

MOTION:

SECOND:

RE: APPROVAL OF PRTC COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 9, 2020

ACTION:

WHEREAS, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (“PRTC” or the “Commission”) has had the opportunity to review the draft meeting minutes for July 9, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission does hereby approve the minutes of July 9, 2020 as presented/amended.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent from Vote:

Alternate Present Not Voting:

Absent from Meeting:



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

July 9, 2020

ZOOM Virtual Meeting

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

Members Present

- *Victor Angry
- *Andrea Bailey, At-Large
- *Kenny Boddye (arrived 7:45 p.m.)
- *Margaret Franklin, Chair
- *Jeanine Lawson
- *Tinesha Allen (arrived 7:05 p.m.)
- *Pamela Sebesky, Vice Chair
- *Matthew Kelly
- *Deborah Frazier, Treasurer (arrived 7:05 p.m.)
- *Gary Skinner
- *Lee Carter
- *Elizabeth Guzman (arrived 7:05 p.m.)
- *George Barker

Members Absent

- Yesli Vega
- Cindy Shelton, Secretary
- Jeanette Rishell, At-Large
- Jennifer Mitchell

Alternates Present

- *Bennie Smith
- *Meg Bohmke
- Ralph Smith
- *Donald Shuemaker
- *Todd Horsley

Alternates Absent

- Ann Wheeler
- Pete Candland
- Maggie Hansford
- Gary Snellings
- Preston Banks
- Hector Cendejas
- Jason Graham
- Tim McLaughlin
- David Ross
- Jennifer DeBruhl
- Steve Pittard

Jurisdiction

- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- City of Manassas
- City of Fredericksburg
- Spotsylvania County
- Spotsylvania County
- Virginia House of Delegates
- Virginia House of Delegates
- Virginia Senate
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- City of Manassas Park
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- City of Manassas
- City of Manassas Park
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- 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 Public on ZOOM

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

Aline Frantzen - Keolis
Mike Ake - Keolis
Bryan Jungwirth - Keolis
Rich Dalton – VRE
Ben Owen – NVTC
Sharon Pandak – Greehan, Taves & Pandak

Chair Franklin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and said that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to PRTC Commission Resolution No. 20-05-01, this meeting of the PRTC Board of Commissioners is being conducted remotely. 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.

Chair Franklin announced that Delegate Lee Carter and Delegate Elizabeth Guzman have been officially appointed to the PRTC Board, and that Senator George Barker has been reappointed to the Board. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call followed.

Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Frazier, and Commissioner Guzman arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – 4 [RES 20-07-01]

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

Approval of Minutes of June 4, 2020– 5 [RES 20-07-02]

Commissioner Barker moved with a second by Commissioner Sebesky. There was no discussion on the motion. (BARKER/SEBESKY; BOHMKE ABSTAINED; UNANIMOUS)

Virginia Railway Express Acting Chief Executive Officer's Time – 6

- VRE continues to operate at a reduced service level. Ridership increased from about 620 per day in early June to about 1000 per day at the end of June. Trains will be lengthened and added as ridership increases to help maintain social distancing.
- June on-time-performance was at 93% system wide, the same rate as in May.
- Efforts continued in June to welcome returning riders, place signage for social distancing, enhance cleaning, and place hand sanitizer dispensers at stations and on trains.
- There's nearly 100% compliance with the requirement for passengers to wear face coverings, and staff has face coverings available for riders who may not have one.
- There is daily messaging including social media and direct communications to provide information to riders.
- Staff continues to work remotely with all business functions fully operational.
- In coming weeks, members can expect to see preliminary information about FY20 year-end financial results. Staff continues its FY21 scenario planning and is refining projections for ridership, revenues and expenses, which will be shared at a later date.

Public Comment Time – 7

The Chair explained no public comments would be received during the virtual meeting; however, the public was advised to submit written comments to the Board Clerk by July 8 at 5 p.m. No comments were received.

Consent Agenda – 8 [RES 20-07-03]

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

- Acceptance of the PRTC Monthly Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Period Ended April 30, 2020 [RES 20-07-04]
- Authorization to Budget and Appropriate the City of Fredericksburg's Motor Fuels Tax Funds for Various Transportation Projects [RES 20-07-05]

PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9

Dr. Schneider updated the Board on the following items:

COVID-19 Response and Update

- Express service has returned to a Friday service level on each weekday, which is about 85% of pre-COVID weekday service. There have been minor ridership increases each week since June, recovering 8-10% of lost ridership, and is hopeful that the continued re-opening of Virginia in Phase 3 with no additional waves results in more passengers returning.
- Ridership and revenues will continue to present challenges until traffic volume and/or parking capacity become issues.
- Local services continue to operate fare-free to reduce dwell time and decrease risk of exposure to COVID-19. Commuter services are cashless and are likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future.
- The next benchmark for ridership recovery will be the post-Labor Day ridership rates as schools, employers, and workforces respond to the virus and telework models become more entrenched. We will also have more concrete data on fuel tax revenues and will begin preparing for longer-term responsiveness to trends and demands.

Employee/Passenger Safety

- We remain focused on cleaning.
- Staff was at several of the larger park and ride lots this week to thank passengers and answer their questions. Feedback from riders was good; they appreciate the operators who have been on the road each day.
- The OmniRide lobby reopened only for customer questions and the passenger vestibule reopened for riders who are waiting for a bus. Floor decals and Plexiglas protective panels have been added in the lobby.
- Virginia Workplace Safety Mandates
 - We're focused on signage and reminders for distancing, and have placed wipes and sanitizer throughout the facility.
 - We are evaluating employee responsibilities and re-evaluating positions that can be longer-term telework, in-office and hybrid systems. We have provided employees with back-to-work training and materials, including instructions for daily self-assessments for COVID-19 symptoms and protocols.

Passenger Rail Authority Update

- Nine names and resumes from PRTC jurisdiction members were forwarded to DRPT for the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. At this time, no action has been taken. All resumes will be forwarded to the Commissioners. Please note that individuals could independently submit names outside of this process.

Federal Legislative Update

- There has been no significant news in federal policy for COVID-19; however, the most recent federal legislation for transit is the INVEST act, a five-year surface transportation legislation that includes \$105 billion for transit, \$29 billion for Amtrak, and is expected to be considered by the full House in early July. The major impact would be on the level of funding for capital assets and would impact both

VRE and OmniRide funding. This is exclusive of any COVID-19 funding we have received and also—at this stage—exclusive of any future COVID-19 assistance.

Chuck Steigerwald's Final Meeting

- Chuck Steigerwald is retiring in August after 20 years at PRTC in many roles. He joins two other 2020 retirees, Sun Amacker from the Finance Department and Leon Jordan of the Quality Assurance department. Leon retired just two weeks ago after 25 years at the organization and 20 years as a PRTC employee. We're fortunate to have had their leadership, their friendship, and wish them the best.

Chair Franklin thanked Mr. Steigerwald for his service, wished him luck and asked if there were questions about Dr. Schneider's report.

Commissioner Horsley noted he has no update on the Passenger Rail Authority Appointments, but there may be an update at the VRE Operations Board meeting on July 17.

Commissioner Shuemaker asked how long the local buses would be fare-free. Dr. Schneider replied the next evaluation will take place around Labor Day. Fare boxes are located next to the bus operator, so offering free fares is a safety measure to reduce interactions between the operator and passengers. It also helps to ensure that COVID-19 doesn't enter the building via cash, Dr. Schneider said, adding that staff will look at things like mobile ticketing in a more expedited manner. Commissioner Shuemaker said free fares encourage ridership and enable riders to become familiar with where the bus goes.

Presentations and Information – 10

I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program

Ben Owen, Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager at the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, presented an overview of the I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program.

The first round of projects was implemented last fall along with the opening of the I-395 Express Lanes. Toll revenues come from Transurban, the Express Lanes concessionaire. NVTC expects full funding of about \$30 - \$35 million for the upcoming program because the payment is a term of Transurban's master agreement with the Commonwealth to operate the Express Lanes. The upcoming call for projects covers fiscal years 2022 and 2023. Member jurisdictions and transit providers along that corridor are eligible to apply for funds.

Both PRTC and NVTC are being asked to appoint three Commissioners each to the Joint Commission Working Group, which serves as an intermediary between the full Commissions and program participants.

Commissioner Lawson asked how the pandemic will impact the concessionaire payment. Mr. Owen replied that a full payment is anticipated despite lower toll revenues.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bailey, Mr. Owen said the current plan is to offer an introductory briefing to members of the Joint Commission Working Group in mid-to-late August.

Commissioner Skinner said he was a member of the Working Group last year and wondered if briefings could be held before mid-to-late August. Mr. Owen replied that there was some flexibility.

Chair Franklin said she is looking for three Commissioners to volunteer for the Joint Working Group. Mr. Owen said he'd like for the members to be identified within the next week or two. Chair Franklin asked those interested to email herself or Dr. Schneider by July 17. Commissioner Skinner said if no one else from Stafford or Fredericksburg wants to represent the southern portion, he would be willing to serve.

Commissioner Boddye arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Transit Strategic Plan and Transportation Demand Management Plan

Chuck Steigerwald, OmniRide's Chief Development Officer, presented an overview of PRTC's Transit Strategic Plan and Transportation Demand Management Plan.

The Public Participation Process for these two plans is the last piece of the Strategic Plan process which began in May 2016. Staff would like to have feedback from the Public Participation Process in time to return to the Commission in September for adoption of the plans. OmniRide's focus then would shift to implementing the plans and performing annual plan updates, Mr. Steigerwald said.

Commissioner Horsley noted these plans are required by DRPT and also were mandated by the General Assembly in 2018. DRPT has always required agencies to do a Transit Development Plan (TDP), but in 2018 the decision was made to ask the larger transit agencies for more planning due to new legislation and guidelines. Although PRTC was in the early phases of its TDP update, it volunteered to transition to a Transit Strategic Plan once the guidelines were created. DRPT appreciates all the work that PRTC put into the plan, Commissioner Horsley said. He also congratulated Mr. Steigerwald on his retirement and said the DRPT staff will miss him.

Commissioner Bailey thanked Mr. Steigerwald for the update and wished him well.

Commissioner Boddye apologized for being late to the PRTC meeting due to a Town Hall meeting and said our transit system is important to constituents and he's looking forward to seeing these plans implemented.

Commissioner Lawson thanked Mr. Steigerwald for his service to the community. She pointed out that growth is anticipated in the Manassas area due to plans to expand George Mason University's campus at Innovation and asked why the TSP doesn't anticipate new bus services in that area until 2027. Mr. Steigerwald replied that's due to projected revenue sources and the fact that development is anticipated but not assured. Annual updates to the plans will allow staff to make changes as conditions change.

Commissioner Sebesky said she appreciates Mr. Steigerwald's work on the Strategic Plan and his service to the organization and community.

Commissioner Shuemaker asked if there's been thought of realigning western OmniRide Express routes in light of the planned Route 28 expansion. Using a Manassas Park VRE parking garage as a commuter hub would provide options for residents in the Route 28 corridor, Commissioner Shuemaker said. Mr. Steigerwald said any I-66 corridor expansion plans have been identified based on the Transform66 project as that will be the main funding source. Previous thoughts about operating routes to areas in the Route 28 corridor were removed from plans in order to concentrate on existing services and take advantage of the new Express Lanes and associated infrastructure such as new park and ride lots along I-66. In order to operate new service in the Route 28 corridor, PRTC would need to identify a funding source and be assured about the reliability of travel times on the roadway, Mr. Steigerwald said.

Commissioner Shuemaker said many commuters are traveling between suburbs and they have no transit options. He then clarified that when discussing bus services on Route 28, staff may not have to find new funding but could take some funding from routes that operate along Sudley Road and shift it to the Route 28 corridor. Mr. Steigerwald said that's a possibility but added that OmniRide's Gainesville buses couldn't be re-routed because they are close to capacity and they'd lose the time advantage by operating along Route 28. The trip-making pattern is more varied in the I-66 corridor than in the I-95 corridor, he added.

Chair Franklin said some comments have been submitted regarding I-66, Route 28, the Transit Strategic Plan, and Transportation Demand Management Plan.

Commissioner Kelly said traditionally the focus has always been on the bus system and VRE, but very little is said regarding vanpools and slugging. He asked Mr. Steigerwald to share his thoughts about the importance of vanpools and slugging from a performance measure standpoint. Mr. Steigerwald said no one knows how many people slug, but prior census attempts put the figure at 10,000 individuals in the I-95 corridor. It's a major activity and he believes there are more passenger trips via slugging than people who ride on OmniRide buses or VRE trains in the I-95 corridor. On the I-66 corridor, slugging is virtually non-existent. Formally measuring slugging's impact would be valuable, but would take a significant effort.

Turning to vanpooling, Mr. Steigerwald said Vanpool Alliance has created a database of any measurable data points one would want. The impact of vanpools for traffic mitigation is similar to slugging but vanpools fill a different niche. Vanpools are particularly suited for long-distance commutes and for serving locations that transit can't because they're isolated or secure. Commissioner Kelly thanked Mr. Steigerwald for his service and noted that the Board tends to focus on buses and trains but should remember there are other options that have a significant impact on moving people.

Chair Franklin said she'd like the plans to be available in additional languages other than English and Spanish because Prince William County is incredibly diverse. She then asked Mr. Steigerwald to address how PRTC will encourage slugging in the I-66 corridor since the Board recently rejected a proposal to use grant funding for that purpose. Mr. Steigerwald said staff will help assist with the promotion of I-66 slugging.

Operations and Maintenance Contract Structure and Development

Dr. Schneider presented an overview of the Operations and Maintenance Contract structure and development. The staff recommendation is to award the contract to Keolis Transit America, which also is the provider for VRE's Maintenance and Operations. This is a five-year base contract, with five option years that can be exercised in any combination. Keolis will begin on November 1, 2020. Near universal hiring of First Transit employees is expected, if they are interested in remaining under the OmniRide service brand.

Chair Franklin welcomed Aline Frantzen, CEO of Keolis Transit America, along with Mr. Bryan Jungwirth and Mr. Mike Ake of Keolis Transit America, all of whom participated in the virtual meeting. Chair Franklin said she was happy to hear that current First Transit employees will have the opportunity to stay at OmniRide if they choose. Chair Franklin said she expects to see a new culture with this new contract.

Commissioner Guzman said she's excited for a brighter future for bus services in Prince William County and asked for more information about paratransit including the use of taxis. Dr. Schneider replied that OmniRide has been using taxi vouchers for the Wheels-to-Wellness program. The use of transit networking companies such as Uber wasn't a transit option in 2013 when PRTC last revised its contract with First Transit. OmniRide's vision is to better serve the community and be more flexible. In eastern Prince William County the three focal points are Lake Ridge, the Route 1 corridor, and Dale Boulevard. Although the majority of services are provided in these three areas, there are pockets outside these three that also are important. OmniRide wants to partner with experienced firms that can help us deliver flexible services, but that won't eliminate the need for fixed bus routes, Dr. Schneider said.

Commissioner Guzman said that as a resident of eastern Prince William, she hasn't seen services increased in the area, and she doesn't want bus service to be replaced with Uber or Lyft.

Chair Franklin said Commissioner Guzman's question complements the previous presentation on the Transit Strategic Plan and Transportation Demand Management Plan noting that OmniRide is looking to increase services in the Route 234 corridor.

Commissioner Boddye welcomed Keolis and echoed Chair Franklin's comments about tweaking the tone of the bus contractor's management and leadership. He asked if Keolis has engaged yet with the AFSCME union

and if that's in the plans. Mr. Bryan Jungwirth of Keolis said Keolis has copies of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement and intends to honor all the provisions. Keolis will reach out to the union once the PRTC contract is executed.

Commissioner Angry said he is focused on the bus drivers because they're the ones who make the operation work and is pleased to hear that the contractual agreements worked out with the union will be honored.

Regarding Commissioner Guzman's question, Commissioner Angry noted that Uber can be helpful with serving the first- and last-mile and asked if that's being discussed. Dr. Schneider said the single biggest challenge is funding, but OmniRide is committed to protecting local services, whereas in the past that was the first victim of budget cuts. The pandemic has been unique because local services have outperformed commuter services nationwide, he said.

Commissioner Angry told Dr. Schneider there may be a pilot program for a dedicated bus lane along Dale Boulevard.

Commissioner Lawson recalled that OmniRide has had "rogue" buses in the past and said she's excited about the advancements in technology to address emergencies like that in this contract.

Commissioner Bailey said she's encouraged that existing employees will have the opportunity to remain at OmniRide, and she encouraged incentive programs to build employee morale.

Commissioner Sebesky echoed comments about looking forward to Keolis examining the need for changes and improving morale.

Commissioner Kelly said he's dealt with Keolis over the years through the VRE Operations Board and looks forward to having a good relationship.

Commissioner Skinner said PRTC is lucky to get Keolis on board and he looks forward to now working with them on the bus side.

PRTC Action Items – 11

Authorization to Execute a Contract with Keolis Transit America to Provide Fixed Route Bus and Paratransit Operations and Maintenance Services [RES 20-07-06]

Commissioner Bailey moved, with a second by Commissioner Boddye. Commissioner Shuemaker asked what contract protections are in place to protect OmniRide given the poor past performance of VRE that resulted in the former VRE Executive Director leaving. Dr. Schneider said there are protections in place and that VRE's problems were directly related to Positive Train Control. OmniRide's top issue is tied to traffic congestion, accidents and construction, not fleet performance. There are contract deductions for issues that affect service such as not meeting vehicle inspections, unclean vehicles, missed trips, etc., Dr. Schneider said. OmniRide's Quality Assurance department does regular audits and inspections. There also are rewards for good performance. (BAILEY/BODDYE; AYES - 16; NAYS – 1 (CARTER); APPROVED)

Authorization to Commence the Public Participation Process for the Transit Strategic Plan and the Transportation Demand Management Plan [RES 20-07-07]

Commissioner Barker moved, with a second by Commissioner Bailey. There was no discussion. (BARKER/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Concurrence with the City of Fredericksburg's VRE Operations Board Appointments [RES 20-07-08]

Commissioner Angry moved, with a second by Commissioner Skinner. There was no discussion. (ANGRY/SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

Chair's Time - 12

Chair Franklin congratulated Keolis and said she's looking forward to a new culture and transparency in how business is conducted with safety of passengers being the top concern. She also thanked Mr. Steigerwald for his passion for transportation and years of service at OmniRide. Finally she thanked the Commissioners and participants for their patience and dedication at meetings.

Commissioners' Time - 13

Many Commissioners welcomed Keolis and thanked Chuck for his years of service.

Commissioner Shuemaker said bus service is important for riders especially seniors and people who don't have access to vehicles. He also pointed out two typos in the Keolis contract. Ms. Sharon Pandak of Greehan, Taves & Pandak and said the typos would be fixed.

Commissioner Kelly said Keolis overcame significant challenges when they started operating VRE, and many of VRE's then-delays were self-inflicted. Since then, delays have not been due to Keolis, but to the track owners, heat restrictions, track congestion and Positive Train Control.

Commissioner Skinner reiterated Commissioner Kelly's statement and said the VRE problems were not due to Keolis. Keolis and VRE are working together and Keolis has a great working relationship with CSX.

Commissioner Guzman said that as a new appointee to PRTC, she looks forward to working with everyone over the coming years.

Adjournment - 14

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Franklin entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Angry moved, with a second by Commissioner Boddye. There was no discussion. (ANGRY/BODDYE, UNANIMOUS)

Chair Franklin said the next PRTC meeting will be in September and in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Information Items

None