

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
5th FLOOR BOARD ROOM
MONTPELIER, VERMONT
March 19, 2015**

ATTENDEES: Chris Cole, VTrans
Barb Donovan, VTrans
Scott Bascom, VTrans
Ross MacDonald, VTrans
Mollie Burke, Legislature
Mary Grant, RCT
Van Chesnut, AT
Lee Cattaneo, COVE
John Sharrow, Mountain Transit
Jim Moulton, ACTR/STSIVPTA
Matt Mann, WRC
Peter Johnke, VCIL
Alyson Platzer, United Way
Steve Gladizuk, CVRPC
Rita Seto, TRORC
Christine Forde, CCRPC
Susan Schreibman, RRPC
Minga Dana, MVRID
Katharine Otto, SWCRPC
Robert Moore, LCPC
Meredith Birkett, CCTA/GMTA
Charles Norris-Brown, VCAPT
Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Gov. Appointee
Jan Terk, DVTA
Josh Donabedian, ACRPC

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of Michele Boomhower, Chris Cole, VTrans Deputy Secretary, called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM. Introductions were made. Chris Cole left the meeting at 1:31 PM and Barb Donovan assumed the duties of Chair.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 11, 2014

MOTION by John Sharrow, SECOND by Peter Johnke, to approve the minutes of 12/11/14 with the following correction(s)/clarification(s);

Page 4, Other Business, Bus Rebuild – change “Vermont Transit buses” to “transit buses from Vermont”.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

3. LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATIONS & FY2016 VTRANS TRANSIT BUDGET

Copies of the budget were distributed. Chris Cole noted there were no substantive changes to the budget by the legislative committees. Barb Donovan reported some money has been moved in the budget for CMAQ inter city bus projects, administration, and elderly and persons with disabilities. An extra \$1 million was added to capital purchases. VTrans is investigating the cost of rehabbing versus buying new buses. Federal money may be available for bus rehab once the buses reach the end of their useful life.

4. VTRANS PLANNING INITIATIVES, SUMMER STUDIES

CCTA Local Share Funding Study

Chris Cole mentioned the impact on state revenues due to people using more energy efficient vehicles to meet state environmental and energy policies. The state does not want to re-study how to raise funds on a regional basis for public transit when there is no regional government in place and there is no interest in further impact on the property tax. The funding study will look at how to raise local funding.

Thruway Bus

The study will look at the following types of bus service and provide cost/benefit analysis:

- Thru bus to serve Amtrak riders with a ticket to and from Albany to points north.
- Inner-city open door bus service to and from Albany to Bennington and Manchester.

Elderly and Disabled Transportation

The study will refresh the last study and findings on gaps, needs, and resources. There is disparity on the ability to deliver services because the federal grants require local match and some communities can better raise the local match and therefore get better service. There are a variety of ways for local match, including the private sector playing a role user side subsidy program, or in-kind funding. The study is slated to be complete by January 2017.

Governor's Council on Pathways from Poverty

The study will look at transportation as a way out of poverty including issues of transportation to childcare services, people without vehicles, and people who lost their license to drive. Peter Johnke mentioned people who do not drive must plan their trips and if something changes or is not planned there is little to no flexibility. John Sharrow mentioned the active AARP group in Vermont is looking at the issue of transportation for seniors.

5. VTRANS PUBLIC TRANSIT GRANT PROCESS

Barbara Donovan reported the grant process is now a two year process which will save staff time on both the state and federal sides. E-signing will be done as well to save time. VTrans continues to try to enhance product delivery. Grants are out and due April 24th for review. To see the applications (rural service) contact Barbara Donovan. Urban applications (Burlington) are handled directly through the federal agency.

Gwendolyn Hallsmith asked if there is a procedure for changing needs within the grant timeline. Barbara Donovan said an application can be submitted for the second year of the grant if necessary.

MOTION by Mary Grant, SECOND by Gwendolyn Hallsmith, that PTAC approves and recommends a two-year contract (grant) process to VTrans.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

6. INTERCITY UPDATES, VERMONT TRANSLINES, GREYHOUND, MARKETING EFFORTS, AND UPCOMING NEW SERVICE SOLICITATION

Barbara Donovan reported the February fare recovery numbers on the Route 7 and Route 4 bus services show a 32.37% recovery on the Route 7 route as of January (40% projected) and about a 7% recovery on the Route 4 route (21% projected). The contract for service is three years. VTrans is working on next year's marketing plan. Ridership and origin/destination data on the Route 4 service will be reviewed. VTrans is meeting with the Veterans Administration as one of the partners. The VA will pick up individuals going to the VA facility at the bus station. This will be incorporated into the marketing to improve ridership on the route. The next recommendation for a new bus service route is into the northeast kingdom (Newport) connecting to service in New Hampshire. Mary Grant suggested contacting Jay Peak as well. Jay Peak is adding more vehicles to their transportation service.

Ross MacDonald mentioned current marketing efforts using Front Porch Forum, printed ads, Facebook blasts, rack cards, and other opportunities to promote both services. Approximately \$60,000 has been spent on outreach by Vermont Translines and VTrans.

John Sharrow said having a connection to Boston and Springfield may help with the Route 4 service. Jim Moulton asked if there is a threshold to determine whether the Route 4 service continues or if the route is mandated to meet the intercity requirement. Barb Donovan said the threshold is met. The route needs time to develop because it is new. No change is proposed at this point in time. The funding is federal and an in-kind donation from Greyhound is the non-federal match for the next three years.

Minga Dana noted regarding duplication of service with the Route 4 route they meet with CRT four times daily to serve commuters.

Barbara Donovan mentioned the Massachusetts Department of Transportation put out a bid for bus service from Boston to Rutland via Route 103. The bus will use the multi-modal station in Rutland.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Vermont Community Alliance for Public Transportation (VCAPT)

Chuck Norris-Brown briefly explained VCAPT and the grassroots campaign for community support of public transit. The organization started a year ago following the

bus driver strike at CCTA and seeks to be the voice for the public interested in issues relative to public transportation. VCAPT also seeks to do the following:

- Explain the importance of having and maintaining public transportation and resulting benefits and advantages;
- Ensure regional planning commissions and other planning organizations have a focus on public transportation options in planning;
- Make the public aware of the importance of supporting state and federal transit funding.

Contact vermontcapt@gmail.com for more information.

Google Transit for Trip Planners

Works continues at VTrans on a comprehensive trip planner to include carpools, fixed transit route, and E&D rides.

Van Chesnut mentioned his company's GPS project developed by RSG. The system now uses a digital GPS two-way radio system. Areas covered and the cost continue to be issues. AT is still determining if the system will work for them.

Meredith Birkett said CCTA is just finishing their ITS planning project. The cost range is \$300,000 to \$1 million to develop and maintain the system.

Reflective Bracelets

CCTA, State Police, and VTrans will have available the "Be Safe Be Seen" reflective slap bracelets.

Warning of Meetings

PTAC meetings will continue to be warned per past practice. Future meeting dates will be added to the agenda.

PTAC Meeting Schedule

- June 18, 2015
- September 17, 2015

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the council the meeting was adjourned at 2:24 PM.

RScty: MRiordan