



Vehicle for Hire Licensing Board

Vehicle For Hire - Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 5:30 PM, Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 149 Church Street, Burlington. VT 05401 OR remotely via Zoom.

**Member Present: Paul Hines
Stephen Hamlin
Youness Jamil**

**Also present: Hayley McClenahan
Tenzin Chokden
Nic Longo
Councilor Mark Barlow**

Meeting start time: 5:40PM

1. Agenda

1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda
Motion to accept the agenda by Stephen Hamlin
Seconded: Youness Jamil
Approved unanimously.

2. Previous Minutes

2.1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept the previous minutes by Stephen Hamlin
Seconded: Youness Jamil
Approved unanimously.

3. Public Forum

3.1. PUBLIC FORUM - Verbal Comments

Councilor Mark Barlow said that the memo to the City Council that the board sent was accepted and referred

to TEUC committee. He is going to add it to the agenda for the next TECU meeting in October and deliberate and work with Director Spencer on that.

4. New Business

4.1. Updating Taxi Rates

Paul Hines asked if this is the commission's job to set the taxi rates and if the board decided today that the rates should change, could that go into effect immediately.

Hayley McClenahan replied yes, it is board's job to set the taxi rates. However it's supposed to be on a licensing year basis and she would have to check with Sarah. She believes the licensing year runs with the fiscal year, but she will double check.

Councilor Barlow asked if the licensing does not run on fiscal year, does the board have any flexibility on making changes to the rate structure at any point.

Hayley McClenahan replied her understanding is that the past practice is that the rates have been set on a licensing year basis and that the licensing year has lined up with the fiscal year, but it does not explicitly state this anywhere in ordinance.

Paul Hines noted that he is concerned in general that the system is really not working right now. One of his colleagues was charged \$70 for a 3 mile trip from the airport, not using the meter. He thinks this is because the rates are really low and people don't know the rules.

Hayley McClenahan replied that for ease administration, the current licensing year should be completed before starting fresh. She described the current rates as only applying to vehicles for hire who are operating as taxis with a taximeter, and noted that there is not a rate schedule for vehicles for hire that are operating on a prearranged basis.

Youness Jamil added that this discussion is about pick up from the airport. Taxi drivers are supposed to use a meter when picking up from the airport and picking up street hails from downtown or anywhere else. There are two different rates between airport and downtown.

Paul Hines shared proposed new meter rates on a spreadsheet and asked the board if they have any opinions on how the rates should be set and how the change should be implemented.

Youness Jamil asked to put into consideration when calculating new rates that we are a small city compared to other big cities. We don't have the level of traffic that they do - these cities have more planes, and more tourists. As far as implementation, he knows the person in Florida who used to calibrate meters in Burlington; perhaps the city can hire him to calibrate all the meters with new rates.

Paul Hines asked Youness Jamil what would be an ideal charge for a 5 miles ride from the airport. Youness Jamil replied the price should be set between \$35-\$40.

Nic Longo mentioned airport queue permits at the airport will be increased to 90. They are also thinking about splitting the queue permits between an early shift and a late shift because the airport queue line can only hold up to 18 taxis at once.

Stephen Hamlin asked if there is going to be a way to tell the difference between two queue permits.

Nic Longo replied yes. There are obviously some concerns with the expired queue permits that are operating at the airport. Monitoring this is very labor intensive and his team is responsible for the security element of

Paul Hines started the discussion on the signage at the Airport, the key points that would be important to note

in signage are noted below.

“Passenger Rights

As a passenger using Taxis in the City of Burlington you should expect to:

- Ride in a clean vehicle with a courteous and professional driver, and review the taxi license.
- Understand how much you will be charged. Most rides should use the city-approved taxi rate. If you choose you may agree to a different fare before starting your ride.
- Obtain a printed or electronic receipt for your ride.

**The city approved taxi fare for a ride from the airport is
\$X + \$Y/mile + \$Z/minute + [after 10pm fee]**

For a full description of your rights see:

<https://www.codepublishing.com/VT/Burlington/html/Burlington30/Burlington3008.html>

[insert QR code]

If you feel that your rights as a passenger have been violated, you may file a complaint at {XYZ}”

Stephen Hamlin suggested the passengers should have the right to see taxi driver’s license.

Nic Longo mentioned that he had great conversation with his teams, ambassadors and ground transportation and they had great ideas. Some of the ideas include having a chart of how much a passenger can expect to pay for certain miles and also having printed material that would be translated. Another idea was using a QR code for easy access on information. He mentioned they interact with drivers and can ask the drivers if they have bill of rights posted in their vehicle and check on them.

Stephen Hamlin expressed how important is it for the board on take on this action because the past complaints in the last meetings were complaints about not having a clean car.

Paul Hines suggested the Airport to create signage with the current rates even though no one will use and then put up new version in January. Nic Longo suggested having a QR code that will directly link to passengers to file complaints to the Taxi Administration and that all drivers should accept credit card.

Youness Jamil agreed that all drivers should accept credit cards and he knows a company who is avoiding using to credit cards to avoid paying taxes and he tells his drivers to not accept credit cards.

Tenzin Chokden added all the taxis should have a copy of the bill of rights and the current rates. They are being reminded and issued a copy of these, whenever they renew their license.

The motion to recommend to the Airport Director or designee that signage substantially similar to that presented be implemented at the Airport as soon as possible.

Stephen Hamlin accepted the motion, seconded by Youness Jamil. Approved unanimously.

5. Adjournment

5.1. Motion to adjourn

Youness Jamil made the motion to adjourn.
Seconded by Stephen Hamlin.
The meeting ended at 6:52pm.