

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 26, 2019

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on June 26, 2019 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Lawrence Campbell	Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager
Anna Kautzman	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Judy Keesee	Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director
John Moody	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant

Committee member, John Moody presided over the meeting due to the absence of the chairperson and vice-chairperson.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Larry Campbell moved that the minutes of the March 19, 2019 be accepted as presented. Judy Keesee seconded the motion, all members present were in favor, and the motion passed.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status report data with the Committee. He identified that total operating revenue is under budget by 7.8 percent or \$29,464 year to date. Adelman indicated that tokens sold this fiscal year increased 10 percent year to date. Overtime expense is comparable to the FY2017 level of \$57,686 for the year through May. Overtime charges during FY18 were \$38,077.

Total operating expenses are over budget by .4 percent at \$9,888. Based on the net cost to offer service, the transit system's local match contribution for operations is currently over budget for FY19 by \$30,648. For FY19, the local match requirement is greatly influenced by the shortfall in cash fares compared to the budgeted amount. As previously mentioned, a significant item that will influence the local match amount for FY19 is the receipt of additional Federal operating assistance for FY17 since the transit system's eligibility for aid exceeded the federal allocation for that fiscal year by \$76,548 and these funds were received this fiscal year. Factoring in the additional federal aid, Adelman projected that the local match for FY19 could be under budget by approximately \$45,900.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports (continued)

The ridership report reflects that fixed route ridership activity has slightly increased by one percent year to date or 106 trips. The Reserve A Ride ridership increased only by .4 percent, due to the service cap that was put in place in March that reduced the number of reservations that can be scheduled from 300 to 250. Handivan ridership increased sixteen percent through May 2019 by 791 trips.

A primary reason for the increase in Handivan ridership is due to the cap placed on the reduced number of reservations that can be processed for the Reserve A Ride and Senior service and because disabled seniors are using the Handivan service if their trip request is rejected. Federal regulations associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit public transit systems from regularly denying service to disabled passengers. Senior ambulatory trips have increased by six percent and senior disabled trips have decreased by twelve percent year to date due to the service cap. In summary, total reservation based ridership and service hours decreased by one percent year to date.

Update on Demonstration Grant – Regional Bus Service

Adelman identified that 28 employee separations occurred this fiscal year to date. Currently, the transit system employs 22 full time drivers and 13 part time drivers. In July 2018, the transit system employed 27 full time drivers and 14 part time drivers. To restore the reservation based operations to service levels prior to when the cap was implemented and support regional bus service a total of 33 full time drivers are needed. In addition, to support regional service to Pittsylvania and Halifax counties the transit system needs to hire a new full time dispatcher and a part time dispatcher. A vacant evening dispatcher position must also be filled.

In early June, the Commonwealth Transportation Board approved the Demonstration grant to subsidize regional bus operating expenses at 80% of the deficit. Letters were sent out to companies who provided a letter of support for the grant informing them of the status of the project. In addition, the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center issued a press release regarding the approved funding and indicated that drivers are needed to support the operation. In July, Danville City Council will consider appropriating the funds for the grant. Adelman said the state extended the Demonstration grant deadline to September 30, 2020 due to the driver shortage. Discussion continued regarding the pay study the city will complete next fiscal year and the possibility that driver's wages may increase to attract and retain staff.

Proposed Service Modifications

Adelman provided detailed information concerning proposed service changes for next year. He mentioned that he received a request from a citizen regarding extending the fixed route service to New Ingram Heights Apartments. He indicated that the only way to expand service to the apartment complex would be to cut service somewhere else.

Proposed Service Modifications (continued)

Marc Adelman also indicated that a Demonstration grant was received several years ago to include New Ingram Heights Apartments as part of the fixed route network and the experimental service generated low ridership. Currently Reserve a Ride, Handivan and Senior service is offered to New Ingram Heights. Due to these reasons, Adelman said he would not recommend providing fixed route service to the apartment complex. ***A motion was made Larry Campbell and seconded by Judy Keesee not to expand fixed route service to New Ingram Heights. All were in favor and the motion passed.***

Averett University has requested to expand existing service and add two additional runs to their service. This service would be from Main campus to the airport at 6:15 am and 8:30 am. Adelman recommended completing the additional service. This request is related to the growth of Averett's flight school. ***A motion was made by Earl Reynolds and seconded by Judy Keesee to expand the Averett service to include two additional runs to the airport. Members in attendance were in favor of the motion with Anna Kautzman abstaining.***

Adelman also recommended that the transit system provide bus service on all the new city holidays, which include the following; July 5 (this year, Governor declared), Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, ½ day before Thanksgiving and George Washington Day. Adelman said he surveyed other transit systems such as Lynchburg, Greensboro and Radar in Roanoke regarding holidays when service is not provided. Based on this information he pointed out that Danville already offers less service than all the systems surveyed except Radar. He recommended that in order to provide good customer service the system should operate when other city employees will receive a new holiday. Drivers that work on those holidays would receive holiday pay and would be paid for working as they do now the day after Thanksgiving, which is a city holiday. ***A motion was made by Judy Keesee and seconded by Larry Campbell to approve operating bus service on the following holidays: July 5 (this year, Governor declared), Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, ½ day before Thanksgiving and George Washington Day. All members present were in favor of the motion.***

Currently, the transit system offers limited service along Old Riverside Drive. Service was extended to Old Riverside Drive based on a request from American National University to support classroom activities. However, since this university closed drivers have approached him to modify this service. Based on ridership data, Adelman recommended eliminating service along Old Riverside Drive for the Run #2 only at 5:05 pm. ***A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Judy Keesee to eliminate the 5:05 pm bus run to Old Riverside Drive. All members present were in favor of the motion.***

Adelman informed the Committee that a citizen made a request for the city to equip all the buses with bike racks. He commented that he does not support this request because bike racks reduce the driver's visibility and increase the footprint of the bus. As a result, buses would need a longer bus stop zone and more room to make turns.

Proposed Service Modifications (continued)

Marc Adelman commented that adding bike racks would also make it challenging to get through tight spots and would require additional time for the driver or passenger to secure the bike. ***A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Judy Keesee not to equip the buses with bike racks. All members present were in favor of the motion.***

Update on FY19 and FY20 Capital Projects

Marc Adelman updated the Committee on the current capital projects as identified below.

<u>FY19 Projects</u>	<u>Status</u>
Purchase 3 gas buses for regional bus service (14 passenger)	Buses delivered in 2019
Purchase 4 propane/gas for fixed route service (28 passenger)	Three buses will be in service this week; the fourth bus was damaged by the propane installer and is awaiting repairs.
Purchase Shop Equipment – AC recharging unit for buses	Completed
Purchase mobile column lift for bus maintenance	Completed
Parking lot expansion for small buses	Second Bid awarded – Project should be completed by late fall.
Purchase and install Wal-Mart Bus Shelter	Completed
<u>FY20 Projects</u>	<u>Status</u>
Purchase 2 propane/gas buses (20 passenger)	Approved – Order in July
Purchase 3 propane/gas buses (14 passenger)	Approved – Order in July
Propane station improvements – Install additional dispenser unit to allow two buses to be fueled simultaneously. Install a canopy and link dispenser units to the city’s Petrovend fuel management system.	Approved – Order in August
Purchase replacement tablets for buses	Rejected by the State
Purchase automated phone system	Rejected by the State

Phone System Modifications for Customer Support

Due to the state’s rejection of the grant request to obtain an automated phone system, the city’s IT department is working with Mass Transit staff to modify the existing phone system to direct calls to certain employees to improve customer service. This system should also be able to provide automated service hours and other information to customers. Discussion continued.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 pm.