

**CIP SUB-COMMITTEE  
(RE: MTA)**

**March 21, 2000**

**6:45 PM**

Chairman Pariseau called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Pariseau, Levasseur, Clancy, M. McCarthy  
(for M. Hobson)

Messrs: D. Clay, G. Boisvert, J. Webster

Chairman Pariseau addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Louise Gazda to the Amalgamated Transit Union on MTA issue.

Chairman Pariseau stated there is really no need to go into the organizational nature of this Committee. For Alderman Levasseur's information, this sub-Committee was formed by former Alderman Reiniger after the members of the Board received a considerable number of memos from employees at the MTA. The Committee did meet with union representatives and MTA representatives. The report of the Committee stated that they were to continue working to address the issues and as far as I am concerned, management has been doing that. There is concern by a few drivers at the MTA who aren't happy not because of the entire management, but they have sour grapes with the appointment of Mr. Webster to a management position. I think that is all it is in my opinion. We have received several more letters, not only from Louise Gazda but others relative to the situation at the MTA. In my talking with other drivers at the MTA, they don't have a problem. You have these certain few that continually bring up the issue. I say if they are not happy they should get out. I will let Mr. Clay speak now. There is really nothing we can do.

Alderman Levasseur asked is Louise Gazda here.

Mr. Clay answered I don't know what the situation is.

Alderman Levasseur asked was she aware of this meeting.

Mr. Clay answered I am not sure of that either.

Mr. Boisvert stated we had a roundtable meeting that we established and we asked for union representation and employee representation and the last one we had she didn't come but the union President came and our driver representative came, as well as Alderman Lopez.

Chairman Pariseau replied I did receive a copy of those minutes from Mr. Clay. I don't know if that was sent to everybody.

Mr. Clay responded I don't believe it was, but I do have copies for those who didn't receive them.

Chairman Pariseau stated the acting union President agrees that things at the MTA are improving.

Alderman Clancy asked, Mr. Clay, have you people had any recent meetings with the union.

Mr. Clay answered yes. We met in February at a roundtable discussion. Other than that, we meet twice or three times a week with the business agent who comes in to discuss issues. We are always going to have issues where everybody is posturing right now because we are getting ready to go into our contract negotiations. We meet with...right now we are meeting with the acting President, but the President will be back Wednesday. We meet quite regularly with them. We don't meet with all of them. Everybody doesn't come into the meetings. It is almost impossible. We do make ourselves available at all times. The doors are always open. There are always drivers in there talking with John and Pat Goal, who is our Assistant Superintendent. We have some good communications going. We have some good rapport. We have not had any real problems for quite some time as indicated by Don Gosselin. Can things be better? Absolutely. The problems we had when we were here a year or 13 months ago, they are not there. We are still working very hard to make sure that it doesn't happen again. At the moment, you might see a little bit more because we start negotiations for contracts next month. We have already swapped proposals and everybody has their own ideas now of how to go. The letter that I wrote to Louise and copied all of you on says it like it is. The letter being questioned on January 11 that you referenced in your agenda tonight, that created no grievance. Three days after that letter was written, we had the union officers in, talked to them and told them what had happened and no grievance was filed. They said they were going to take care of it.

We did make some good strides in trying to say that if an error is made in a check we are going to make sure they get that money in a separate check. We are no longer going to wait until the next payday. If we made an error, you will get the check right away. We are not going to go that route anymore.

Alderman Clancy asked other than Louise Gazda, how many more disgruntled employees do you have.

Mr. Clay answered I can name probably three. One in the garage and two drivers and right now we have 140 employees. A lot of the problems went away when we finally were able to attract more drivers. We were so short-handed with part-time operators. In the last month and half we have put 12 or 13 new drivers on and it has taken care of the problems because now we are not asking people I know you did your 8 hours today but I need you to do 2 more. Now we have people saying can I get some overtime? You can't have it both ways. Louise wants every bit of time she can possibly muster. We have a good working relationship now with the officers of the union. When you go through the hallways now it is "Hi, how are you?" "Good afternoon", "What can I do for you?" It is just a much better place then we had a year and a half ago. Don't forget that last year when we got into this, we had been in contract negotiations for 18 months and as soon as it was done you had a bunch of people who didn't like what they saw in the contract, didn't like the time clock agreement, they never had a time clock before and they weren't going to do it. We have done some changes on that and eased some of the discipline. I think we are all working in the right direction.

Chairman Pariseau asked are you following the recommendations.

Mr. Clay answered yes, we are.

Chairman Pariseau stated I don't think we can ask anymore from management. Maureen, do you want to speak about your observations of the MTA.

Ms. McCarthy replied I was very involved last year in facilitating the meetings between labor and management following the report to this Committee. We met for eight weeks once a week. I think those meetings went very well. There were a lot of issues put on the table and the opportunity to talk face-to-face helped to clear some of those communication barriers. I did here probably into June from some drivers at least once a week who were still unhappy and wanting some sort of immediate change. The calls tapered off and I would have to say that I haven't talked with anyone or received any calls since July or August. Since that time, I haven't been involved directly, but they all have my name down there as a contact.

Chairman Pariseau asked is there a way that we could get the message to these parties that send us letters that we don't want the letters. I suppose there is no way. I don't want to start a war, but this is bologna. The unsigned letter, the one from Louise Gazda, and the one from Susan Hammond.

Alderman Levasseur stated if they are going to send letters, they should send them to management first and then management should forward them here with a letter showing that they have read it first and some sort of a buffer has to be given before they come to us. They should be made to understand and I am not sure if you are the right person to do this, but to show this discord between two individuals on a personal animosity does not look favorable upon them or yourself and it creates a cloud over the whole organization when this goes on. It doesn't make anybody look good. There should be some sort of barrier before it comes to us. Maybe they should send it to this Committee first. We get mail day and night and personality issues are not something we want to deal with.

Mr. Clay replied I think the problem and some of it is summed up in the recommendations from the CIP Sub-Committee on #6 where it says the ATU Local 717 should work to constrain its members.

Chairman Pariseau stated we should send a letter to the President of the union to ask them to relay to their membership that they should discuss their problems with the union before sending a letter out to anybody. Can't we do that? Would that be offensive?

Ms. McCarthy replied I don't think it would be offensive, but I would stress that you do it in such a way that you don't turn off the letter writing campaign. You just don't want to send the message that no one can communicate, but I think you can stress that they have a process in-house, not only the formal process through the collective bargaining and agreement procedure but you have also established an informal process with the roundtable discussions and the regular meetings that are still being held. The union leadership should send a strong message.

Chairman Pariseau stated in that letter we should state that no letter would be acted upon until it is initialed by a union representative or union President before it is sent to the members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Alderman Levasseur replied I would accept the letter if there were a letter from the union President.

Alderman Clancy stated so in other words what we are trying to do is have them sort it out themselves before it comes to us.

Alderman Levasseur moved to have the Human Resources Department draft a letter to the MTA union President. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion. Chairman Pariseau called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Clancy asked do you have any outstanding issues at the MTA right now.

Mr. Clay answered we have four grievances in the works right now.

Chairman Pariseau asked how many are Ms. Gazda's.

Mr. Clay answered none. John sat with the union and went over...I have a lot more papers from Louise Gazda than you do as to her grievances and what she is doing is instead of just going to the union and saying I have a grievance, she wants to write it down and copy everybody. We sat down for three hours and they came out with that many grievances. She must have had 30 items that she wanted grieved and got zero. The union just said we don't have a grievance here. There is nothing. It is contractual language, what can you do?

Mr. Boisvert stated at the first roundtable meeting we gave them a format to follow and they had five items on the agenda. We cleared up three of them and the others were contractual so we couldn't do much with those. We told them that we could address those during contract negotiations. During the second roundtable, only the union President and one driver showed up. They were very pleased in speaking for the drivers. We asked them if there were any problems and they said no that during the last six months things have been going well and it is a whole new ballgame. We were very encouraged by that. We are going to have a roundtable every other month.

Alderman Clancy stated that sounds okay. You can't give them everything they want.

Mr. Clay stated I can't think of one item that would be a real problem down there. I really can't. Things are going smoothly.

Mr. Webster stated we took a stack of letters from Louise and Don Gosselin and some of the other union representatives spent about three and a half-hours in my office. I pulled our worksheets and assignments and everything and every one of her letters got reduced to interpretation of the contract. Not one grievance came out of about 10 letters, each one accusing various managers of harassment or stealing work away. It comes down to the basics of personality and some rhetoric. There are always going to be issues. There is never perfection anywhere.

Alderman Clancy stated I usually here the scuttlebutt from a few of the MTA drivers and as far as I am concerned, things are working out well. You have done a good job since the last time we met. I think you guys are doing a good job. Like you said, you are always going to have some disgruntled employees down there, but you can't please everybody.

Mr. Webster stated the union has also done a good job.

Alderman Clancy stated maybe we should meet again in six or eight weeks unless somebody comes up with something serious.

Alderman Levasseur stated for the record I would like to say that the fact that Louise Gazda did not show up for the meeting weighs heavily on the decision I made.

Mr. Boisvert stated channeling the communication the proper way is 90% of the problem. You have junk mail going all over the place.

Chairman Pariseau stated so we are going to send that letter to the President of the union and a copy to members of this Committee, as well as to MTA management.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Levasseur it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee