**Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

A quorum was attained and Commissioner Kanoyton called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

**Commissioners in attendance:**

Gaylene Kanoyton, Hampton

Councilman Matt Hammel, Chesapeake

Councilwoman Andria McClellan, Norfolk
Amelia Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach

Mayor John Rowe, Portsmouth

**Hampton Roads Transit staff in attendance:**

Gene Cavasos, Director of Marketing & Communication

Joe Dillard, Government Relations Liaison

William Harrell, President & CEO

Dr. Brian Smith Chief of Staff

**Additional Attendees:**

Judith Brown, League of Women Voters of South H.R.

Johnna Cossaboon, Advantus Strategies

The Honorable Thelma Drake, Norfolk

Barbara Hamm-Lee, The Miles Agency

Delceno Miles, The Miles Agency
Ron Jordan, Advantus Strategies
Season Roberts, The Miles Agency

Jerri Wilson, Newport News

 **Approval of April 2020 Meeting Minutes**

The April meeting minutes were not approved. Minutes will be reviewed and are subject to approval at the May meeting.

**Federal COVID-19 Policy Update**

Chairwoman Knoyton recognized Mr. Dillard to bring an update on the Federal/State COVID-19 Policy update. Mr. Dillard then turned it over to Mr. Harrell. Mr. Harrell thanked the External & Legislative Affairs Committee for its leadership and advocacy over the years in addressing the agencies outdated funding structure and support for new regional dedicated funding. This year, the General Assembly passed legislations to support dedicated funding for transit in Hampton Roads. Mr. Harrell then turned it back over to Mr. Dillard.

Mr. Dillard started the conversation around the CARES Act funding allocated to FTA in the amount of $25 billion. Hampton Roads Transit lobbied in support of increased funding to transit agencies due to the impacts of COVID-19 and loses of revenue. Based on past formula used for federal grant funding the agency was allotted $61,731,853.00 in which we would have to apply for as needed to cover COVID-19 related expenses.

Mr. Dillard explained that Mr. Burns and the finance department has been working with departments across the agency to determine the current and future funding impacts on operations. The finance department will continue to apply for COVID-19 funding relief as needed to ensure stable and financial operations of the agency.

Currently a paper is being drafted for TDCHR consideration to assist our operators with Hazard Pay for essential personnel. The Government Relations team has been working with our federal elected officials to ensure that transit employees are considered in any hazard pay language to include essential personnel.

The $2.3 million allocated from the CTB in state funding is being used to mitigate fare box revenue shortfall due to ridership decline and free fares during COVID-19.

Commissioner McClellan asked about the CARES Act funding being related to current advocacy for Hazard Pay. It was clarified that the Hazard Pay advocacy is centered around new legislation under a second phase to the original CARES Act to address broader issues concerning the impacts of COVID-19.

Action Item: Commissioner McClellan has requested that when talking points are developed to share at the federal level in support of Hazard Pay that they be shared with committee members to assist with advocacy efforts.

**2020 General Assembly Debrief**

Mr. Dillard asked Mr. Jordan to give an update on the 2020 General Assembly outcomes and how others fared around the Commonwealth. Mr. Jordan began by detailing the Governor’s Transportation Bills which were Senate Bill 890 (Saslaw) and House Bill 1414 (Filler-Corn). Under these fund, the funding structure for the Commonwealth Transportation Fund has been revamped to include new sub-funds to meet the varying transportation needs of different modes of transportation. Existing gas tax that was percentage based is now being converted to a cents-per gallon tax. The new rate of $0.262 per gallon will be phased in over 2 years. The regional gas tax will be converted to a rate of $0.076 per gallon of gasoline and will be imposed everywhere in the Commonwealth that a regional gas tax is not already imposed.

Mr. Jordan continued to talk discuss the registration fees for motor vehicles will be lowered. Also the $5 walk in fee for conducting certain transactions in person at the department of Motor Vehicles has been eliminated. He explained that in Northern Virginia the regional transportation improvement fee, used to support Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), is lowered to $0.10 per $100 for the recordation of conveyance of a deed and the regional transient occupancy tax (TOT) is raised from two percent to three percent.

The bill also establishes a new Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and new transportation safety programs to include Interstate Operations and Enhancement Program, a Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program, the Statewide Special Structures Program and a Transit Incentive Program.

Mr. Jordan then gave updates on other bills impacting transit across the Commonwealth like Senate Bill 899 (Saslaw)/ House Bill 729 (Watts) which would raise the grantors tax from $0.15 per $100 to $0.20 per $100 for localities in Northern Virginia Transportation District, the bills were incorporated in both omnibus bills Senate Bill 890 (Saslaw) and House Bill 1414 (Filler-Corn).

Commissioner McClellan inquired about changed support from Delegate Watts whom at first didn’t support our efforts behind HB 1726. Mr. Jordan explained that Delegate Watts was 100% supportive the bill when the relators came on board to support the amended version of the bill.

Mr. Jordan explained HB 1541 (McQuinn) which established the Central Virginia Transportation Authority which 15% will be allocated for public transit. The

Mr. Jordan then moved to the Hampton Roads Region to discuss Senate Bill 1038 (Lucas) / House Bill 1726 (Askew) which creates the Hampton Roads Regional Transit Program to develop, maintain and improve a regional network of transit routes and related infrastructure, rolling stock, and support facilities. The coordination of regional transit planning is vested in the Hampton Roads TPO with each regional transit entity (TDCHR) being responsible for its own specific strategic planning, in accordance with state (DRPT) requirements.

The Hampton Roads Regional Transit Fund is funded by grantors tax at a rate of $0.06 per $100 for the conveyance and a one percent transient occupancy tax that will go into effect on May 1, 2021. The bill also dedicates $20 million of the state recordation tax revenues to the program annually.

Dr. Brian Smith explained the bill language in detail, highlighting that the TDCHR would have to adopt the strategic plan before the funding be allocated to the agency.

The bill requires a local maintenance of effort of public transportation funding no less than levels funded in FY 19. It also requires Hampton Roads TPO to establish a Regional Transit Advisory Panel composed of major stakeholder to provide ongoing advice to the regional planning process.

Mr. Dillard stated that the Government Relations and Marketing departments are working together to recognize Senator Lucas and Delegate Askew for being Patrons of such impactful legislation.

Action Item: Send draft resolution to External & Legislative Affairs Committee for review.

**Next Steps**

Mr. Dillard then called on Ms. Miles to share some insight on what the next steps would be from the public relations front being that we now have dedicated funding in place. Ms. Miles explained that her team will be working with HRT to address further outreach to both the grassroots and grasstops in ongoing promotion. Ms. Miles pointed to the desire to identify some ambassadors from HRT to accomplish a full schedule of ongoing outreach of educating the public about our Transformational Transit Plan.

Mr. Dillard shared that the Government Relations department was working with the Governor’s administration and Senator Lucas to schedule a ceremonial signing of Senate Bill 1038 (Lucas) / House Bill 1726 (Askew) at Hampton Roads Transit.

Mr. Dillard called on Mrs. Barbara Hamm-Lee. Mrs. Barabara Hamm-Lee discussed the effort to possibly conduct the Moving Hampton Roads Part II concerning transit in early 2021 due to COVID-19 impacts. She will be working with the team to determine what type of options we have moving forward to accomplish this goal.

Chairwoman Konoyton thanked everyone for joining the Zoom meeting and concluded the meeting.

Action Item: Send Resolution for City Council’s to External & Legislative Affairs Committee for support.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.