

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – DECEMBER 7, 2006
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM – ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Connolly at 8:20 P.M.

Members Present

Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Adam Ebbin
Paul Ferguson
Catherine M. Hudgins
Tanya Husick (DRPT)
Dana Kauffman
Timothy Lovain (Alternate, City of Alexandria)
Elaine McConnell
Scott Silverthorne
David F. Snyder
Mary Margaret Whipple
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

David Albo
Eugene Delgaudio
Jeannemarie Devolites Davis
William D. Euille
Jay Fiset
Joe May
Thomas Rust
Paul Smedberg

Staff Present

Rhonda Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Jana Lynott
Adam McGavock
Kala Quintana
Steve MacIsaac (VRE)
Elizabeth Rodgers
Jennifer Straub (VRE)
Richard K. Taube
Dale Zehner (VRE)

Oath of Office for New NVTC Alternate

Chairman Connolly administered the oath of office to Timothy Lovain, a new alternate for the city of Alexandria. Commissioners welcomed Mr. Lovain to NVTC.

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of November 2, 2006

On a motion by Mrs. Hudgins and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

NVTC's Legislative Agenda for 2007

Mr. Taube reported that on November 29th NVTC's Legislative Committee conferred by teleconference to review a draft Legislative Agenda for state and federal actions in 2007. Chairman Connolly chaired that meeting and additional members participating on the call included Commissioners Euille, Ferguson and Snyder. NVTC's MAC group has also reviewed the draft agenda, which is compatible with the positions of NVTA and VRE.

Mr. Snyder moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to approve the 2007 Legislative Agenda. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Code Orange/Red Free Bus Fare Program

Mr. Taube stated that NVTC manages a program of free bus fares on forecast Code Red air quality days using CMAQ funds. It is proposed to expand the program to include forecast Code Orange days as well as forecast Code Red days. NVTC has available about \$1.4 million in carryover funds from summer of 2007, plus \$1.1 million of CMAQ funds approved by the NVTA on November 9, 2006. Of the new funds, \$50,000 would go for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and \$80,000 for promoting the project. Mr. Taube stated that the commission is asked to authorize NVTC staff to:

- 1) Utilize \$1.1 million of new CMAQ funding (advanced from the FY 2008 program).
- 2) Combine these new funds with \$1.4 million remaining unspent from previous NVTC CMAQ grants.

- 3) Broaden the existing eligibility for the program to reimburse free bus fares on days forecast by MWCOCG to be Code Orange as well as Code Red, beginning in summer of 2007.
- 4) Revise the administrative agreements with participating bus systems to reflect the changes.
- 5) Secure TIP amendments from TPB and contract amendments from DRPT, as required.
- 6) Issue a Request for Proposals for a consulting firm to conduct onboard bus passenger surveys and perform an evaluation of the program's effectiveness in accomplishing improved air quality.
- 7) Develop a marketing plan to promote the expanded program and measure the effectiveness of promotional techniques.
- 8) Return to NVTA's Interim Technical Committee by early September, 2007 with an interim report and to the commission by November 1, 2007 with a final evaluation report and recommendations for the future of the program.

Senator Whipple moved, with a second by Mrs. Bulova, to approve the recommendations.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that as this program gets bigger, it will be important to ask the hard question whether this is a good way to spend \$1 million of CMAQ funds. Mr. Taube explained that an evaluation will be conducted as part of the process, which will help answer that question. Mr. Zimmerman stated that information is needed about how many commuters riding on Code Red days are regular riders or are they actually changing their commute. He stated that he is skeptical about spending \$2.5 million without having a clear indication that this program is effective.

Senator Whipple expressed her concern about providing "free" service because a lot of people are going to be riding anyway. She suggested having a discounted fare. Mr. Taube stated that the survey could ask riders their intentions and what they would do if there were a smaller fare. He pointed out the difficulty with programming fare boxes on short notice.

Mr. Ferguson suggested using the funds to buy down bus fares over an extended period, since the goal is to increase bus ridership. Tom Biesaidny of Fairfax County explained that the goal of Ozone Alert Days is to increase ridership but more importantly to reduce emissions. Mr. Ferguson suggested providing buy downs during the summer months. In response to a question from Chairman Connolly, Mr. Biesiadny stated that Northern Virginia is committed through MWAQC to providing free fares on Code Red days as part of its contribution to reducing emissions.

Ms. Husick stated that the idea behind adding more funds this year was to give the Code Red program a full last swing to see what would happen if the program was well-promoted. Members of the Technical Committee have differing opinions on the effectiveness of the program.

Mrs. Hudgins stated that in regards to emissions reductions, it may be better to use the funds to promote stay-at-home and telework activities on Code Red days. Mr. Silverthorne observed that big companies, such as Capital One, are already doing that; however, there is no coordination on a regional basis.

Mrs. Hudgins suggested amending the motion to include looking into how to promote telework components through the Code Red program. Senator Whipple accepted the amendment. Chairman Connolly asked that the motion also include an amendment that would include some analysis to make sure that the program is generating new riders who don't normally ride. Senator Whipple stated that she would accept the amendment as long as it does not interrupt the time frame. Mr. Taube stated that it wouldn't.

Senator Whipple suggested that the survey ask detailed questions to get the most information possible. Mr. Taube stated that he would bring the survey back to the commission for review before it is implemented.

Chairman Connolly clarified that the amended motion is to approve the recommendation and to include telework as a component, to identify the extent of new ridership as well as to direct staff to bring back the survey to the commission for review. The motion passed with the following commissioners voting in favor of the motion: Bulova, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Whipple. Chairman Connolly and Mr. Zimmerman voted no.

Authority to Issue a Request for Proposals for a Hydrogen Fuel Injection Bus Demonstration

Mr. Taube stated that the commission is asked to authorize release of the Request for Proposals. Up to \$86,600 is available in a state grant for this project. It is anticipated that staff will return to the commission on January 4, 2007 for authority to award the contract. The fuel injection system will be placed in service on four CUE buses in the city of Fairfax and fuel savings and emissions reductions will be measured and reported over the next nine months. The final report is expected to be completed in January, 2008.

In response to a question by Mr. Snyder, Mr. McGavock explained that there is no hydrogen stored on the buses and thus there is no potential danger.

On a motion by Mr. Zimmerman and a second by Mr. Ferguson, the commission unanimously authorized the release of the RFP. The vote in favor

was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Authority to Execute a Contract for Senior Transit Training

Ms. Lynott stated that the commission is asked to authorize NVTC's executive director to sign a contract with the Partnership TMA of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania to provide group and individual instruction to 50-60 seniors as a pilot project on how to use public buses and trains in Northern Virginia. Authority is also requested to issue the notice to proceed upon receipt of insurance certifications and other requirements. The contract amount will not exceed \$85,000 and will be paid for with NVTC's \$150,000 VDOT/NVRC pilot planning grant for Phase II of the commission's Senior Mobility Project.

Senator Whipple observed that this seems like a lot of money since it averages out to approximately \$1,000 per person. Ms. Lynott responded that it is a two-day group training session in five locations across Northern Virginia, as well as the opportunity for 30 seniors to receive individual one-on-one instruction with a travel trainer.

Mr. Kauffman stated that he hopes the process is tied into senior citizen communities and that some senior center staff are trained to instill this knowledge to seniors and make it part of regular courses at the centers. Ms. Lynott stated that she has been working closely with senior center staff and they will be invited to attend the training sessions. Chairman Connolly observed that it is much more beneficial to train senior center staff because they can turn around and train many more seniors. Ms. Lynott stated that part of the pilot program is to learn the best way to train seniors and what works best to reaching out to seniors.

Senator Whipple stated that she sees the point in taking seniors on one-on-one trips, but suggested that, as well as one-on-one training, a trainer should take seniors two-at-a-time so they can go together and reinforce each other. A comparison can be made between one-on-one and training several at one time.

Mrs. Hudgins stated that the project seems very comprehensive and transferable. She asked if language minorities will also be targeted. Ms. Lynott explained that they are not being targeted at this time.

Mr. Taube stated that commissioners need to keep in mind that this is a pilot project and the evaluation process will be important. NVTC has developed a technique and will follow its effectiveness and measure if it works.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that the evaluation process is very important to determine what is most effective and what techniques work, because it impacts future funding decisions. Mr. Ferguson stated that the bottom line is to

encourage people to use transit who aren't currently doing so. He suggested local officials ride along during the training session.

Mrs. Hudgins expressed her concern that is important to give assistance to language minority communities. Different communities will need to be targeted differently.

Chairman Connolly stated that he cannot support the motion if only 50-60 seniors are being trained at that cost, but he can support it if the program is developing a template of techniques on how to train seniors to use Metro. Mr. Taube reassured the commission that this is the intent. Chairman Connolly also agreed with Ms. Hudgins that is important to look at other ethnic and minority groups.

Mr. Kauffman stated that it is important to train seniors to use transit in areas where they can easily access transit. Ms. Lynott explained that part of the selection criteria was that a person has to live within ¼ mile of a bus route.

Mr. Kauffman moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to authorize a contract be executed for senior transit training, with the understanding that the process will develop a template of techniques on how to train seniors to use Metro. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Authority to Purchase Additional SmarTrip Fareboxes and Associated Equipment

Mr. Taube explained that several local transit operators would like to equip their new vehicles with SmarTrip-compatible fareboxes, or make changes to their existing equipment orders. Cubic is willing to provide and install this equipment as a change order to its existing contract with NVTC. Accordingly, the commission is asked to authorize its executive director to execute the proposed change order and to arrange with local jurisdictions to pay all of the costs totaling \$296,685. NVTC staff will ask each jurisdiction to provide a letter stating its intent to purchase the additional fareboxes and parts, and providing authorization for NVTC to do so on their behalf.

The change order provides for 22 additional SmarTrip fareboxes for Fairfax Connector (\$269,370), exchange of a "through the wall" cashbox vault for a standard vault and mobile bins for PRTC (\$27,315), and exchange of two "golden chassis" test beds for one portable data unit for all of Northern Virginia's transit systems (no cost impact).

Mrs. McConnell moved, with a second by Mrs. Bulova, to authorize the executive director to execute the proposed change order and to arrange with local jurisdictions to pay the costs.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hudgins, Mr. Taube explained that this is a change order and, if approved, the contract would be executed on December 8, 2006.

The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and VRE Chief Executive Officer. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read the minutes of the November 17, 2006 VRE Operations Board meeting.

Consent Agenda Items. Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve the following Consent Agenda items:

- Resolution #2024: VRE FY 2007 Audited Financial Statements.
- Resolution #2025: VRE 2007 Legislative Agenda.
- Resolution #2026: MOU with Manassas for Joint Parking Facility.
- Resolution #2027: MOU with Fredericksburg for ADA Parking.
- Resolution #2028: Contract for Variable Message Signs.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Hudgins, Husick, Kauffman, Lovain, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Proposed Governance/Formula Master Agreement Changes. Mrs. Bulova reported that a task force of VRE Operations Board members and local/commission staff has recommended a set of changes to the Master Agreement. Membership on the VRE Operations Board would be altered with two votes for jurisdictions with at least 15 percent of ridership and one vote for all others. The subsidy allocation would also change over four years to eliminate the current population component and be based strictly on ridership.

Mr. Zehner gave a detailed presentation on the governance issues and the proposed changes to the Master Agreement and subsidy formula. He reviewed the current structure of the Operations Board and the proposed changes, which include expanding membership of the Board to include all member jurisdictions with voting proportionate to ridership. The allocation

formula, which would be phased in over a period of four years, would be based on system ridership with no population component. He reminded the commission that all authority ultimately resides with the two commissions.

Mr. Zimmerman observed that Arlington and Alexandria together would be paying over \$278,000 in subsidy, which is almost as much as what Fredericksburg or all Manassas Park would be paying, but Arlington and Alexandria will have no vote when a weighted vote based on ridership is called for, while all of the other jurisdictions will each have at least one vote. The new jurisdictions that may join VRE in the future will be small and yet still have a vote, but Arlington and Alexandria won't. Mr. Zehner stated that he will take these concerns back to the task force. He stated that Mrs. McConnell also had concerns that as the system expands Fairfax County could drop to one vote, but Fairfax County has been a major leader of the system since its inception. Chairman Connolly observed that if a jurisdiction's ridership percentage decreases, its subsidy also decreases. Mrs. Bulova stated that with this proposal every jurisdiction needs to give and take. Fairfax County would reduce its subsidy, but would also lose some representation. Smaller jurisdictions get a place at the table, but have to pay more.

Mrs. McConnell stated that the BRAC changes will significantly impact the I-95 corridor and VRE will be an important component for transporting commuters. In 1984 when VRE planning began, there were lots of struggles and hardship and Fairfax County carried the brunt of the costs of VRE. She stated that to lose its leadership now is really bothersome. There needs to be some security in this. Chairman Connolly stated that Mrs. McConnell has a good point. Equity needs to be achieved for Fairfax County taxpayers because the county has been unfairly subsidizing the VRE system for a long time. Fairfax County helped to create the system, subsidize it, and keep it running, but this is unrecognized. He also agreed with Mrs. Bulova that every jurisdiction has to give a little.

Mr. Kauffman stated that the challenge is compounded by the budget situation with jurisdictional subsidy increasing significantly. VRE is seeking state assistance to hold harmless the jurisdictions to soften the financial burden.

Mr. Ferguson asked how he can explain to his constituents in Arlington these proposed changes. Mr. Zehner stated that ridership was a driver in the allocation formula and membership on the Board. Mr. Zimmerman stated that if allocation formula is based on ridership, then Arlington's subsidy should be zero. Zero votes should mean zero dollars. Arlington's \$165,000 should count as much as Manassas Park's \$165,000. Arlington County has contributed to VRE since its inception. Mr. Ferguson expressed his opinion that he is somewhat insulted that Arlington does not get a vote. Arlington County is part of the team and contributes financially; however, if it's not part of the team, then it shouldn't have to contribute. Mrs. Bulova offered to take these concerns back to the task force.

Chairman Connolly is sympathetic to Arlington's point in general, but it is important to be practical and look at the dollars and cents. To reduce Fairfax County voting representation to two votes while paying \$4.5 million and to give Arlington one vote at \$165,000, isn't fair either. Mr. Ferguson suggested having the vote weighted based on subsidy shares. Mr. MacIsaac explained that the significant difference between Arlington and Alexandria as contributing jurisdictions is that they are not part of the debt issuance and therefore, not part of the risk.

Transportation Incident Response Planning

Ms. Lynott reported that there are completed draft plans for eight Metrorail stations in Northern Virginia. During rush hour on August 7th a power outage at Franconia/Springfield Metrorail station provided an opportunity to test out the emergency plans. It was a well-coordinated effort. The operations level personnel do know the plans and how to implement them and there's good communication within agencies. However more needs to be done to share information across agencies. There also needs to be a general communications protocol. On November 28th the region conducted a tabletop exercise to examine response plans, including those prepared by NVTC in cooperation with Northern Virginia transit systems. The focus of the simulation was on communication.

Mr. Ferguson left the meeting and did not return.

Chairman Connolly stated that he hopes the region doesn't spend a lot of money on planning for an unlikely scenario, where there would need to be a regionwide evacuation. There is a need to focus on sectoral evacuations and sheltering in place plans. Mrs. McConnell observed that a dirty bomb could affect a 26-mile radius and the region would need to be prepared to evacuate many people.

Mr. Snyder stated that an outstanding issue is who is in charge since there is no equivalent to an incident manager. There still is a gap and there needs to be a way to make sure that information is flowing between agencies and the public. It is important to create a regional entity that would fill that gap. Chairman Connolly stated that where the incident occurs would determine which jurisdiction is in charge.

Metro Items

Preliminary Budget for FY 2008. The presentation of the draft budget to WMATA's Budget Committee has been postponed.

Regional Bus Conference. The bus conference was held November 30th in Bethesda. Metro's new general manager, John Cato, attended the conference, although he hasn't officially started his tenure at WMATA.

FY 2006 Annual and First Quarter FY 2007 Finance Reports. For FY 2006 Metro ended \$3 million under budget with record ridership and revenue growth. Combined ridership systemwide was up 12 million from the previous year. But rail ridership leveled off in the first quarter.

New General Manager Selected. Mr. John Cato is a native of D.C. and has been serving as second in command at the Los Angeles MTA. He has particularly strong experience in bus operations and has pledged to continue customer service as Metro's top priority.

Final Alignment for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project. FTA has approved the amended Record of Decision for the project, which signifies the end of the planning process and identifies the final project alignment for the 23-mile project, including the aerial portion through Tysons Corner.

Regional Transportation Items

Status of I-95 HOT/HOV Lanes. The transit task force chaired by DRPT Director Tucker met at NVTC on November 3rd and December 6th.

Status of Congestion Pricing Demonstration. Because of a requirement for congressional review, the anticipated release of program details in the *Federal Register* has been delayed. Staff will reconvene to consider next steps soon after the notice appears.

Status of FAMPO Request for Federal Funding. Ron Kirby of TPB intends to convene a meeting of designated recipients of federal formula assistance to learn of their reactions to the FAMPO proposal to divert some existing funds.

Notice of Public Hearing on NVTC's 2007 Work Program and Meeting Schedule

Chairman Connolly announced that at its meeting on January 4, 2007, NVTC will conduct a public hearing on its proposed 2007 Work Program and Meeting Schedule.

Notice of Appointment of a Nominating Committee for 2007 NVTC Officers

Chairman Connolly stated that he appointed the Executive Committee to serve as the Nominating Committee. The proposed slate of officers will be reported on NVTC's website and mailed to commissioners prior to the January 4th meeting at which the election of officers will occur.

NVTC Financial Items for October, 2006

The financial reports were provided to commissioners and there were no questions.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 10:00 P.M.

Approved this 4th day of January, 2007.

David F. Snyder
Chairman

Christopher Zimmerman
Secretary-Treasurer