

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – NOVEMBER 2, 2006
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM – ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Connolly at 8:10 P.M.

Members Present

Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Jeannemarie Devolites Davis
William D. Euille
Paul Ferguson
Dana Kauffman
Joe May
Elaine McConnell
Paul Smedberg
David F. Snyder
Matthew Tucker
Mary Margaret Whipple

Members Absent

David Albo
Eugene Delgaudio
Adam Ebbin
Jay Fisette
Catherine M. Hudgins
Thomas Rust
Scott Silverthorne
Christopher Zimmerman

Staff Present

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

Oath of Office for New NVTC Commissioner

Chairman Connolly administered the oath of office to Matthew Tucker, DRPT's new director. Commissioners welcomed Mr. Tucker to NVTC.

NVTC's FY 2006 Audit

Chairman Connolly reported that NVTC's audit firm, PBGH, Certified Public Accountants, has completed its audit and provided an unqualified (clean) opinion. NVTC's executive committee met with the auditors, Mike Garber and Dwight Buracker, and heard a detailed overview of the audit. Mr. Garber stated that NVTC's financial statements were the "cleanest" PBGH has experienced. Chairman Connolly acknowledged Scott Kalkwarf for his hard work during the audit process.

Presentation on Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS)

Mr. Taube explained that at the suggestion of Delegate May, NVTC has invited Lisa Wallmeyer, executive director of JCOTS, to make a presentation on the work of her commission. Ms. Wallmeyer explained that JCOTS was created by the General Assembly in 1997 and its emphasis is on energy and technology policy. JCOTS has 12 legislative members, with Delegate May serving as chairman. Delegate Rust also is a committee member. JCOTS considers issues, through the use of advisory committees, and makes recommendations to the General Assembly. Some of the topics of interest are electronic tolling, 5.9 GHz technology and its impact on increasing productivity and capacity of existing transportation systems, traffic congestion management technologies, photo-red programs, driving distractions, modeling and simulation, and teleworking. In response to a question from Chairman Connolly, Ms. Wallmeyer stated that non-legislative members can participate in JCOTS, although no one from the local level has yet applied. She stated that JCOTS is open to input and suggestions from NVTC, since many of the topics are of interest to both commissions.

Mr. Smedberg arrived at 8:20 P.M.

Delegate May stated that JCOTS is using simulation technology to model traffic on Route 1 at Ft. Belvoir to maximize passenger flow. Mr. Snyder observed that the work JCOTS is doing is very important. The city of Falls Church is interested in photo-red programs as well as looking at ways to get travel information (both day-to-day and for emergencies) to the public. He urged JCOTS to coordinate some of their work with the Transportation Planning Board and the Council of Governments. He stated that 50 percent of congestion is caused from non-recurring occurrences, so improvements from new technology can certainly help to solve traffic congestion problems.

In response to a question from Chairman Connolly, Ms. Wallmeyer explained that there are two different legislative efforts concerning telework, including a formal legislative study (HJ 144) vice-chaired by Senator Devolites Davis, focusing on the how-to issues of teleworking. JCOTS is also looking at the infrastructure issues of teleworking. Chairman Connolly stated that NVTC has a keen interest in telework issues.

Mr. Kauffman suggested JCOTS look at the Phase 8 of the mixing bowl project which would link the two HOT lanes projects with new technology. It is important to have the project built and the new technology included.

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of October 5, 2006

On a motion by Mr. Ferguson and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Devolites Davis, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, May, McConnell, Smedberg, Snyder, and Tucker.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and VRE Chief Executive Officer. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read the minutes of the October 20, 2006 VRE Operations Board meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding with CSXT for Construction of L'Enfant Storage Track. Mrs. Bulova explained that Resolution #2039 would authorize VRE's CEO to enter into an agreement with CSXT for construction of the L'Enfant storage track in an amount not to exceed \$830,000. VRE has received that amount from the Department of Homeland Security for the project which will allow two VRE trains to be stored there during mid-day. The final agreement will be reviewed by VRE's legal counsel before it is executed.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve Resolution #2039 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Devolites Davis, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, May, McConnell, Smedberg, Snyder, and Tucker.

Task Order for General Fleet Maintenance. Mrs. Bulova reported that Resolution #2040 would authorize VRE's CEO to amend a task order with STV, Inc. for general fleet maintenance by \$377,015 for a total value not to exceed \$754,030. Amtrak has further delayed its procurement of a new contractor so VRE must use its own contractor for this work anticipated through the end of December, 2006. Funding is available in the approved FY 2007 VRE budget.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve Resolution #2040 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners

Bulova, Connolly, Devolites Davis, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, May, McConnell, Smedberg, Snyder, and Tucker.

Change to Authority Delegated to the VRE Operations Board. Mrs. Bulova explained that the VRE Operations Board recommends that the commissions authorize the Operations Board to act on items up to \$1 million. Resolution #2041 would accomplish this. Currently, the limit is \$500,000. Mrs. Bulova explained that this change is part of the three-year phased approach adopted by the commissions in December, 2005.

Mrs. Bulova moved to approve Resolution #2041 and Mrs. McConnell seconded the motion.

Chairman Connolly stated that for this to work there needs to be no surprises to the commissions, so it is important that the Operations Board bring issues to the attention of the commissions. NVTC and PRTC are ultimately responsible for VRE as co-owners. Mrs. Bulova stated that the commission will receive monthly updates at NVTC meetings.

The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Devolites Davis, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, May, McConnell, Smedberg, Snyder, and Tucker.

Metro Items

Mr. Kauffman distributed a fact sheet about Metro that provides useful information at the system level and by jurisdiction. He reported that WMATA is beginning its search process for a general manager, since Dan Tangherlini has taken himself out of the running.

2005 Development-Related Ridership Survey. Metro conducted a survey that covered 1,950 people who lived, worked or visited businesses within a half-mile of 13 Metrorail stations (including six in Virginia). These stations were surveyed in 1989 and one purpose of the current study was to observe trends over that decade and a half. Regression results showed that for any distance from a station, trips to/from home attract bigger Metrorail shares than trips to/from places of work. Regressions also illustrated relationships between mode shares by distance from station, time of day and trip purpose. Among the policy issues raised by the study is what type of developments to encourage at suburban stations.

Delay of Dulles Rail Project. DRPT has revealed that its construction schedule has been pushed back by about a year. It should now begin late in 2007 or early 2008. It was reported in the media that DRPT cited the exploration of a Tysons Tunnel alternative for the delay, but some local officials suggested other possible reasons such as administrative issues at DRPT or an unfilled FTA administrator position.

WMATA Governance Task Force. WMATA has provided a draft report to NVTC with a request for comments. Staff prepared a draft letter commenting on the report. There were no objections to sending the letter.

Legislative Items

NVTC's 2007 Legislative Agenda. Mr. Taube reminded commissioners that NVTC's Legislative Committee will convene in November to develop recommendations of the 2007 Legislative Agenda for action by the commission at its December meeting. Commissioners were urged to make suggestions for the Legislative Agenda.

Washington Post Survey on Transportation Taxes. On October 18th the Washington Post published a front page story about its survey showing a large majority of Northern Virginia residents want the state to spend more to fix roads and public transit. More than 75 percent want the opportunity to raise local taxes to do it. According to the survey, compared to the rest of the commonwealth Northern Virginians are much more dissatisfied with the performance of the General Assembly, less satisfied with overall state government performance, rank transportation as a much more important issue, blame Governor Kaine less and the House and Senate more, favor more strongly allowing voters to approve local tax increases for road projects, and prefer increased taxes for all Virginians more and tolls less.

Chairman Connolly reported that the Washington Post will be doing another story in the near future documenting the falling share by the commonwealth for Northern Virginia transportation costs and the rising local burden.

Interim Final Report to FTA on the SmarTrip Farebox Project

Mr. McGavock reported that NVTC staff submitted the interim final report to FTA on the lessons learned so far as the region converts all of its transit systems to SmarTrip fare collection capacity. FTA has asked for drastic changes to the report. Delegate May asked if the changes requested were policy or substantive changes. In response Mr. McGavock stated that FTA only wanted the report to deal with NVTC's responsibilities with the project, and not Cubic's or the other agencies involved. His report detailed some of the problems during the process. Mr. Kauffman stated that the only choice for fare media is through Cubic. Chairman Connolly cautioned that NVTC not be forced into censorship by changing the report. The NVTC Board insists on an honest report. Senator Devolites Davis asked if FTA's response was in writing. Mr. McGavock stated that it was an e-mail message.

In response to a question from Mr. Smedberg, Mr. McGavock stated that there were no major problems during the first days of in-service demonstration in Alexandria, although there are minor issues that need to be addressed.

Senator Whipple arrived at 8:45 P.M.

Status Report on Congestion Mitigation Demonstration

Mr. Taube explained that no significant changes have occurred since staff is awaiting the publication in the Federal Register of the details about a new federal funding program. Staff intends to examine those details when they are released and determine whether it is appropriate to seek authorization from NVTA and/or NVTC to apply for funds. The federal funds would be used to determine the feasibility and practicality of conducting a congestion pricing pilot project in Northern Virginia. Coordination among all interested agencies would be needed to conduct such a feasibility study, especially with TPB's Value Pricing Task Force.

Status Report on Transit on I-95/395 HOV/HOT Lanes

Mr. Taube reported that the commonwealth has signed an interim agreement with Fluor-Transurban. However, transit agencies have expressed concerns about the process and prospects for this public-private sector initiative. Transportation Secretary Pierce Homer asked DRPT Director Tucker to convene a task force of transit systems representatives to work to resolve these issues and develop a transit service plan. The first meeting of that task force is scheduled for November 3rd. Chairman Connolly observed that Fluor-Transurban is having trouble with the Beltway HOT lanes and now need \$150 million from the local governments to make it work. He asked why the region would rush into another HOT lane proposal on I-95/395. Fairfax County is not opposed to the project, but is concerned. Mr. Tucker stated that there are many issues that need to be resolved. It is important to take a step back and look at it as a multi-corridor issue.

Senator DeVolites Davis expressed her opinion that moving forward is a grand idea because those in the General Assembly who are opposed to legislation raising revenues for transportation are using PPTA as a solution. Now that the Beltway project has determined that they are \$150 million short, it shows that it is not the entire solution. It makes a better case in Richmond that privatization is not a panacea without public investment.

Chairman Connolly stated that there is a substantive difference between the Beltway and I-95/395. The Beltway HOT lane project has a clear compelling benefit because it would add capacity and provides additional transit options, without taking anything away from existing facilities. However, I-95/395 is different because it is an existing facility paid for with tax dollars which currently

serves as a busway. It is very important to make sure that the transit component of the HOT lane proposal is preserved and enhanced. That puts a burden on the private entity that is distinctly different than the burden put on the Beltway proposal. He explained that his comments are meant as a caution, not opposition. Mr. Tucker agreed and stated that the project needs to produce a significant benefit and protect the investment already made.

Mr. Kauffman expressed concerns regarding the growth and traffic congestion that could result from the Ft. Belvoir/EPG BRAC recommendations. The proposed square footage of office space is equal to the entire office space in Reston, but in a much smaller area. One exit off the HOT lanes will cork traffic back to Massaponax.

Status Report on FAMPO Transit Formula Funding Issue

Mr. Taube reported that FAMPO has passed resolutions that ask, among other things, for a share of transit formula funding now going to WMATA. Staff of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has drafted a proposed response that suggests FAMPO work with TPB to address this allocation issue. This draft has not yet been presented to the TPB for action. Mr. Zimmerman, as chairman of NVT, has written to TPB asking that the TPB letter not be sent and that instead a meeting be convened by TPB staff with the existing designated recipients of funding (primarily WMATA but also Maryland Transit Administration, PRTC and VRE). TPB staff is now in the process of scheduling that meeting. In response to a question from Chairman Connolly, Mr. Taube stated that the meeting will be at the staff level.

Regional Transportation Items

Northern Virginia Tour for Senior State Officials. The tour is scheduled for December 7 and 8, 2006. The purpose of the tour is to provide an overview of public transit operations and funding issues in this region. Commissioners were urged to participate.

U.S. Compared to Northern Virginia Transit Ridership Trends. Northern Virginia's growth is over twice as fast as the national average for all types of transit over the first six months of FY 2006. This conclusion may change somewhat as the remaining two quarters of FY 2006 national data are compiled.

NVTC's Statement at the Commonwealth Transportation Board Hearings. Chairman Connolly reported that he presented NVTC's statement at the CTB hearing. He observed that Secretary Homer was pessimistic about the state of funding and warned that there will be a second round of funding cuts to the six-year secondary road improvement program. Mrs. Bulova asked if anything was said about maintenance. Ms. Quintana stated that it is her understanding that the commonwealth is pulling \$450 million from new construction to maintenance.

Chairman Connolly stated that this is a problem because there will be a continued shift from construction to maintenance and by 2010 there will be no new construction funding and by 2011 the commonwealth will not be able to match federal funds. Senator Devolites Davis noted that the people down state benefit from maintenance money, so when there is no more funding to fill their potholes and pave their roads, they will have a different view about raising revenues. Mr. Euille stated that the “robbing Peter to pay Paul” philosophy is not going to work.

NVTC Financial Items for September, 2006

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

Recognition of Chairman Connolly’s APTA Award

Mr. Ferguson noted that Chairman Connolly has earned the prestigious Local Distinguished Service Award from the American Public Transportation Association and its 1,500 member transit systems and suppliers.

Commissioners congratulated Chairman Connolly.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 9:05 P.M.

Approved this 7th day of December, 2006.

Gerald E. Connolly
Chairman

William D. Euille
Secretary-Treasurer