

MOTION:

SECOND:

RE: APPROVAL OF PRTC COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – September 5, 2019

ACTION:

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (“PRTC” or the “Commission”) convened its regular meeting at the OMNIRIDE Transit Center, located at 14700 Potomac Mills Road, Woodbridge, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, PRTC conducted business in accordance with a published agenda dated October 3, 2019.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission does hereby approve the minutes of September 5, 2019 as presented/amended.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent from Vote:

Alternate Present Not Voting:

Absent from Meeting:



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 5, 2019
OMNIRIDE Transit Center • 14700 Potomac Mills Road,
Woodbridge, VA

Members Present

*Ruth Anderson, Chair
*Victor Angry (arrived at 7:09 p.m.)
*Jeanine Lawson (arrived at 7:16 p.m.)
*Marty Nohe (arrived at 7:22 p.m.)
*Mark Dudenhefer
*Wendy Maurer, Secretary
*Pamela Sebesky, Vice Chair
*Jeanette Rishell, At-Large Member
*Matthew Kelly
*Gary Skinner, Treasurer
*Robert Thomas
*Rojan Robotham
*George Barker (arrived at 7:11 p.m.)

Members Absent

Maureen Caddigan
Frank Principi, Immediate Past Chairman
Paul Trampe
Jennifer Mitchell

Alternates Present

*Norm Catterton
*Kalai Kandasamy
*Jennifer DeBruhl

Alternates Absent

Hilda Barg
Pete Candland
Margaret Franklin
Darrell Jordan
Jack Cavalier
Cindy Shelton
Mark Wolfe
Preston Banks
Hector Cendejas
Donald Shuemaker
Jason Graham
Tim McLaughlin
David Ross
Todd Horsley
Steve Pittard

Jurisdiction

Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
Stafford County
Stafford County
City of Manassas
City of Manassas Park
City of Fredericksburg
Spotsylvania County
Virginia House of Delegates
Virginia House of Delegates
Virginia Senate

Prince William County
Prince William County
Spotsylvania County
Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Prince William County
Prince William County
Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
Prince William County
Stafford County
Stafford County
City of Manassas
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

*Voting Member

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

Staff and General Public

Dr. Robert A. Schneider, PhD – PRTC
Doris Lookabill – PRTC
Betsy Massie – PRTC
Joyce Embrey - PRTC
Althea Evans - PRTC
Chuck Steigerwald – PRTC
Becky Merriner – PRTC
Christine Rodrigo – PRTC
Perrin Palistrant – PRTC
Kenneth Tuitt – PRTC
Charles Kent – PRTC
Monica Backmon - NVT
Uriah Kiser – Media
Michael William Kostiw – General public
Naomi T. Fireman – General public
David Sinclair – Prince William County

Bob Leibbrandt – Prince William County
Rob Dickerson – Prince William County
Ryan McManus – Prince William County
Paolo Belita – Prince William County
Ric Canizales – Prince William County
Xavier Harmony – DRPT
Doug Allen- VRE
Todd Johnson – First Transit
Nelson Cross – First Transit
Sharon Pandak – Greehan, Taves & Pandak
Cozy Bailey – NAACP Prince William
Joann Tuitt – General public
Brad Heller – General public
Clara Williams – General public
Walter Cranfield – General public

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call followed.

Approval of the Agenda –4 [RES 19-09-01]

Commissioner Kelly moved with a second by Commissioner Maurer. There was no discussion on the motion. (KELLY/MAURER, UNANIMOUS)

Approval of the Minutes of the July 11, 2019 PRTC Board Meeting – 5 [RES 19-09-02]

Commissioner Sebesky moved, with a second by Commissioner Rishell to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2019 meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. (SEBESKY/RISHELL, MAJORITY VOTE; MAURER and ROBOTHAM ABSTAINED)

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) – 6

Mr. Doug Allen briefed the Board on the following items of interest:

In the past month, VRE installed and integrated a new access control system at Alexandria and at its storage and maintenance facilities.

VRE is working with Manassas to do a full-scale emergency response drill on a train in September.

On-time performance for the past month has been better and reached 89% last week. On days when there are no heat restriction orders, on-time performance is in the mid-80% range.

Positive Train Control is working well and has caused some trains to slow when they've been going too fast. VRE and its host railroads continue to look for ways to improve the software to increase efficiency.

Within the past week, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Long Bridge project was released. The document is available for public review until the end of October, and there will be a hearing on the document at a meeting on October 22. Mr. Allen anticipates a Final Environmental Impact Statement will be complete within eight to ten months after that.

Mr. Allen departed the meeting.

Commissioner Angry arrived at 7:09 p.m.

Public Comment Time - 7

Chair Anderson opened Public Comment Time by stating the Board would first take comments on the I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program. No one had comments on that subject and the public hearing was closed at 7:11 p.m.

Commissioner Barker arrived at 7:11 p.m.

Chair Anderson opened the floor for all other public comments. Mr. Brad Heller told the Board he lives in the Occoquan area and rides OmniRide's Lake Ridge – Mark Center bus. He recommended the Board delay any decision on changes to Mark Center routes for up to one year so a current study can be done on proposals that the Mark Center routes serve the Horner Road and Telegraph Road commuter lots. Mr. Heller questioned what type of marketing has been done to promote ridership on the Mark Center services. He said he would provide PRTC with written comments.

Commissioner Lawson arrived at 7:16 p.m.

Approve the Consent Agenda – 8 [RES 19-09-03]

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

- Acceptance of the Monthly Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Period Ended May 31, 2019 -8A [RES 19-09-04]
- Authorization to Approve FY20 Schedule and Bus Stop Display Production Task Orders – 8B [RES 19-09-05]
- Authorization to Execute a Western Maintenance Facility Deed of Easement – 8C [RES 19-09-06]

PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9

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

During the employee evaluation process, four employees were identified for going Above and Beyond in their jobs. LaTricia Benson, Leon Jordan, Natasha Khan, and Kenneth Tuitt each will receive a small bonus, a plaque, and recognition within the organization.

Commissioner Nohe arrived at 7:22 p.m.

Dr. Schneider said staff is looking at different options for OmniRide's two Mark Center routes and may not make a recommendation to the Board until November or December. With the planned start of Stafford bus services in late October, OmniRide is not under pressure to make Mark Center route changes to achieve a better standing under the new statewide performance measurement program.

An FTA procurement audit was conducted at PRTC and VRE, and the results were good. There were two findings in two areas, neither of which was systemic. In comparison, there were 11 findings in the 2017 audit. One finding – that references were not properly documented – has already been corrected. The second finding was in how the performance elements for cost and task were outlined, and we've received guidance on that.

Dr. Schneider presented a timeline of events for the three-day work stoppage, which began August 1st, that resulted from a contract dispute between First Transit and the AFSCME union that represents the bus operators.

Moving forward, the Executive Director will provide the Board with periodic updates beginning 90 days before the expiration of the contract. The Board leadership will be notified 14 days in advance of how services will operate if a work stoppage occurs, and the public communications plan will be implemented 7 days in advance of a work stoppage

Commissioner Robotham said she is an OmniRide passenger and overheard others questioning PRTC's treatment of its employees that could cause a work stoppage. She said the public doesn't understand the difference between PRTC and First Transit. She said that branding OmniRide shouldn't just be about the name on the bus exterior but also about how the community perceives the Board.

In answer to a question from Commissioner Rishell, Dr. Schneider said those who participated in the work stoppage were not assessed points for non-attendance.

Commissioner Barker heard from residents who were upset at the short notice and wanted the work stoppage to be resolved quickly.

Commissioner Lawson said the public probably doesn't realize that the bus operators aren't employed by PRTC but are contract employees with First Transit and she wondered how to inform the public about that.

Commissioner Angry asked how much the work stoppage cost. Dr. Schneider said the figures are still being audited but the fare reimbursement loss was \$118,000. According to provisions in First Transit's contract, it must reimburse PRTC for lost fares. There are other contract deductions, such as for missed trips, and the totals will be provided to First Transit.

Dr. Schneider advised the Commission that a firearm was discharged on an OmniRide bus on August 27, 2019. The bullet struck the floor and went through a window. No one was hurt. The driver didn't think the shot came from inside the vehicle so he drove to the next bus stop. The person who fired the gun turned himself in to police the next day.

Staff received active shooter training with the Prince William County Police on August 28.

The June fleet maintenance audit showed a slight uptick in the number of defects per vehicle, and the majority of defects were for minor issues.

Presentations and Information – 10

Strategic Plan Update – 10A - Chuck Steigerwald

Mr. Steigerwald's presentation focused on the Strategic Plan's Transit Recommendations. The key theme is to recapture the market share, grow ridership, and focus on public-private partnerships, and a performance-driven approach to achieve those goals.

Mr. Steigerwald said 65% of the actions associated with these recommendations are currently in progress and then listed 11 specific examples including the OmniRide app.

Chair Anderson asked if any Commissioners are using the app and what their experiences have been in using the app.

Commissioner Robotham said she has used the app.

Commissioner Kandasamy said sending messages through the app to notify riders of delays or major disruptions would be of added value. He added that it would benefit riders if disruption information could also be added to the phone message. In response, Mr. Palistrant said there is a mechanism on the phone system to do that.

PRTC Action Items – 11

Authorization to Create Three (3) Full-Time Positions – Chief Development Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Grants Administrator – 11A [DEFERRED]

Commissioner Skinner moved with a second by Commissioner Barker. Chair Anderson said there has been some consternation about this resolution and asked Dr. Schneider to give a presentation. Dr. Schneider said a financial analysis by SC&H in 2017-2018 identified succession-continuity planning as vital because OmniRide has a number of long-tenured employees in key roles. Additionally OmniRide is facing a series of retirements over the next 12 months, including Mr. Steigerwald who plans to leave OmniRide in August 2020. Commissioner Maurer asked if the reduction from 55 employees when Dr. Schneider became Executive Director to 48 employees currently included those who were part of the Reduction In Force. Dr. Schneider replied that they were not.

Dr. Schneider said he presented the Board with a Vision 2020 Plan in September 2017 and that plan was approved by the Board in October 2017. The restructuring of the organization was put on-hold and now the organization is ready to move forward. OmniRide currently has three major projects that are grant-funded that have been on the books for 18 months, but haven't launched yet because Mr. Steigerwald doesn't have the bandwidth to do them. The goal is to get those projects moving forward and identify Mr. Steigerwald's successor so that when Mr. Steigerwald departs we have continuity and these projects are up and running.

In response to a question from Commissioner Maurer, Dr. Schneider advised the intention is to replace the Director of Strategic Planning position with the Chief Development Officer once Mr. Steigerwald departs.

Dr. Schneider noted that one of Prince William County's concerns is that there is no dedicated long-term stable funding for OmniRide. OmniRide's goal was to have these positions approved so the organization could move forward when ready. OmniRide has the funding in the current budget and has the headcount capacity because this would not increase the headcount beyond where OmniRide was two year ago.

Chair Anderson said Commission members who also sit on the Prince William Board of County Supervisors had received information from the Prince William County budget office and she invited Prince William County Budget Director David Sinclair to speak about his main concerns. Mr. Sinclair applauded PRTC for finding money in its budget to fund the positions in FY20, but said County staff's concern is the impact the positions will have on the budget in FY21 and FY22 and beyond. The County has a multi-year budget plan and expenses must be funded across all five years. He recommended deferring a decision to the FY21 budget process.

Commissioner Maurer said the new positions would have a fiscal impact on Stafford County ranging from a 40% - 60% increase in Stafford's contribution, which would be difficult. She noted if one position is going to replace another, the fiscal impact information provided may not be accurate.

Commissioner Rishell noted the recurring cost potential was between \$400,000 and \$700,000, and asked if efforts were made to find alternative staffing methods. Dr. Schneider replied that staff considered not funding new positions and keeping the status quo or waiting until the person is at or near retirement and filling the position then as a one-for-one. Commissioner Rishell asked why this proposal calls for Mr. Steigerwald's position to be replaced by a higher position. Dr. Schneider replied the goal is to create a Development Department that includes vanpooling, ridesharing and planning, essentially a "Services" arm of the organization under one department so there's more coordination and fewer silos.

Commissioner Sebesky asked about the savings from reducing staff from 55 to 48. Dr. Schneider replied the agency saved \$550,000 in the restructuring, and about \$160,000 of that was put into other new positions related to FTA Safety and Security personnel requirements and Quality Assurance. In response to a question from Commissioner Sebesky, Dr. Schneider advised the remaining \$400,000 in savings would pay for these positions. He noted that the current FY20 budget approved by Prince William and Manassas already includes the funding for the new positions.

Commissioner Robotham said it's unclear to her where the work this position will do is coming from – whether it's new work, or if it's being pulled from other job descriptions.

Commissioner Kelly said that in order to not put grant money in jeopardy, it seems that Mr. Steigerwald's position should be filled now and the others can be filled later.

Commissioner Thomas noted that the Executive Director has the authority to fill Mr. Steigerwald's position now at the current level. By taking no action the Board would simply not be elevating the new person's title, which could be done at a later date.

Commissioner Thomas motioned the item be deferred to the FY21 budget cycle, noting the Executive Director has the authority to address position vacancies. Commissioner Maurer seconded the motion.

Commissioner Thomas noted these positions were in the 100-Day Plan that Dr. Schneider brought forward two years ago, and the Commission just hasn't acted on it yet.

Commissioner Barker said he would support the motion to defer and noted he would like to see the impact in future years.

Commissioner Thomas noted that the Executive Director will need guidance from the Board on how to proceed by November in order to include these positions in the FY21 budget.

Commissioner Kelly said that in addition to studying the numbers, the operational impact also should be considered.

Commissioner Lawson asked how long of an overlap Dr. Schneider expects with Mr. Steigerwald's position and the new position. Dr. Schneider replied that the new position would be advancing other parts of the program to enable Mr. Steigerwald to get projects up and running before he leaves. He estimated the overlap would be for 6-8 months.

Commissioner Thomas motioned the item be deferred to the FY21 budget cycle, noting the Executive Director has the authority to address position vacancies. Commissioner Maurer seconded the motion. (THOMAS/MAURER, UNANIMOUS)

Authorization to Participate in WMATA's Competitive Procurement for Revenue Generating Advertising on PRTC's Bus Fleet – 11B [RES 19-09-07]

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

PRTC's Chair Time - 12

Recognition and Appreciation for Prince William County Attorney's Office for the Dedication and Outstanding Work – 12A [RES 19-09-08]

Chair Anderson asked Deputy County Attorney Rob Dickerson to come forward and thanked him, on behalf of the Commission, for his legal counsel. She read the resolution extending the Commission's appreciation to Prince William County Attorney Michelle Robl and her staff for their representation over the past 10 years. Chair Anderson then presented Mr. Dickerson with a framed copy of the resolution and a gift.

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

Chair Anderson said with the encouragement of Commissioner Kandasamy, she recently toured all five commuter lots in the I-95 corridor with a group including VDOT, PWC, and PRTC to see what improvements were needed. They noted numerous observations that Chair Anderson has submitted for consideration as part of an I-95 corridor study. She said she has received word that the list is being taken seriously and she thanked Commissioner Kandasamy for initiating this process.

Other Business/Commissioner's Time – 13

Dr. Schneider noted that OmniRide is testing a new model double-door MCI bus in September. This new model bus has wheelchair access on a lower platform as compared with the current MCI bus. The double deck bus that was tested in April costs about \$1 million, but this new model MCI bus costs about the same as the current MCI bus. In addition to cost, other factors to consider are service cost, efficiency of service, and throughput.

Many Commissioners thanked Mr. Dickerson for his service and said they had enjoyed working with him. Several also expressed thanks to Assistant County Attorney Jackie Lucas for her work.

Commissioner Robotham thanked Dr. Schneider for a past tour of the PRTC facility and overview of services.

Adjournment – 14

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Information Items

There were no comments.