

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 25, 2018

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on January 25, 2018 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Ralph Price, Chairperson	Judy Keesee
Alexis Ehrhardt, Vice-Chairperson	Ken Larking
John Moody	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Wade Key	Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director
Larry Campbell	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

Alexis Ehrhardt moved that the minutes of the December 5, 2017 meeting be accepted as presented and Larry Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status report data through December 2017 with the Committee. The transit system is under budget for operating expenses by 3.7% however, passenger revenue is also under budget by 8.6% year to date. Token sales have decreased year to date by 7%, which is a strong indicator that fixed route customers are not riding as regularly as in previous years. Since operating expenses are under budget and the deficit is under budget by 3.7% the transit system's eligibility for federal operating aid is also less than budgeted year to date. Presently, the city's cost to operate the service excluding the senior transportation operation is under budget by approximately \$2000.

Highlights from the ridership reports show that fixed route ridership has decreased by 11% year to date. Reserve A Ridership has decreased by .7% or 110 fewer completed trips than last year. This is due in part to the cap placed on the reservation-based service in January 2017. Handivan ridership has decreased by 13%, which is 330 trips less than last year. Of significance, senior ridership has increased 14% year to date. Adelman said after the last Committee meeting he did receive support for the Southern Area Agency on Aging and Parks and Recreation to place a cap on reservations from seniors, which went into effect January 2018. The Mainline Trolley service is averaging between 1.0 and 1.5 trips per hour.

Adelman expressed interest to improve ridership opportunities for the Averett University operation. Currently, most students use transportation to travel from Main Campus to North Campus and Averett University provides vans at certain times that support the majority of students traveling to North Campus.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports (continued)

During the 2017/2018 school year Danville Transit was requested by Averett University to provide service at times that complement schedules when classes end at North Campus and students are traveling to the Main Campus, when ridership activity is less.

Regional Transportation Initiative

Marc Adelman said he recently attended the Tobacco Commission meeting in Richmond. The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) was able to secure a grant for \$317,490 to finance the anticipated local operating and capital cost requirements for the planned bus service. However, the Tobacco Commission indicated that if the service terminates after three years the SVHEC will be required to reimburse the funds provided for the vehicles. In addition, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will require the city to use the buses in other service if the operation terminates after three years. Adelman said it is his recommendation that an agreement should be executed in advance with Pittsylvania and Halifax counties concerning the purchase of these vehicles should the service terminate after the three-year period. Discussion continued.

A notice will be advertised in both English and Spanish regarding the capital grant for the buses and other grant requests for FY19. The grant applications will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation by February 1, 2018 for consideration. Adelman discussed several possible service plan options regarding Halifax County with the Committee.

Consideration to expand Reserve A Ride Service to Pittsylvania County

Marc Adelman said he would like the Committee's opinion on the possibility of expanding the Reserve A Ride service area to include Pittsylvania County. Over the years, the transit system has received multiple requests for trolley service to be provided to Pittsylvania County for weddings and special events. Adelman suggested that if the Committee is supportive of this expansion that he would recommend that the service be offered on Saturdays only during the afternoon and evening hours. In addition, Adelman said he would advise to limit the service area to an area within ten miles of the city limits along a two-mile corridor for Highway 29 and Highway 41. It was discussed to add Highway 58 to serve Gentry Farm. ***A motion was made by John Moody and seconded by Alexis Ehrhardt to expand the Reserve A Ride Service to go into Pittsylvania County within a ten miles radius of the city limits of Danville. All were in favor and the motion passed.***

In addition, the possibility of offering service to the Virginia International Raceway was discussed by the Committee. ***A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Wade Key for the Reserve A Ride service to serve VIR as a separate location. All were in favor of the motion.***

Mainline Trolley Service Update

The Mainline Trolley Planning Committee recently met to discuss the status of the service. The Committee is open to expanding the trolley route to other areas of the city during evening hours. A survey is planned for the spring to assess the public's interest for possible route modifications.

Mainline Trolley Service Update (Continued)

Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director, plans to talk to business owners and patrons of River District eateries to obtain their input on possible service modifications. He will also schedule meetings with civic organizations to promote the operation. Discussion continued.

FY18-19 Capital Projects Review

Information was shared with the Committee concerning funding requests for FY19 capital projects including the following;

- Replace four (4) buses - \$560,000
- Replace Air Conditioning recharging unit for vehicles - \$6,000
- Replace hydraulic lift for large buses - \$30,000
- Expand parking lot with automatic gate to improve safety - \$155,820 (includes engineering and construction administration services)

The total cost for the FY17-18 capital budget requests was \$959,550 and the requested capital budget for FY18-19 is \$751,820, which generates a decrease of \$8,309 in local match funds needed to finance the projects.

FY18-19 Budget Review

Adelman discussed the highlights for the FY 18-19 operating budget with the Committee which included the following;

- New position for Evening Dispatcher and reduction in maintenance labor cross charges - additional \$24,860 in salary and wages
- Increase the advertising budget from \$2,000 to \$10,000 to promote the Mainline Trolley Service
- Reduce the budget amount for cash fares by \$19,000 due to fixed route ridership decrease
- Decrease anticipated State operating aid by 1.2%, which would be a \$4,870 decrease for the base service
- Loss of State Operating Aid for Senior Transportation - \$46,143
- Net increase of the local contribution relative to change in operating and capital expense and revenue streams - \$47,990

Adelman said he recently spoke with staff from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to inquire about a unique grant that will fund up to \$20,000 to help offset the loss of the state aid for the senior service. Staff suggested that Danville should also apply for the New Freedom grant again in case funds are available again through that grant program. Adelman said he plans to apply for both grants on February 1st to hopefully off-set the loss of the state aid for senior transportation that occurred this fiscal year.

A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by John Moody to approve the Capital and Operating budgets for FY2019 as presented. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 pm.