



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

February 13, 2020
OMNIRIDE Transit Center • 14700 Potomac Mills Road,
Woodbridge, VA

Members Present

- *Victor Angry (arrived 7:28 p.m.)
- *Andrea Bailey, At-Large
- *Kenny Boddye
- *Margaret Franklin, Chair
- *Jeanine Lawson
- *Yesli Vega
- *Cindy Shelton, Secretary
- *Pamela Sebesky, Vice Chair
- *Jeanette Rishell, At-Large
- *Gary Skinner
- *Deborah Frazier, Treasurer

Members Absent

- Tinesha Allen
- Matthew Kelly
- Jennifer Mitchell
- George Barker

Alternates Present

- *Maggie Hansford (departed 8:30 p.m.)
- Ralph Smith
- *Jason Graham

Alternates Absent

- Ann Wheeler
- Pete Candland
- Bennie Smith
- Meg Bohmke
- Preston Banks
- Hector Cendejas
- Donald Shuemaker
- Tim McLaughlin
- David Ross
- Jennifer DeBruhl
- Todd Horsley
- Steve Pittard

Jurisdiction

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

- Stafford County
- City of Fredericksburg
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Virginia Senate

- Prince William County
- City of Manassas
- City of Fredericksburg

- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- City of Manassas Park
- City of Manassas Park
- City of Manassas Park
- Spotsylvania County
- Spotsylvania County
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- 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
Rowena Reyes - PRTC
Althea Evans - PRTC
Chuck Steigerwald – PRTC
Christine Rodrigo – PRTC
Perrin Palistrant – PRTC
Becky Merriner - PRTC
Lamarr Johnson – PRTC
Kenyetta Whitford – PRTC
Tomonkia Byrd – PRTC
Todd Johnson – First Transit
Joey McKelvey – First Transit

Gwen Robinson – First Transit
Patrice Brown – First Transit
Jeff Dandridge – First Transit
Rich Dalton – VRE
Xavier Harmony – DRPT
Rick Canizales – Prince William County
Paolo Belita – Prince William County
Megan Landis – Prince William County
Ryan McManus – Prince William County
Karen Mills – Prince William County
Pamela Montgomery – Prince William County
Zach Packard – Greehan, Taves & Pandak
Ken Jones – General Public
Rick Horner – Potomac Local

Chair Franklin called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call followed.

Approval of the Agenda – 4 [RES 20-02-01]

Commissioner Lawson moved with a second by Commissioner Bailey. There was no discussion on the motion. (LAWSON/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Approval of the Minutes of the January 16, 2020 PRTC Board Meeting – 5 [RES 20-02-02]

Commissioner Sebesky moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2020 meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. (SEBESKY/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) – 6

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

- January on-time performance was 85% (88% on Fredericksburg line and 83% on Manassas line).
- January average daily ridership was 18,500.
- On January 21, VRE hosted National Transportation Safety Board member Jennifer Homendy, who also is a VRE rider from the Spotsylvania station, for a briefing on Positive Train Control and a tour of the Crossroads Maintenance and Storage Facility.
- On January 28, VRE met with U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and pledged to participate in Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking. VRE is now working with Amtrak on specific training materials for train crews. While there have not been specific reports of VRE being used for trafficking, Mr. Dalton said he thinks it's best to not let any mode of transportation go unnoticed.

Public Comment Time – 7

Mr. Ken Jones asked the Board to reverse the Reduction in Force that was taken by the previous Board in March 2019.

Approve the Consent Agenda – 8 [RES 20-02-03]

Commissioner Rishell moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey to approve the Consent Agenda. Following a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Boddye and seconded by Commissioner Bailey to remove one item, *Authorization to Submit FY2021 State Grant Applications*, from the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda was approved as amended. (RISHELL/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

- Acceptance of the PRTC Monthly Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Periods Ended November 30, 2019 [RES 20-02-04]
- Approval and Authorization to Execute a Western Maintenance Facility Deed of Easement to Verizon South, Inc. [RES 20-02-05]

PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9

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

Digital Board Packet – PRTC will soon launch software that will enable Commissioners to review all meeting materials and Commissioner Handbook materials through an app on a tablet. Dr. Schneider asked for three volunteers to test the software. Supervisors Boddye, Shelton and Vega volunteered. PRTC will continue to mail print copies of monthly Board meeting materials to those who prefer that.

Grant Applications – Staff is asking the Board to retroactively approve two sets of grant applications: one is for FY2021 state grant applications, and the other is for FY2021-2022 I-66 Commuter Choice Program Projects. These are retroactive requests because the grant application deadlines were prior to the Board's February meeting.

HR Consulting – PRTC recently entered into a MOA for PRTC's Human Resources Director to provide HR consulting to NVTC.

Commissioner Handbook – Updated information is at everyone's place on the table.

Commissioner Orientation – Immediately prior to tonight's meeting, an orientation session was held for six attendees. Another session will be held soon for those who were unable to attend.

Legislative Update – HB1414 and its companion bill SB890 both reached cross-over in the General Assembly.

Strategic Plan – An overview of PRTC's Strategic Planning process is included in meeting agenda packet and staff will soon request Board approval to begin the Public Participation Process.

Presentations and Information – 10

Dr. Schneider said that staff presents the budget over three meetings, breaking the information down into Key Assumptions, which were covered at January's meeting; Revenues, which will be covered this evening; and Expenditures, which will be presented at the March meeting.

Joyce Embrey, Director of Finance & Administration, presented a high level overview of revenues in PRTC's proposed FY2021 budget. Revenue streams include passenger fares, state and federal grants, and jurisdictional subsidies. No fare increase is proposed for FY2021, and staff is proposing to offer free fares for seniors on all OmniRide Local and Metro Express buses, costing approximately \$175,000 annually.

The FY21 budget proposes \$22.8 million in jurisdictional subsidies, which is a \$5 million increase over FY20. Prince William County would shoulder the bulk of that increase while the subsidies from the two other bus-sponsoring jurisdictions would decrease. Non-bus sponsoring jurisdictions would see an increase in their subsidies because of new administrative positions, a compensation study, and consultant costs.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bailey, Dr. Schneider explained that Prince William's subsidy is much higher than the other jurisdictions because it pays for 100% of the operational costs of OmniRide Express service plus all local services in eastern Prince William. The operational costs of local bus services in the areas of Manassas and Manassas Park are split between those three jurisdictions based on residential ridership. In addition, the proposed budget includes costs of \$870,000 in new operating expenses for the new western facility and one-time capital costs of about \$500,000 for that facility.

Dr. Schneider said the majority of the increase in jurisdictional subsidy is related to the costs of the western facility and to policy-level decisions that will need to be made at the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, such as a study of fast ferry service, the Wheels-to-Wellness program, and free fares for seniors riding locally and to Metro stations. Other items that are included in the proposed budget are an assessment of the Transit Center facility, a compensation study, projected costs for a new contract for bus services, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative, and mobile ticketing.

In response to questions from Chair Franklin, Dr. Schneider said that paratransit can't run alongside Wheels-to-Wellness because paratransit is currently only offered in the Manassas corridor. Offering free fares for seniors may reduce some demand for Wheels-to-Wellness, he added.

Chair Franklin also asked about new positions. Dr. Schneider replied that a grants administrator is needed because PRTC currently applies for and reports on approximately 30 separate grants and also is responsible for all federal grants for VRE. Another new position, the Chief Financial Officer, would oversee multiple departments and help ensure continuity with upcoming retirements.

Regarding Prince William County's fuel tax fund balance, Chair Franklin said she's concerned that the balance is being spent down and believes that PRTC's budget should reflect where we want PRTC to be financially taking into consideration the county's overall financial health. Based on the financial health of the system, she questioned if the items in the budget really need to be done now. Dr. Schneider said he understood and noted that staff didn't want to be a "gate-keeper" but to allow Prince William County to make decisions about what to include in the final budget based on policy-level decisions about which items are most important to them.

Commissioner Rishell asked about the final Diversity, Equity and Inclusion document, noting that the final recommendations have not been presented in a public meeting. Dr. Schneider replied that the report will be on the Board's March agenda.

Dr. Schneider said Prince William County policy since about 2008 has been to fund PRTC only to the extent of what's available in the fuel tax fund. The organization's funding is attached to a declining revenue stream and there's never been a focus on finding any other means to fund PRTC services except for passenger fares, grants and jurisdictional subsidies.

At the invitation of Chair Franklin, Rick Canizales, Director of Prince William County's Transportation Department, addressed the Board and stated that the county was concerned to see a proposed \$5 million increase in subsidy. He added that Prince William County used to fund both PRTC and VRE from fuel tax revenues but a policy decision was made in 2014 that designated fuel tax revenues only for PRTC.

In response to questions from Commissioner Graham, Dr. Schneider said state grants don't penalize PRTC for good ridership by taking grant money away. When asked about growth opportunities, he listed increasing ridership via new routes and attracting new passengers to existing routes.

There was a general consensus among Commissioners that they would prefer to see all the budget details now with explanations about why expenditures and revenues are changing rather than a segmented high level overview. Dr. Schneider said the budget details and a five-year history of the fuel tax fund balance would be provided to Commissioners the following week and that a detailed version of the budget will be posted in a visible location on PRTC's website.

PRTC Action Items – 11

Authorization to Apply For and Accept Funding for FY2021-FY2022 I-66 Commuter Choice Projects [RES 20-02-06]

Commissioner Lawson moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey. Commissioner Boddye asked if this grant expires and was informed that it does not. (LAWSON/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Authorization to Commence the Procurement Process for Consultant Assistance in Support of the I-66 Slug Line Promotion Project

Commissioner Bailey moved, with a second by Commissioner Sebesky. Commissioner Angry asked why there's an effort to support slugging on I-66 when no similar effort took place for I-95. Dr. Schneider replied that slugging has existed and evolved over nearly 40 years on the eastern side of the county, but I-66 is new territory that will go from virtually no slugging culture to multiple options over approximately a five-year period.

Commissioner Angry said he doesn't want sluggers to believe PRTC is a slugging organizer. Dr. Schneider replied that this grant would help with information flow and use lessons learned from the I-95 experience to help solve through-put issues on I-66.

Commissioner Sebesky expressed concerns that by helping to promote slugging, PRTC would become liable for any problems with that system, such as unsafe drivers or apps that aren't reliable. Dr. Schneider said PRTC isn't taking over slugging, but the grant would enable activities that would promote and assist slugging.

After Commissioner Boddye asked if a risk analysis had been done, Dr. Schneider invited Mr. Canizales to speak about the risk analysis the county did when planning a new parking garage in the Neabsco area. Mr. Canizales said the county is providing areas that allow for carpoolers and transit, but does not refer to it as a slugging area due to concerns about liability. Mr. Canizales stated that he believes it would be wise for PRTC's attorney to consult with the county attorney and VDOT.

Commissioner Shelton said a few years ago hundreds of people protested in Stafford County when VDOT tried to get involved with the grassroots slugging movement.

Commissioner Angry said those who are involved in slugging on the I-95 corridor should be the source of advice and support for I-66 slugging.

Chair Franklin recommended that PRTC's attorney speak with the county attorney for an opinion on risk analysis about PRTC's liability.

Commissioner Bailey moved, with a second by Commissioner Sebesky to withdrawal their motion that enabled discussion on this item to begin.

Chuck Steigerwald, PRTC Chief Development Officer, said funding for this project was awarded in the FY20 Commuter Choice grant, was approved by the Commission in January 2019, and that everything is now in place to start the procurement process for these services.

Commissioner Graham moved, with a second by Commissioner Boddye to defer this item until an analysis and recommendation on PRTC's liability is provided. (GRAHAM/BODDYE, UNANIMOUS)

Authorization to Purchase 21 Driver Control Unit Kits to Extend the Life of the Current Fareboxes [RES 20-02-07]

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

Authorization to Submit FY2021 State Grant Applications [RES 20-02-08]

Commissioner Bailey moved, with a second by Commissioner Frazier. Chair Franklin said the county will decide whether or not it supports a Fast Ferry study when going over the Prince William County budget and asked if a project can be pulled from the application if Prince William County decides against a Fast Ferry study. Dr. Schneider said any project not supported by the Commission can be pulled from the application. (BAILEY/FRAZIER, UNANIMOUS)

Following the vote, Commissioner Franklin moved, with a second by Commissioner Boddye to reconsider the vote so it could be amended. (FRANKLIN/BODDYE, UNANIMOUS)

Commissioner Lawson moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey with the amendment that the Board reserves the right to withdrawal any project from the application. (LAWSON/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Chair's Time - 12

Concurrence with Stafford County's Appointment to the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Appointments [RES 20-02-09]

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

Chair Franklin reviewed the list of Engagement Opportunities.

Other Business/Commissioner's Time - 13

None

Adjournment - 14

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Franklin adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

Information Items

There were no comments.