rates, resulting in revenue gains.

Committee Discussion

Speaking on the proposed fare increase, Commissioner Byrne asked whether staff considered increasing the cash fares, since OC Transpo is encouraging people to use tickets. The Director, Planning and Development, Dr. Helen Gault, advised that, because so many people now use tickets, increasing cash rates would not have a great impact. She added that a .05 cent increase on tickets will provide \$870,000 in extra revenue; cash fares would have had to be increased by .25 cents to get \$835,000 in additional revenues. Dr. Gault pointed out this would result in a cash fare as high as \$3.75 for Express buses.

Commissioner Byrne asked how much needs to be added to get \$330,000 (the adult Transpass) and then \$530,000. Dr. Gault replied the cash fare would become quite awkward, noting the current regular drop fare is \$2.25 (at least two coins): increasing it to \$2.40 (at least four coins) would generate increased revenues of approximately \$400,000.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Byrne on the Para Transpo report, Pat Larkin, Director of Para Transpo services, clarified the \$150,000 includes purchase of service from Laidlaw, (\$85,000), which will generate 4,250 trips and the taxi pilot project (\$65,000) which will generate 4,250 trips. He explained that the taxi project is for ambulatory clients and it will use all available cabs (including accessible taxis). This will reduce the demand on accessible vehicles and be more cost effective, since it is approximately 43% cheaper to provide a trip by taxi than by specialized transit, based on an hourly contract.

Commissioner Byrne said she felt increasing trips by 8,500 was merely a stop-gap measure. The number of trip refusals will only increase with the growing population of seniors and the situation should be addressed before it gets out of control. Mr. Larkin indicated staff expect productivity improvements that will match the 8,500 new trips.

He noted that productivity levels have now risen to the same level that existed prior to the introduction of the new system. Mr. Larkin thought the new cancellation policy would also help deal with the problem.

Commissioner Holmes asked if any discussions have been held with the taxi companies. Mr. Larkin said a lot of work has been undertaken since the last report to the Commission on this matter in 1994. Approval in principle will allow staff to continue gathering more information. Mr. Larkin informed the Committee that the cost of an average 10 kilometer trip will be approximately 25% less by taxi, i.e., \$15 as compared to \$20 on Para Transpo. Commissioner Holmes asked whether only taxi companies would be eligible to provide the service. Mr. Larkin said staff will seek additional information on this before making a final determination. Responding to questions from Councillor Holmes about the eligibility criteria review, Mr. Larkin indicated that interviews could be held with clients. He added that, to his knowledge, medical professionals were not involved in the interviews in other municipalities, however the municipalities of Peel and Kingston consulted with occupational therapists.

Commissioner Legendre asked whether the current contract with Laidlaw prevents OC Transpo from dealing with another supplier. Mr. Larkin replied that OC Transpo can go elsewhere to conduct the taxi pilot project. Commissioner Legendre expressed his support, noting he has been a long-time proponent of expanding the spectrum of Para Transpo services.

Commissioner Legendre asked whether consideration was given to a ride-sharing promotion/coordination bureau for Ottawa-Carleton. Dr. Gault indicated that the Transportation Demand Management Program which involves OC Transpo, the Environment and Transportation Department and the Planning and Development Approvals Department is looking into these kinds of activities.

Commissioner Legendre said he was pleased to see references about the Global Positioning System (GPS) and "Smart Card" applications in the future, and he urged that consideration be given to linking these systems together. Commenting on suggestions for reduced transit rates for low income individuals and families, Commissioner Legendre pointed out the public transit system represents a low-cost way to circulate. He spoke about an even greater inequity, the fact that people living in rental accommodation pay over 130% more in taxes, and he called this discrimination at the source.

Commissioner Doucet asked how much money is needed to eliminate the 35,000 trip refusal backlog. The General Manager, G. Diamond, replied this depends on the mix of use; using taxis would be cheaper and using the current contractor will require \$700,000. Commissioner Doucet said he felt the Commission has to begin to address this and reinvest in Para Transpo. He expressed the view there are times when debt is a reasonable alternative to address a difficult situation and he asked whether he was being unreasonable in this assumption.

The Regional Finance Commissioner, Jack LeBelle, said the staff forecast is that, at the end of the year 2000, there will be just under \$500 million of total debt. He spoke about Council's debt management strategy which has been in place since the early 80s, indicating that Council is losing ground in this area. Everyone is aware of the impact of debt on future years' operating budgets. Mr. LeBelle said he would not recommend that the debt be increased.

Commissioner Bellemare asked whether staff could confirm the desirability of lowering the average life-span of buses from the current 14 years to 9 years. The Director, Equipment Division, Art Phelan, clarified that the KPMG Report has recommended the maximum life of buses be 12 years without a re-build. In staff's experience, buses need a re-build between 8 and 10 years to deal with corrosion. This is the rationale for staff's proposal for a 16 year total life with a rebuild in the 8th or 9th year. Mr. Phelan indicated that re-builds currently cost between \$60,000.00 and \$100,000.00 depending on the extent of work to be done: the cost to re-build an engine is \$20,000.

Commissioner Bellemare wanted to know why taxis need to be accessible if they are meant for ambulatory clients and whether shifting these clients to taxis will free-up space on the service provided by Laidlaw. Pat Larkin indicated that service would be freed up. He pointed out that 70% of ridership is ambulatory and 30% use either wheelchairs or scooters; between 10,000 and 12,000 people are registered for service. Commissioner Bellemare inquired whether a percentage decrease in the cost of service would equate to the same percentage increase in the number of trips provided. Mr. Larkin clarified that, in the industry, it is on average 40 to 45% cheaper to provide a trip by taxi. Based on summary analysis, Para Transpo staff estimate the number will be in the 25% range but there will be cost advantages; handling trips by taxi will allow for improved productivity on wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

Commissioner M. McGoldrick-Larsen asked whether there was any information about what percentage of the million dollars approved by the Community Services Committee for the Task Force on Poverty includes funding for transportation initiatives. In addition, is there information available about whether Purchase of Service agencies will be able to provide transportation assistance for the clients they serve.

Chair Loney responded that one of the problems with bringing the budget process forward is that a lot of information is not yet available. The final report of the Task Force on Poverty is not ready, and the material considered by the CSC represents only regional staff's estimation of what are likely to be priority areas. Chair Loney said it was his understanding that \$350,000 of the million dollars would be used for the further subsidy of transit tickets or passes, to be handled through the Social Services Department. Commissioner McGoldrick-Larsen emphasized the importance of having as much information as possible to be able to respond, in a knowledgeable manner, to all the Corporation's requirements.

Commissioner Davis asked whether staff have looked into removing some of the impediments such as required qualifications and the bidding process to ensure lower costs are achieved. Mr. Phelan described the bonds required, a bid bond to protect the Commission in the advent of failure on the part of the re-builder, and a surety bond to ensure the value of the buses; there is also a 100% holdback provision payable on delivery of the vehicle. Commissioner Davis asked for a comment on the contention that OC Transpo is paying double the price because of the contracting process. Mr. Phelan said that, while there are some additional costs associated with both the bid and surety bonds, he did not believe this doubled the cost of the contract.

Commissioner Davis inquired about the total amount spent on contracting out re-builds. Art Phelan replied this amount is \$4.5 million per year. Commissioner Davis said this was a considerable amount, and she offered to meet with staff to see whether there are other firms that could provide more competitive rates. Chair Loney asked that staff prepare a brief report back to Committee on how re-builds are done and any outstanding matters could be considered at that time.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Byrne, Mr. Jim English, Director, Financial Services, indicated that the Para Transpo operating reserve fund will open in 2000 with a balance of \$1.3 million. accommodate

At this point, Chair Loney read a Motion from Commissioner Doucet, requesting that \$240,000 be added to the Para Transpo budget estimates instead of \$150,000 to begin reducing the number of un-accommodated trips. Responding to a query from Chair Loney, Pat Larkin confirmed this amount would translate into 13,000 trips as opposed to the 8,500 trips envisioned in the staff recommendation.

Chair Loney spoke about the need to put into perspective the number of un-accommodated trips compared to the amount of service provided in Ottawa-Carleton. He pointed out that only the City of Edmonton provides the same number of trips, per capita, and that Ottawa-Carleton provides twice as much service, per capita, as the City of Toronto. Chair Loney posited that service in those cities is limited because of the cost implications. He made reference to a document which lists the "top forty" Para Transpo users, noting the top user received 108 trips in November 1999, at a subsidy cost of \$20 per trip. The number of trips taken by the top forty clients ranges from 65 to 108 one-way trips. Chair Loney said he was only presenting this data to make sure Commissioners are aware of the cost implications. He added that more than half the top ten users in November were refused trips on top of those they received and this indicates that their demands are also not being met.

Chair Loney referred to the comment about people having a “democratic right to receive as much service as they want”. He posited this argument could apply to regular and Para Transpo service for residents of Ottawa-Carleton who live outside the Urban Transit Area, who do not currently receive service. Chair Loney recalled that the recent seniors’ pass “top up” requirement resulted in many clients reverting to regular service, with apparently little or no impact to themselves. He expressed the view that both the Transit Services Committee and the Commission have avoided reviewing the eligibility criteria for a long time and now is the time to act. Chair Loney pointed out that the Accessible Transit Advisory Committee has, for a number of years, asked that more service be provided to those who really need. The Commission must accede to ATAC’s request. He put forward the view there is a limit to what the property tax base can sustain and practical limits must be established. Chair Loney urged the Committee to approve additional service as recommended by staff and to commit to moving forward on the eligibility criteria review.

Commissioner Davis asked whether staff could indicate how many trips the top person in the “top 40” list had requested. Mr. Larkin said he would provide the information. He added that some individuals received 20% more and cancelled trips.

In reply to a further question from Commissioner Davis, Mr. Larkin indicated that the rate of same-day cancellations was 15% prior to June 1st; it decreased to 11% with the introduction of the seniors’ pass “top-up”. He posited that, with the cancellation policy in place, the numbers will continue to decrease throughout 2000. Commissioner Davis wanted to know what kinds of checks and balances are in place to ascertain the need for trips. Mr. Larkin replied that staff have looked at the trip pattern of the top five persons on the “top 40” list and have ascertained these trips were for workshop-type operations, and/or for post-secondary education purposes. A high percentage of the trips taken by the top person (108) was for recreational purposes. Mr. Larkin added that, at this stage, very few municipalities in Ontario operate specialized transit service based on trip purpose.

Commissioner Davis asked for information on the routes to be made accessible and how this will be determined. Chair Loney directed staff to provide a copy of the list to Committee members as soon as possible so that it can be reviewed prior to final consideration of the budget.

Commissioner Byrne said she agreed with Chair Loney’s comments about the definition of necessity, however she felt that recreational activities are crucial to a person’s mental and emotional health. She stated that, even with the strategies proposed, the 35,000 refusals will not be eliminated. The Motion put forward by Commissioner Doucet represents a small step in the right direction and will only cost \$90,000 more than the original proposal.

Commissioner Davis expressed concern that many in the Region, particularly seniors, are missing medical appointments because of trip refusals. She noted this ends up costing the community more because it must then pick up ambulances and hospital costs. She said people need access to regular medical attention and as the population ages, the demand will increase. The Commissioner agreed there is some abuse of the system but this will be addressed through the eligibility criteria review.

The following Motion was then considered:

Moved by C. Doucet

WHEREAS the 6-year freeze on Para Transpo service has led to 35,000 trip refusals and given that the local economy is now booming, it is time to increase the funding for Para Transpo, therefore;

That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Commission and to Council:

- 1. That approval be given for a total of \$240,000 which has been added to the Para Transpo 2000 draft operating estimates in order to increase the number of trips provided to Para Transpo customers by approximately 13,000. And, that the \$240,000 be drawn from Para Transpo operating reserves.**
- 2. That approval in principle be given for a taxi pilot project for Para Transpo and authorization for staff to tender for service to provide transportation to some customers who would otherwise be refused service in 2000.**
- 3. That the review of eligibility for Para Transpo be completed by June, 2000 and that any freed up service be re-deployed to customers who cannot use regular transit.**

CARRIED, as amended

Chair Loney read a Motion from Commissioner Holmes, calling for the use of any further social services caseload reductions to provide bus passes for persons living in poverty. Commissioner Holmes asked for the Committee's support, noting any such measures will help these individuals get to job interviews, access health services and meet their other needs. She said staff could recommend whether the funds should be disbursed through the Social Services Department or through community partners such as the community health and resource centres.

Commissioner Davis said the Commission must find a way for persons on social assistance to access buses at a much reduced rate, primarily during off-peak hours, so they can keep medical appointments or look for work. She felt this approach would need to be handled with sensitivity in order not to “mark” these clients, but it could be a way to get people moving across Ottawa-Carleton/

Moved by D. Holmes

In the event that caseload reductions (in the Social Services Department) are higher than predicted for 2000, that the Social Services Commissioner and the General Manager, OC Transpo, bring forward a joint report on bus passes for people living in poverty, including those on social assistance, the report to include an option for an off-peak hour bus pass.

CARRIED, as amended

Commissioner Kreling moved the staff recommendation relative to the 2000 Draft Estimates, the proposed rate increase and the 2000 Draft Capital Estimates. The Commissioner said he didn't relish the thought of increasing fares in the year 2000, but given the financial difficulties described by staff, it is important to find a balance in what the taxpayer is expected to pick up. He noted the Commission is trying to improve the service, make it more reliable and expand it through the new corporate culture emerging at OC Transpo, with the cooperation of employees across the organization. Commissioner Kreling said a number of issues under discussion for the past several years are now coming to fruition, and a slight fare increase may be timely to help the overall bottom line.

Chair Loney asked the Finance Commissioner to comment on the need for further expenditures in the Capital program, over and above what is being recommended by staff. Mr. LeBelle confirmed that, in order to meet emerging needs, OC Transpo would need more than the capital funding requested. In reply to a further question from Chair Loney, Mr. LeBelle indicated that the Capital budget does give OC Transpo authority to order buses in 2000 for delivery in 2001. He reminded Committee members that the corporate debt management objective is to arrive at the end of year 2000 with a debt no higher than it was at the beginning of the present term of Council. Mr. LeBelle pointed out staff have managed to achieve this, and are forecasting a debt of \$441.7 million at the end of the term from \$442.3 million at the beginning of the term. If the Committee wish to order vehicles in the year 2000, authority will need to be brought forward in 2000, thereby increasing the debt at the end of the year 2000.

Chair Loney expressed the view this will need to be done, given the likelihood that the soon-to-be-appointed Transition Team may set the 2001 budget, and OC Transpo may find itself in the position of having to wait another four years before it can order more buses (order time is 18 months to 2 years).

Chair Loney posited that, by 2001, some federal infrastructure money will be available, and this will have a downward impact on the amount of the debt having to be placed on the books. He reminded Committee members about staff's presentation on coping with old buses and the cost of refurbishing these vehicles. Chair Loney said this will continue to be the case unless additional funding is provided for this purpose at this time. Mr. LeBelle indicated that the amount required would be \$21.6 million.

Commissioner Holmes asked for a comparison of the 1997 budget to that of 2000. Mr. LeBelle indicated that the budget increased by approximately \$300 million during this period of time. Commissioner Holmes wanted to know whether the Finance Commissioner was advocating retaining the debt at the same level, in light of the growth. He replied that, in order for Council to live up to its longstanding objective of debt management, and as a result of recent local service realignments, strategic decisions were made during the last two budget cycles that have increased the debt. Mr. LeBelle added that the 2000 budget, at this point, provides Council with a debt no higher than it was three years ago.

Moved by D. Holmes

That debenture authority of \$21,592,000 be created to allow the pre-commitment of bus purchases for 2001.

CARRIED, as amended

Moved by H. Kreling

That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Commission and to Council:

- 1. That the 2000 Operating budget be approved, including fare increases to be introduced on April 1, 2000 as follows:**
 - a) Ticket prices to increase by 5 cents to 80 cents;**
 - b) Adult Transpass prices to increase by \$1.50 to \$58.50; and**
 - c) Student Transpass prices to increase by \$1.00 to \$47.75.**

CARRIED
(W. Byrne, D. Holmes,
L. Davis dissenting on a),
b) and c)

2. That the 2000 Capital budget be approved, with new Authority for \$18,179,000.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

COORDINATOR

CHAIR