



MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 3, 2020
OmniRide Transit Center and ZOOM Meeting
Livestreamed at [YouTube.com/PRTCtransit](https://www.youtube.com/PRTCtransit)

Members Present (in person)

*Victor Angry
*Andrea Bailey, At-Large
*Margaret Franklin, Chair
*Pamela Sebesky, Vice Chair
*Jeanette Rishell, At-Large
*Cindy Shelton, Secretary

Members Present (virtual)

*Kenny Boddye
*Yesli Vega
*Tinesha
*Deborah Frazier, Treasurer (departed 8:49 p.m.)
*Elizabeth Guzman (departed 8:25 p.m.)
*George Barker (arrived 7:20 p.m.)

Members Absent

Jeanine Lawson
Matthew Kelly
Gary Skinner
Jennifer Mitchell
Lee Carter

Alternates Present (virtual)

*Pete Candland
Bennie Smith
Ralph Smith
*Tim McLaughlin (arrived 7:25 p.m./departed 8:25 p.m.)
*Todd Horsley

Alternates Absent

Ann Wheeler
Maggie Hansford
Preston Banks
Hector Cendejas
Donald Shuemaker
Meg Bohmke
Gary Snellings
Jason Graham
David Ross
Jennifer DeBruhl
Steve Pittard

Jurisdiction

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

Jurisdiction

Prince William County
Prince William County
Stafford County
Spotsylvania County
Virginia House of Delegates
Virginia Senate

Prince William County
City of Fredericksburg
Spotsylvania County
Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Virginia House of Delegates

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

Prince William County
Prince William County
City of Manassas Park
City of Manassas Park
City of Manassas Park
Stafford County
Stafford County
City of Fredericksburg
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 approximate arrival/departure time.

Staff and Public in person or on ZOOM

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

Betsy Massie – PRTC
Byren Lloyd – PRTC
Lamarr Johnson – PRTC
Rich Dalton – VRE
Steve MacIsaac – VRE
Sharon Pandak – Greehan, Taves & Pandak
Nancy West – Exstare Federal Services Group

Chair Franklin called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. noting 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 both in person and 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.

Approval of Agenda – 4 [RES 20-09-01]

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

Approval of Minutes of July 9, 2020– 5 [RES 20-09-02]

Commissioner Rishell moved with a second by Commissioner Bailey. There was no discussion on the motion. (RISHELL/BAILEY; CANDLAND ABSTAINED; ALLEN ABSTAINED BUT LATER CHANGED HER VOTE TO YEA; UNANIMOUS)

Commissioner Barker arrived at approximately 7:20 p.m.

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

- VRE is continuing to operate on a reduced level. Ridership has increased from 1000 daily riders in early July to 1,200 daily riders in late August.
- System wide on-time performance was 94 percent in July and 90 percent in August.
- There was a fatal trespassing incident near Burke Station on August 26, 2020, and VRE sends out its condolences to the victim's family and friends. Mr. Dalton thanked OmniRide and Fairfax Connector for providing bus bridges as the rail line was shut down for approximately four hours.
- VRE continues to focus on health and safety measures to welcome returning riders. There's nearly 100 percent compliance with the requirement to wear face coverings.
- An unaudited review of end-of-year financials for FY2020 showed VRE's preliminary net operating position, prior to emergency aid related to the pandemic, was approximately \$900,000 – a small surplus relative to the operating expenses of nearly \$81 million. This was achieved despite the collapse of ridership and fare revenue; expenses were cut due to lower service levels and the deferment of discretionary activities.
- Staff continues to work remotely.
- Scenario planning is under way for varying levels of ridership revenue for FY21.
- Mr. Dalton said his focus is the health and safety of riders, staff and contracted providers.

Commissioner Rishell asked if there are plans to alter VRE's annual ridership survey due to the pandemic. Mr. Dalton said there has been discussion about using the results that were used for the FY21 budget, and that it will be discussed further at the September Operations Board meeting.

Commissioner McLaughlin arrived at approximately 7:25 p.m.

AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING – 6.2 [RES 20-09-03]

Ms. Pandak read a resolution for the PRTC Board to go into a closed meeting to discuss personnel matters regarding the appointment of the VRE CEO and personnel matters regarding the Commission's Executive Director's performance evaluation, pursuant to VA Code § 2.2-3711.A.1. Commissioner Sebesky moved with a second by Commissioner Rishell. Chair Franklin asked the Board Clerk to read a list of those who are authorized to participate in the closed session. The Board Clerk stated that participants will be all members of

the PRTC Board of Commissioners, including alternates, along with Mr. Dalton, Mr. MacIsaac and Ms. Pandak. (SEBESKY/RISHELL, UNANIMOUS). The closed meeting began at 7:30 p.m.

CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING – 6.3 [RES 20-09-04]

Ms. Pandak read a resolution at 8:16 p.m. certifying that the PRTC Board only discussed those matters that are legally allowed during the closed session, pursuant to VA Code § 2.2-3712. Commissioner Shelton moved with a second by Commissioner Sebesky. (SHELTON/SEBESKY, UNANIMOUS)

APPOINTMENT OF VRE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER [RES 20-09-05]

Mr. MacIsaac read a resolution recommending the appointment of Richard A. Dalton as the VRE CEO. Commissioner Sebesky moved with a second by Commissioner Bailey. (SEBESKY/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

ACCEPTANCE OF PRTC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION [RES 20-09-06]

Ms. Pandak read a resolution recommending acceptance of the PRTC Executive Director's performance evaluation and a \$4,000 supplemental payment for work from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Commissioner Sebesky moved with a second by Commissioner Bailey. (SEBESKY/BAILEY, UNANIMOUS)

Commissioner Guzman and Commissioner McLaughlin departed at approximately 8:25 p.m.

Public Comment Time – 7

The Chair explained no public comments would be received during the meeting because the public is participating via livestream; however, the public was advised to submit written comments to the Board Clerk by September 2 at 5 p.m. Eight comments were received, read into the record, and are attached to this document.

Consent Agenda – 8 [RES 20-09-07]

Commissioner Rishell moved with a second by Commissioner Sebesky. There was no discussion on the motion. (RISHELL/SEBESKY, UNANIMOUS)

- **Acceptance of the PRTC Monthly Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Period Ended May 31, 2020 [RES 20-09-08]**

PRTC Executive Director's Time – 9

Dr. Schneider updated the Board on the following items:

COVID-19

Two OmniRide employees tested positive for COVID-19 in late August. OmniRide has worked to protect their identities while also notifying the workforce and public. This generated suggestions from employees about ways to help protect others, and some of the suggestions will be implemented. Barriers to separate operators from passengers on the bus are being purchased, but delivery is delayed primarily due to high demand. Cleaning and sanitization is constantly being stressed, and employees are being reminded about PPE and distancing. Authorities are stressing that people not let down their guard around friends, family and co-workers.

Bus Service

OmniRide is operating at 85 percent of regular service. There was a spike of ridership in early July, but ridership growth remains slow. About 30 percent of pre-pandemic ridership has returned. Historically ridership is highest in September and October, so the next few months may be an indication of what to expect in 2020-2021, and will help to determine future service levels.

Western Facility

The Western Facility is nearing completion. A phased opening is planned with some staff moving this fall. We expect to be operating full service from there in February 2021 and will schedule an open house at that point to welcome the community.

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Names and resumes of nine people were forwarded for consideration by DRPT, but no action has been taken yet by the Governor's office.

TSA Award

The TSA recently notified Dr. Schneider that PRTC has won the Gold Standard Award. Only three transit systems are receiving the award in 2020 and PRTC is the first bus-only transit system in the National Capital Region to win the award. We plan to host a small ceremony later in September and will recognize the staff who contributed.

OmniRide Above and Beyond Award

Two staff members have won the OmniRide Above and Beyond Award:

- Lamarr Johnson, Transit Amenities Coordinator, is recognized for his work to transform our bus stops, performing a bus stop inventory, and proactive management of amenities for cleanliness.
- Byren Lloyd, Safety and Security Manager, is recognized for leading OmniRide's safety and security campaign for the TSA BASE assessment, which resulted in the Gold Standard Award.

Transition from First Transit to Keolis

The existing contract with First Transit is being closely monitored by our Quality Assurance team for regular performance. Separately, an independent maintenance auditor has inspected the fleet and identified defects, and we are performing a facility audit in accordance with the contract. The Quality Assurance team continues with bus inspections, on time performance and customer service tracking.

Keolis will take over operations on November 1. Keolis is recruiting existing non-management employees and intends to bring in a nearly new management team including an outside general manager. Key personnel are already working in the building.

During tonight's public comment time, everyone heard about the fears that employees have that they will not receive the full payout of benefits and accruals. Dr. Schneider said he has spoken with First Transit at the local and corporate level to address these issues. The concerns and issues raised tonight are governed by a mix of labor law, the collective bargaining agreement between First Transit and its union members, and the individual employees who have different tenures of service and vacation utilization rates. First Transit has said it will follow its policies and the law. Employees with concerns have been asked to contact their local HR team and review their individual benefits. Dr. Schneider has encouraged First Transit to provide additional resources for employees in the coming weeks. The public comments that were read tonight have been shared with First Transit.

At the October meeting, First Transit and Keolis will be asked to outline their status on the contract transition process to keep the Commission informed.

Commissioner Frazier departed at approximately 8:49 p.m.

Chair Franklin said she has heard many concerns from First Transit employees about what they view as a lack of transparency and she hopes First Transit will be more proactive and take the initiative to communicate with employees before the employees have to ask questions. This is a high-stress time with the contractor turnover and worry about health and safety during COVID. It's incumbent on First Transit to do the right thing and be proactive. Many employees don't know the labor laws so First Transit must provide more information and transparency.

Commissioner Angry said there were very specific concerns raised during public comment time and he doesn't want to hide behind interpretations of the law. He's very concerned about these issues and believes we must do a better job of taking care of our bus operators. First Transit must provide more transparency and honor its contract with employees.

Commissioner Boddye agreed with Commissioner Angry and commended Dr. Schneider for personally ensuring that both First Transit and Keolis are meeting their obligations. He also supports Chair Franklin's statements on transparency and communication. He expressed his hope that First Transit (and Keolis) will continue to improve communication even though its contract expires soon; that shouldn't equal a tapering off in responsiveness. Commissioner Boddye said he believes in finishing stronger than you started.

Commissioner Bailey commended Dr. Schneider for his support and efforts to boost employee morale. She suggested that Dr. Schneider address staff with a message of thanks for First Transit's service and a welcome to the future with Keolis.

Commissioner Sebesky thanked Dr. Schneider for reaching out not only to First Transit locally but to its corporate office to let them know we're watching and expect accountability. She asked Dr. Schneider to stay on top of this issue and continue being the liaison so First Transit is held accountable.

Commissioner Rishell agreed with the comments that have been stated.

Chair Franklin said the Board stands with the bus operators and dispatchers in making sure they get everything that is owed to them, and the Board's commitment is to make sure that happens.

Presentations and Information – 10

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment

Nancy West, Managing Member of Exstare Federal Services Group, presented an overview of the DEI Assessment.

Commissioner Bailey thanked Ms. West for her due diligence and follow through. She believes the Board should help Dr. Schneider get engaged, make changes and maintain the support level that already exists at OmniRide.

Commissioner Sebesky thanked Ms. West and said this is an important issue that's been talked about ever since she joined the Board.

Commissioner Rishell thanked Ms. West and said this is an important step toward turning the ship around but there needs to be follow through.

Commissioner Shelton said when she joined the Board in 2018, she was fearful about going on the buses but over the past year she's noticed that the employees and people are reacting differently. She believes this new focus is making a difference. The Board wants to make a change, and she thanked Ms. West for being a part of that.

Chair Franklin said the DEI is very important especially in light of what's happening in the country, and this is the optimal time to move this forward. She said she has talked with Dr. Schneider and Ms. Pandak about how to get the Board more involved in the discussion, whether through the DEI Working Group or other means. Chair Franklin invited Ms. West to return at a future meeting for further discussion about what role the Commission should play.

PRTC Action Items – 11

Chair Franklin said she'd like to consolidate the four items on the Action Items agenda into a Consent Agenda and she asked Dr. Schneider to explain each item. Dr. Schneider gave an overview of each item.

Authorization to Approve Action Items [RES 20-09-09]

Commissioner Rishell moved, with a second by Commissioner Angry. In response to a question from Chair Franklin, Dr. Schneider said there is no additional cost associated with extending the pilot period for paratransit. Commissioner Rishell asked if there's any indication when western local ridership will reach 75 percent of pre-pandemic levels which is the trigger for looking at the paratransit pilot; Dr. Schneider said he will provide a rough estimate. (RISHELL/ANGRY, UNANIMOUS)

- Resolution to Ratify Action of the Executive Director to Conduct an Emergency Procurement with Mansfield Oil Company for Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel [RES 20-09-10]
- Authorize the Executive Director to Execute a Contract with James River Solutions to Purchase Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel [RES 20-09-11]
- Authorize the Executive Director to Extend the Pilot Period for the Paratransit Service in the Western Service Area [Res 20-09-12]
- Authorize the Executive Director to Award a Task Order Contract to Siddall Communications LLC for Vanpool Alliance Program Marketing Services [Res 20-09-13]

Chair's Time - 12

Chair Franklin said Commissioner Allen has asked to change her vote on Res 20-09-02, approval of the July 9, 2020 minutes, from ABSTAIN to YES.

Chair Franklin reiterated that her top priority is to see a smooth transition between First Transit and Keolis. PRTC and First Transit deserve credit for keeping all bus operators and dispatchers employed throughout COVID-19, but First Transit must step up to the plate and rectify issues such as confusion over incentive bonuses.

Commissioners' Time - 13

Commissioner Rishell said she's grateful there were no layoffs at PRTC despite falling revenues and businesses facing economic problems, and she thanked Chair Franklin for being a driving force for stability at PRTC.

Commissioner Shelton said she's requested an in-depth conversation about 5307 funding with Dr. Schneider, and others are welcome to join her.

Adjournment - 14

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 Sebesky. There was no discussion. (BAILEY/SEBESKY, UNANIMOUS)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Information Items

None