

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: March 3, 2011
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2nd Floor
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with a quorum present.

At this time, Chairman Jenkins welcomed PRTC Alternates Hilda Barg, Hap Connors, and Harry Crisp representing Prince William County, Spotsylvania County, and Stafford County, respectively. He also welcomed Jim Zumwalt, Manassas Park City Manager.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Richard Anderson	Virginia House of Delegates (departed at 7:50 p.m.)
*David Awbrey	Department of Rail and Public Transportation
*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Fred Howe	City of Fredericksburg
*John Jenkins, Chairman	Prince William County
*Michael May, Immediate Past Chairman	Prince William County
*Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
*Marty Nohe	Prince William County
*Gary Skinner	Spotsylvania County
*Jonathan Way, Vice Chairman	City of Manassas

ALTERNATES PRESENT

*Hilda Barg	Prince William County
*Hap Connors	Spotsylvania County
*Harry Crisp	Stafford County

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Nick Alexandrow	PRTC Transit Project Manager
Gina Altis	PRTC Executive Assistant
Doris Chism	PRTC Dir., Customer Service and Dispatch
Art Clark	FIRST TRANSIT Safety & Training Manager
Cynthia Cross	Citizen
Joyce Embrey	PRTC, Dir., Finance & Administration
Althea Evans	PRTC Dir., Marketing & Communications
Sandy Ferris	Citizen
Anthony Foster	PRTC Transportation Project Manager
Holly Frisch	Citizen
Shanta Garth	FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Accounting & Admin.
Alfred Harf	PRTC Executive Director
Steve Hastalis	Citizen
Ryan Jones	PRTC Special Projects Coordinator
Bob Liebbrandt	PWC Budget & Analysis
Amy Inman	DRPT Planning & Project Manager
Mary Marshall	PRTC Accounting & Budget Manager
Eric Marx	PRTC Dir., Planning & Operations
Betsy Massie	PRTC Dir., Grants & Project Management
Tim McCann	FIRST TRANSIT Region Vice President
Paul Pitchke	FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Operations
Chuck Steigerwald	PRTC Mgr., Planning & Quality Assurance
Norine Walker	PRTC Project Mgr. Western Maintenance Facility
Michael Weinberger	PRTC Transportation Apprentice
Dale Zehner	VRE Chief Executive Officer
Jim Zumwalt	MANASSAS PARK City Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT

Wally Covington	Prince William County
Frank Jones	City of Manassas Park
Jerry Logan, Secretary	Spotsylvania County
Paul Milde, Treasurer	Stafford County
Frank Principi	Prince William County
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate
Susan Stimpson	Stafford County

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Ateeb Ahmad	Prince William County
Mark Dudenhefer	Stafford County
Brad Ellis	City of Fredericksburg
Darrel Feasel	Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Lorraine Lasch	Prince William County
Suhas Naddoni	City of Manassas Park
Hal Parrish	City of Manassas

Benjamin Pitts
Sorine Preli
Corey Stewart
John Stirrup
William Wren

Spotsylvania County
Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
City of Manassas Park

*Voting Member

3. INVOCATION Led by Vice Chairman Way.
4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Led by Commissioner Richard Anderson.
5. CITIZENS' TIME

Ms. Holly Frisch stated that she has been riding the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) since moving to Fredericksburg in September 2010, which enables her to continue as a member of The Rotary Club located in Crystal City. Ms. Frisch commended VRE staff in their efforts to assist her and in particular Ms. April Maguigad, who oriented her personally with the VRE train system. Chairman Jenkins expressed the Commission's appreciation to Ms. Frisch for taking the time to express her views about the service, and to VRE staff for its exemplary efforts.

No other citizens came forward.

6. PRESENTATIONS

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

In Mr. Howell's absence, First Transit AGM of Operations Paul Pitchke recognized the January 2011 Operator-of-the-Month Mohammad Shafiq. Mr. Shafiq was unable to attend the meeting and will be recognized at the April meeting.

Mr. Pitchke reported 17 commendations were received during the month of February (for eight different operators, eight pertaining to the service on the "bad weather" evening, and one for the training department). He went on to report that five collisions occurred during the month of February (three preventable, two non-preventable). He also reported the complaint rate on the OmniRide service for February was 6.39 versus 5.12 for the month of January. Mr. Pitchke attributed the increase to the influx of new bus operators, the Potomac Mills commuter parking lot situation, and the rerouting of PRTC's OmniRide services from 14th Street to 15th Street and related slug line relocation from 14th Street to New York Avenue that occurred on February 28th. The complaint rate on the OmniLink service is 2.85 versus 4.12 for the month of January. The February rate is the second lowest on the OmniLink service and much lower than the rate for the same month last year.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 11-03-01 Minutes of February 10, 2011.
[PRTC]

Commissioner Way moved, with a second by Commissioner Howe, to approve the Minutes, as presented. There we no discussion on the motion. (WAY\HOWE; WITH MAJORITY VOTE, CADDIGAN\MAY\NOHE ABSTAINED)

8. AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 11-03-02 Agenda of March 3, 2011.
[PRTC]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Barg, to approve the Agenda, as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\BARG, UNANIMOUS)

9. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 11-03-03 Consent Agenda of March 3, 2011.
[PRTC]

Vice Chairman Way moved, with a second by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. (WAY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-03-04 A. Treasurer's Report.
[PRTC]

Accepted the Treasurer's Report for the period ended December 31, 2010, as presented. (WAY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-03-05 B. Budget and Appropriation of \$135,846 of Stafford County's
[Stafford County] Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Transportation Expenditures for the Second Quarter of FY 2011.

Authorized to budget and appropriate \$135,846 for the second quarter (FY 2011) of 2% motor fuels tax funding in Stafford County's account for Transportation Expenditures, as presented. (WAY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

[VRE\Info] A. Operations Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes of February 18, 2011. There were no comments.

Mr. Zehner reported system wide on-time performance was 95% on both the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines. He went on to report that VRE experienced its highest ridership day on February 16th when it carried 20,130 riders. On average, VRE carried 18,000 daily riders during the months of January and February (with lighter ridership days on Mondays and Fridays compared to Tuesday through Thursday). Ridership continues to grow with 7.5% higher ridership compared to this same period last year.

Continuing, Mr. Zehner reported that the Governor's transportation proposal to fund new VRE railcars increased from \$2.5 million to \$10 million and also includes \$5 million for construction of the third track in Spotsylvania County. The funds are provided by the sale of bonds, which will occur sometime after July 1st at which time VRE staff will work with DRPT Director Thelma Drake to commence the procurement process.

Chairman Jenkins asked how many days VRE carried over 20,000 riders and how many of the new locomotives have been delivered. Mr. Zehner explained that February 16th is the only day that VRE carried over 20,000 riders, but VRE is averaging over 19,000 riders Tuesdays through Thursdays. He went on to explain that VRE currently has five new locomotives in service, and the sixth locomotive is on the property going through inspection. The inspection process takes about a week, followed by a test run in which the new locomotive "double-heads" with another locomotive making two round trips. If the test goes well, the new locomotive is placed into service. He further explained that the remaining new locomotives are being shipped every two weeks from the Boise, Idaho plant, but have been delayed in transit as a result of the inclement weather in the mid-west. VRE expects to be in receipt of all twenty new locomotives by the end of July. To date, VRE has sold 18 of its 20 older locomotives.

Following an observation by Chairman Jenkins about the new locomotives' capability to haul ten car trains, Mr. Harf asked how many ten-car consists VRE can operate given the mid-day storage limitation. Mr. Zehner replied while that capability is constrained for the reason Mr. Harf referenced, additional seating capacity is attainable by virtue of the VRE Operations Board's approval to turn and operate a Manassas line train back to the VRE Broad Run Station so that it stores at Broad Run during the mid-day. Doing so enables VRE to lengthen a variety of trains on both lines, though not to ten-car consists.

Chairman Jenkins asked if there is enough parking to accommodate additional VRE riders. Mr. Zehner replied it depends on where riders board a train. The Burke Centre, Lorton, Rippon, and Woodbridge VRE station parking lots can accommodate additional riders, while the Brooke, Broad Run, Fredericksburg, and Leeland VRE Station parking lots are over-capacity. The Brooke and Leeland VRE Station parking lot expansion projects are progressing, having received sign-offs from the Stafford Planning Commission. Bids for construction will be sought within the next month.

Commissioner Skinner stated that parking is a less acute problem than mid-day storage for railcars at Union Station. With the 2012 opening of the VRE train station in Spotsylvania County, he urged more aggressive pursuit for mid-day storage solutions at Union Station. Chairman Jenkins recommended staff work with the Northern Virginia Congressional Delegation to seek funding.

Vice Chairman Way asked about the status of the program VRE instituted a few months ago to fix the large number of mechanical failures. Mr. Zehner explained that it is working as planned -- VRE brought in locomotive experts as well as five additional mechanics from MotivePower to improve train preparedness for the next day's service. Keolis has also hired additional people. The old locomotives are removed from service as the new locomotives are being placed into service. Experts have also been brought in to technically look at the HVAC systems, toilets, and door control to evaluate how VRE maintains these systems. The train system has been at 91% since January 2011.

Commissioner Awbrey asked where VRE riders stand on the railcars and how many standees can each passenger railcar accommodate. Mr. Zehner noted that on February 16th, some VRE trains carried over 100 standees. He explained that an eight car train carrying 1,200 people and a six car train carrying 800 people can carry approximately 100-150 standees. Most people stand in the passageways and although VRE prefers people not to stand in the vestibules, they do so.

11. CHAIRMAN'S TIME

[PRTC\Info] A. Expression of Appreciation – PRTC Accounting & Budget Manager Mary Marshall (Five Years of Service).

Chairman Jenkins recognized PRTC's Accounting & Budget Manager Mary Marshall for five years of service with PRTC and presented Ms. Marshall with a certificate and token of appreciation.

Chairman Jenkins announced that 2011 marks PRTC's 25th Anniversary and directed Mr. Harf to ready a recommended plan to commemorate it, following the same guidelines used for the 20th Anniversary celebration.

Chairman Jenkins also announced that the 6th Annual PRTC-First Transit Local Bus Rodeo will be held the first weekend in April at Gar-Field High School and, immediately following the Bus Rodeo, an awards banquet will be held at the Dumfries Holiday Inn that Sunday. Invites to the Commissioners are pending.

Continuing, Chairman Jenkins reported on progress being made to keep the bus fleet in a state of good repair, one of the essential elements of a quality bus operation. More specifically, he noted that 8 of the 61 MCI buses slated for overhaul have been completed, and further noted that two more will be completed every six to seven weeks or an average of 14 to 15 per year. He went on to report that four new OmniRide buses are scheduled for

delivery in June and at tonight's meeting authorization will be sought to contract for 13 additional new OmniRide buses from federal TIGER grant funds.

Chairman Jenkins also highlighted ongoing management efforts on the "service" side, noting that on February 28th, the State Department-originating bus services shifted from 14th Street to 15th Street along with the relocation of the slug line from 14th Street to New York Avenue (the first of multiple changes that PRTC is advocating to ease traffic problems), and prospective plans for the repositioning of bus stops, integrated signage, and parking supplementation to alleviate the loss of commuter parking at Potomac Mills Mall. Alternate parking accommodations have been identified and changes to usage patterns continue to be monitored. Effective March 14th, Prince William County will lease 370 parking spaces from the Dale City First Baptist Church to help relieve the commuter parking situation.

Chairman Jenkins went on to note that an authorization will be sought at this evening's meeting to contract for professional services to commence environmental assessment and design work for a westerly bus maintenance facility. PRTC's Transit Development Plan (TDP) will also be presented this evening for adoption, and a procurement is underway for the purchase of a CAD/AVL system providing real time information about bus arrivals for customers. A contract award for the CAD/AVL system will be recommended later in the year.

In conclusion, Chairman Jenkins announced that he will not be in attendance at the April meeting and expressed his appreciation to Vice Chairman Way for presiding at that time. At the April meeting, PRTC management will present a companion plan to the TDP -- prepared in collaboration with the Prince William Area Agency on Aging -- to address the mobility needs of the most vulnerable segments of the Prince William area populations (i.e. older Americans, low income households, and people with disabilities).

Commissioner Anderson departed at 7:50 p.m. following Item 11 – Chairman's Time and was absent for the vote on Items 12-B.1, 12-B.2, 12-B.3, 12-B.4, 12-B.5, and the added Fuel Prices resolution.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TIME

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

On the Federal side, Mr. Harf reported that with a March 4th deadline looming, the House and Senate extended the continuing resolution (CR) that will fund federal programs through March 18th. He went on to report that the House passed an authorization bill yesterday that will carry through the end of FY 2011. It is now up to the Senate whether to replicate the House passed authorization bill or not. He explained that the multi-year authorization will hopefully be taken up this calendar year and there will be at long last a bill that has multi-year funding. Mr. Harf went on to report that the Obama Administration also unveiled its FY 2012 budget this past month, which outlines the Administration's "reauthorization" aspirations for transportation funding through 2017. It envisions a substantial increase of federal transportation funding for both highways and transit, which would essentially double

the level of transit funding comparing the last year of SAFETEA-LU and the last year of the new six year period (i.e. FY 2017). The Administration has not identified a proposed funding source, however, reasoning that this is a matter best left to the Congress.

On the state legislative side, Mr. Harf reported that the McDonnell Administration's signature aim to accelerate funding for transportation over the next three years by debt-financing was successful.

Mr. Harf went on to report that HB 1865 (Cole) -- a bill that all of PRTC's member jurisdictions opposed -- was defeated. The bill would have authorized individual jurisdictions to confine the motor fuels tax to only a portion of themselves and to limit the tax to something less than the 2.1% current rate. The Senate Finance Committee summarily passed over the bill.

Moving to another subject, Mr. Harf reported that a revised I-95 HOT Lanes proposal has been announced, and he observed that the revised plan succeeds in defusing much of the opposition that the original plan aroused (i.e. Arlington County has withdrawn its lawsuit, the slugs have been conspicuously silent, and Prince William County has signaled that most of its concerns have been assuaged). In order for the project to come to fruition, however, a series of procedural steps are necessary beginning with actions by the TPB and FAMPO to amend their "constrained long-range" plans to accept the revised HOT Lanes proposal. An environmental review process will ensue over the next year, hopefully leading to the commencement of the construction on the northerly segment of the project in calendar year 2012. The Administration has indicated that its aim is to complete the northerly segment by 2015, and the southerly segment of the project could be finished as early as 2018. The southerly HOT Lanes segment extends as far south as Massaponax (Interchange 126) in Spotsylvania County.

Continuing, Mr. Harf noted the fate of the "Transit Plan" prepared in conjunction with the original project proposal remains uncertain. He explained that the original Transit Plan was endowed by a combination of a "concession" payment by the private-sector consortium (amounting to \$195 million) and some public funds that, all told, would have resulted in some \$300 million for park and ride and transit investments. He further explained that because the revised HOT Lanes project is a more confined proposal whereby the northerly segment ends at Edsall Road (Interchange 2A) rather than the Pentagon (Interchange 8A), there will be less roadway over which tolls are paid, and the revenue stream associated with the tolls will be less. Consequently, the Administration's revised plan involves a combination of toll financing coupled with public funds. It is not yet known what the split between public and private funding for the revised HOT lanes project will be or what the successor to the previous Transit Plan will be. The Administration recognizes the need for a companion Transit Plan and has directed DRPT to work with local governments on fashioning a revision, while at the same time signaling that the revision will not be as ambitious as the previous plan. Member jurisdictions that are participants in the TPB and FAMPO arenas will have decisions to make at the end of a public review process about what, if anything, they would want to hold out for transit and parking-wise in agreeing to a revision to the constrained long-range plans.

Commissioner Skinner asked if the environmental study covers the entire project. Mr. Harf replied “yes,” and explained that the Administration expects this to lead to approvals to stage the project.

Commissioner Caddigan asked what the time frame is for the project. Mr. Harf replied that the first phase – in which the lanes would be constructed as far south as Garrisonville Road (Interchange 143) in Stafford County -- is anticipated to be completed in 2015 while the more southerly second phase -- from Interchange 143 to Massaponax -- is anticipated to be completed some three years later (2018).

Commissioner Caddigan also expressed concern about the financial exposure and who bears it if toll revenue fails to live up to expectations. Mr. Harf explained that while the state is bearing some such risk within the beltway HOT Lanes project, there has not been any disclosure as yet about how that will be handled in the I-95 project. Mr. Harf went on to say it is safe to assume that the local jurisdictions will not bear any risk, so the issue is how will the state and the private-sector consortium agree to allocate that risk. He concluded by noting that the original HOT Lanes proposal envisioned no risk exposure for the state and said that, hopefully, this will be replicated.

Chairman Jenkins noted that a “blue-sheeted” handout that signifies “Bills of Interest to PRTC Passed by the General Assembly (2011 Session)” has been provided for the Commission’s perusal.

[PRTC\Action] B. Action Items:

- RES 11-03-06 1. Transit Development Plan (TDP) Adoption.
[PRTC]

Mr. Harf introduced DRPT Planning and Project Manager Amy Inman. Ms. Inman heads up TDPs that are under development statewide including PRTC’s TDP.

At this time, Mr. Harf gave a presentation on PRTC’s TDP. A question/answer session followed. There were no questions.

Commissioner May moved, with a second by Commissioner Caddigan, to adopt the initial TDP covering the period FY 2012 through FY 2017 and authorized its transmittal to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. There was no discussion on the motion. (MAY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

- RES 11-03-07 2. FY 2011 Mid-Year Budget Revision.
[PRTC]

Mr. Harf explained it is an annual rite around mid-year for PRTC to “re-rack” the budget so that it reflects realities that have evolved over the course of the first half of the year. The PRTC Board is being asked this evening to agree to a revision to the budget that doesn’t

significantly below the projections while other jurisdictions are seeing higher than expected revenue postings. Taxation is also in receipt of a list of the retailers in all of the jurisdictions, which it can use as an independent way of corroborating whether its list of retailers is correct. Taxation is also reaching out to the retailers and asking them to disclose who their distributors are, as a means of confirming that taxes that are due are being properly remitted and posted. Mr. Harf noted that another meeting with Taxation is scheduled for March 18th, following which there will hopefully be more progress to report.

Commissioner Miller asked how NVTC and PRTC stand to benefit from the “staffing change” proposal. Mr. Harf explained that both NVTC and PRTC bear the cost of Taxation’s staffing associated with tax collection and enforcement, and he went on to say he is confident the extra \$20,000 per year that PRTC will incur would more than pay for itself by ensuring that the tax revenues are being properly collected and posted.

Commissioner Miller asked what percentage of the City of Manassas’s tax collection PRTC and VRE receive. Mr. Harf explained that Prince William County is the only jurisdiction using 100% of its motor fuels tax yield to subsidize PRTC and VRE. The other member jurisdictions have used their tax revenue in part for other qualifying transportation purposes.

Commissioner Miller went on to ask if the new Taxation staffing position can be defunded if revenue collections do not match \$40,000. Mr. Harf replied that staffing plans surely can be changed, but went on to caution that it would be difficult to isolate the effects of this one change since there are lots of variables bearing on tax collections, citing fuel price as the most significant. Mr. Harf noted that he is confident that by having “another pair of boots on the ground” with audit capabilities, tax yields will increase by more than it’s going to cost PRTC.

At this time, Commissioner Skinner moved, with a second by Commissioner Crisp, to provisionally accept a staffing plan proposed by the Department of Taxation for Taxation’s handling of tax collections and enforcement on behalf of PRTC and NVTC provided that the NVTC Board does the same, and directed the Executive Director to inform the State Tax Commissioner of the Commission’s concern about the slow pace of corrective actions being undertaken by Taxation to remedy collection and posting problems.

Commissioner Skinner stated that a 28% revenue loss to Spotsylvania County is a major concern. Spotsylvania has previously dealt with Taxation on similar issues, because areas in the County have a Fredericksburg zip code. He went on to state that this is a good step to ensure that these finances are squared away properly, and opined that the risk is greater than what may be currently known. Commissioner Crisp also noted that a substantial portion of the south end of Stafford County is also a Fredericksburg zip code.

At this time, Commissioner Connors offered a “friendly” amendment to the motion calling for PRTC’s state legislative delegation to be alerted that this problem has recurred. Chairman Jenkins asked Commissioners Skinner and Crisp if they agree to Commissioner Connors’ friendly amendment. Both Commissioners Skinner and Crisp agreed.

Commissioner Nohe recounted the NVTA's experience regarding the costs local governments bear for tax collection and enforcement by Taxation, inasmuch as that same obligation applied to NVTA collections that Taxation was legislated by HB 3202 to collect for NVTA. He observed that it is standard practice for local governments to bear the cost of Taxation's expense associated with the collection of money restricted at its source for local governments' use.

Commissioner Miller stated that after hearing Mr. Harf's and Mr. Nohe's explanations, he realizes this is how positions in the Department of Taxation are funded, which allays his concerns.

There was no further discussion on the motion. (SKINNER\CRISP; WITH MAJORITY VOTE, AWBREY ABSTAINED)

[PRTC\Info] C. Information Items:

1. 2/10/11 Governor McDonnell Letter re Consolidation of the Transportation Commissions and Authorities. Mr. Harf noted PRTC is in receipt of a courtesy response from Governor McDonnell to the consolidation proposal.
2. PRTC Service Performance Reports. There were no comments.
3. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison. There were no comments.
4. Communications:
 - a. Related to Funding. Not applicable.
 - b. Related to Jurisdiction. Not applicable.
 - c. General Interest. There were no comments.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMISSIONERS' TIME

RES 11-03-11
[PRTC] Commissioner Skinner moved, with a second by Commissioner Howe, to direct the Executive Director to transmit a letter to Federal and State representatives urging an investigation of the rapid escalation of fuel prices to ascertain whether suppliers are price gouging. There was no discussion on the motion. (SKINNER\HOWE; WITH MAJORITY VOTE, WAY\MILLER NAY)

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Jenkins adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 7, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center
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