



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes TAXICAB REVIEW BOARD

ALD. JAMES BOHL, JR, CHAIR
Elizabeth A. Nicols, Todd O'Leary, Carmela Peot, Michael Sanfelippo, Peter N. Tsounis
Staff Assistant: Joanna Polanco, 286-2366, Fax: 286-3456, jpolan@milwaukee.gov
Legislative Liaison: Richard Withers, 286-8532, rwith@milwaukee.gov

Friday, September 10, 2010

9:00 AM

Room 301- B, City Hall

Meeting convened at 9:17 A.M.

1. Roll call

Present 4 - Bohl, O'Leary, Tsounis and Omar

Excused 3 - Nicols, Sanfelippo and Peot

Also present:

Richard Withers - Legislative Reference Bureau

Richard Pfaff - License Division

Officer Tyshnsky - Police Department

Officer Sikora - Police Department

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the May 21, 2010 meeting

Mr. O'Leary moved to approve minutes from May 21, 2010. There were no objections.

Present 3 - Bohl, O'Leary and Tsounis

Excused 3 - Nicols, Sanfelippo and Peot

3. Discussion relating to limousine and shuttle regulations and permits

Mr. Richard Pfaff said that there is no additional information since the last meeting in May 21, 2010.

Mr. withers said that he will continue to work with Assistant City Attorney, Mr. Adam Stephens, successor of Mr. Schrimpf to bring back a proposal to the task force about creating an ordinance that would codify Public Passenger Vehicles (PPV) and other related issues.

Ald. Bohl said that he is open to the possibility of further discussion of this topic, however, does not see the need to bring this item in further agendas unless something is codified.

4. Taxicab fare survey update and related information

Chair, Ald. Bohl said that he wants for the taxicab review board to have an annual review of taxicab fares.

Mr. Withers, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, presented the board with a memo regarding a comparison of recent rates and charges explaining the Status of Milwaukee Taxicab charges and the comparison of these rates among other cities.

Mr. Tsounis said that milwaukee taxicab rates are fare. That the complaint rate will depend on the services the drivers provide.

Mr. O'Leary said that he has not receive any complaints regarding the pricing for the taxicab services.

5. Discussion on Meter Inspection by the Health Department

Present from Health Department:

Mr. Jay Labecki, Meter Inspector

Mr. Kevin Hulbert, Consumer Environmental Health Manager

Mr. Labecki lead the discussion of explaining what their work consist in the testing for rollout per tenth of a mile and time drops and several other rates that are posted.

Ald. Bohl asked Mr. Labecki, how frequent is the calibration not done properly?

Mr. Labecki answered that it is very frequent.

Ald. Bohl asked is it the duty of the individual taxi owner or taxi company to purchase these machines that are calibrated by some outside firms?

Mr. Labecki said that the state ordinance requires the person to be certified and registered to be installer and calibrator. In the past these requirements have been overlooked. Now the Health department makes sure that anyone touching those meters meet those requirements. Right now there are only two companies, Jack Wagner Telecommunications and San Felippo that are certified state registered companies to do these tests.

Mr. Omar asked Mr. Labecki and Mr. Hulbert is there a way the inspection can be accommodated a differnet day than Thursdays.

Mr. Hulbert stated that the inspection are set up to be done on wednesdays, however, the Health Department could arrange for a thursday inspection.

Mr. Labecki said of complaint regarding the suitcase charges. Apperantly, there are some taxicab drivers that are charging \$1.00 per suitcase as opposed to what is posted. The signs states that there is a \$1.00 charge for 3 or more suitcases.

Ald. Bohl said that he is open to suggestions or ways to bring these individuals forward to hold them accountable for their non-compliance.

Mr. Hulbert stated that is hard to monitor the entire operation of the taxicab drivers.

6. Public comments/complaints regarding service animals, credit cards and other service related issues

Individual present:

Ms. Penny Bell with her service dog, TWXT

Ms. Bell submitted a packet of information to all members regarding her experience with the taxicab industry and supporting documentation to her complaint and concerns regarding the treatment she and her service dog has received. In Ms. Bell's packet she included The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and People with Physical Disabilities, Chapter 951 Crimes Against Animal from the Wisconsin Status Database, Wisconsin Public Accommodations Law, from the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Disability Rights Section ADA Business BRIEFF: Service Animals, Muslim Taxi Drivers vs. Seeing -Eye Dogs by Daniel Pipes, article and also from the U.S. Department of Justice Civil rights Division - Commonly Asked Questions About Service Animals in Places of Business, The American With Disabilities Act and You: Frequently Asked Questions on Taxicab Service, presented by Easter Seal Project ACTION and the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association

Ald. Bohl said to Ms. Bell that as a political leader is incumbent on him to have an open ear and try to rectify problems that he is made aware of. Ald. Bohl also said to Ms. Bell that it is important that individuals such, as her bring these types of concerns to this body. He also said to Ms. Bell that this board wants to be able to have the mechanism of education in place for the drivers, so those that are not following the law, this board can go back to them to make them aware of the problems and take action against those who are in violation.

Mr. Pfaff said that upon renewal of the taxicab license, the license division is prepared to look out for complaints of the nature of Ms. Bell's complaint and concerns.

Ms. Bell offered to the body to compile further research in regards to this issue.

Ald. Bohl encouraged Ms. Bell to forward any further information directly to his attention.

Mr. Pfaff said that the code currently only restricts to one provision that states that drivers can not refuse a ride to handicap individuals or individuals with a service animal. It does not address the kinds of concern we are hearing. There is no regulation or requirements after the ride is accepted as the passenger responsibility to care for their service dog.

Ald. Bohl requested more discussion of this topic in the next meeting, perhaps have some perspective possible legislation that would at least mirror and enhance some of the laws and provide a clear definition for individual drivers and companies.

Ald. Bohl asked does the city license companies?

Mr. Pfaff responded that generally the cars are independently owned and most of the time the person who drives the vehicle is not the owner. The License Division licenses the company not the dispatch services.

Ald. Bohl promised to Ms. Bell that he will continue to discuss this issue, and that he will work with the Legislative Reference Bureau to discuss the federal legislation, city ordinances and see how can the Taxicab Review Board better help with the understanding of the ordinances in place.

Ald. Bohl said that in regards to the company and the individual driver, he will send a complaint letter to the company based on the information Ms. Bell provided the board, send a copy to the appropriate Milwaukee county agency to ensure that they see it as part of the city review board hearing an open complaints.

7. Next meeting date, time and agenda

Friday, January 7th, 2011 at 9:00 A.M.

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 A.M.

Joanna Polanco

Staff Assistant