

**San Benito County  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**October 21, 2010 2:45 P.M.**

**FINAL MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chair Gomez, Director Bilich, Director Botelho, Director De La Cruz, and Director Emerson

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Executive Director, Lisa Rheinheimer; Transportation Planning Manager, Mary Dinkuhn; Transportation Planner, Betty LiOwen; Secretary, Monica Gomez

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Pauline Valdivia, Jovenes de Antaño; Tony Mercado, Bill Lewis, MV Transportation

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Gomez called the meeting to order at 3:18 p.m.

**1. ACKNOWLEDGE CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Emerson, the Director's unanimously acknowledged the Certificate of Posting.*

**2. County Express and Specialized Transportation Operations – LiOwen**

- a. Consider the Possibility of Consolidating County Express and Specialized Transportation Services.
- b. Direct Staff as Necessary.

Ms. LiOwen stated that staff is in the process of selecting contractor(s) for County Express and Specialized Transportation Services. Currently, there are two separate contractors for each of the services. Staff is seeking direction on whether to consolidate County Express and Specialized Transportation Services or continue with having two separate contractors.

Ms. LiOwen provided a Power-Point presentation which included an overview of the two services, proposals, issues, impacts to transit system, and the next steps.

Director Bilich commented on how the Jovenes de Antaño drivers don't have the training that County Express drivers have. Director Bilich stated that consolidating the services would be most beneficial with all drivers being cross-trained as well as making it an enhanced focal point for dispatch and maintenance.

Director De La Cruz stated that he was a part of the selection committee and he expressed appreciation to staff for educating him on this process.

Director De La Cruz stated that Senior Citizens are the most vulnerable people in this community, and it was his opinion to continue to allow Jovenes de Antaño (JDA) to continue to provide the specialized services. JDA drivers are familiar with the clients and they have built a relationship with JDA clients.

Director De La Cruz recognized however that there are some cost issues and upgrade issues with JDA, but noted that Ms. Valdivia should be allowed the opportunity to transition and catch up to the latest regulations and training standards. Director De La Cruz stated that Ms. Valdivia should be allowed the opportunity to return to Board with a lower cost proposal and she should work with staff on ways of becoming more efficient in providing services.

Director Emerson inquired if the upgrading of phone systems is going to be a requirement regardless of consolidating the services or only if the services are consolidated.

Ms. LiOwen stated that staff is not requiring the contractor to upgrade the phone system, however, staff does have plans on upgrading the phone systems once the funds become available.

With regard to consolidating services, Director Emerson inquired if there will be costs associated with changing the decals of the JDA buses.

Ms. LiOwen confirmed that there would likely be costs associated with changing the decals on buses.

Director Botelho stated that MV and JDA provide very distinct services and mentioned that MV may come back to the LTA and say that they need additional funds to provide both services. Director Botelho inquired if LTA would realize the savings of about \$12,000 annually, and if this would truly be a practical savings.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that there would be an \$18,000 annual average savings by consolidating services.

Ms. Rheinheimer invited Jovenes de Antaño's Executive Director, Pauline Valdivia, and MV Transportation's Regional Vice President, Bill Lewis, to address the Board.

Ms. Valdivia stated that she has been with Jovenes de Antaño (JDA) for over 35 years now. JDA was the first agency in the County to provide transportation for the community. Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA has an excellent record in functions of administration, financial, and service delivery. JDA also has a good record of providing transit services to the community and excels in customer service, productivity, and cost effectiveness.

Ms. Valdivia stated that she did not understand how the Board could consider consolidating services because the impacts would be devastating to the community. JDA provides escort services, translation services, and shopping assistance services to its clients. Ms. Valdivia inquired if MV would be able to provide these same services along with dealing with people with an array of needs such as dementia, mobility and hearing problems. Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA dispatcher works with clients and doctor's offices to better coordinate transportation schedules.

Ms. Valdivia stated that she is very concerned for her clients because there will be a lot of confusion especially for the frail elderly who have relied on JDA for many years.

Ms. Valdivia mentioned that JDA receives a small grant from the Area Agency on Aging, however this grant is not enough to fund JDA, which is why they also rely on the LTA.

Ms. Valdivia highly recommended that the Board continue to fund JDA to provide specialized transportation services and direct LTA staff to work with JDA staff to be able to work within the box.

Director Bilich asked Ms. Valdivia to address her concerns about scheduling appointments in advance with JDA and being told the day of her appointment that transportation is not available.

Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA has made great efforts to provide her transportation services, however the dispatcher has to coordinate with other clients who are traveling in the same area, and this is when

Director Bilich makes the decision to reschedule her appointment. Ms. Valdivia mentioned that on occasion a driver will call in sick and this may cause some cancellations or rescheduling.

Ms. Valdivia stated that she will continue to monitor scheduling concerns to ensure that they are handled appropriately.

Director De La Cruz recommended that Ms. Valdivia meet with LTA staff to address issues or concerns such as those brought up by Director Bilich.

Ms. Valdivia stated that she is open to any suggestions the Board may have and is always willing to work with staff and clients to resolve any issues or concerns.

Mr. Lewis stated that it is somewhat difficult to come into a small “mom and pop” community, and be looked at as “the nationwide big beast” trying to take something away from a local organization, however, the whole thought behind MV’s proposal is that they do have the experience in working with individuals in specialized services. MV is one of the largest nationwide paratransit operations in the country. MV handles the VA account out of San Francisco and provides services to some local clients who may be quadriplegic and who require door to door service. MV also provides paratransit services for Monterey County.

Mr. Lewis stated that as stated in their proposal, MV would help the LTA save funds by consolidating services. The proposal also states that MV will offer jobs to all JDA drivers and provide them with training and union negotiated salaries.

Mr. Lewis stated that MV’s approach was to have a seamless service in which local clients would see the familiar faces of drivers when using these services and provide an effective and efficient service.

Mr. Lewis addressed the Board’s concern of coming back at a later date and requesting to renegotiate the proposal cost by stating that the price listed in the proposal will not increase. The price that they agreed to is the price they will work with tomorrow, if they made an error in the price they would absorb the cost.

There was discussion about the overall cost savings of consolidated services.

Director Bilich inquired about how many people would be responsible for dispatching, scheduling, and answering phones.

Mr. Lewis stated that there is more than one dispatcher and they are very skilled and familiar with the area. Mr. Lewis added that the dispatching function also lies on the General Manager as well if needed.

Director Emerson inquired how many positions would be eliminated with JDA if the services were consolidated.

Mr. Lewis stated that MV would offer an opportunity of employment to JDA employees in an effort to retain these individuals. MV would analyze and review each individual’s level of expertise and see where they may fit in with MV. The drivers would have to go through MV’s extensive training and cross training as part of MV’s union agreement. Mr. Lewis stated that in any consolidation there could be a loss of positions, however employment opportunities would be offered primarily to the drivers.

Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA would lose at least 6 positions if LTA consolidates service.

Director Botelho inquired about the state funds that are allocated to JDA and whether or not JDA’s overall program would be jeopardized if the services are consolidated.

Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA would not be able to provide the Senior Lunch Program without the state funds provided by the LTA.

Director Botelho directed staff to take into account the overall impacts made to JDA by consolidating services.

Director De La Cruz inquired if JDA is willing to work with staff in reducing their price by \$10,000.

Ms. Valdivia stated that JDA will work with staff in reducing their price in order to make it work.

Mr. Lewis stated that MV's proposal would absorb all of JDA's drivers who are currently part time and would offer them the opportunity for full-time positions down the road. However, the proposal did not show that they would absorb JDA's dispatcher position.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that in terms of negotiating a price with JDA, the same offer of negotiating a price would have to be offered to MV as well. Ms. Rheinheimer stated that with regards to the price, and looking at it from a staff level as a fixed price, they provided their firm and final offer and she would not recommend a renegotiation.

After brief discussion amongst Board members and staff, the Board directed staff to schedule a special meeting to provide a more detailed report outlining how the Senior Program will be affected and whether or not federal dollars will be lost. In addition, the Board directed staff to include the exact number of current employees in both organizations and how many positions would be eliminated by consolidating the service.

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Emerson, the Director's unanimously voted to adjourn the LTA Special meeting.*

**ADJOURN TO LTA MEETING NOVEMBER 18, 2010.**