

**BOARD OF TAXICAB
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MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

100 S. MAIN STREET, 10th FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

RITA L. ROBINSON
General Manager

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF TAXICAB COMMISSIONERS**

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009
9:00 A.M.

CONVENED

The Board of Taxicab Commissioners convened on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 9:08 a.m., in Room 1070, City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

President Iwasaki called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present noting that those wishing to testify before the Board, must fill out a speaker's form. He informed the audience that if anyone is a registered lobbyist, City ordinance requires that it should be indicated on the speaker's form.

Item No. 1 – Roll Call

Present: President Bruce Iwasaki, Commissioner Andrea A. Alarcon, and Vice President Dennis F. Hernandez, arrived at 9:10 a.m.; Amir Sedadi, Assistant General Manager, arrived at 10 a.m. during Item No. 6; Keith Pritsker, City Attorney, arrived at 9:15 a.m. during Public Forum and Thomas Drischler, Taxicab Administrator.

Absent: Commissioners Kim Pattillo Brownson and Sergio Siderman

Item No. 2 – Minutes

Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by Vice President Hernandez to adopt the minutes of March 5, 2009. Unanimously APPROVED.

Item No. 3 – Communications

There were no new communication items to report.

Item No. 4 – Commission Business

There was no new Commission business to report.

Item 5 – Administrator’s Report

The Administrator’s Report was head after Public Forum.

Thomas Drischler, Taxicab Administrator, reported on the following:

- The Airport Department has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to turn the Airport taxicab dispatching system into a concession. Their proposal indicates that taxi drivers will be paying an additional \$2 to \$4 dollars or more per trip, including the existing \$2.50 surcharge, which is now recovered from passengers. The RFP also assumes that the Taxicab Board, the City Council and Mayor will approve a dramatic increase in the Airport’s taxi surcharge.
- The Franchise and Taxicab Regulation Bureau will not be hiring someone to fill the following six vacant positions: Chief Transportation Engineer, Senior Transportation Investigator, Transportation Investigator, Senior Transportation Engineer, Transportation Engineering Associate II and Clerk Typist.
- The bandit taxicab statistics for the first four months of this year, have been good. There have been 334 arrests with 308 impounds. In 2008, there were 251 impounds.
- Legislative efforts to improve impound – Senator Oropeza’s Bill – SB-201 and TCP Waybill Ordinance.
- The next Taxicab Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6 at 10 a.m. in Room 1050, City Hall.

Question and answer session ensued.

President Iwasaki requested that staff invite Airport representatives to address the Board regarding the concession RFP.

Commissioner Alarcon requested that the concession RFP be agendized.

Keith Pritsker, City Attorney, will inform the criminal section in his office, regarding assisting with enforcing the Bandit Program.

PUBLIC FORUM

Public forum was taken before the Administrator’s Report.

INFORMATION ITEM

Item No. 6 – Presentation by Verrus Mobile Technologies

Item No. 6 was heard after Item No. 8.

Tom Drischler, Taxicab Administrator, introduced Jeff Goldsmith-Jones, from Verrus Mobile Technologies.

Mr. Goldsmith-Jones addressed the Board and mentioned the following:

- Verrus Mobile Technologies, located in Vancouver, has been in business since in the year 2001, primarily in the parking business and have parking contracts all over the United States, Canada and the UK.
- This service allows the consumer to pay for taxicab services by using a cell phone or blackberry to charge to their credit card. Verrus would have credit card information on file.
- Provide credit card information by using Verrus' website or by telephone.
- Seven and one-half percent of taxicab metered fare is charged to the consumer.
- No electronic and/or hardware is required to be installed in the taxicab.
- This method is more secure because the credit card is not handed to anyone to process the transaction.
- A sticker indicating - pay the taxicab driver by phone - is adhered inside the taxicab.

Question and answer session ensued.

Public forum was taken.

Amir Sedadi, Assistant General Manager, addressed the Board and reported the following information:

- Mayor's proposed budget is \$5 million shortfall.
- Budget negotiations are taking place with management and the Unions.
- The Mayor proposed a 14% budget cut; consequently, the Department of Transportation will be losing all 160 vacant positions.
- The Mayor proposed a 10% salary cut for all Departments, including Police and Fire Departments.
- Also, being considered are possible early retirement; mandatory furloughs and layoffs.
- The Franchise Division has six vacancies – which is a 22% proposed cut. This reduction includes not filling the Chief Investigator, Senior Transportation Investigator, Transportation Investigator, Senior Transportation Engineer, Transportation Engineering Associate II and Clerk Typist vacancies.

Mr. Sedadi's report continued:

- The Department's services, safety and revenue for the City will be impacted.

Question and answer session ensued.

President Iwasaki requested that staff provide the Board with periodic reports on operations conducted pertaining to overcharging by taxicab drivers and also report on good news. Mr. Drischler will provide this information at the next Board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Item No. 7 – Final approval of Board Order No. 058 – revising Taxicab Rule No. 799 – credit/debit card identification separate from gift cards

Tom Drischler, Taxicab Administrator, presented the report.

Question and answer session ensued.

Public forum was taken.

Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by Vice President Hernandez to approve staff's recommendations. Unanimously APPROVED.

Item No. 8 – Approval of exemption to Taxicab Rule No. 401 & 407 for Bell Cab Company to field up to three (3) hybrid/clean fuel vehicles and authorization for the Department to grant future exemptions.

Item No. 8 was heard after the Administrator's Report.

Thomas Drischler, Taxicab Administrator, presented Board report.

Question and answer session ensued.

Commissioner Alarcon recommended that Taxicab Rule No. 401 be amended and not have to review and approve exemptions on a one-to-one basis. Staff will review this Rule and present to the Board at a future Board meeting.

Public forum was taken.

Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by Vice President Hernandez to approve staff's recommendations. Unanimously APPROVED.

Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by Vice President Hernandez to adjourn to Executive Session. Unanimously APPROVED.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.7

Item No. 9 - Appeal of Mr. Kulwinder Singh, concerning the Department's September 10, 2008, denial of his new taxicab driver permit, pursuant to Board Order 471, Rule 608 – no company sponsor

Following discussion, President Iwasaki moved, seconded by Commissioner Alarcon to grant the appeal and reduce his suspension period to obtain a permit until September 26, 2009. Unanimously APPROVED.

Item No. 10 – Appeal of Mr. Sukhwinder Singh, concerning the Department's October 23, 2008, denial of his new taxicab driver permit, pursuant to Board Order 471, Rule 608 – co company sponsor

Following discussion, Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by Vice President Hernandez to grant the appeal and reduce his suspension to obtain a permit until December 7, 2009. Unanimously APPROVED.

Item No. 11 – Appeal of Mr. Ferrdous Ahmmed, concerning the Department's February 10, 2009, revocation (cancellation), of his replacement taxicab driver permit, pursuant to Board Order 471, Rule 657 – no company sponsor

Following discussion, Commissioner Alarcon moved, seconded by President Iwasaki to adopt the Department's recommendations and approve the report. Unanimously APPROVED.

Vice President Hernandez moved, seconded by Commissioner Alarcon to adjourn to Regular Session. Unanimously APPROVED.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board of Taxicab Commissioners, Vice President Hernandez moved, seconded by Commissioner Alarcon to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously APPROVED.

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.