

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 30, 2019**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on December 30, 2019 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Lawrence Campbell	Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager
Alexis Ehrhardt, Vice-Chairperson	Jim Westmoreland, Consultant
Anna Kautzman	Candice Raby, Senior Grant Specialist
Judy Keesee	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
John Moody	Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director
Ralph Price, Chairperson	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Larry Campbell moved that the minutes of the September 25, 2019 meeting be accepted as presented. Judy Keesee seconded the motion, all members present were in favor, and the motion passed.

Review of Monthly Ridership Report Highlights

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership report data with the Committee. Fixed route ridership decreased 3% for the period, July 2019 through November 2019 compared to the same timeframe last year. Full fare coin trips increased by 1% and full fare token trips decreased 13% year to date. Averett University ridership increased 21% for the first five months of the fiscal year compared to last year. Reservation based one-way trips decreased 17% year to date. Related operations included Reserve A Ride trip activity which decreased 23%. In addition, Handivan trips increased 2% for the period and disabled senior invoiced trips decreased 25%. Ambulatory senior invoiced trips decreased by 8%. Reservation based service hours for all operations decreased by 17%. Due to the driver shortage for the past two months, the transit system was unable to process reservations for passengers up to three weeks in advance.

Review of Financial Status Report

Token sales year to date by organizations and passengers declined significantly by 16% compared to the previous fiscal year. Passenger revenue is currently 3% under budget by \$4839. Adelman explained to the Committee that the budget was developed based on employing 30 full time drivers, however only 26 full time drivers are presently employed.

Review of Financial Status Report (continued)

Marc Adelman explained that since the transit system has not been able to fill all driving positions and cannot provide the level of service that has been budgeted, the transit system is also currently under budget for most operating expense line items such as vehicle maintenance and fuel expense. Total operating expenses are under budget by 6.6 % year to date. Due to the driver shortage and additional holidays that employees received in FY2020 overtime expense is over budget by 28% or \$9461 year to date. Due to the reduced service level, the federal operating aid surplus is anticipated at approximately \$86,207. Discussion continued. Larry Campbell commented that we must work towards increasing the drivers pay.

FY2021 Budget Highlights

Marc Adelman informed the Committee that the FY2021 local match contribution is expected to increase for all operating and capital expenses to \$264,630. This increase is partially due to the loss of the Senior Transportation Coordination grant funds in the amount of \$20,000. The State informed Danville Transit that it would not be eligible to receive these funds next year because the program guidelines were changed to limit funding to recipients for a three year period and Danville received funding the past three years. In addition, the local match requirement should increase due to the pay study that is being completed that will involve an increase in driver's wages. Adelman said it is also hard to develop a budget with regards to overtime due to issues with job recruitment and workforce retention that have occurred over the last few years. The possible reduction in service can affect state operating funding levels that are based on performance with regards to ridership, revenue miles and revenue hours of service.

Adelman asked for the Committee's input concerning service level options, potential fee increases and capital projects that are planned for next fiscal year.

Operating Expense	Increase	Explanation
SALARY AND WAGES	\$115,000	Possible salary adjustment (pay study) – 30 FT DRIVERS
FRINGES	\$30,995	Fringes adjustment (pay study)
OVERTIME CHARGES	\$19,935	Related to wage rate adjustment for drivers and additional holiday service provided
INSURANCE	\$55,700	FY20 Budget \$36,700 - FY21 Budget \$91,700
TOTAL EXPENSE INCREASE	\$221,630	
ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID	\$110,815	Anticipated additional aid due to increased expense
LOSS OF STATE OPERATING AID FOR SENIORS	\$20,000	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation changed program eligibility guidelines (now limited to 3 years)
LOCAL MATCH INCREASE	\$131,815	Based on no fee increases and employing 30 FT drivers

FY2021 Budget Summary Options

Marc Adelman reviewed fee increase options with the Committee that included a Reserve A Ride fare increase and eliminating the 10% discount on the sale of tokens. If the Reserve A Ride fare was increased to \$5, the local match could potentially be reduced if the current level of service was provided by \$12,852. Also, if the 10% discount on tokens was eliminated, the local match could be reduced by \$4,500 annually. Both of these fee options would require City Council approval. Discussion continued. ***A motion was made by Alexis Ehrhardt and seconded by Larry Campbell to recommend to City Council to eliminate the discount on bus tokens and increase the Reserve A Ride fare by \$1 from \$4 per one way trip to \$5 per one way trip. The motion passed by majority vote with Earl Reynolds abstaining from the vote and John Moody opposing the motion.***

Marc Adelman identified another option to reduce the local match that would involve maintaining the current level of service provided, limiting the number of full time driver positions to 27 instead of 30, and eliminating the second mechanic position that has been vacant for over a year. He indicated this alternative could potentially result in a cost savings of \$86,243 per year. Discussion continued. ***A motion was made by John Moody and seconded by Alexis Ehrhardt to pursue the budget for thirty drivers. All members were in favor of the motion with Earl Reynolds abstaining from the vote.***

Adelman also reviewed FY2021 capital budget with the Committee. The proposed FY21 capital budget consists of the following projects:

Replace two (2) twenty-eight passenger buses	\$290,000
Replace four (4) fourteen passenger buses	\$420,448
Replace mechanic's pickup truck/plow	\$ 40,000
Acquire 12 tablets and hardwire mounts	\$ 12,000
Replace Transfer Center VCT tile with ceramic	<u>\$ 12,000</u>
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	\$774,448

The local match requirement for these capital projects is \$30,978. Adelman said that the local match requirement for FY21 projects is very similar to the local match requirement for FY20 capital projects that was budgeted at \$31,217.

Opportunities to reduce overtime and improve service efficiency levels

Adelman said in trying to improve opportunities to recruit drivers, the Adult Education Center reached out to him in November regarding a possible partnership that would involve Danville Transit training their students to get a CDL license. This partnership is supposed to start in February. Under this arrangement, Adult Education would be responsible to train the students to get a CDL learners permit and conduct customer service training. Adelman pointed out that the individuals would have to meet all the requirements to be hired as city employees in order to be hired and trained by Danville Transit.

Opportunities to reduce overtime and improve service efficiency levels (continued)

Marc Adelman identified another option to reduce overtime by strictly enforcing federal paratransit service regulations to reduce capacity constraints. This would include limiting standing reservations so those reservations do not absorb more than 50% of the number of trips available at a given time of day. However, this limitation could affect those passengers traveling to dialysis.

Adelman informed the Committee that Candice Raby, the Senior Transportation Grant Specialist, suggested a possible scheduling partnership with the Fresenius Medical Clinic. Ms. Raby was present for the meeting and discussed the concept with the Committee. This idea would require changing some appointment times so the service could operate efficiently like a fixed route. If the clinic would support changing appointment times to improve service efficiency levels then the number of trips completed per hour could improve from two trips per hour to possibly five trips per hour. A meeting will be held in January to discuss this partnership further.

Mainline Trolley Bus Service

Marc Adelman reviewed Mainline trolley ridership activity with the Committee that involved promotional activity. He indicated that unfortunately the promotion only generated a slight increase in trips per hour completed compared to previous months and in December ridership fell to the lowest since June 2019 averaging about one trip per hour. The promotion was held in November to improve awareness of the Mainline Trolley service and increase ridership activity by offering free service to the public. Multiple types of advertising were completed to promote the free service.

Adelman discussed other types of service options that could be considered in place of the existing service with the Committee. Alexis Ehrhardt commented that it was originally discussed that the Committee should look at a three-year window for evaluating the Mainline Trolley operation and the service is currently into the third year with no improvement. ***A motion was made Alexis Ehrhardt and seconded by Larry Campbell to terminate the Mainline Trolley service due to low ridership after offering the Mainline Trolley promotion in November in which service was free to the public. The motion passed by majority with Earl Reynolds abstaining from the vote and Anna Kautzman opposing the motion.***

Update on FY19 and FY20 Capital Projects

Marc Adelman updated the Committee on the status of current capital projects. The FY2019 parking lot expansion project for parking small buses is complete. In regards to the FY2020 capital projects, the two, twenty-passenger gas buses were ordered and should be delivered this spring/summer. The three, fourteen-passenger buses are ready to be delivered to Sonny Merryman but currently the company is having problems finding drivers to bring them from Indiana.

Update on FY19 and FY20 Capital Projects

Adelman indicated that the propane station improvements are underway. Purchase orders have been issued and parts have been ordered by the vendors for the second propane dispenser unit, the fuel management system and canopy installation.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm.