

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 14, 2023**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on December 14, 2023 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit training room. The following were present:

Members:

James Buckner
Chris Franks, Vice-Chairperson
Debra Hairston
Anna Kautzman, Chairperson
Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager
Rhonda Spraggins

Staff and Other Participants:

Amanda Paez, Chief Equity Officer, Assistant to the City Manager
Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Asst.
Via Zoom
Steven Hennessee, Transit Project Manager, VDRPT
Kyle Trissel, Transit Project Manager, VDRPT

The Transportation Advisory Committee meeting, held on December 14, 2023, was called to order at 12:07 pm by Chairperson, Anna Kautzman.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes

James Buckner moved that the minutes of the October 5, 2023, Transportation Advisory Committee meeting be accepted as presented and Debra Hairston seconded the motion. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

Financial, Ridership and Employee Status update

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee concerning financial data, ridership, and the transit system's employment status. He indicated that total operating costs for the first five months of the fiscal year are under budget by \$211,079 (12.3%). Also, salary and wage expenses are under budget by 15.1% for the period, primarily due to job vacancies related to driver positions. However, overtime expense is over budget by \$9,796 (26%) year-to-date due to the driver shortage. Overtime charges are expected to continue to increase over the next several months not only due to the driver shortage but also because a full-time driver is now cleaning the buses versus relying on an outside temporary services company. However, since a bus operator is cleaning buses, the expense associated with temporary service fees will also decrease.

Financial, Ridership and Employee Status update (*Continued*)

Fuel charges are under budget by 15.6% year to date due to lower fuel prices through contract pricing. Workers Compensation charges are under budget for the period by 76%. The General Liability Insurance line item is at budget related to the insurance premium. However, charges related to actual claims will not be posted until the end of the fiscal year. Vehicle maintenance charges are also under budget by \$17,552 year-to-date.

Passenger revenue realized for the first five months of the fiscal year exceeded the budget figure by 9.9% or \$13,785 primarily due to the contract revenue received from the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research and Averett University. In addition, realized bus advertising revenue has significantly exceeded the budget amount. Only \$20,000 was budgeted for bus advertising for the entire fiscal year and \$32,262 was already realized through November 2023.

As a result of greater than anticipated revenue figures and actual operating costs that are under budget, the operating deficit is less than budgeted. Consequently, the transit system is eligible to receive less federal operating aid than budgeted in the amount of \$146,179 for the period. State operating aid received for FY24 is greater than budgeted by \$63,296 through November 2023. Likewise, the local match requirement is currently under budget by \$206,158.

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee concerning the employment status for bus drivers as identified below. Of significance, since August 2023 the transit system has seen a significant reduction in part-time employment.

- Twenty-two (22) full-time drivers are currently active compared to twenty-two (22) full-time drivers in August 2023.
- There are currently no full-time drivers unavailable to work due to medical leave.
- A total of twenty-eight (28) full-time and part-time drivers are currently employed compared to thirty-four (34) drivers in August 2023.
- Eight (8) drivers currently employed have been with the transit system for less than a year.
- Since January 2024 fourteen offers were made to candidates that did not make it through the hiring process due to pre-employment testing requirements.

Marc Adelman updated the Transportation Advisory Committee concerning ridership activity comparing year to date figures and ridership data for the same time last fiscal year. As identified on the following page, fixed route ridership has increased marginally this fiscal year. However, ridership activity related to the reservation-based operations has increased significantly. The primary reason for the increase in reservation-based ridership is due to the new automated scheduling software system and the post-pandemic operating environment. During this same period last fiscal year Danville Transit was using a different scheduling software system. Discussion continued.

Financial, Ridership and Employee Status update (Continued)

	FIXED ROUTE TRIPS	SENIOR TRIPS	RESERVE A RIDE TRIPS	HANDIVAN TRIPS	PATHS INVOICED TRIPS
July-Nov. 23	86,991	6498	15,348	2298	58
July-Nov. 22	84,976	5140	12,683	1656	0
DIFFERENCE	2%	26%	21%	9.8%	100%

New Route and Schedule Guides

New route and schedule guides should be available for distribution in January 2024. The new guides will highlight information concerning how to use the Mobile App and will promote the new text alert system to passengers so they can receive real-time updates.

FY2025 Capital Program of Projects and Operating Budget

Marc Adelman reviewed the proposed FY2025 capital program of project and operating budget highlights with the Committee.

FY25 CAPITAL BUDGET ITEMS				
PROJECT	FEDERAL 80%	STATE	LOCAL 4%	TOTAL
Three 14, passenger buses	\$516,923	\$103,385	\$25,846	\$646,155
Replace bus wash system	\$264,000	\$52,800	\$13,200	\$330,000
Convert maintenance pit to bus parking area, 90' x 9', 4.5 depth	\$88,000	\$17,600	\$4,400	\$110,000
Two bus shelters, concrete pad, installation 5' x 12' shelter	Not Applicable	\$86,400	\$3,600	\$90,000
TOTAL	\$868,923	\$260,185	\$47,046	\$1,176,154

Three 14-passenger buses – Since FY2020 the price of a 14-passenger bus has increased from \$100,138 to \$174,131 in FY2024. The quote received to purchase a 14-passenger bus during FY2025 is \$187,291. It is proposed to purchase three 14-passenger buses next fiscal year.

Replace bus wash system – A new bus wash system is identified for next year’s capital budget to replace the bus wash system that was taken out of the bay over twenty years ago. An additional meeting is planned next week with an electrical contractor to make sure all the necessary items are included in the amount proposed. Therefore, the amount identified above could increase before the grant application is submitted.

FY2025 Capital Program of Projects and Operating Budget (Continued)

Install concrete in the maintenance pit – This project would involve installing concrete in the existing maintenance pit that is ninety feet long, nine feet wide and four and a half feet deep. The maintenance pit was designed for heavy duty vehicles that are no longer in the fleet and the pit is not deep enough to complete repairs for light and medium duty buses that are currently in the fleet. The installation of concrete will make it easier for bus operators to park buses inside the maintenance facility. This work will also involve removing the metal decking, structural supports and all the electrical and water lines that are linked to the maintenance pit.

Two bus shelters, concrete pad and installation – It is proposed to purchase two bus shelters to be installed in the casino area. One would be installed at Bishop Avenue and West Main Street and the location of the second shelter could be determined later.

Other areas for bus shelter locations were discussed with the Committee. One area mentioned is located near Biscuitville on Riverside Drive. However, due to a Smart Scale project grant application that was submitted by Public Works for sidewalk improvements a bus shelter for this area was included in that grant application and as a result, this location will not be considered to install a bus shelter by Danville Transit at this time. Other areas of consideration were discussed.

Bus shelter installation - Proposed policy change – In 2022 the Transportation Advisory Committee established a policy to provide guidance for installing passenger benches and bus shelters. Marc Adelman indicated that he would like for the Committee to review this policy to consider potentially reducing passenger activity requirements to install benches and shelters. The original policy identified that three or more passengers per day should use a bus stop to support the installation of a passenger bench and seven or more passengers per day should use a bus stop to support the installation of a bus shelter.

After discussion, a motion was made by James Buckner and seconded by Rhonda Spraggins to amend the policy to require only two or more passengers per day should use a bus stop to support a passenger bench and only three or more passengers per day to support the installation of a bus shelter. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Marc Adelman reminded the Committee of the ADA design requirements to install bus shelters and that the transit system constructs concrete pads for bus shelters that are set ten feet back from the curb to support related regulations. Based on the Committee's decision to revise the policy to install benches and bus shelters along the fixed route network Marc Adelman mentioned that bus operators can track ridership activity at different stops before the February 1st grant deadline to see if sufficient ridership activity exists to increase the number of bus shelters for the grant request. Discussion continued.

FY2025 Capital Program of Projects and Operating Budget (Continued)

A motion was made by James Buckner and seconded by Debra Hairston to accept the proposed program of projects for FY2025 with the potential for an increased number of benches and bus shelters based on the policy change. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

FY 25 Operating Budget Line-Item Highlights

Marc Adelman recommended budget line-item adjustments for the FY25 operating budget compared to the FY24 budget.

- Increase Overtime by \$20,000 due to driver shortage. Funding will also be used for drivers to clean buses versus using temporary services.
- Increase Outside Services for additional police assistance by \$16,000 to increase coverage at the Transfer Center from 6 hours per day to 8 hours per day.
- Increase Advertising Revenue from \$20,000 to \$40,000 due to current sales. During the current fiscal year, it is possible that advertising revenue will exceed \$50,000.

Update on the Black History Bus Wrap

Amanda Paez, Chief Equity Officer and Assistant to the City Manager, was present for the meeting and updated the Committee on the Black History Bus Wrap process. Ms. Paez said that the candidates were assigned to different categories based on their background for the purpose of developing biographical posters.

2024 Honorees

EDUCATION

Carrie Ashe
Doris Wilson
Xelia Hickson
Harry Johnson

EMPOWERMENT

Bishop AR Linder
Norma Brower
Claudius Claiborne
Judy Fallen
Shelby Irving
Charles Harris

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CG Hairston
Kirby Wright

Amanda Paez said she is in the process of obtaining high-resolution photos and approval from the honorees or their families to use those photos. After all the photos are received the design will be finalized. The possibility of holding an unveiling event the week of February 5th was discussed. Marc Adelman clarified that the biographical posters will be displayed at the Transfer Center.

Amanda Paez said she will complete a profile narrative for each honoree and other honorees that have been on previous bus wraps that will be posted on the city’s social media sites throughout Black History Month. Steven Hennessee, Project Manager for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) asked if a copy of the press release could be sent to VDRPT after it is finalized to be included on their sites.

Update on the Black History Bus Wrap (Continued)

Discussion continued. Marc Adelman informed the Committee that Steven Hennessee will be retiring at the end of the month and thanked him for his assistance and involvement throughout his tenure at the department.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 pm.