

ITEM 7

(13 PAGES)

**POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**RESOLUTION**

**MOTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-10-\_\_\_\_  
OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING  
OCTOBER 2, 2008**

**SECOND:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2008**

**WHEREAS**, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission reviews and approves the minutes of each meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the minutes of the September 4, 2008 PRTC meeting have been presented for review.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission does hereby approve the minutes of the September 4, 2008 Commission meeting as presented/amended.

**“PENDING BOARD APPROVAL”**

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: September 4, 2008  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center  
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

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1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Corey Hill	DRPT
*Frank Jones, Chairman	City of Manassas Park
*Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
*Martin Nohe	Prince William County
*Frank Principi	Prince William County
*George Schwartz	Stafford County
*Jonathan Way, Vice President	City of Manassas

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Jean Benson	City of Fredericksburg
*Matthew Kelly	City of Fredericksburg
*Lorraine Lasch	Prince William County
*Sorine Preli	Prince William County
Phillip Rodenberg	City of Fredericksburg

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Gina Altis	PRTC Executive Assistant
Joyce Embrey	PRTC Dir., Finance & Administration

Anthony Foster	PRTC Transportation Project Manager
Holly Frisch	Citizen
Shanta Garth	FT AGM-Accounting & Administration
Al Harf	PRTC Executive Director
Steve Hastalis	Citizen
Angela Horan	PRTC Legal Counsel
Robb Howell	FIRST TRANSIT General Manager
Todd Johnson	FIRST TRANSIT Maintenance Manager
Eric Marx	PRTC Dir., Planning & Operations
Betsy Massie	PRTC Dir., Grants & Project Management
Paul Pitchke	FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Operations
Mark Roeber	VRE Mgr., Public Relations & Govn't Affairs
Mark Ross	Citizen
Joe Swartz	PRTC Senior Transit Planner
Dave Tyeryar	PWC Dir., Budget & Analysis
Jerry Vincent	FIRST TRANSIT Quality Assurance Mgr.
Dale Zehner	VRE Chief Executive Officer

MEMBERS ABSENT

Wally Covington	Prince William County
John Jenkins	Prince William County
Scott Lingamfelter	Virginia House of Delegates
Michael May, Treasurer	Prince William County
Paul Milde, Immediate Past Chairman	Stafford County
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Charles Badger	DRPT
Harry Crisp	Stafford County
Mark Dudenhefer	Stafford County
Larry Hughes	City of Manassas
Peter LaMarca	City of Fredericksburg
Hal Parrish	City of Manassas
Bryan Polk	City of Manassas Park
Brian Potvin	Prince William County
Corey Stewart	Prince William County
John Stirrup	Prince William County
William Wren	City of Manassas Park
Matthew Tucker	DRPT

\*Voting Member

- |    |                      |                            |
|----|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 3. | INVOCATION           | Led by Commissioner Kelly. |
| 4. | PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE | Led by Vice Chairman Way.  |

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 July 2008 Operator-of-the-Month Clifton Tate (bus operator since March 2004). He also recognized the August Operator-of-the-Month Donnell Griffin (bus operator since April 2007).

Mr. Howell reported that five commendations (directed to different bus operators) were received during the month of August.

Mr. Howell noted that the accident frequency rate during the month of August was 1.04 per 100,000 miles, continuing a downward trend.

Mr. Howell reported that the "Maintenance Audit Fleet" is complete and the overall results are favorable. Safety-critical defects declined from 0.23/bus in February to 0.15/bus in July, a 35% reduction. There was also a decline in total defects/bus of 24% for the same period. He commended Maintenance Manager Todd Johnson and Quality Assurance Manager Jerry Vincent on job well done.

Mr. Howell noted that the complaint rate on the OmniRide service is 5.13 per 10,000 passengers (the lowest complaint rate on the record) and the OmniLink complaint rate is 4.23, which has been reduced each month since the "spike" occurred in May.

Mr. Howell went on to say that there were some items of concern to management this past month, citing the spike in trips operated by the strategic buses as a prime example. There were also numerous "call-outs" and "medical leaves" of absence by bus operators. Management is addressing these issues.

Chairman Jones commended First Transit on a job well done and noted that the complaint rate declines are one manifestation of quality service.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 08-09-01 Minutes of July 17, 2008.  
[PRTC\Minutes]

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



With regard to Item 9-B, Vice Chairman Way asked if PRTC will provide "collection bins" at the new bus shelters. Mr. Harf answered that it is PRTC's standard practice.

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

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

[VRE\Info]           B.     Chief Executive Officer's Report (Jul/Aug 08).

Mr. Zehner reported that the August ridership is 10% higher than for this time last year. On-time performance is 92% system-wide (94% and 91% on the Fredericksburg and Manassas Lines, respectively).

Mr. Zehner noted that the thirteen Kawasaki railcars were sold on August 21<sup>st</sup> for over \$22 million and delivered to the MTA five days later. He went on to say that an agreement for the purchase of ten additional Gallery cars has been executed, and will be delivered in March 2010.

Mr. Zehner reported that VRE's FY 2007 financial report was an award winner from the Government Financial Officers Association. The award is a certificate of achievement for excellence of financial reporting.

Mr. Zehner noted that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed its Triennial review of both PRTC and VRE. Twenty-three areas were reviewed for compliance (i.e., procurement, finance, safety, security, etc.) and VRE had no deficiencies.

Mr. Zehner reported that the Manassas parking garage opened last Friday and as of yesterday it was 92% full. The Burke parking garage opened in early July and is about 50% full. The Brooke parking lot has been restriped and is 97% full.

Mr. Zehner reported that the last five railcars of the first 50 cars purchased will be delivered in two weeks and will be placed into service about a week thereafter. He explained this means there are only two trains with old cars left, one on each line.

With regard to Manassas Line Trains #325 and #337 with only 18% and 22% occupancies, Commissioner Way asked if there is a threshold employed by VRE for deciding whether trains should be run. Mr. Zehner explained that these two trains operate in the early afternoon (depart about 1:00 p.m.) and are generally lightly used except on Fridays or before a major holiday. He went on to note the importance of these trains despite their light usage, observing that they are available for people who need to depart early for doctor's appointments, etc., and that their presence bolsters peak period train usage because riders know they have that mid-day train in

a pinch. The remaining trains that operate during the peak commuting hours are 80% and above full.

[VRE\Info]                    C.     Review of Customer Opinion Survey from May 2008.

There were no comments.

RES 08-09-08                D.     Referral of Preliminary FY 2010 VRE Operating and  
[VRE\FY 2010                Capital Budget to the Commissions and Authoriza-  
Budget]                      tion to Solicit Comments for FY 2009 Mid-Year Fare  
Increase.

Mr. Zehner explained that there is a slight shortfall in the current budget and a larger shortfall will occur next year. He went on to say that the VRE Operations Board authorized staff to solicit comment through public hearings in the VRE service area for a pair of prospective fare increases amounting to as much as 15% and 10%, respectively. The public hearings will commence on September 11<sup>th</sup> and will continue until September 30, 2008, inviting riders' reactions to the possibility of fare increases in January 2009 and at the beginning of FY 2010.

Commissioner Way asked if VRE has a target level of reserves? Mr. Zehner explained that the reserve is one-third of the operating costs for that particular year in assets or liquid assets, so it can be cash receivables, reserve funds, etc. totaling the one-third target.

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Nohe, to authorize the transmittal of the preliminary budget to the PRTC member jurisdictions for review, formally launching the Master Agreement-prescribed review process that will culminate in a recommended budget for the VRE Operations Board's consideration in December 2008 and the PRTC Board's consideration thereafter. There was no further discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\NOHE, UNANIMOUS)

11. CHAIRMAN'S TIME

RES 08-09-09                A.     Expression of Appreciation for Marvin Dixon's  
[Fredericksburg]             Service and Contributions as a PRTC Commissioner.

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Commissioner Caddigan, to recognize Mr. Marvin Dixon for his outstanding service as a Commissioner from August 2006 to September 2008. There was no discussion on the motion. (KELLY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

[PRTC\Board            B.     PRTC Monthly Board Package.  
Package]

Chairman Jones proposed that the Commissioners receive the monthly board package via the PRTC website with "action" items provided in hard copy form at each monthly meeting and the "informational" items to remain electronic. The Commissioners concurred, with the proviso that those who favor continuing to receive a paper copy are to make Ms. Altis aware following this evening's meeting.

Rather than e-mailing board packets to the Members of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, Commissioner Nohe noted that staff e-mails a "link" to the website. Chairman Jones noted that PRTC already has this option in place and asked Commissioners if they prefer to receive the link via e-mail once the board packet has been posted. There were no objections.

Commissioner Benson recommended staff provide a series of links to Commissioners on a monthly basis.

Commissioner Nohe noted that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors recently passed a resolution transmitting endorsement of CMAQ/RSTP funded projects to the NVTA (which includes a request for additional funding for the proposed PRTC westerly bus maintenance facility and for ridesharing). He explained that the NVTA will meet next week to discuss business and administrative matters and will meet again in December to elect a new Chairman and Vice Chairman. He went on to explain that the NVTA still exists by an act of the General Assembly and for the time being will only meet to adopt its legislative plan and to approve/disapprove CMAQ/RSTP funding issues.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TIME

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

On the Federal legislative side, Mr. Harf noted that a continuing resolution (CR) is certain for FY 2009 and the actual appropriation may not happen until the new Congress convenes.

Mr. Harf reported that a remedy for the "Highway Trust Fund" insolvency problem passed the House, but there is has been no action as yet in the Senate. In the absence of a fix for that insolvency problem, federal highway funds will drop precipitously in FY 2009.

Mr. Harf went on to say that the Bush Administration's transportation reauthorization proposal was unveiled about two weeks ago and explained that this is the Administration's counter to the National Transportation Policy and Revenue

Study Commission Report ("the Commission report"). The Commission report calls for an increase in Federal transportation investments amounting to about 2.5 times prevailing levels with an increase in the Federal gas tax as an interim measure and indexing over time so that the Federal gas tax doesn't continue to suffer erosion in its purchasing power. He noted that the Administration took exception to the Commission report when it was released, and he contrasted the Commission report with the Administration's counterproposal which emphasizes public-private partnerships and tolling as the solution to future Federal transportation funding, without new taxes.

Mr. Harf reported that three of PRTC's public hearings regarding a "Proposed Bus Fare Increase and Fare Indexing Policy" have been held with the remaining hearings scheduled for next week. Public attendance has been light (about 40 people so far). Mr. Harf also noted that an on-line forum was held on August 26<sup>th</sup> to dialogue with people on a real-time basis. Comments were also fielded through electronic media over the course of the public review process. He went on to say that the predominant sentiment is that a fare increase is understandable, but there are concerns about PRTC having adequate seating capacity.

Mr. Harf went on to say that it will be necessary to revisit the proposals that were presented at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting because conditions are changing as fuel prices have decreased since June/July. Since the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, PRTC has locked in fuel through the end of February 2009 and by virtue of the fact that the fuel PRTC purchased on futures contracts later in the period is lower, the projected fuel expense will not be as high as reported in July. This changed condition and others will be accounted for in finalizing recommendations, which may also call for still more revenue service hours than proposed by management in July, as PRTC is struggling to ensure there are adequate seats for customers.

Delegate Miller asked if PRTC currently has enough data to determine if the ridership has started to decline as gas prices decrease?

Mr. Harf explained that results through the end of August are 27% higher than this time last year and there is no sign as yet of ridership abatement. People appear to be coming around to the view that they need to travel differently. It remains to be seen if this will change over time.

Delegate Miller asked if PRTC is in a position to determine if riders will remain if the gas prices continue to decrease?

Mr. Harf answered that PRTC relies on recent published research (e.g., TCRP, GAO) to understand the elasticity of demand and PRTC has accounted for these elasticities in projecting both ridership and fuel tax yields. He explained that, in round number terms, the research indicates that there is an elasticity of about minus .2 which means that as fuel prices increase by 10% you can reasonably expect that there will be a reduction in vehicle miles traveled of about 2%. It is safe to say that

the reverse logic would apply. There will be some diminution of the ridership growth if the prices continue to decrease but PRTC anticipates it will sustain most of the ridership it has gained. He went on to say that further, lasting declines in fuel prices are not expected.

Mr. Harf highlighted three information items provided in the board package: 1) the Fleet Maintenance Audit, 2) the First Transit fifth year evaluation, and 3) the completed FTA Triennial Review.

With regard to the fleet maintenance audit, Mr. Harf reiterated that it is outstanding and a tribute to the First Transit maintenance staff whose changes are paying dividends. Mr. Harf also noted that Maintenance Manager Todd Johnson brought to PRTC's attention that Alison Transmission is collaborating with Greyhound on a transmission alteration that has the potential to significantly reduce fuel consumption. PRTC is intrigued by this possibility and has seen fit to alter the specification for the two buses that are expected to be delivered in November by Motor Coach Industries (MCI) to incorporate this particular modification so that we can pilot-test it. If the benefits are as substantial as reported, PRTC envisions potentially undertaking a fleet-wide campaign to make this same alteration to take advantage of such fuel economy savings. The return on investment is enormous -- the savings that PRTC could realize in fuel costs might permit the recovery of the cost of the capital investment in as little as six months. He went on to say that it's a measure of the PRTC-First Transit partnership that First Transit does not wait for direction from PRTC to find opportunities for savings. First Transit fashions such savings as a win:win, and Mr. Harf praised First Transit for bringing this opportunity to PRTC's attention.

Turning to First Transit's "Fifth Year Evaluation", Mr. Harf reminded the Commission that the contract has a potential duration of as long as ten years. He went on to say that the fifth year evaluation is mixed. First Transit recovered well from lapses in the early part of the year and the evaluation reflects more positives than negatives. He noted that the evaluation is a necessary step for PRTC to determine how much of the liquidated damages that PRTC withheld from First Transit for performance lapses are earned back. First Transit earned back 75% of the maximum earn back, so about \$100,000 of damages over the course of the year were withheld.

As part of these annual evaluations, PRTC also quantifies what First Transit's incentive earnings will amount to if the performance for the first six months of the year is sustained for the balance of the year. Based on that calculation, Mr. Harf noted that First Transit would earn over \$400,000 of incentives if the performance over the first six months is sustained for the whole year.

With regard to the Triennial Review, Mr. Harf noted that PRTC received "kudos" from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and only two minor deficiencies were cited. He explained that the Triennial Review is conducted once every three

years and PRTC treats the Triennial Review as a very serious matter. He commended Betsy Massie and Joyce Embrey, who ensured that PRTC came through the review virtually unscathed.

Mr. Harf reported that the new PRTC website was launched on August 20<sup>th</sup>, with a new on-line forum capability that was tested on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Harf noted that PRTC is producing more frequent fuel tax projection updates because of changing conditions in fuel prices. A new set of projections has been produced in conjunction with the FY 2010 VRE budget submission so the jurisdictions entertaining the VRE budget submission have the latest available "intelligence" about how those subsidy requirements contrast with the fuel tax revenue yields. As expected, the revenue yields are up significantly.

Mr. Harf noted that there have been recent changes in the "commuter benefit" dictates from the Federal Government that PRTC has to abide by. He explained that two such changes have occurred. First, as a way to curb the illicit sale of MetroCheks, the IRS has mandated that paper MetroCheks will be eliminated after November 15, 2008, forcing the MetroChek benefit to be in the form of an electronic benefit. Second, the IRS is clamping down on Federal workers who receive three months worth of benefits (\$345.00) all at once. To date, people have been allowed to have three months worth of benefits loaded on a SmartTrip card all at once but this practice has ceased. PRTC now has to ensure that when value is loaded on a SmartTrip card that no more than \$115.00/month of the MetroChek benefit is loaded. This adds to the processing time, but it's a necessary "price to pay" to curb the illicit use of the MetroChek benefit.

Chairman Jones noted his awareness of other pilot-testing efforts aimed at curbing the illicit use of commuter benefits. He explained that, later this month, transit entitlements will be loaded onto the new Federal ID card which is the SmartCard that all Federal employees carry. This new process has been in the works for two and half years, growing out of an incident where MetroCheks were being sold on E-bay for 50-60% of the face value.

[PRTC\Action            B.     Action Items:  
Items]

RES 08-09-10                            1.     FY2010 CMAQ Funding Proposal.  
[PRTC\FY2010  
CMAQ Funding]

Commissioner Nohe moved, with a second by Commissioner Caddigan, to endorse the proposed projects for regional consideration by the NVT A for FY 2010 Federal CMAQ funds. There was no discussion on the motion. (NOHE\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

[PRTC\Info] C. Information Items:

1. First Transit Fifth Annual Review. There were no comments.
2. July 2008 Fleet Maintenance Audit. There were no comments.
3. FY 2008 Triennial Review Final Report. There were no comments.
4. PRTC Service Performance Reports. There were no comments.
5. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison. There were no comments.
6. DRPT Quarterly Transit/TDM Stakeholder Meeting – and DRPT Quarterly Rail Stakeholder Meeting. There were no comments.
7. Innovation Wave: An Update on the Burgeoning Private Sector Role in U.S. Highway and Transit Infrastructure (7/18/08). There were no comments.
8. Infrastructure Outsourcing: Leveraging Concrete, Steel, and Asphalt with Public-Private Partnerships. There were no comments.
9. Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost? There were no comments.
10. Current Study and Legislative Proposals for the Reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act. There were no comments.
11. Bacon's Rebellion. There were no comments.
12. I-495 HOT Lanes Groundbreaking Tyson's Corner Center (7/22/08). There were no comments.
13. GAO Report 08-844 Improvements Are Needed to More Fully Assess Predicted Impacts of New Starts Projects. There were no comments.
14. Metro Station Access & Capacity Study Final Report (4/08). There were no comments.
15. Surface Transportation Innovations Issue No. 58 (8/08). There were no comments.
16. Carbon Taxes (8/08). There were no comments.
17. Roadworthiness of PRTC's Contingency Fleet. There were no comments.

18. Communications:
  - a. Related to Funding. There were no comments.
  - b. Related to Jurisdiction. There were no comments.
  - c. General Interest. There were no comments.
19. Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's New Master Agreement. There were no comments.
13. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMISSIONERS' TIME

Chairman Jones introduced and welcomed Delegate Jackson Miller.

Commissioner Preli recommended that the PRTC Board Meetings be held at least twice a year in multiple locations. Chairman Jones "polled" the Board and the Board unanimously agreed to continue to meet exclusively at the PRTC Transit Center.

#### 14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Jones adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 2, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center  
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811  
Main # (703) 583-7782  
Fax #: (703) 583-1377