

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
Councilwoman Andria McClellan, Norfolk
Amelia Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach
Mayor John Rowe, Portsmouth

Hampton Roads Transit staff in attendance:

Gene Cavazos, Director of Marketing & Communication
Joe Dillard, Government Relations Liaison
William Harrell, President & CEO
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist
Dr. Brian Smith Chief of Staff

Additional Attendees:

Johnna Cossaboon, Advantus Strategies
The Honorable Thelma Drake, Norfolk
Barbara Hamm-Lee, The Miles Agency
Delceno Miles, The Miles Agency
Sherri Neil, City of Portsmouth
Ron Jordan, Advantus Strategies
Season Roberts, The Miles Agency
Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters South H.R
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 Kanoyton recognized Mr. Dillard to bring an update on the Federal/ Policy update. Mr. Dillard started the conversation around the HEROES Act funding for hazard pay. Hampton Roads Transit lobbied in support all Hazard Pay consideration for essential employees. Mr. Dillard share that HRT has been working with Senator Mark Warner's office to host a Zoom Town Hall with our Transit Union employees to discuss hazard pay and lobby for continued support.

Mr. Dillard also acknowledged that Senator Mitt Romney has introduced the Patriots Pay Plan which also provided hazard pay funding. Though its drastically different from the language included in the HEROES Act, it does provide additional funding to those essential employees whom work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hampton Roads Transit currently has implemented the “Attendance Premiums.” Mr. Harrell shared that the full board supported and approved this measure in showing appreciation to our operators currently operating our public transportation system during the COVID-19 crisis.

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.

INVEST Act is now being considered to replace the FAST Act in reauthorization of our surface transportation bill. On June 12 2020, Mr. Harrell sent letters to our congressional representation in support of the INVEST Act bill. Sherri Neil weighed in but was muted and shared that she forwarded Mr. Harrell’s letter to the Executive Director of NLC’s Transportation and Infrastructure Advocacy Committee.

Commissioner Kanoyton shared that other national organizations were lobbying for hazard pay and other bills we are pushing for as well.

Draft Resolutions for Chief Patron(s)

Commissioner Kanoyton called for a motion to support the resolution in thanking the patrons of Senate Bill 1038 and House Bill 1726.

Commissioner McClellan asked for clarification relating to this resolution.

Commissioner Rowe made a motion and was 2nd by Commissioner Ross-Hammond to approve the resolution to be considering by the full TDCHR committee.

Next Steps

Mr. Dillard then called on Ron Jordan and 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 (Hampton Roads Regional Transportation Plan).

Chairwoman Kanoyton asked about partnerships with US Census. Mr. Dillard stated we do have a bus operating in Norfolk but need a new connection with the US Census staff to include other localities in achieving marketing and promotion via bus.

Dr. Smith reported that HRT had a good meeting with the HRTPO concerning the new board mandated by legislation. A briefing in July to the full board is also planned.

Mr. Harrell thanked Ron Jordan and the Advantus Strategies team for all the support of the efforts concerning dedicated funding.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.