

Minutes of the Metropolitan Taxi Commission
Monday, October 4, 2004
1:00 p.m., in the Auditorium at 100 N. Tucker Blvd.

(Note: there were 14 attendees in the audience today)

Meeting was called to order at 1: 10 p.m. by Chairman Thomas McCarthy.

Roll was called; all 9 Commissioners were present.

* Mr. Rudawsky made a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 20 meeting; motion was seconded by Mr. Morgan, and passed by unanimous vote. (Note: no September meeting was held)

Old Business

Mr. Tully recommended that the **moratorium** be extended another 60 days, citing his recent attendance at the IATR Conference and suggestions obtained at that forum which may impact.

Mr. Tully confirmed that the proposed 'Schedule of Fees' introduced at the August meeting, has been published on our website so as to elicit comments. Moreover an explanatory letter has been mailed to every Certificate holder, a copy of which is in the board members' folders. He stated no significant feedback was received by MTC to date - thus, vigorous enforcement of our VFH Code will begin tomorrow, October 5.

MTC Counsel, Mr. Patrick McCarthy, provided a brief review of the MTC merger policy.

Mr. Tully reported that he had a September meeting in Jefferson City with DOT officials, and they now will be coming to our offices this Thursday (October 8) for a follow-up meeting. The purpose is to establish the 'multi-jurisdictional task force' – a report about that session will be given at next month's meeting.

Mr. Tully addressed several open 'operational' issues in a comprehensive report:

- 1) MTC staff recommends the inclusion of horsedrawn carriages, hansom cabs and rickshaws into our operation. Staff suggests fees of: \$50 per vehicle, \$25 per driver.
- 2) we have already ordered the distinctive brass plaques which the horse-drawn carriages will be required to display
- 3) we will order the annual renewal stickers, pending approval of our staff recommendation that the renewal period for the 'carriages' group should coincide with that of Premium Sedans
- 4) he has contacted both City, and County, Police and received very different responses to his overtures about working cohesively together
- 5) he has met with the City Police concerning the communications system, to include a tactical channel and a Nextel Channel with 24/7 coverage by a police department dispatcher. This was a very productive meeting, he added.
- 6) Radios – we are still awaiting a response for radio channels for MTC agents.
- 7) A vigorous 'enforcement plan' has been developed and will begin this Sunday, October 10, extending for approximately 90 days. There is enforcement coverage on weekends and at night.

Mr. Tully has met with Col. Joachimstaler, and with Lt. Siemers, and will begin with a focus on traffic safety and mobile reserve. Director Tully will address police department Roll Calls and will present our comprehensive plan; soon, our agents will be permitted to do 'ride-alongs' with police patrol units.

8) we have already ordered 1,000 MUTT (Missouri Uniform Traffic Tickets) forms and expect the delivery this week – we will begin using them immediately upon receipt.

9) Additional “round table” forums will be scheduled, one later this month; these will continue at periodic intervals, and have proven to be very beneficial to us and to the attendees alike

10) Further to Dr. Ziub’s complaint at last month’s meeting, (regarding advertising space inside passenger terminals) Mr. Tully has investigated the terms by contacting Deputy Director Slay. For a monthly fee of \$1,000 (\$850 rental of space, plus \$150 for the telephone line) anyone may participate in the advertising program. Mr. Tully will provide details to anyone who requests it, or the Airport Authority can likewise do so.

11) MTC personnel have just been accepted for inclusion in the City Pension Plan for the Zoo / Museum District employees. Enrollment kits and cost projections are forthcoming, and the effective date will be made retroactive to August 1 this year.

New Business

After consultation among the members, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Friday, November 12, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Director’s Report

1) Director Tully thanked the Commission for allowing Mr. Rudawsky, Mr. Patrick McCarthy, and himself to attend the IATR Conference in mid-September. He stated the IATR was impressed with all that the MTC has accomplished since its inception and said the principals had invited him to participate in their agenda at next year’s conference.

2) Mr. Tully then summarized all the violations reported by Sgt. Sampson of the Airport Police since our last meeting: 44 metro taxi violations; 12 vehicles red-tagged; 7 traffic summonses; and 13 MoDOT violations. He stated no suspensions or revocations have occurred in the past month.

3) He added that MTC Enforcement agents have inspected 35 premium sedans in the past month, and reminded everyone that the deadline for ALL premium sedans to be inspected and licensed is the end of this month, October 31.

4) Mr. Tully then introduced Ms. Mackinnon Webster, a Coro Leadership Foundation fellow who is just completing her ‘government agency rotation’ with us this week. He commended her for the fine research work she has done and for her assistance to our staff.

5) The Director then reported on his meeting with the Department of Revenue concerning specialty license plates. He displayed prototypes of various designs which have been developed, and announced that, once in production, these licenses will be in stock only at 3 DOR offices: on North Kingshighway, on South Kingshighway, and at Deer Creek Plaza (in Maplewood).

6) Director Tully then stated that, as requested, we have sent a letter to directors of 4 large state agencies, exhorting them to use only MTC-licensed vehicles when traveling on state business, and to be especially mindful of this when contracting for services to state agencies.

7) Finally, Mr. Tully stated that he and Commissioner Morgan will be meeting by the end of this month to develop the 2005 budget, which will be submitted to the members for their vote at the November board meeting - as was directed by the Chairman at the August meeting.

Public Comments

1) Ms Ann Marie Heise and Ms Ernie Boswell, of AFLAC Supplemental Insurance Company

Ms. Heise made a brief presentation suggesting the vehicle for hire company owners consider purchasing this optional, additional coverage. Mr. McCarthy suggested that these women should first meet with the Director, who can then make a report to the Commission at our next meeting.

2) William Jackson, of St. Louis Auto Livery

Speaker expressed confusion over the appeals procedure, and wanted to clarify whether a driver could receive tickets for violations from both the MTC and from City/County police. Mr. *Patrick* McCarthy replied, yes, that is the case.

Speaker then asked whether the ‘airport starter agents’ are on the MTC payroll? Mr. *Patrick* McCarthy replied these personnel are the employees of the Airport Authority, not of the MTC.

3) Ms. Jeannette Culpepper, a driver for Allen Cab Company

Speaker alleged that the dress code was developed arbitrarily without driver input, and stated that as a woman driver she would like to be given the option to wear a skirt and pantyhose rather than pants. Chairman McCarthy replied that this is a reasonable request and stated we will consider a revision to the VFH Code to allow for female drivers’ attire.

Speaker then stated that she got a ticket at the Airport when driving for Auto Livery, but feels this is unreasonable because Harry Haggard owns that company as well as Allen Cab, the firm she is licensed to drive for. Mr. *Patrick* McCarthy then interjected, as a point of order, that there is an appeals process available; and Chairman McCarthy concurred that Ms. Culpepper should use the proper procedure and ‘make her case’ at the time of any hearing which may ensue.

4) Douglas Haggett – representing Air Park

Speaker wanted clarification of where the courtesy shuttle vans are supposed to park, and said the drivers are complaining they are receiving conflicting instructions from various personnel.

Chairman McCarthy stated that according to state statute, MTC has nothing to say about what happens within Airport property boundaries, and then called upon Sgt. Tim Sampson who had asked to be acknowledged so as to respond.

Sgt. Sampson explained that the speaker has correctly summarized the basic procedures, but that due to space limitations sometimes an airport police officer will have to override them due to traffic conditions, shift operations, and/or sudden congestion. When this occurs these are merely *temporary* adjustments and do not constitute a *permanent* change of the basic procedures.

He provided the direct phone number to their office and invited the speaker to contact them directly to discuss and resolve this matter.

Commissioner Rudawsky interjected the observation that this interchange, and Ms. Culpepper’s before it, are excellent examples of how our procedures are meant to work – and do! He added it is often best to submit these subjects in writing to the Director, and usually there is resolution within a week, or certainly in time for the next month’s meeting. Chairman McCarthy concurred.

5) John Dubinsky – regional manager of Sun Park Corporation, known in St. Louis as Air Park

Speaker wanted to address the ‘overlap on regulations and requirements for the DOT versus the MTC on drug testing standards’.

Director Tully invited Mr. Dubinsky to contact him personally and stated he would be pleased to help clarify the issue.

(Note: Chairman McCarthy had to leave the meeting at this point, in order to fulfill another appointment, and **Vice Chairman Lou Hamilton then chaired the meeting to its conclusion.**)

Mr. Hamilton noted that no one else is signed up to address the board, and asked if the other commissioners or staff have anything to add.

Mr. Shiferaw stated that he has been asked to convey the concerns of airport company owners, and airport drivers, because strong rumors are circulating to the effect that the Airport Authority is preparing to 'bid-out' the airport operation to a concessionaire.

Mr. Hamilton responded that the Airport had been discussing this general concept for quite some time, but that the MTC has yet to see any specifics/details. He added it was made clear to the Airport Authority that they have the right under state law to control the airport operations, including the choice of which party may ultimately operate any such concession, but that whatever they do is nevertheless subject to licensing by this Commission, and will remain so.

Mr. Hamilton made the motion to adjourn; Mr. Satz seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

-- minutes taken by Judith Cannon, Office Administrator

NOTE: a half-page of notes follows, which was mostly more-detailed info about how the license prototypes were developed – for brevity I didn't include that, but it IS explained in the VERBATIM notes, also.

Director's Report

Mr. Tully thanked the members for sending Cmsnr. Rudawsky, legal counsel Patrick McCarthy, and himself to the IATR Conference last month, stating it was extremely beneficial.

Director Tully stated that no suspensions or revocations have occurred in the past month, however he did enumerate all the violations reflected in Sgt. Sampson's weekly Airport activity reports: 44 _____

Mr. Tully reported that MTC Enforcement Agents have inspected 35 premium sedans in the past month; he reminded everyone that the deadline to complete *vehicle* inspection/licensing for all premium sedans is the end of this month, that is October 31.

Director Tully introduced Ms. Mackinnon Webster, a Coro Leadership Foundation Fellow who is completing her one-month 'government agency rotation' with MTC this week.

Mr. Tully reported on his meeting with the Department of Revenue concerning the specialty license plate design prototype they developed. A copy was given to each Commissioner and was held up for the audience to see. In the sample design, the DOR suggested replacing the state motto "Show Me State" with the designation "Taxicab;" the prototype also depicted a prefix of "TX" followed by a 4-digit number which will correspond to the fleet number.

Director Tully reiterated that he does not advocate that the MTC emblem be incorporated into the design (whereby it might be mistaken for an official vehicle), adding that the DOR has emphasized simplicity of design is recommended.

Mr. Tully added it has been suggested that the specialty plate could also be a solid field of brilliant yellow, also showing the "TX" prefix and 4-digit number as explained above, and/or having a "checkerboard" design around the entire perimeter to make it instantly, easily recognizable as a specialty vehicle license plate.

The members strongly concurred that this (yellow with checkerboard) was the best option, but they asked Mr. Tully to provide a prototype before, or at, the next meeting.