



Management / Financial Advisory Committee

Monday, April 19, 2021 • 1:30 p.m.
3400 Victoria Blvd., Hampton VA
Zoom Teleconference

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

Amy Inman, Chair – City of Norfolk, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

Attendance was taken via teleconference.

Committee members in attendance via Zoom:

Amy Inman, Chair – City of Norfolk
Lisa Cipriano, City of Newport News
Angela Hopkins, City of Newport News
Alex Gottschalk, City of Virginia Beach
Earl Sorey, City of Chesapeake
Karl Daughtrey, Director of Finance
Carl Jackson, City of Portsmouth
Constantinos Velissarios, City of Newport News
Sheila McAllister, City of Newport News
Mark Shea, City of Virginia Beach
Seth Parker, City of Norfolk
Ann Doyle, City of Norfolk
Thelma Drake, City of Norfolk
Jessica Dennis, City of Norfolk
Troy Eisenberger, City of Chesapeake

Hampton Roads Transit Staff in attendance:

Brenda Green, Accounting Coordinator(recorder)
Larry Kirk, Assistant Director of Finance
Conner Burns, Chief Financial Officer
Angela Glass, Director of Budget and Financial Analysis
Debbie Ball, Director of Finance
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist
Ashely Johnson, Capital Budget Analyst
Adrian Tate, Finance Manager
Sheri Dixon, Director of Revenue Services
Michael Price, Chief Information Officer/Chief Technology Officer
Juanita Davis, Budget Analyst III



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Keshia Branch, Director of Office of Program and Project Excellence
Kim Wolcott, Chief Human Resources Officer
Dawn Sciortino, Chief Safety Officer
Shanti Mullen, Internal Auditor
William Harrell, President and Chief Executive Officer
Robert Travers, Attorney
Gene Cavazos, Director of Marketing and Communications
Brian Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Sonya Luther, Director of Procurement
Amy Braziel, Manager of Operations Administration
Joe Dillard, Organizational Advancement Officer
Vincent Jackson, Director of Service Planning & Scheduling
Alexander Brink, Interim Manager of Bus Transportation
Antoinette White, Manager of Service Planning
Ashley Goodrich, Planner II
Sibyl Pappas, Chief Engineering and Facilities Officer
Ben Simms, Director of Transportation Bus and Rail

Others in attendance via Phone:

Jeff Raliski, Hampton Roads Transportations Planning Organization (HRTPO)

The April 2021 Management/Financial Advisory Committee (MFAC) package was distributed electronically to Committee Members in advance of the meeting. The meeting package consisted of:

- Agenda
- March 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Route Ridership FY17-FY21- ALL ROUTES
- March 21 FY21 Financial Report

Approval of the March 2021 MFAC Minutes

A motion to approve the March 22, 2021 meeting minutes was made and properly seconded.

The March 2021 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.



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March 2021 FY 2021 Financials

Conner Burns, Chief Financial Officer, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mr. Burns reminded the Committee Members of the additional rows that were added to the statement of operations that separate the traditional 5307 monies and the CARES 5307 monies. Mr. Burns emphasized that the CARES operating grants are 5307 operating funding, citing *United States Code 49, chapter § 5307, Urbanized Area Formula Grants*.

The March financials, including the operating financial statement, non-operating COVID revenue/expenses, farebox revenue/expenses, locality crosswalk and locality reconciliations, were presented in detail by Mr. Burns to the Committee.

Communication with HRTAC – HRT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

William Harrell, President and Chief Executive Officer, stated that HRT is making substantial progress with Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) as it relates to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). HRT is currently reviewing a draft shared by HRTAC. Robert Travers, Attorney stated that HRT's hopes to review the draft and collaborate with HRTAC within the week concerning the final stages of the MOU.

Amy Inman, Chair – City of Norfolk, requested that Kevin Page, Executive Director of HRTAC be extended an invitation to an upcoming June MFAC meeting to give the members a better understanding of the key points of the finalized MOU.

ACTION ITEM: HRT will brief the MFAC members on a “high level” of communications/understanding of the final MOU.

Bus Stop Amenities and Maintenance – Existing Bus Stop Amenity Policy

Sibyl Pappas, Chief Engineering and Facilities Officer, stated that the current policy concerning the installation of the bus stop amenities and lighting was based on a boarding threshold. HRT has rewritten this policy to reflect amenities being provided along the “new” Regional Transit System (RTS) routes. HRT is currently working with its City Partners trying to determine where these bus stop amenities will be applicable. HRT's RTS plan will be funding the installation and cleaning for the amenities installed on the “new” RTS routes. The Bus Stop Amenity Policy has been updated with a conclusive paragraph to include the RTS routes. *“In the case of RTS, bus stop amenities may be placed as appropriate.”* Ms. Pappas stated that she will circulate the new Bus Stop



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Amenity Policy draft to the Committee. The localities will no longer fund the cleaning for the currently installed shelters that are now being identified as part of the “new” RTS routes, the cleaning will be funded by the RTS plan. The installation of the solar lighting has already begun, however the installation of the shelters will initiate in June, July, and August 2021.

Status of Free Fares for COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

Brian Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Officer expressed that HRT’s objective is to assist the community to overcome transportation barriers as it relates to COVID vaccination appointments. HRT is distributing One-Day-Go-Passes to those persons who are identified as having a transportation need as it relates to the vaccination sites. Sheri Dixon, Director of Revenue Services, is the One-Day-Go-Pass liaison and is currently working with emergency services, coordinating with public health officials, and management in all localities concerning the dissemination of passes. Additionally, HRT is providing Paratransit trips to vaccination sites, free of charge.

HRT issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) that actively explores the possibility of contracting additional services, for an “on demand” curb to curb service to vaccination appointments to the targeting areas that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified as the “most vulnerable populations.” Mr. Smith stated that HRT will keep the Committee apprised of any updates.

There were discussions concerning the advertisement as it relates to the “free fare” for COVID-19 vaccination appointments. While HRT is partnering with the different local emergency responders, HRT is allowing the partners to “get the word out” and screen those persons with transportation needs. HRT is not directly involved with the vaccination registration process.

VTA Grant for Families in Need: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Virginia Transit Association (VTA) is administering a grant opportunity to promote access to employment and job training on public transportation. The total available funding is \$1 million statewide. This is TANF block grant funding, having conditions and stipulations and requires program administration of tracking and reporting data related to eligible TANF families. The application to participate in the program is due by April 30th. The Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP) was the recipient of some of the grant funding. HRT is working with HRCAP on a collaborating effort to distribute 30-day Go-Passes, that were purchased for the clinics. HRCAP has expressed the interest in expanding their program regionally.



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Service Reliability Plan

There was discussion concerning the Service Reliability Plan as it relates to the FY 2021 Budget. Due to the nationwide pandemic, related staff absences and its impact of the workforce in the transportation industry, HRT is implementing a “Reliability Plan”. This will address missed trips, which has increased by 12% since the pandemic, due to the lack of available human resources. The Reliability Plan is designed to cut back on route frequency, while maintaining 100% geographic coverage. This service plan will match the number of weekly runs to the number of expected operators available to reduce/eliminate the number of missed trips and provide customers with service reliability.

Antoinette White, Manager of Service Planning, stated that HRT’s transit system is made up of 69 routes and 399 weekly runs, which takes 479 Operators to operate the routes. Due to ongoing manpower shortfalls, Bus Operations has calculated that they could reliably support 317 weekly runs, which would require 327 Operators. Planning and Scheduling has reduced manpower requirements by adjusting frequency and span of service for each locality. No routes will be eliminated, and service will be maintained with less frequencies.

| Weekly Runs | | |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|
| Operating Division | Current | Reliability Plan |
| Northside | 127 | 108 |
| Southside | 239 | 186 |
| VB Division | 33 | 33 |
| Totals | 399 | 327 |

Ms. White reviewed the effected changes that the Service Reliability Plan will have on the (current routes, as well as the Metro Area Express (MAX)) routes. HRT’s goal is to implement the Service Reliability Plan on May 9, 2021 and the VA Beach Wave service, May 23, 2021. The Agency will develop public timetables to reflect all schedule changes and post it on the goHRT.com website.

HRT’s ongoing effort to stay in communication with their customers, the Agency will have on-board announcements on the buses, distribute customer alerts and information to our key employers, while posting information in major transit centers and locations. Information will be recorded on the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Information will also be posted on Facebook and Twitter, as well as having a press release announcement advertising the upcoming changes.



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Mr. Harrell expressed that shortage of shortfall during the COVID-19 pandemic is an industry wide issue. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is reporting that many agencies have adjusted their service to meet the labor availability. Mr. Harrell stated that Reliable Service Plan is the right size for our service to meet the demands and ensure increased reliability of our passenger and city stakeholders. There will be adjustments to the Ferry operations. The cities quarterly invoices will reflect the reduction in services.

Ms. Glass reviewed the number of hours /values that the “Reliability Plan” will affect each City.

- City of Chesapeake \$1,500.00
- City of Hampton (\$158,000.00)
- City of Newport News (\$332,000.00)
- City of Norfolk (\$279, 900.00)
- City of Portsmouth (\$24, 900.00)
- City of Virginia Beach (\$53,900.00)

Light Rail

- City of Norfolk (\$47,000.00)

There were discussions concerning VA Beach’s seasonal Wave routes being truncated as it relates to the Reliability Plan. Currently, HRT has no definitive answer currently concerning the manpower issues as it relates to the Wave. HRT is currently in the recruiting stages for those services and can address the issues at a later junction. However, HRT will monitor the Waves manpower requirements and availability and make changes if applicable.

Mr. Harrell stated that due to operator recruitment challenges, HRT has forecasted the implementation of the Reliability Plan to last until the end of the FY21, June 30, 2021. However, the Agency plans to revisit this decision in late May or early June to reevaluate the intended time frame for the Reliability Plan.

There were discussions concerning HRT’s communication and due diligence concerning the implementation of the “Reliability Plan”. Mr. Harrell stated upon its completion HRT made the Reliability Plan presentation available to the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads (TDCHR) Board and Alternates via emails and personal conversations/meetings.



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Bus Fleet Accidents/Damages Issues

Dawn Sciortino, Chief Safety Officer, stated that HRT will be providing a comprehensive report that will include the accident rates, costs, and mitigation. This report will also address some of the concerns shared by the TDCHR Board. Ms. Sciortino confirmed that this comprehensive report will be available for presentation to the Board in June.

Other Business

There were some discussions concerning Paratransit having “no” dispatch availability on the northside after 7:00 pm and that all dispatched related concerns are routed to the southside. In addition, there were questions concerning the two-hour window change for appointments, no longer being applicable. Ben Simms, Director of Transportation Bus and Rail, stated that VIA was in the process of calling back some additional workers to fill the growing demand for the Newport News office. However, Mr. Simms stated that he was unaware of these additional concerns, but he will investigate the matter and report his findings.

The following finds concerning the Paratransit was communicated to the MFAC members via email by Keith Johnson, Manager of Paratransit.

“There have been no changes to the way inbound calls are handled. Calls after 7:00 PM will be routed to the correct dispatcher on duty which most likely will be in Norfolk as the dispatchers in Newport News are usually wrapped up by that time. This is nothing new, MV had the same process when demand was down. Current demand does not warrant staffing in both locations in the evening hours, and we consider ourselves an all-in-one service area, so any dispatcher should be able to field any issues that arise. VIA is now staffing the northside depot on weekends, as demand is increasing, along with weekend traffic through the tunnels. As for drivers on duty after 7:00 PM, most of them will be working out of the Norfolk facility for the same reasons, dependent on daily demand.”

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.