



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

March 4, 2021

Virtual ZOOM Meeting

Livestreamed at [YouTube.com/PRTCtransit](https://www.youtube.com/PRTCtransit)

Members Present

- *Andrea Bailey, At-Large
- *Margaret Franklin, Chair
- *Jeanine Lawson (arrived 7:04 pm)
- *Tinesha Allen
- *Pamela Sebesky, Secretary
- *Jeanette Rishell, Vice Chair
- *Matthew Kelly
- *Deborah Frazier, Treasurer
- *Gary Skinner
- *Elizabeth Guzman
- *George Barker (arrived 7:18 pm)

Members Absent

- Victor Angry
- Kenny Boddy
- Yesli Vega
- Cindy Shelton, At-Large
- Jennifer Mitchell
- Lee Carter

Alternates Present

- *Kalai Kandasamy
- *Kim Short
- *Bennie Smith
- Ralph Smith
- Darryl Moore
- *Todd Horsley

Alternates Absent

- Pete Candland
- Maggie Hansford
- Ann Wheeler
- Meg Bohmke
- Tom Coen
- Preston Banks
- Alanna Mensing
- Jason Graham
- Tim McLaughlin
- David Ross

Jurisdiction

- 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
- Virginia House of Delegates
- Virginia Senate

- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Virginia House of Delegates

- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- City of Manassas
- City of Manassas Park
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation

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

*Voting Member

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

Staff and Public on ZOOM

Dr. Robert A. Schneider, PhD – PRTC
Doris Lookabill – PRTC
Becky Merriner – PRTC
Christine Rodrigo – PRTC
Carl Roeser - PRTC

Joe Stainsby – PRTC
Barbara Murdock – Keolis
Rich Dalton – VRE
Ben Owen – NVTC
Sharon Pandak – Greehan, Taves & Pandak

Chair Franklin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. noting due to the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to PRTC Commission Resolution No. 20-05-01 dated May 7, 2020, this meeting of the PRTC Board of Commissioners is being conducted virtually via Zoom. Public access for this meeting is being provided via livestreaming on PRTC's YouTube channel. The public was given notice on PRTC's website, Facebook, at the Transit Center, and in InsideNova and the Free Lance-Star. The Chair then read an announcement detailing procedures for the electronic meeting. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Commissioner Lawson arrived at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – 4 [RES 21-03-01]

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

Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2021– 5 [RES 21-03-02]

Commissioner Bailey moved with a second by Commissioner Sebesky. There was no discussion on the motion. (BAILEY/SEBESKY; LAWSON AND HORSLEY ABSTAINED; UNANIMOUS)

Virginia Railway Express Chief Executive Officer's Time – 6

Mr. Dalton updated the Board on the following items:

- VRE continues to operate at a reduced service level.
- Over past month transit leaders including Mr. Dalton have been speaking about COVID-19 with members of the new administration including Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, Acting FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez, and Acting FRA Administrator Amit Bose.
- February average daily ridership was about 1,000 and in the first few days of March daily ridership numbers are similar to what they were prior to the holiday season, about 1,500 average daily riders.
- February on-time performance was 93 percent system wide with some weather delays and system congestion due to freight and Amtrak trains.
- Most staff continue to work remotely, and all business functions are fully operational

Presentations and Information – 7

Ben Owen, Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager at Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, presented an update on the I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program Round Two.

Commissioner Barker arrived at 7:18 p.m.

In response to a question from Commissioner Skinner, Mr. Owen said there are three proposed projects in Spotsylvania County: a Massaponax park and ride lot that's already mostly funded, a FRED transit feeder bus route from the Route 208 lot to Downtown Fredericksburg, and OmniRide Vanpool incentives that could benefit commuters from Spotsylvania County.

Commissioner Short asked how the public comment period is being publicized. Mr. Owen said NVTC expects to use social media channels and will work with the applicants to help publicize the public comment period. Other expectations are a Town Hall meeting livestreamed on YouTube and an online public comment form

for feedback. Chair Franklin said the jurisdictions also can take the responsibility of getting the information out to their constituents

Public Comment Time – 8

One comment was received, read into the record, and is attached to this document.

PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9

Dr. Schneider updated the Board on the following items:

- Last week the Commissioners were emailed an Excel ridership viewing tool. The information was something staff had been working on previously, but a request for the information from Commissioner Vega helped get it into higher gear. Ridership information also is provided monthly in the meeting materials with year-over-year trends.
- Federal items:
 - The House and Senate continue to work toward what is expected to be the final COVID-19 Relief legislation, which currently proposes a \$30.5 billion relief package for transit.
 - We continue to enforce the mask mandate and await vaccines for our transit workers. It is a source of frustration for the workforce, but we are in regular contact with Health District and Prince William Emergency Services to get vaccines for employees.
 - Two weeks ago Dr. Schneider met with Senator Mark Warner along with other transportation leaders, including Rich Dalton of VRE, Kate Mattice of NVTC, and Virginia Secretary of Transportation Valentine, to discuss the impacts that COVID has had on the workforce and our need for continued funding for readiness. Once employers ask employees to return on a consistent basis, we expect to see sudden increased demand and we must be ready. Without the appropriate funding and lead time, we can't meet that demand.
- State items:
 - The General Assembly's key items included a statewide analysis of Transit Equity and Modernization to be conducted by DRPT as well as stabilized funding for transit. The Senate budget also approved amendments to allow for reduction or elimination of fares in urban and rural local services.
- Local items:
 - OmniRide was a finalist for the Prince William Chamber's Large Business of the Year award. We congratulate NOVANT UVA Health Systems, as very deserving winner especially in light of how they responded to the COVID-19 crisis.
 - Regarding transit access to COVID-19 vaccination sites, OmniRide has routes that serve Manassas Mall and the vacant Gander Mountain store which are vaccination sites. Anyone wanting to learn how transit can help them access a vaccination site should call 703-730-OMNI or visit our website and check out our route maps. We've encouraged the Health District to place vaccination sites directly on transit routes to assist with distribution, especially among minority and economically disadvantaged communities. Staff has contacted several senior living communities to remind them that transit can help. Our local services remain fare-free so we may continue to offer equity within those impacted communities.
 - Over the next few weeks Dr. Schneider will be presenting at a Chamber transportation roundtable, speaking at an event for the Prince William Conservation Alliance about the impacts of land use on transit, participating the VTA Equity and Diversity statewide Working

Group, and continuing to work on the national COVID-19 response committee and the mid-sized operations committee.

- We had a successful Keolis Town Hall on February 21 and are preparing for Transit Worker Appreciation Day.

Keolis Update

Keolis General Manager Barbara Murdock updated the Board on the following items:

- Ms. Murdock thanked the Board members who participated in the February 21 Keolis Town Hall. The employees appreciated the Commissioners' participation.
- This week, operators are going through the second seniority bid pick and it's going much smoother than the previous one due to the hard work of the PRTC and Keolis team.
- Nationally our front-line workers are being celebrated on March 18, which is Bus Driver Appreciation Day, but locally we're calling it Bus Operator and Technician Appreciation Day so we can include our maintenance staff. We will celebrate all day on March 18 from 3:30 AM to 3:30 PM by providing staff with grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches. We hope many Commissioners can participate and meet the amazing drivers and maintenance workers and get to know them. More information will be emailed to Board members next week.

Commissioner Bailey asked that more information about the March 18 event be shared with Commissioners.

Action Items – 10

Chair Franklin said the only Action Item on the agenda, a potential grant for Wheels-to-Wellness, was removed prior to the meeting because PRTC is ineligible for the grant. Dr. Schneider explained that organizations are eligible only if the grant would prevent that organization's employees from losing jobs so Wheels-to-Wellness, a voucher-based taxi program, is ineligible and the application has been pulled.

Chair's Time - 11

Chair Franklin reiterated that it would be good for Commissioners to participate in the March 18 Bus Driver and Technician Appreciation Day to show appreciation for those who have been coming to work every day since the pandemic started.

Chair Franklin said members of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors have been answering questions about what it can do to help with the COVID-19 vaccination process and about providing transportation to and from appointments. Those who need information can reach out to their elected officials, she said, adding that outreach is on-going to those in priority groups who have appointments to make sure they have transportation.

Chair Franklin stressed that the priority groups for COVID-19 vaccinations were set at the state level. The hope was that transportation workers would be higher up in the priority groups, and the priority list still could change. We consider transportation workers to be front-line workers.

Commissioners' Time - 12

Commissioner Rishell said she hopes everyone is well and she's looking forward to meeting in person again.

Commissioner Barker said the General Assembly has provided substantial additional funding in the budget for transit and passenger rail. He expects developments fairly soon regarding the Norfolk Southern tracks through Manassas to Broad Run as well as a significant increase in funding for passenger rail service from DC to Roanoke and an extension to the Christiansburg area and potentially further.

Regarding the comment that was read during Public Comment Time, Commissioner Barker said it's a ringing endorsement of why transit is important: it helps the whole community, not just the individual who happens to ride. We must convey to everyone that we are in this for the long haul and hopefully during this calendar year we'll see a significant return of ridership. We need to be sure we're positioned well to entice people back to riding. He is very optimistic about what we can do long-term and is glad to be working on that.

Adjournment – 13

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Franklin entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Bailey moved, with a second by Commissioner Rlshell. There was no discussion. (BAILEY/RISHELL; UNANIMOUS)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Christine Rodrigo

From: Melissa Borofsky <mborofsky@mfa.gwu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 9:42 AM
To: Christine Rodrigo
Cc: Faye Leon
Subject: Concerns Re: Possible OmniRide Service Cuts

Hello,

I found your contact info on the OmniRide website and saw that passengers could reach out to you with any concerns prior to the upcoming meeting tomorrow. There has been some talk amongst riders that service cuts are coming and coming quickly and I wanted to share my situation with you.

I am a current daily passenger who takes OmniRide from the Portsmouth Commuter Lot in Manassas into DC. This bus has been a saving grace and was one of the biggest reasons I chose to move to Manassas last year, as I do not drive. In fact, I do not even have a drivers license. Because I knew your commuter buses existed, I felt comfortable in relocating to Manassas and knowing that I could still get to work every day with ease. You see, I am a very specialized Rhinology & Skull Base Surgery nurse taking care of patients with complex diseases and disorders of the nose, sinuses, and anterior skull base. I am the only nurse with this specialization at our large academic medical center, if not in the entire metro DC area. If it was not for your commuter buses, I would not be able to continue to commute and our patients would suffer. While I understand ridership is extremely down due to the current COVID19 pandemic, please keep us essential workers in mind when you consider any service cuts. My colleague, Faye, is also cc'd on this e-mail. She, too, is a health care professional here at our medical center who relies exclusively on your OmniRide service to get to work to take care of patients every day. While we are more than happy to change the location in the Manassas/Gainesville area where we catch the bus in the morning, we are asking that you consider keeping an early morning bus (5/5:30am) running into DC every day. In addition to ourselves, there are usually 3-5 other people that we see routinely on our routes that we know heavily rely on your commuter bus services. I, personally, would much rather have the daily fares increase a bit to have the service continue rather than be left with no/limited commuting options.

We thank you in advance for making note of our concerns and, more importantly, our patients greatly thank you for always getting us into work safely every day.

Best,
Melissa Borofsky

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