

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC PARKING AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH
THURSDAY JULY 15, 2021**

Having been duly advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Act No. 84 of 1986, a virtual meeting of the Public Parking Authority of Pittsburgh was held at 10:01 a.m. on July 15, 2021. The following Board members were present at the start of the meeting: Jeff Cohen, Matt Barron, Bobby Wilson and Liz Fishback. Present from staff were David Onorato, Christopher Speers, Jo-Ann Williams, Chris Holt, Gwen Bolden, Mark DiNatale, David Perry, Tracy Sowinski and Pat Konesky. Also present were Jason Wrona of Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, Jean-Jacques Ngor Sene of Chatham University; Bill Stewart of Strategic Communications and Alison Keating.

MINUTES

Mr. Cohen asked for approval of the minutes from the June 17, 2021 meeting.

Upon motion by Ms. Fishback and seconded by Mr. Wilson, the minutes were approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Fishback, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Ngor Sene, a Chatham University professor and Squirrel Hill resident, said he wanted to make a public comment regarding street cleaning and the issuance of tickets related to that function. He stated that he felt that this is a racket and feels that actual street cleaning doesn't really occur and is just a way for the City to raise revenue and feels that it is particularly frustrating for a city of our stature. He stated that he feels this is a forced donation to the City, adding that a parking violation should be a violation of the letter of the law and not a deliberate attempt to raise money. He thanked the Board for its time and allowing him to speak.

Mr. Cohen thanked Mr. Sene for his comments and advised him that he could reach out to Mr. Onorato directly with any further questions he might have.

Mr. Onorato stated that he would welcome Mr. Sene contacting him and provided him his phone number to do so.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Authority was currently issuing tickets during street cleaning.

Mr. Onorato advised that no tickets have been issued for street cleaning this year and said last year's total was minimal, because of the Covid shutdown.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Onorato advised that, as directed by the Board, today's meeting agenda was posted in advance on our website prior to the meeting.

Mr. Onorato advised that the Authority is in discussion with the Port Authority regarding the possible compatibility of its connect card for use in our new meters.

Mr. Onorato advised that the Pennsylvania Parking Association annual conference will be held at Station Square from August 18 through 20 and said any Board member wishing to attend should advise him of his or her interest.

Mr. Onorato advised that the 2021 Structural Engineer's reports on our garage facilities is completed and said he anticipates receiving the final document by the end of the month.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Finance Reports, noting that employing 2019 as the base year, June 2021 produced 61 percent of June 2019's revenue total. He said the year-to-date revenue comparisons are about at the same rate, \$29 million versus \$14 million in 2021. He stated that the month-to-month results are increasing and said we are not looking to 2020 for comparison because of the wide discrepancy between the two years.

Ms. Fishback stated that it is good to see things coming back and even though it is a slow process, we are continuing to hope that results keep going up.

Mr. Onorato advised that revenues are returning slower than we anticipated and said we do not see many employees taking advantage of optional returns to work on a part time basis, particularly during the summer months. He stated that January 2021 revenues were at \$1.8 million and rose to \$2.9 for the month of June, a gain but still significantly lower than in June 2019.

Mr. Cohen asked if there was any indication as to which areas of the city are down in meter revenue.

Mr. Onorato stated that he can provide that information to Mr. Cohen and stated that the following financial reports may show that data.

Mr. Barron stated that his understanding is that the Authority is not going to receive any of the Pandemic Relief Funds that the City received and asked if it would therefore be prudent to schedule an Executive Session to discuss the impact of that decision. He said the action would likely have quite an impact on our reserves and capital program especially if we do not see a more rapid increase in revenues.

Mr. Onorato responded that the suggestion was a good one and an Executive Session would be an opportunity to also brief the Board on our discussions to renegotiate the Co-Op agreement with City administration. He said he will schedule an Executive Session to discuss both matters and he stated that an amendment on the agreement is scheduled to be presented to Council next week.

Mr. Cohen stated that he is disappointed that the City administration said it was going to give the Authority some of the funds received and is now stating that it will not. He advised that it could have given the Authority at least enough to cover our Capital expenses because, without sufficient funds for that purpose, we cannot afford to do any repairs even if they are needed badly.

Ms. Fishback asked the timeline on the co-op revision.

Mr. Onorato replied that we have been working with the administration and are looking to have it finalized and before City Council before its August break.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Revenue Per Space Report, advising that it compares us with the industry as a key measure of performance. He advised that January through June 2021's average is \$569.00 for our garage facilities compared to a 2019 average of \$1,079.00 for the same period.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Enforcement Report, noting that June's total of 15,300 tickets was compared to the 11,300 issued during the month in 2020. He said that prior to the pandemic we averaged from 20,000 to 22,000 tickets per month. He stated that meter violations accounted for 50 percent of the tickets issued and verified that there was no enforcement during street cleaning this year.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Meter Revenue Report, which shows revenues categorized by street, lot transient and lot leases. He noted that there is a difference in street revenues of approximately \$500,000 between 2019 and 2021. He advised that lot revenues in June 2019 totaled \$215,000 but had declined to \$149,000 this past month and said lot lease revenue fell approximately \$8,000 during the period. He advised that he would send the Board a report showing meter revenue by individual neighborhoods at a later date.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Parking Court Report, which shows revenues trending upwards to \$637,000 in June from \$153,000 a year ago. He said that though six months, 2021 revenues are at \$3.4 million compared to \$5.5 million in 2019, a normal year.

He advised that the estimate amount being forwarded to the City through June 2021 is \$2.4 million while in 2019 the total was \$4.2 million, approximately 58 percent of the year's revenue.

Ms. Fishback inquired about the significant difference in personal sick time contained in the report, \$31,000 versus \$2,000.

Ms. Williams responded that this increase was due to a retirement by an Authority employee.

Ms. Fishback asked if this was the same reason for the change in the health insurance line item.

Mr. Williams responded that the second change was also due to the retirement

Mr. Onorato discussed the Utilization Report, which shows that Smithfield/Liberty and Forbes/Semple continue to show over 50-percent utilization with Shadyside and Second Avenue being just under 50 percent in usage. He stated 2019 use of those facilities averaged between 90 and 98 percent. He stated that as with revenues, utilization is increasing, currently around 41 percent system-wide.

RESOLUTION NO. 15 OF JULY 2021, “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE A CHANGE ORDER AND FINAL PAYMENT TO NATHAN CONTRACTING LP FOR SANITARY SUMP PUMP REPLACEMENT AT THE MELLON SQUARE GARAGE, was read by Mr. Cohen and considered by the Board.

Mr. Onorato advised that the original contract amount for the sanitary sump pump at the Mellon Square garage was \$218,888 and a change-order credit in the amount of \$7,982.62 brought final amount of the contract to \$210,905.38 and said we are asking the Board to authorize final payment. He advised that there was MBE participation of 32 percent on this contract while WBE and MBE/WBE payroll labor participation were at .6 and two percent, respectively.

Mr. Holt advised that the reductions in the amount of materials and repairs needed resulted in the credit being issued.

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any additional questions or comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Ms. Fishback and seconded by Mr. Barron, Resolution No. 15 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Fishback, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes.

RESOLUTION NO. 16 OF JULY 2021, “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PURCHASE TWO (2) LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION (LPR) SYSTEMS FOR INSTALLATION ON AUTHORITY ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES, was read by Mr. Cohen and considered by the Board.

Mr. Onorato advised that these are the camera systems that gives our vehicles the ability to scan license plates by driving through patrol areas rather than monitoring them on foot. He stated that we currently have 11 vehicles equipped with these systems and this purchase is to replace two of

those now in service. He noted that these are sole-source purchases as the software involved is created specifically for us by Groupe Techna.

Mr. Wilson asked if the total cost of \$50,000 was for both units.

Mr. Onorato confirmed that the \$50,000 is for both, and mostly covers the hardware and license costs as we already have the software.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Authority had a target number of the total camera-equipped units it would like to have in operation.

Mr. Onorato responded that currently most of the systems we have are being utilized in our 32 Residential Permit districts. He advised that enforcing with LPR systems makes the process more efficient and he stated that while we would like to add more LPR systems, we have yet to determine the optimum number we would need to employ.

Mr. Cohen asked if there was any questions or comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Ms. Fishback and seconded by Mr. Wilson, Resolution No. 16 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Fishback, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes.

RESOLUTION NO. 17 OF JULY 2021, "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ESTABLISH PARKING RATES FOR PARKING GARAGES AND OFF-STREET SURFACE PARKING LOTS OWNED, LEASED AND/OR OPERATED BY THE AUTHORITY, was read by Mr. Cohen and considered by the Board.

Mr. Onorato advised that the current procedure is for the Executive Director to present any requests for garage and lot rate increased to the Board for final approval before implementing the, adding that City Council or the City Finance Director is assigned authority over street-meter rates. He advised that during this pandemic, private operators are changing their rates frequently both in their neighborhood and downtown locations. He noted that the private garage next to our Oliver Garage has been particularly aggressive in adjusting its rates to entice parkers who also could be potential patrons of our facility. He stated that this resolution asks the Board to authorize the Executive Director to adjust rates on an as-needed basis but not to implement any across-the-board rate adjustment.

He stated that we are also looking to institute a more flexible event rate, noting that our Ft. Duquesne and Sixth Garage, for instance, charges a flat \$8.00 in the evening while one nearby operator is charging \$26.00. He said the disparity shows that we should be able to increase rates during large events in the Downtown and the North Shore areas

Mr. Wilson stated that the preliminary agenda he received prior to the Board meeting did not include this resolution and therefore he did not have a chance to review it prior to arriving. He asked if this proposal was just for garages and for clarification that its purpose is principally to decrease rates.

Mr. Onorato responded that this applies to the transient daily parkers and not to lease customers, and said the authorization is for rates to either be increased or decreased according to conditions.

Ms. Fishback asked for an example of the resolution's implementation and if we were looking to do this on a daily basis.

Mr. Onorato responded that we are looking principally at Ft. Duquesne and Sixth and Mellon Square garages because of their proximity to the areas where most events are held. He stated that we could set rates of \$10.00 or \$12.00 on event days such as Pirate or Steeler games. He advised that we are seeing rates fluctuating daily at private garages because of the buyers' market created by the current glut of parking options.

Ms. Fishback noted that she has seen Downtown rates ranging from \$3.00 to \$26.00 in the evening.

Mr. Speers offered a specific example of what this resolution accomplishes, stating that our Oliver Garage is directly next to the 350 Oliver Garage run by Alco Parking, which lowered its evening/weekend rate to \$3.00 from \$5.00 while our evening garage rate remains at \$5.00. He said at Ft. Duquesne & Sixth where our evening and weekend rate is a flat \$8.00, some nearby private operators serving the area are charging an "as-posted rate" that is ranging anywhere from \$15.00 to \$25.00. He stated that the Board's action would give us the potential to increase our rate for example, from \$8.00 to \$10.00. He stated that we are not looking to match private operator rates but said he just feels it's important to have the ability to move with the market while remaining its low-cost provider by a substantial margin.

Mr. Wrona added that the resolution permits the garage off-street lot rates to be adjusted by the Executive Director in accordance with market conditions.

Ms. Fishback asked if at some point could the Board be updated to determine if we are realizing the intended benefit of the Board's approval of this change.

Mr. Onorato responded that he will keep the Board informed of any rate adjustments and the effect of the changes

Mr. Speers added that this flexibility would give us the opportunity to offer different products, perhaps remote leases, for less than a full week. He said the full rate could be restored when business activity becomes more normal.

Ms. Fishback asked how the Authority would monitor this increased flexibility.

Mr. Speers responded that we have been doing our due diligence with our PARCS vendors learned that they have the ability to set parameters on the preprogrammed days and would restrict access on other days, limiting access by lease-card holders to just pre-programmed days.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Authority had the ability to run usage reports to determine if lease access would be being abused by potential customers. He asked how many requests for reduced-use leases have been received.

Mr. Speers responded that at this time it is only a handful of holders asking for this type of programming and said at this point we want to make sure that we have everything in order before we offer any levels of reduced service. He said this availability could vary from garage to garage and could even be affected by the location of competing providers.

Mr. Wilson asked if this would affect mostly nighttime parking and asked if it would also accommodate decreases in parking prices. He also asked how long the resolution's impact would be in effect.

Mr. Onorato stated that he sees more potential application for the night and weekend parking but said that it could be applied to daytime transient rates as well. He said if any daytime reduction would occur, any market rebound would permit us to raise the rates back to the established amount. He did advise, though, that any new event rate would likely be higher than our current evening and weekend amount.

Mr. Wrona stated that the Board has the authority to both authorize this flexibility and rescind it. He stated that if the Board was dissatisfied with the administration of this program it would be able to repeal this resolution at any time.

Mr. Cohen stated that the Executive Director looks at these measures from a business standpoint and establishes rates based on the objective of increasing parkers and accompanying revenue. He said that while there may be a trial-and-error component at the beginning of any implementation, the program will be evaluated over an evaluation period to determine its effectiveness. He expressed his support of the Authority personnel's ability to run its operation and know what is best for the organization.

Ms. Fishback asked if the Authority had an idea of when we would know if this rate flexibility was or was not working.

Mr. Onorato replied that we should give its application at least until the end of the year.

Ms. Fishback stated she was surprised when she drove throughout the downtown area this week and found rates varying from \$3.00 to \$26.00.

Mr. Speers responded that Alco, being a private operator, has the ability to raise or lower rates at the garages it owns, but said the firm cannot make those changes at facilities it operates that are owned by others.

Mr. Cohen asked if there was any questions or comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Ms. Fishback and seconded by Mr. Barron, Resolution No. 17 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Fishback, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any new or old matters to discuss.

Ms. Fishback advised that the third Thursday in September, which is the 16th, is Yom Kippur and asked if the Authority would look at rescheduling this meeting.

Mr. Cohen stated that the Board would like to extend its condolences to Cathy Qureshi, a former Board member, on the recent passing of her husband Rif. He stated that not only was Cathy a former Board member but was also a former Parking Authority employee. He stated that the Board's thoughts are with Cathy and her family at this difficult time.

Mr. Cohen asked if our goal was to have next month's meeting in-person.

Mr. Onorato stated that we are hoping to have the August Board Meeting in-person.

There were none.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m. with all Board members in approval.

APPROVED TO CONTENT


Chairman

ACCEPTED FOR FILING IN THE AUTHORITY'S BOOK OF
MINUTES

Approval

Mr. Cohen asked if there was any questions or comments.

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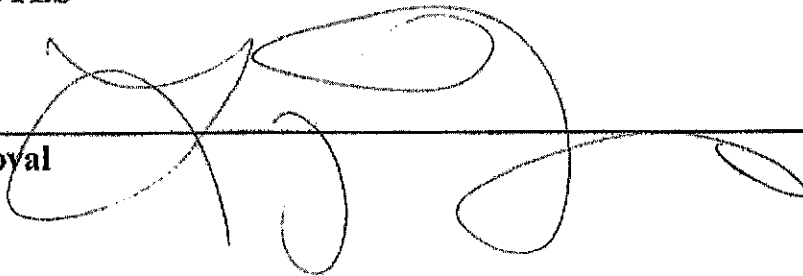
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APPROVED TO CONTENT

Chairman

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Approval

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is highly cursive and loops around itself.