

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
COMMON COUNCIL
AND
TRANSIT COMMITTEE
COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL
AUGUST 27, 2024
6:00 P.M.**

Common Council: The Common Council met in special session, Mayor Poeschel presiding. On roll call: Council Member Clough absent, all other members present.

Transit Committee: The Transit Committee meeting was called to order by Chair William Neville. On roll call: Daniel Clough absent, all other members present.

Transit Committee: Chair Neville declared the minutes of the August 6, 2024 meeting approved as filed with the City Clerk.

Mayor Poeschel announced that the purpose of this joint meeting is to discuss and act on the Neillsville Taxi Service.

Mayor Poeschel called for appearances.

Jon Counsell, City resident, stated what are the City's priorities, the City Council has to make a tough decision, it cannot simply pay for everything for everybody. The taxi service serves some people, but not all. The City's population has shrunk. The City's share of the taxi service is about \$135,000 or about \$58 per City resident. The overall cost is about \$330,000 for around 10,000 rides per year or \$33 per ride, mostly funded out of taxpayer dollars (Federal, State and City). Hard decisions have to be made, other avenues may become available-a private service, Uber or Lyft.

Mayor Poeschel stated under State rules the City has fallen under the 2,500 population requirement. In June, the number of riders were 846-224 or 26% of those rides were outside of the City limits – 76 went to the IGA (they deliver). Checking around with cities our size, they don't have a taxi service. Medford and Hayward do, but they are bigger. There are some regular riders, but most riders used the taxi service four times or less that month.

Chair Neville stated Mark Jones, Abby Vans owner and operator, proposed cutting the second taxi and raising fares saving \$50,000 to \$55,000. This would still leave the City Fund about \$80,000 to \$85,000 and you will not retain the same number of riders. The public hearing on August 6th did not have a great amount of support from City residents, many were from out of the City. Looking at the numbers about 15% of the population used the taxi service, but that included non-City people. Do we cut service and raise fares or eliminate the taxi service?

Council Member Counsell stated Jones' proposal to drop one taxi and increase fares is going to lose riders, the City has not grown, we have a lot of demand for budget dollars, what benefits the majority.

Council Member Rochester stated that cutting back on hours of service will hurt more, bar closing hours are not covered already. This is a small community with small businesses. What does Abby Vans give back.

Discussion continued.

Common Council: Motion Counsell, second Rochester, to eliminate the City taxi service giving Abby Vans the required 90 days notice. All Aye.

Transit Committee: Motion Amber Vine, second Kory Poeschel, to adjourn. All Aye.

Common Council: Motion Counsell, second Rochester, to adjourn. All Aye.

Dewey Poeschel, Mayor

William Neville, Transit Committee Chair

Rex R. Roehl, City Clerk-Treasurer

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