

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: February 4, 2010
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2nd Floor
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman May called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Wally Covington	Prince William County (arrived at 7:30 p.m.)
*Corey Hill	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
*Matthew Kelly, Secretary	City of Fredericksburg
Jerry Logan	Spotsylvania County
*Michael May, Chairman	Prince William County
*Paul Milde, Treasurer	Stafford County
*Martin Nohe	Prince William County (departed at 7:55 p.m.)
*Frank Principi	Prince William County
Gary Skinner	Spotsylvania County
*Susan Stimpson	Stafford County
*Jonathan Way, Vice Chairman	City of Manassas

ALTERNATES PRESENT

*Lorraine Lasch	Prince William County (left the table at 7:30 p.m.) (returned to the table at 7:55 p.m.)
Benjamin Pitts	Spotsylvania County
*Brian Potvin	Prince William County
*William Wren	City of Manassas Park

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Gina Altis	PRTC Executive Assistant
Monica Backmon	PWC Department of Transportation
Alyssa Brown	Assistant, Supervisor Michael May
Doris Chism	PRTC Dir., Customer Service & Dispatch
Aroni S. El	Citizen
Althea Evans	PRTC Dir., Marketing & Communications
Anthony Foster	PRTC Transportation Project Manager
Shanta Garth	FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Accounting & Admin.
Al Harf	PRTC Executive Director
Angela Horan	PRTC Legal Counsel
Robb Howell	FIRST TRANSIT General Manager
Ryan Jones	PRTC Special Projects Coordinator
Todd Johnson	FIRST TRANSIT Maintenance Manager
Betsy Massie	PRTC Dir., Grants & Project Management
Tim McCann	FIRST TRANSIT Region Vice President
Jennifer Mouchantaf	VRE Deputy Executive Officer
Paul Pitchke	FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Operations
Chuck Steigerwald	PRTC Mgr., Planning & Quality Assurance
Dale Zehner	VRE Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Frank Jones, Immediate Past Chmn	City of Manassas Park
John Jenkins	Prince William County
Scott Lingamfelter	Virginia House of Delegates
Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Ateeb Ahmad	Prince William County
David Awbrey	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
Hilda Barg	Prince William County
Jean Benson	City of Fredericksburg
Harry Crisp	Stafford County
Hap Connors	Spotsylvania County
Mark Dudenhefer	Stafford County
Brad Ellis	City of Fredericksburg
Peter LaMarca	City of Fredericksburg
Suhas Nadonni	City of Manassas Park
Hal Parrish	City of Manassas
Sorine Preli	Prince William County
Corey Stewart	Prince William County
John Stirrup	Prince William County

*Voting Member

- 3. INVOCATION Led by Commissioner Wren.
- 4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Commissioner Potvin.
- 5. CITIZENS' TIME No citizens came forward.
- 6. PRESENTATIONS

[FT\Info] A. First Transit General Manager Robb Howell – Employee Recognition and Operations Report.

Mr. Howell recognized the December 2009 Operator-of-the-Month Kingsley Dubeng. Mr. Dubeng currently operates OmniLink bus service. He noted that Mr. Dubeng will be present and introduced at the March PRTC Board meeting.

Mr. Howell reported eight commendations (directed to nine different operators) were received during the month of January. He went on to report the accident frequency rate for the month of January is 0.79 per 100,000 miles. He also noted the fiscal year rate is 1.30, better than First Transit's 1.375 goal and a 20% reduction compared to the same period last year. He also reported the complaint rate on the OmniRide service for January is 6.04 per 10,000 passengers compared to 7.04 for the prior month, and the year-to-date is 6.04 compared to 10.48 for the same period last year. The complaint rate on the OmniLink service for January is 2.63, the lowest complaint rate since the inception of the service.

With regard to the operator shortage, Mr. Howell reported a number of students recently graduated and a class of twenty is currently in progress with a new class scheduled to commence shortly. He also noted that both PRTC and First Transit are preparing for the blizzard predicted for tomorrow.

For the benefit of the new PRTC Board Members present this evening, Mr. Harf explained that Robb Howell is the on-site General Manager for First Transit, and that First Transit has been PRTC's bus operations contractor since 2002 performing all bus operations and maintenance. The PRTC-First Transit contract has the potential to run for as long as ten years (meaning that First Transit would be PRTC's contract operator until June 2013 if all the options are exercised). Mr. Harf went on to observe that the on-site First Transit General Manager reports on the status of the bus operation at the outset of each PRTC Board meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 10-02-01 Minutes of January 7, 2010.
[PRTC\Minutes]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Kelly, to approve the Minutes, as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\KELLY, WITH MAJORITY VOTE; LASCH, MILDE, NOHE, POTVIN, WREN ABSTAINED)

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

[VRE\Info] A. Operations Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes of January 15, 2010. There were no comments.

[VRE\Info] B. Chief Executive Officer's Report (1-10).

Mr. Zehner reported that VRE experienced nine of its highest ridership days during the month of January. Ridership continues to grow, with "standees" on most of the trains. He went on to report that on-time performance system-wide remains over 90% (91.5% and 89.8% on the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines, respectively). He also noted that a spike in ridership has occurred at the Burke, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Rippon, and Woodbridge VRE stations.

Continuing, Mr. Zehner reported the Federal Railway Administration (FRA) recently announced the award of "High Speed Rail" funds. VRE stands to benefit from the \$75 million FRA has chosen to award for the construction of eleven miles of third main rail trackage between Powell's Creek near Cherry Hill and Arkendale, a "crossover" in Stafford County. The new trackage will cross over the Quantico bridge, which was constructed to house a second track (the third track is on an older bridge across the Creek). The third main track will be constructed on a "design build" basis, meaning one contractor will be hired to both design and construct the new track. The FRA will announce within the next few weeks the commencement date and how the project will proceed.

Commissioner Principi asked why ridership spiked at the Rippon and Woodbridge VRE stations. Mr. Zehner speculated that there's a higher incidence of new riders in those areas, observing that VRE's ridership turnover is 30% per year, meaning that there are new riders replacing riders who leave the system all the time.

Commissioner Principi asked what the impact of High Speed Rail will have on Harbor Station located in Prince William County and commented that the investors (Wachovia and Wells Fargo) are interested in developing the station in that area. Mr. Zehner replied that VRE is ready to commence working with Wachovia and Wells Fargo when they are ready to proceed, and went on to say that construction is expected to be completed within two years once the funds are received.

Vice Chairman Way asked if plans for the assumption of VRE operational responsibilities by Keolis are proceeding satisfactorily and on schedule. Mr. Zehner replied "yes," and explained that Keolis has met with CSXT and is scheduled to meet with Norfolk Southern. Keolis also meets with key VRE Managers on a weekly basis and with the VRE CEO and President of Keolis on a monthly basis. To date, Keolis's "deliverables" have been on schedule.

- HB 19 (Cole) – would have authorized PRTC to charge higher fares for people who originated from jurisdictions who are not members of PRTC. The bill was defeated.
- HB 55 (Cole) – would have capped the VRE subsidy that any member jurisdiction would have to bear at whatever the fuel tax revenue yield for that jurisdiction is for that year. The bill was defeated.
- HB 690 (Miller) – would authorize PRTC and transit operators that do not currently have authority to conduct fingerprint and background checks on applicants. It has passed on the Senate side (SB 28 / Puller), but the “fiscal impact statement” became a complication on the House side because the state police estimate for additional costs it would incur was seen as prohibitive (i.e., 45,000 plus additional fingerprint checks annually, requiring five more forensic technicians at a cost of about \$300,000 per year). Mr. Harf explained that discussions have taken place with Delegate Miller about limiting the authority to just those who have been offered employment to shrink the fiscal impact and make it more palatable to the House of Delegates. Delegate Jackson amended the bill accordingly and has asked the state police to produce another fiscal impact statement.

Commissioner Milde asked if the cost to conduct fingerprint checks will be passed on to PRTC. Mr. Harf explained that the fiscal impact speaks to the expense the state will bear and there is currently no precedent for the state levying a fee for background checks. The state reports an out-of-pocket expense of about \$37.00 per each fingerprint check, but this does not account for the “personnel” cost to process the work load. He went on to explain that PRTC did explore with Delegate Miller whether a fee based solution might be an option, but this appears to be unduly complicated because of the way the state police currently handle background checks. There are no fees for any currently authorized background checks; it’s simply an expense the state absorbs. Amending the bill as Delegate Miller has done appears to be a more straightforward solution, and doing so still achieves PRTC’s basic aim.

Commissioner Principi asked if there is an update on HB 1313 (Torian). Mr. Harf replied “no,” because the Committee has not acted. He clarified for all the Commissioners that HB 1313 will legislate a taxing district to pay for a Metrorail extension to Prince William County.

Mr. Harf announced that an on-line forum related to the proposed FY 2011 budget/fare increase and public hearings are scheduled for next week. A full account of the results of the public review process and a set of final recommendations with regard to both the fare increase and FY 2011 budget will be presented to the PRTC Board at its March meeting.

Mr. Harf noted that the budget as proposed provides no additional seating capacity to ease overcrowding, and he went on to say that exploratory efforts to see if leased buses funded by favorable passenger revenue variances might be a possibility, concluding that the costs are prohibitive. Vice Chairman Way asked for further clarification. Mr. Harf explained that

PRTC would need 75 new riders to recover the cost of a leased bus plus the cost of the extra hours for placing the bus in service, which is more than the seating capacity of the bus. Mr. Harf also contrasted this finding with actions taken a year ago, when PRTC was able to do this very same thing because it still had some over-aged contingency fleet buses that could be placed into service.

Mr. Harf noted that PRTC is in receipt of a letter from Martz National Coach Works, Inc., which operates commuter bus service from Fredericksburg to Washington, D.C. Martz's letter advises that Martz is now reporting its performance/operating statistics to the National Transit Database (NTD), and it seeks consideration for this in the form of federal formula funding to defray a portion of its capital costs. Mr. Harf explained that Martz is a "private for profit" bus operator whose commuter service is a byproduct of its charter bus service. Many of Martz's bus charter services are deadhead moves to Washington, D.C. to pick up people to transport them to places such as the Manassas Battlefield. The commuter bus portion of Martz is incidental to the charter bus service which is the mainstay of their business. By Martz's telling, the region will realize between \$250,000 and \$300,000 of additional earnings each year, and if those funds were made available to Martz, nine to twelve buses could be purchased over the course of twelve years or so. Mr. Harf concluded his remarks about this issue by observing that the region's stakeholders – the TPB, the NVT, FAMPO, and PRTC – would be conferring on a response.

Referencing a separate vanpool design study that will soon commence, Commissioner Milde asked if the issue of calculated miles traveled through each jurisdiction has been resolved. Mr. Harf replied "no," and explained it will be resolved in the course of the vanpool design study. Commissioner Milde also asked if Stafford will realize any of the money earned by Martz – Mr. Harf explained the money would be apportioned by FTA to the Washington MPO and would be split thereafter on a negotiated basis just as the North Stafford funds earned by FRED were before. The FRED bus service realizes 100% of its earnings in North Stafford. Commissioner Milde asked whether Martz's proposal would also apply to Quick's bus service; Mr. Harf replied that this is plausible.

Commissioner Covington arrived at 7: 30 p.m. during Item 12-A – Executive Director's Report and was absent on the vote for Items 7, 8, 9, 9A-D, and 10-C. Commissioner Lasch left the table as a voting member at 7:30 p.m.

[PRTC\Action] B. Action Items:

- RES 10-02-09 1. FY 2011 State Grant Authorization.
[PRTC\FY11 State Grant]

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Vice Chairman Way, to authorize the Executive Director to submit the applications as proposed. There was no discussion on the motion. (KELLY\WAY, WITH MAJORITY VOTE; HILL ABSTAINED)

- RES 10-02-10 2. Application for FTA Bus Livability Grant Funds to
[PRTC\Bus Shelters] Support Bus Shelter Program.

3. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison. There were no comments.

4. Communications:

a. Related to Funding. There were no comments.

b. Related to Jurisdiction. There were no comments.

c. General Interest. There were no comments.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMISSIONERS' TIME

There was no other business to come before the Commission.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman May adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, March 4, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
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