



# MINUTES

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

January 16, 2020  
OMNIRIDE Transit Center • 14700 Potomac Mills Road,  
Woodbridge, VA

### Members Present

\*Victor Angry  
\*Andrea Bailey  
\*Margaret Franklin  
\*Jeanine Lawson  
\*Yesli Vega  
\*Tinesha Allen  
\*Pamela Sebesky, Vice Chair  
\*Jeanette Rishell, At-Large  
\*Matthew Kelly  
\*Gary Skinner, Treasurer  
\*Deborah Frazier  
\*Todd Horsley

### Members Absent

Kenny Boddye  
Cindy Shelton  
Jennifer Mitchell  
George Barker

### Alternates Present

\*Ann Wheeler  
Bennie Smith  
Ralph Smith

### Alternates Absent

Pete Candland  
Meg Bohmke  
Preston Banks  
Hector Cendejas  
Donald Shuemaker  
Jason Graham  
Tim McLaughlin  
David Ross  
Jennifer DeBruhl  
Steve Pittard

### Jurisdiction

Prince William County  
Prince William County  
Prince William County  
Prince William County  
Prince William County  
Stafford County  
City of Manassas  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Fredericksburg  
Spotsylvania County  
Spotsylvania County  
Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Prince William County  
Stafford County  
Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
Virginia Senate

Prince William County  
Prince William County  
City of Manassas

Prince William County  
Stafford County  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Fredericksburg  
Spotsylvania County  
Spotsylvania County  
Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
Department of Rail and Public Transportation

### Staff and General Public

\*Voting Member

Arrivals/departures following the commencement of the PRTC Commission Board Meeting are notated with the arrival/departure time.

Dr. Robert A. Schneider, PhD – PRTC  
Doris Lookabill – PRTC  
Betsy Massie – PRTC  
Joyce Embrey – PRTC  
Rowena Reyes - PRTC  
Althea Evans - PRTC  
Chuck Steigerwald – PRTC  
Christine Rodrigo – PRTC  
Perrin Palistrant – PRTC  
Becky Merriner - PRTC  
Joe Swartz – VRE  
Rich Dalton – VRE

Mark Schofield - VRE  
Monica Backmon - NVTA  
Xavier Harmony – DRPT  
Rick Canizales – Prince William County  
Paolo Belita – Prince William County  
Ryan McManus – Prince William County  
Karen Mills – Prince William County  
Pamela Montgomery – Prince William County  
Andrea Light – Stafford County  
Sharon Pandak – Greehan, Taves & Pandak  
Ken Jones – General Public

Vice Chair Sebesky called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Moment of Silence, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call followed. Vice Chair Sebesky noted that there are many new members on the Board and asked members to introduce themselves.

#### **Approval of the Agenda –4 [RES 20-01-01]**

Vice Chair Sebesky asked to reverse the order of agenda items 12.1 and 12.2. Commissioner Lawson moved with a second by Commissioner Kelly. There was no discussion on the motion. (LAWSON/KELLY, UNANIMOUS)

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the December 5, 2019 PRTC Board Meeting – 5 [RES 20-01-02]**

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Commissioner Skinner to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2019 meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. (KELLY/SKINNER, MAJORITY VOTE; ALLEN, BAILEY, FRAZIER, LAWSON, VEGA, WHEELER ABSTAINED)

#### **Virginia Railway Express (VRE) – 6**

Acting CEO Rich Dalton briefed the Board on the following items of interest:

- December on-time performance was 85% (90% on Fredericksburg line and 80% on Manassas line).
- December daily ridership was just above 15,000, which is about 2.5% higher than December 2018.

#### **Adopt and Refer the Amended FY2020 and Recommended FY2021 Virginia Railway Express Operating and Capital Budgets to the Jurisdictions [RES 20-01-03]**

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Commissioner Skinner. There was no discussion on the item. (KELLY/SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

In response to a question from Commissioner Rishell, Mr. Dalton explained that the annual passenger survey is conducted jointly with PRTC and NVTC staff on the first Wednesday of October. Passengers are asked to fill out an on-board survey identifying which stations they use. Commissioner Rishell asked if it was a surprise that several localities increased from 14 to 17 percent. Mr. Dalton replied that comparing the figures with FY19 data normalizes the increase.

Mr. Mark Schofield, VRE Chief Financial Officer, said VRE gets a very high response rate to its annual survey, but taking the survey on only one day annually results in variations year-to-year based on who is riding that day. For example in FY20, the survey showed a large increase in ridership from Fairfax County which resulted in an increase in that jurisdiction's subsidy at a time when the general subsidy wasn't increasing so other jurisdictions saw their subsidies decrease. This is more of a return to where

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things were in 2019, Schofield said, adding that VRE has discussed ways to reduce these variations. Commissioner Kelly said this issue is being discussed by the VRE Operations Board.

#### **Public Comment Time – 7**

No comments.

#### **Approve the Consent Agenda – 8 [RES 20-01-04]**

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Commissioner Angry. There was no discussion on the item. (KELLY/ANGRY, UNANIMOUS)

#### **Acceptance of the PRTC Monthly Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Periods Ended September 30, 2019 and October 31, 2019 [RES 20-01-05]**

#### **Authorization to Budget and Appropriately Spotsylvania County's Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Various FY20 and Prior Transportation Programs [RES 20-01-06]**

#### **PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9**

Dr. Schneider briefed the Board on the following items of interest:

**Ferry Service** – PRTC recently issued a Request for Information about operating ferry service and received two submissions, then had replies from two other parties. Staff is working through the information and answering questions. A fast ferry stakeholders meeting is scheduled for January 21.

**Legislative Update** – Dr. Schneider gave a general overview of several proposed General Assembly bills (HB729, HB1414, and SB890) that would impact transportation funding and stated that PRTC is not endorsing any particular bill.

At the invitation of Commissioner Lawson, Prince William County Transportation Director Rick Canizales addressed the Board and stated that the county has concerns about HB729 because it would divert \$4 million to \$5 million in annual revenues generated by the grantors tax away from the county and give it to NVTa instead. Manassas and Manassas Park also would lose revenues, Canizales said.

Commissioner Rishell said Manassas Park is concerned that Richmond is continually willing to let this region tax itself rather than finding alternative money streams.

Vice Chair Sebesky asked that talking points or other information about the proposed bills be shared with Commissioners so they can be prepared to speak about the bills' impacts when meeting with state legislators on February 6.

**DRPT Grant Request** – The deadline for PRTC to submit grant requests is February 3, but the next PRTC meeting is February 13 so staff will apply for the grant and bring the information to the Board on February 13 for approval. If the Board objects to anything on the grant application, PRTC can pull the application.

**Bus Operations** – OmniRide had a successful Service Change in December.

Express Services

- Two new Stafford routes that started in December are half-full, which is outstanding for a service that started so recently.
- We're keeping an eye on afternoon trips from D.C. to the new University Boulevard Commuter Lot and will add trips if necessary to prevent chronic overcrowding.

## Local Services

- Positive feedback on new bus stop signs in western service area.
- Working to resolve a timing issue with one route to better enable transfers.
- When bus routes are restructured, we expect an immediate ridership decline that lasts for about 100 days. OmniRide Local routes in the western area recovered its ridership within a few weeks. That's been helped by free fares on affected routes through March 15, 2020.
- Next step to increase ridership on local routes in the western service area is Spanish language marketing outreach via a low-level procurement.

OmniRide operated its Emergency Service Plan (ESP) on January 7 during a winter storm that caused OPM to release its employees in mid-afternoon. The commute was challenging, and PRTC is working with COG to stress the importance of having adequate notice when OPM plans an early release of federal workers.

OmniRide Local buses are currently unable to gain access to Marine Corps Base Quantico due to new restrictions on who can access the base. To help passengers affected by this change, PRTC and VRE have reached an agreement that will allow VRE riders to continue on, fare-free, to the Woodbridge VRE Station and catch an OmniRide Local bus there.

**Federal Transit Administration** – PRTC and VRE will undergo an FTA Triennial Review, which is a federal compliance audit, and we already have submitted more than 200 documents.

**Western Facility** – OmniRide's Western Facility, which is under construction, now has permanent electricity.

## **Presentations and Information – 10**

Chuck Steigerwald, OmniRide's Chief Development Officer, provided an update on OmniRide's Strategic Plan. In response to a question from Commissioner Rishell, Mr. Steigerwald said the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will be presented to Commission at a future meeting.

Commissioner Bailey complimented PRTC on its relationship with Northern Virginia Community College and asked about PRTC's relationship with George Mason University. Mr. Steigerwald replied that GMU and PRTC have partnered on a Business Council and there have been discussions about transportation in the Innovation Business Park area, but the relationship is different from the one PRTC has with NOVA, which was driven by students. Vice Chair Sebesky noted that GMU has its own shuttle bus system. Commissioner Lawson added that officials expect growth at the GMU campus and the Innovation area.

## **PRTC Action Items – 11**

Joyce Embrey, Director of Finance & Administration, presented a high level overview of the proposed FY2021 budget. Commissioner Skinner asked why no fare increase is proposed for FY21 and suggested that staff consider a small fare increase every two or three years rather than one large fare increase less often. In response to a question from Commissioner Franklin, Dr. Schneider said the current Express fare is \$6.90 with SmarTrip or \$9.20 cash.

Commissioner Franklin asked if federal money is available for the Fast Ferry study. Dr. Schneider replied that the federal money had limitations to the origin and destination points so we're now looking at the business development plan.

Commissioner Bailey asked about the Wheels-to-Wellness program. After Ms. Embrey explained some of the program's history, Commissioner Kelly said he wanted the new Board members to understand that while Wheels-to-Wellness has value, PRTC was initially only administering the program and it's now morphed into being part of the proposed budget.

Noting that Prince William County alone pays for Wheels-to-Wellness, Commissioner Wheeler asked if the program is only available in Prince William County. Dr. Schneider replied that the program has taken various forms through the years based on the funding source.

Commissioner Angry said Wheels-to-Wellness is needed but should be dissected to determine if there's a better way to offer the service.

Commissioner Lawson said it would be helpful for the budget to clarify which expenses are ongoing operational versus one-time.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lawson, Ms. Embrey said PRTC's last compensation study was conducted about seven years ago.

Commissioner Kelly said state funding for transit goes up and down, and projections show that current subsidy increases for VRE are unsustainable. He assumes that all transit is facing a similar predicament unless there are changes to sources of funding. He would like to see budgets that include projections of future years, if possible.

**Authorization to Refer PRTC's FY2021 Proposed Budget to Member Jurisdictions for Considerations and Hold Public Hearings on the Proposed FY21 Budget and Federal Grant Applications [RES 20-01-07]**

Commissioner Rishell moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey. There was no discussion on the item. (RISHELL/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

**Authorization to Purchase Six (6) 45-Foot MCI OmniRide Buses to Expand the Commuter Bus Service [RES 20-01-08]**

Commissioner Lawson moved, with a second by Commissioner Angry. There was no discussion on the item. (LAWSON/ANGRY, UNANIMOUS)

**Vice Chair's Time – 12**

**Concurrence with Member Jurisdictions' Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Appointments [RES 20-01-09]**

Commissioner Kelly moved, with a second by Commissioner Lawson. There was no discussion on the item. (KELLY/LAWSON, UNANIMOUS)

**Election of the Nominating Committee Recommendations for 2020 Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission Officers [RES 20-01-10]**

Vice Chair Sebesky said the Nominating Committee has recommended Commissioner Franklin as Chair, Commissioner Sebesky as Vice Chair, Commissioner Frazier as Treasurer, and Commissioner Rishell as an At-Large Member.

Commissioner Sebesky noted that the Secretary is to be someone from Stafford County and asked if there was a nomination. Dr. Schneider said Commissioner Shelton had expressed interest in being the Secretary. Commissioner Kelly nominated Commissioner Shelton from the floor with a second by Commissioner Lawson.

Commissioner Sebesky said another At-Large Member was needed because the position of Immediate Past President is vacant. Commissioner Lawson nominated Commissioner Bailey from the floor with a second by Commissioner Angry.

Commissioner Kelly moved for the slate of officers, with a second by Commissioner Lawson. There was no further discussion on the item. (KELLY/LAWSON, UNANIMOUS)

Chair Franklin took the gavel, thanked the Nominating Committee and said she's looking forward to working with PRTC staff and Dr. Schneider.

Dr. Schneider gave an overview of the January list of Engagement Opportunities.

**Other Business/Commissioner's Time – 13**

Several Commissioners said they enjoy being part of the PRTC Board because it's bipartisan and the members work well together.

Commissioner Skinner noted that Commissioner Frazier is the first African American to serve on the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Horsley encouraged anyone with questions about DRPT to contact him.

Chair Franklin noted that Commissioner Skinner is stepping down from PRTC's Executive Committee to serve as Chair of the VRE Operations Board and she thanked him for his service.

Dr. Schneider said an orientation session will be scheduled for all board members and alternates, and members are welcome to attend regardless of how long they've been a Commissioner.

**Adjournment – 14**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Franklin adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

**Information Items**

There were no comments.