

**Meeting Notes: RABA Meeting**

**March 23, 2009**

**Important Definitions (as applicable to this document):**

*\* Important Note: These definitions are based on a little information on the web, direct quoting from professionals at the meeting, or the connotations inferred by the subject matter of the section in the presentation. Something more definitive could be obtained if required – please let me know.*

**RABA:** Redding Area Bus Authority; the local mass-transit provider.

**Meeting Roll:**

Gary Lewis (Shasta College President); Joe Wyse (Shasta College Vice President of Administrative Services); Dr. Keith Brookshaw (Dean of Students, Shasta College); Sue Hanson (Administrative Transportation Planner, RABA); Chuck Aukland (Assistant City Engineer, RABA, City of Redding); Dan Kinney (Senate Representative and Student Senate President, Shasta College)

**Outline of Meeting Goals:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the implementation of a plan that will allow free RABA transportation to all Shasta College students and faculty. Key points that need to be addressed include:

- Securing potentially “free” bus fare for all students and faculty of Shasta College by:
  - Settling on a final cost to the school, per term, for free bus travel;
  - Determining where the responsibility for payments lay, and thusly determining where the necessary monies will come from;
  - Finding ways to work with RABA to increase Shasta College’s student body by providing more transportation opportunities to outlying communities;
  - To discuss other possible partnerships with RABA, including advertising at bus stops and on the busses themselves.

It should be noted that this has been an on-going discussion for an indeterminate number of years; no truly formal action has been taken to see anything implemented until now. A lot of logistics have to be worked out in order for this plan to get up and running, making the earliest possible time likely spring of 2010.

First, a couple of facts about the proposed service: 1.) with the presentation of a valid and current Shasta College ID students *and* faculty will be allowed to ride any RABA bus free of charge; 2.) this service applies to any scheduled route, any day of the week (although the question of the summer term and special service buses is still undetermined).

The issue of cost was discussed in some detail. Our President, Gary Lewis, made some discoveries on the amounts of money that RABA already receives from Shasta College through its ongoing partnership with our EOPS Program. The amount is substantial (between \$15,000 and \$30,000 a year for the past three years) and apparently was

unknown to the delegation sent from RABA. President Lewis, to his credit, chose to share this information and stated that he wanted to keep all of our dealings with RABA “honest and above board.”

This issue raised by this new information is an important one and represents a possible stumbling block in these negotiations: it is important for us to remember that RABA is a business first and foremost, and like any business they have a bottom line that must be met in order for a joint business venture to be worth their time and effort. EOPS is already giving money every term to RABA in exchange for bus passes for their students. This amount, the \$15,000 to \$30,000 represented by  $X$ , would likely be discontinued in favor of the cheaper option of simply purchasing student IDs for their students. This means that RABA would no longer receive  $X$  from EOPS, and needs to be thusly compensated for the termination of that steady income in some way. This is where we find ourselves now: trying to determine the source of a new, but equal, amount of capital ( $Y$ ) to pick-up where EOPS is likely to end their funding to RABA. Under the circumstances if  $Y$  does not equal or exceed  $X$  than RABA stands to gain nothing on the business end of a deal like this one.

Now, that’s not to say that EOPS would not be able to help raise the necessary monies. In fact Joe Wyse came up with a rather ingenious way to raise the necessary money, possibly exceeding the current amount currently being raised by EOPS. Note first that this plan would not be implemented until spring of ’10 because the plan hangs on the \$3 increase to the cost of the student IDs issued by the Student Senate which will not go into effect until next spring. Note second that this plan hangs also on the continued increase in student ID sales, and thus places a great deal of pressure on the Student Senate to see that these IDs are sold (better advertising, more office hours for Senate members, better working knowledge of the ID making procedures for those who don’t know, etc.). The plan calls for EOPS to pay the \$8 per student to the Student Senate for the IDs for their students. There are currently about 1,500 students involved with the EOPS, and this number will possibly be going up in the near future. At 1,500 students, the \$8 per card from EOPS would come out to \$12,000 per term or \$24,000 per year. If Student Senate can meet these sales numbers (an additional 1,500 students) and thus generate equal amounts of money (\$12,000 per term/\$24,000 per year) the grand total per year would be \$48,000 per year. If we cut this revenue in half and give half to RABA then we can guarantee them \$12,000 per term, averaging \$24,000 per year. The remaining \$24,000 per year remains with the Student Senate to supplement their budget as per usual. This means that RABA stands to make more if we sell more (i.e. if made \$60,000 per year in sales, RABA would receive \$30,000 or \$15,000 per term).

#### Summery of the EOPS/Student Senate

- 1.) EOPS pays Student Senate the \$8 per student for all EOPS students (approx. 1,500+ students) to get their student IDs:  $1,500 \times \$8 = \$12,000$  per term/\$24,000 per year;
- 2.) Student Senate produces an equal number of student IDs through independent sales (approx. 1,500+ students):  $1,500 \times \$8 = \$12,000$  per term/\$24,000 per year;
- 3.) Total Yearly Sales: \$48,000, Total Term Sales: \$24,000;

- 4.) The total monies generated are then divided in half (\$48,000/2), with half going to RABA and the other half remaining with the Senate (\$24,000 each year for each party).

This plan has a number of benefits for all parties, making it a proverbial win-win (-win). For EOPS, this can potentially free up some of their funding to be used in other ways to benefit their students. For RABA this plan would guarantee them a steady form of revenue from the college that falls above the average that they have received over the last few years. For the Student Senate this plan increases our current profits from sales, generating greater revenues for the next year, and allows us to fulfill our duty of advocating for the student body. Finally, for Shasta College it could serve to increase enrollment, as the obstacle of transportation would, for many, be removed. It should be remembered that for the time being this idea is simply that: an idea. There are many roads left to explore and questions that have to be answered before this possibility reaches practicality. Nevertheless this represents a solid step in the right direction. We now have some solid numbers to work with and an approximate date for implementation (spring '10).

A number of benefits, beyond the obvious one, to working with RABA on this project were discussed as well. For one, free bus service would (nominally) encourage students to use public transportation instead of driving their own vehicles. This aligns with our new sustainability goals and will help to create a “greener” campus and community. Additionally there is a possibility of working with two of our neighboring counties. While both are working through money issues, there has at the very least been interest in both. Tehama County, especially the Red Bluff area, could provide a new population of students if there is enough interest. A partnership with Trinity County could also provide additional students, and there has been [unconfirmed] Shasta College faculty interest in this possibility. Of the two, Tehama seems the closest and more likely choice initially. However, with the economy where it is at present, these partnerships are likely more of a long-term goal. The idea of a “bus wrap” was discussed again (entirely wrapping a bus or buses in Shasta College colors and logos for advertising purposes) and it was determined that approximately \$3,500.00 to get a wrap done.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the overall tone of the meeting was a positive one. Everyone present was interested in seeing a plan like this initiated for our students and, as Mr. Aukland put it, “This is the ideal time to see a project like this go into effect.” If there are any questions on this report or those other issues, please feel free to ask.

Have a great Spring Break!

### **Other Questions**

- What about the summer term? Will the free bus still apply? How much will a summer term cost, as the student population is considerably lower? How will we handle the costs of a summer term to RABA?
- Does this service include special buses like those for disabled students?
- Is there a possibility of securing a state transportation (CalWorks) grant to cover the costs?

- What can the Senate do to help with the process of getting this program instituted (i.e. surveying the student body, advertising, etc)?