



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
OPERATIONS BOARD

# VRE OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

January 15, 2021 – 9:00 A.M.

*Legal Services Committee Meeting - 8:30 A.M.*

VIA WebEx

1. Roll Call
2. Resolution Finding Need to Conduct January 15, 2021 Meeting Electronically
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from the December 18, 2020 VRE Operations Board Meeting
5. Chairman's Comments
  - A. Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine
6. Installation of New Officers
7. New Chair's Comments
8. Chief Executive Officer's Report
9. Virginia Railway Express Riders' and Public Comment
10. Action Items:
  - A. Authorization to Extend the Lease Agreement for Parking at the Rippon Station
  - B. Adoption of Changes to the 2021 VRE Operations Board Meeting Schedule
11. Information Items:
  - A. Spending Authority Report



Northern Virginia  
Transportation Commission  
2300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 230  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-524-3322



Virginia Railway Express  
1500 King Street, Suite 202  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703-684-1001  
VRE.org



Potomac and Rappahannock  
Transportation Commission  
14700 Potomac Mills Road  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-580-6121

12. Closed Session
13. Operations Board Member's Time

**The Next VRE Operations Board Meeting will be held on February 19, 2021 at 9:00 A.M.**



**MINUTES**  
**VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS**  
**OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING**  
**January 15, 2021**

Virtual Meeting via Webex

**Members Present**

\*Walter Alcorn (NVTC)  
\*Andrea Bailey (PRTC)  
\*Preston Banks (PRTC) \*\*  
\*Elizabeth Bennet-Parker (NVTC)  
\*Meg Bohmke (PRTC)  
\*Katie Cristol (NVTC)  
\*Margaret Franklin (PRTC)  
\*Matt Kelly (PRTC)  
\*Jeanine Lawson (PRTC)  
\*Cindy Shelton (PRTC)  
\*Gary Skinner (PRTC)  
\*Ralph Smith (PRTC)  
\*Dan Storck (NVTC)  
\*James Walkinshaw (NVTC)

**Jurisdiction**

Fairfax County  
Prince William County  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Alexandria  
Stafford County  
Arlington County  
Prince William County  
City of Fredericksburg  
Prince William County  
Stafford County  
Spotsylvania County  
City of Manassas  
Fairfax County  
Fairfax County

**Members Absent**

Jennifer Mitchell (DRPT)

Commonwealth of Virginia

**Alternates Present**

Michael McLaughlin (DRPT)

Commonwealth of Virginia

**Alternates Absent**

Canek Aguirre (NVTC)  
Victor Angry (PRTC)  
Pete Candland (PRTC)  
Hector Cendejas (PRTC)  
Deborah Frazier (PRTC)  
Libby Garvey (NVTC)  
Jason Graham (PRTC)  
Jeff McKay (NVTC)  
Alanna Mensing (PRTC)  
Pam Sebesky (PRTC)

City of Alexandria  
Prince William County  
Prince William County  
City of Manassas Park  
Spotsylvania County  
Arlington County  
City of Fredericksburg  
Fairfax County  
City of Manassas Park  
City of Manassas

\*Voting Member

\*\*Delineates arrival/departure following the commencement of the Operations Board Meeting. Notation of exact arrival/departure time is included in the body of the minutes.

### **Staff and General Public**

Rich Dalton – VRE

John Duque – VRE

Christine Hoeffner - VRE

Robert Hostelka - VRE

Lezlie Lamb – VRE

Steve MacIsaac – VRE Legal Counsel

Kate Mattice – NVTC

Adeel Mysorewala - VRE

Kristin Nutter – VRE

Dr. Bob Schneider – PRTC

Joe Swartz – VRE

Chairman Skinner called the meeting to order at 9:08 A. M. The Roll Call followed.

### **Resolution Finding Need to Conduct the January 15, 2021 Meeting Electronically – 2**

Mr. Smith moved, with a second by Ms. Lawson, to approve Resolution #02-01-2021, Finding Need to Conduct the January 15, 2021 Meeting Electronically. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck and Walkinshaw.

### **Approval of the Agenda – 3**

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol to approve the agenda as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### **Approval of the Minutes of the December 18, 2020 VRE Operations Board Meeting – 4**

Ms. Bennett-Parker moved, with a second by Ms. Shelton, to approve the Minutes from December 18, 2020 Meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Lawson, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw. Mr. Kelly and Mr. McLaughlin abstained.

### **Chairman's Comments – 5**

- Chairman Skinner introduced Virginia Department of Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine, who briefed the VRE Operations Board on the following:
  - Financial impacts of COVID-19
  - Passage of the Long Bridge Act of 2020
  - Noted VRE's agreements with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority were approved by the VRE Operations Board in November and by the Commissions in December
  - Areas of focus for the Transportation Secretariat at this year's session of the General Assembly
    - Introduction of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
    - Transit Ridership Incentive Program
    - Restore funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
    - \$50M for extending Amtrak service from Roanoke to Christiansburg/Blacksburg

### **Installation of New Officers – 6**

Mr. Skinner officially turned the meeting over to the 2021 VRE Operations Board Chair, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker.

### **New Chair's Comments – 7**

Chair Bennett-Parker thanked Chairman Skinner for his service to the VRE Operations Board in 2020. During his tenure Chairman Skinner presided over the challenge of switching to virtual meetings. Other accomplishments under Chairman Skinner:

- VRE was awarded the Virginia Transit Associations Safety Award
- hiring a new CEO
- partnering with DRPT as it works to stand up the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and ensure that the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative moves forward
- advancing several important construction projects, including a new Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade Facility, and improvements at the Fredericksburg, Quantico, and Rolling Road stations
- new railcar procurement

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report – 8**

Mr. Dalton thanked Secretary Valentine for her comments. He thanked Mr. Skinner for his leadership through the challenges in 2020. He briefed the Operations Board on the following items of interest:

- Safety COVID-19 Update
  - VRE will be suspending service from January 17 through January 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Transit workers are included in COVID-19 vaccine prioritization group 1B
- Ridership
- Performance
- Project Spotlight: Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade Facility
- Financial Reporting
- Welcome Back marketing efforts

Mr. Dalton Also recognized Mike Lake from Fairfax County on the occasion of his final VRE Operations Board Meeting. Mr. Lake is retiring after a long career with Fairfax County Department of Transportation. Mr. Lake has been a member of the VRE Coordinating Committee since VRE's early days.

### **Public Comment Time –9**

Chair Bennett-Parker stated that in the virtual meeting environment, Public Comments were being accepted electronically through the VRE Website. The Chair asked the Clerk to read any comments received into the record. Ms. Lamb stated no Public Comments had been received.

### **Action Items - 10**

#### **Authorization to Extend the Lease Agreement for Parking at Rippon Station– 10A**

Ms. Franklin moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey, to authorize the CEO to extend the lease Agreement for Parking at Rippon Station. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### Adoption of Changes to the 2021 VRE Operations Board Meeting Schedule – 10B

Ms. Cristol moved, with a second by Mr. Smith, to adopt changes to the 2021 VRE Operations Meeting Schedule, changing the regular June meeting from June 18, 2021 to June 25, 2021, adding a regular meeting on July 16, 2021; and, eliminating the August meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### Information Items – 11

#### Spending Authority Report – 11A

In, the following purchases greater than \$50,000 but less than \$200,000 were made:

- A Purchase Order in the amount of \$52,503 was issued to Progress Rail Locomotive, Inc. to purchase new water pump assemblies for VRE's fleet of locomotives.
- A Task Order was issued in the amount of \$91,019 to ADS System Safety Consulting, LLC under the Safety and Security Consulting Services contract to conduct a gap assessment and continue development of the VRE System Safety Program Plan.
- A Purchase Order was issued in the amount of \$54,960 to Standard Steel to purchase a total of 40 new wheels for VRE's fleet of locomotives.

### Closed Session – 12

Mr. Skinner moved, with a second by Ms. Lawson, pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Section 2.2-3711.A (1) and (3) of the Code of Virginia,) to convene a closed meeting for the purpose of discussing one matter involving the acquisition of real property for public purposes related to VRE's Broad Run station and maintenance facility where discussion in public would adversely affect the Board's negotiating strategy and bargaining position; and one personnel matter involving an appointee of the Commissions.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

[Mr. Banks left the meeting during the Closed Session]

Mr. Skinner moved, with a second by Mr. Alcorn to certify that to the best of each member's knowledge and with no individual member dissenting, at the just concluded Closed Session, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed; and, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Session was convened were heard, discussed or considered.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### Board Members' Time – 13

Chair Bennett-Parker asked if Members had any additional business. There was none.

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Mr. Skinner, to adjourn the meeting.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 2021

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Elizabeth Bennett-Parker  
Chair

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James Walkinshaw  
Secretary

#### CERTIFICATION

This certification hereby acknowledges the minutes for the January 15, 2021 Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Meeting have been recorded to the best of my ability.



Lezlie M. Lamb



VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
OPERATIONS BOARD

## Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Resolution

2-01-2021

### Resolution Finding Need to Conduct January 15, 2021 Meeting Electronically

**WHEREAS**, on March 12, 2020, the Governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency in Virginia in response to the spread of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, a communicable disease of public health threat as so declared by the State Health Commissioner on February 7, 2020 ("COVID-19"); and,

**WHEREAS**, in subsequent Executive Orders, particularly Executive Order Nos. 53 and 55, as amended, the Governor of Virginia, among other measures designed to ensure safe physical distancing between individuals, prohibited public and private in person gatherings of 10 or more individuals and ordered all individuals in Virginia to remain at their place of residence, with limited exceptions, to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and prevent its spread; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board finds that it has a responsibility to demonstrate to the public, through the Board's conduct, the importance of maintaining proper physical distance from others and to avoid gathering in public where the risks of infection are highest, and to take measures that promote physical distancing in order to protect the public health and mitigate the impacts and spread of COVID-19, including, among others, conducting meetings electronically whenever possible; and,

**WHEREAS**, on April 22, 2020, the Virginia General Assembly adopted, and the Governor signed, budget bill amendments to HB 29 that expressly authorize "any public body, including any state, local, [or] regional body" to "meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body . . . physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency . . . , provided that (i) the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body . . . to assemble in a single location; (ii) the purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body . . . and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities" among other provisions; and,



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**WHEREAS**, jurisdictions of the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board have adopted continuity of government ordinances pursuant to Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-1413 which ordinances, among other provisions, authorize regional bodies of which the locality is a member to meet electronically to transact business to assure the continuity of government;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board hereby finds that meeting by electronic means is authorized because the nature of the declared emergency makes it both impracticable and unsafe for the Operations Board to assemble in a single location on January 15, 2021, to discuss and transact the business of the Operations Board listed on the January 15, 2021 Operations Board Meeting Agenda; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board hereby finds that meeting by electronic means is authorized because the items on the January 15, 2021 Operations Board Meeting Agenda are statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the Operations Board and the discharge of the Operations Board's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board hereby finds that the items on the January 15, 2021 Operations Board Meeting Agenda are encompassed within the continuity of operations ordinances adopted by several member localities of the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board to assure the continued operation of the government during the disaster posed by the public health emergency resulting from COVID-19.

Approved this 15<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021

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Elizabeth Bennett-Parker  
Chair

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James Walkinshaw  
Secretary