

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: March 6, 2008
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2nd Floor
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Wally Covington	Prince William County (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
*Marvin Dixon, Secretary	City of Fredericksburg
*John Jenkins	Prince William County
*Frank Jones, Chairman	City of Manassas Park
*Corey Hill	DRPT
*Michael May, Treasurer	Prince William County (arrived at 7:15 p.m.)
*Paul Milde, Immediate Past Chmn	Stafford County
*Martin Nohe	Prince William County
*Frank Principi	Prince William County (arrived at 7:20 p.m.)

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Jean Benson	City of Fredericksburg
*Lorraine Lasch	Prince William County (left the table at 7:20 p.m. as a voting member)
*Brian Potvin	Prince William County (left the table at 7:15 p.m. as a voting member)
*Sorine Preli	Prince William County (left the table at 7:10 p.m. as a voting member)

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Gina Altis	PRTC Executive Assistant
Monica Backmon	PWC Dept. of Public Works
Rick Canizales	PWC Dept. of Public Works
Doris Chism	PRTC Dir., Customer Service & Dispatch
Joyce Embrey	PRTC Dir., Finance & Administration
Althea Evans	PRTC Dir., Marketing & Communications
Anthony Foster	PRTC Transportation Project Manager
Holly Frisch	Citizen
Shanta Garth	FIRST TRANSIT Asst. Gen Mgr-Admin
Al Harf	PRTC Executive Director
Ross Horton	PRTC Legal Counsel
Robb Howell	FIRST TRANSIT Asst. Gen Mgr-Ops
Todd Johnson	FIRST TRANSIT Maintenance Manager
Bill Leisen	PRTC, Mgr., Contract Operations
Eric Marx	PRTC Dir., Planning & Operations
Mary Marshall	PRTC Accounting & Budget Manager
Betsy Massie	PRTC Dir., Grant & Project Management
Carey Roessel	FIRST TRANSIT General Manager
Joe Swartz	PRTC Senior Transit Planner
Dale Zehner	VRE Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Scott Lingamfelter	Virginia House of Delegates
Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate
George Schwartz	Stafford County
Douglas Waldron, Vice Chairman	City of Manassas

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Charles Badger	DRPT
Mark Dudenhefer	Stafford County
Larry Hughes	City of Manassas
Matthew Kelly	City of Fredericksburg
Peter LaMarca	City of Fredericksburg
Hal Parrish	City of Manassas
Bryan Polk	City of Manassas Park
Phillip Rodenberg	City of Fredericksburg
Corey Stewart	Prince William County
John Stirrup	Prince William County
Matthew Tucker	DRPT
Bill Wren	City of Manassas Park

*Voting Member

3. INVOCATION Led by Commissioner Jenkins.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Commissioner Caddigan.

Commissioner Jenkins introduced Girl Scout Member Nicole Robinson, who is working toward earning a “Gold Award” by “shadowing” him for 48 hours and is present this evening to observe the meeting. He also introduced newly appointed PRTC At-Large Alternate Mr. Brian Potvin (representing Prince William County). On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Jones welcomed Miss Robinson and Mr. Potvin.

Commissioner Covington arrived at 7:10 p.m. following Item 4–Pledge of Allegiance. At this time, Alternate Commissioner Sorine Preli left the table as a voting member.

5. CITIZENS’ TIME No citizens came forward.

6. PRESENTATIONS

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

Mr. Roessel reported that the bus yard expansion construction and bus operations continues and noted that the bus yard expansion will afford more maneuvering room for the buses.

Mr. Roessel reported that seven bus operators received commendations during the month of February and a number of commendations were also received as a result of the ice storm that occurred on February 12th. Also during the month of February, five accidents occurred (three preventable/two non-preventable) keeping the number of accidents per month significantly lower than this time last year.

Mr. Roessel noted that the February Operator-of-the-Month Ms. Francisca Nolasco will be recognized at the April meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 08-03-01 Minutes of February 14, 2008. Commissioner Nohe
[PRTC\Minutes] moved, with a second by Commissioner Milde, to approve the Minutes as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. (NOHE\MILDE, WITH MAJORITY VOTE, CADDIGAN\COVINGTON\DIXON\JENKINS ABSTAINED)

8. AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 08-03-02
[PRTC\Agenda] Agenda of March 6, 2008. Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Covington, to approve the Agenda as amended (Item 12-B.1 postponed and 12-B.2 deferred to a later date to be considered once the budget process is completed). There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\COVINGTON, UNANIMOUS)

9. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 08-03-03
[PRTC\Consent
 Agenda] Consent Agenda of February 14, 2008. Commissioner Nohe moved, with a second by Commissioner Milde, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. (NOHE\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 08-03-04 A. Approved the Treasurer's Report of December 31, 2007, as presented. (NOHE\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 08-03-05 B. Approved Amendment to the PRTC Emergency Purchases Policy, as presented. (NOHE\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 08-03-06 C. Approved Amendment to FY2009 State Grant Applications, as presented. (NOHE\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

RES 08-03-07 D. Approved the Charter Bus Policy, as presented. (NOHE\MILDE, UNANIMOUS)

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

[VRE\Info] A. Operations Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes of February 15, 2008. There were no comments.

[VRE\Info B. Chief Executive Officer's Report (Feb 08).

Mr. Zehner reported that ridership continues to grow (4.4%) and the "ad" campaign will continue through the month of March. He noted that revenue is up (9%), which he attributed to the fare and change in the free-ride policy (30 to 60 minutes). System wide on-time performance is 85% (87% and 83% on the Manassas and Fredericksburg lines, respectively). He went on to say that no delays have occurred

over the past few weeks during the morning commute, but delays were present during the afternoon commute.

Mr. Zehner reported that, to date, six public hearings have occurred regarding a proposed fare increase and an indexing plan for future fare increases (eighteen people attended and 65 e-mails received). The last public hearing is scheduled to occur on March 13th at Manassas City Hall. He expressed his appreciation to Chris Zimmerman, Patrick Herrity, Paul Milde, and George Schwartz for their attendance at the hearings in their jurisdictions.

Commissioner Milde asked about public feedback on the “indexing” plan for future fare increases on a regular basis. Mr. Zehner replied “none were received” and noted that the index values will be reported to the VRE Operations Board for its review as part of the budget process.

Mr. Zehner reported that 15 of the 50 new railcars are currently in service. The next shipment will occur on March 18th and those cars will be placed into service on March 24th. All 50 railcars will be delivered by October 2008.

Commissioner Michael May arrived at 7:15 p.m. during Item 10-B–Chief Executive Officer’s Report and was absent on the vote for Items 7, 8, 9, and 9A-D. At this time, Alternate Commissioner Brian Potvin left the table as a voting member.

11. CHAIRMAN'S TIME

Chairman Jones noted that he is in receipt of a letter from Mr. Doran J. Barnes, who is seeking candidacy as the “APTA Executive Committee Vice Chair for HR” and provided the letter for the Board’s review/consideration.

A. Invitation to Commissioner Nohe to Brief the PRTC Board on the Implications of the Supreme Court Decision and Next Steps.

Commissioner Nohe noted that the Supreme Court ruled last Friday that the General Assembly may not delegate its taxing power to a non-elected body such as the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and that taxes/fees NVTA has imposed are null and void. He noted that the Governor issued an Executive Order to the Department of Taxation and DMV to discontinue collecting the taxes these two agencies were collecting and went on to say that on Monday morning an Executive Directive was issued directing NVTA to also stop collecting taxes. Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park court collections have also stopped and the Attorney General has instructed the Clerks to stop collections.

Mr. Nohe observed that NVTA is now facing the challenge of “refunds”. He explained that the Clerks, DMV, and Department of Taxation have fairly good records to issue a refund, but it will be difficult for NVTA to refund taxes to someone who made a taxable transaction using cash. NVTA is currently in the

process of establishing procedures and is working from the assumption that the revenue has stopped for the time being. He observed that until the General Assembly takes action, there will be no new revenue. NVTA has called upon the General Assembly to act prior to adjournment of the current regular session with legislation that would fully fund the same revenue streams, but there is resistance to proceed in this manner. However, there is some support in the General Assembly to take the same taxes and fees and allow the localities to raise them. NVTA transmitted a letter today to the leadership of both houses saying that NVTA does not find this option acceptable because taxation for transportation should not be a local responsibility. On the House side there seems to be some willingness to act before adjournment, but the Senate leadership prefers to hold a special session in the summer. The principal impact to PRTC is the loss of the \$25M/year set aside for VRE.

Mr. Nohe noted that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors received a staff briefing on Tuesday and the transportation CIP is now a question mark, since certain projects he cited by illustration were reliant on NVTA funds in whole or in part.

Chairman Jones asked the Commissioners if they would like to schedule a work session to discuss prospective funding solutions that PRTC can support as a group or does the Commission want to take a wait and see approach. He expressed his concern about waiting and recommended that the Commission take some action at this time.

Commissioner Caddigan expressed concern about whether a work session would be beneficial since there have been repeated failed efforts to forge a different kind of consensus in the General Assembly.

Commissioner Nohe noted that NVTA adopted principles/guidelines about a year ago regarding what needs to be included in a transportation package and believes that both PRTC/NVTC adopted a variation of these principles. He recommended that PRTC's principles be reaffirmed.

Commissioner Covington asked if the use of NVTA funds for VRE as proposed in its FY2009 budget spreads money outside of Northern Virginia. He reiterated his belief that tax revenues should be spent to benefit only those that are taxed, and suggested that simply reenacting the same taxes on the same geographic area would be objectionable to him for the same reason.

Commissioner Jenkins recommended that the Commission send a "strong" letter to the legislators. Chairman Jones asked for a "motion/second" to send a letter to Governor Kaine, Speaker Howell, and Majority Leader Saslaw. He suggested that the letter be drafted and sent to the Commissioners for review/consideration prior to sending.

RES 08-03-08
[PRTC\Transp.
Funding Crisis]

Commissioner Dixon moved, with a second by Commissioner Jenkins, to the send a letter to Governor Kaine, Speaker Howell, and Majority Leader Saslaw urging expedited resolution of the transportation funding crisis. There was no discussion on the motion. (DIXON/JENKINS, WITH MAJORITY VOTE, COVINGTON NAY)

Commissioner Covington explained that his “nay” vote was an expression of his dissent for how the NVTA funding designated for VRE was going to be spent, and an expression of his views that the previous NVTA funding arrangements for VRE did not fairly assign financial responsibility to all of VRE’s beneficiaries. He reiterated his belief that tax revenue should be spent in a way that benefits only those being taxed.

Chairman Jones clarified that he fashions the letter being written in this spirit, prompting Commissioner Covington to amend his vote to “yea”. Chairman Jones noted that the vote on the issue is now “unanimous” (DIXON/JENKINS, UNANIMOUS) and reiterated that the letter will call for a funding solution encompassing all of PRTC’s jurisdictions.

Commissioner Frank Principi arrived at 7:20 p.m. during Item 11–Chairman’s Time and was absent on the vote for Items 7, 8, 9, and 9A-D. At this time, Alternate Commissioner Lorraine Lasch left the table as a voting member.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TIME

[PRTC\Info] A. Executive Director’s Report.

Mr. Harf noted that the SmarTrip card activation commenced on March 3rd and commended PRTC Senior Transit Planner Joe Swartz for ensuring that bus operators understood what they needed to do. He also commended PRTC Director of Customer Service & Dispatch Doris Chism and PRTC’s Customer Service Agents, who fielded numerous phone calls in good form.

On the I-395/I-95 HOT lanes front, Mr. Harf noted that letters were sent to Governor Kaine and Secretary Peters and the sentiments that PRTC expressed are being received in the constructive spirit they were intended. He also noted that the Secretary has honored his pledge that an independent safety/enforcement examination of the project by Halcrow (a nationally recognized highway safety consultant retained by the state) would be undertaken, noting that an initial work session is scheduled for March 13th (all the stakeholders and PRTC will be present).

Mr. Harf reported that PRTC's newly acquired Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) "went live" in its first phase on February 11th. He noted that the first phase allows callers to confirm/cancel deviation trips without having to speak to a customer service agent. The next phase will allow callers to schedule deviation trips, and will begin in about 6-8 weeks.

Mr. Harf noted that the most recent fleet maintenance audit results have been provided, and they are outstanding. He reminded the Commission that the previous audit (conducted a few months earlier) contained findings that did not meet PRTC/First Transit's standards, precipitating a series of changes including a change in maintenance management. He recognized Maintenance Manager Todd Johnson and noted that it is a credit to Mr. Johnson and his staff for bringing the quality of the fleet maintenance efforts up to par in a short period of time.

Mr. Harf noted that the Customer Service Satisfaction Survey (conducted once every four months) was recently conducted and overall passenger satisfaction continues to be high.

Commissioner Jenkins expressed his appreciation to management for working with Prince William County's Department of Transportation regarding sidewalk issues located on Dale Boulevard. He also inquired about the number of buses in the PRTC fleet. Mr. Harf replied 113 total (22 OmniRide).

[PRTC\Action
Items]

B. Action Items:

1. Dispatch Office Expansion Construction. This item postponed.
2. Retirement Health Savings Plan. This item postponed until the budget process is completed.
3. FY2009 Proposed Budget. Mr. Harf noted that as a result of the Supreme Court ruling on February 29th, the Commission is being asked to authorize only one budget for transmittal to the jurisdictions instead of two budgets and provided a presentation on the proposed FY 2009 PRTC Budget.

RES 08-03-09
[PRTC\FY2009
Budget]

Following a question/answer period, the Commission agreed to move forward with the budget as follows:

Commissioner Nohe made a motion, with a second by Commissioner May, to authorize the Executive Director to refer the proposed FY2009 budget and an alternate budget (that excludes the Haymarket OmniRide route) to the jurisdictions for approval and to hold a public hearing on the FY09 budget, the alternate budget, and the FY09 federal grant applications. There was no discussion on the motion. (NOHE\MAY, UNANIMOUS)

[PRTC\Info]

C. Information Items:

1. PRTC Service Performance Reports. There were no comments.
2. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison – Seven Months Ended January 31, 2008. There were no comments.
3. Hydrogen Fuel Initiative. There were no comments.
4. Communications:
 - a. Related to Funding. There were no comments.
 - b. Related to Jurisdiction. N/A.
 - c. General Interest. There were no comments.
5. Activation of the SmarTrip Card. There were no comments.
6. Financing the Nation's Infrastructure Deficit (Innovation NewsBriefs, 1/25/08. There were no comments.
7. February 2008 Fleet Maintenance Audit. 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 Jones adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 3, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
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Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811
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