



3 External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, December 6th, 2023
Norfolk, VA
1:30 PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

August Bullock, Chair, ELAC
Commissioner Adriana McClellan, Norfolk

Attendees:

Edward Reed, Two Capitols Consulting
Phil Bianchi, Squire Patton Boggs
Adisa Muse, Hunton Andrews Kurth
Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters

HRT Staff:

Alexis Majied, Chief Communications Officer
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer
Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist, Technology
Petra Jovanovic, Executive Assistant, Marketing & Communications

The meeting began at 1:30 pm with Commissioner August Bullock, Chair, calling to order. Chairman Bullock asked for a motion to approve minutes from October 18th, 2023, ELAC meeting. Commissioner Andria McClellan made a motion to approve minutes, seconded by Chairman Bullock. The minutes were approved by the committee.

Legislative Update

Federal Update- Phil Bianchi

There is no end-of-year appropriations crunch as the current continuing resolutions (CR) do not expire until next year. There were two CRs passed last month to avert a government shutdown. The first, which includes transportation funding and 20% of other government agencies expires on January 19th. The second, which covers 80% of government agencies, expires on February 2nd.

The big issue facing Congress at present is funding for Ukraine, Israel, and immigration reform. Senator Tuberville finally stopped blocking over 400 military promotions in protest of military policies concerning travel for abortion access.

The Department of Transportation has announced the next cycle of RAISE grants. Applications are due by February 28th.

State Update- Adisa Muse

The Governor's Biennium Budget will be released on December 20th in anticipation of the 2024 General Assembly session which begins on Wednesday, January 10th.



Turnover from the November election is significant - 1/3 of the House of Delegates members are newly elected and 45% of the Senate are newly elected. These close margins will result in tight caucus leadership as both parties wish to have control of the legislature in 2025. Also, there will be a steep learning curve in both chambers in procedure and policy, including transportation funding. Party margins are close in both the House of Delegates and Senate; the Senate has a 21/19 split with democrats leading and the House has a 51-49 split with democrats leading. No adventurous legislative initiatives are expected but both parties will potentially offer legislation that appeals to their respective bases.

We continue monitoring initiatives coming out of Northern Virginia related to the \$750 million WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) shortfall. There may also be legislation related to the establishment of a transportation authority in Fredericksburg/Prince William County with possible dedicated funding language.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

Alexis Majied presented Marketing and Communications updates. On November 28th, 2023, Hampton Roads Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, and Suffolk Transit hosted the State of Transit: Transit Means Business summit. Approximately 200 business professionals and community members attended this inaugural event. Maurice Jones, Founder & CEO, MJ Connects, provided the keynote address.

Other speakers included William Harrell President, and CEO at Hampton Roads Transit; Matt Scalia, Executive Director, Williamsburg Area Transit; Maria Ptakowski, Transit Manager, City of Suffolk; Bryan Stephens, President & CEO, Hampton Roads Chamber; Tom Cosgrove, Chair, Virginia Peninsula Chamber; Terry Banez, CEO, Greater Williamsburg Chamber.

Together, HRT, WATA and Suffolk Transit wanted to emphasize that public transportation plays a pivotal role in moving Hampton Roads' economy forward, as employees rely on it to get to work, and customers rely on it to patronize businesses.

Noelle Pinkard gave an update regarding Transit Advocacy Day that will be held on Monday, January 22nd, 2024. HRT and its commissioners will use this opportunity to meet with legislative representatives in Richmond.

A Federal Legislative visit is anticipated in mid-April of next year for General Assembly Sessions. HRT will be advocating for earmark requests for FY25.

Chairman Bullock reflected on Student Freedom Pass outreach efforts from the Marketing team and the increased number of schools in Hampton Roads that have been participating in this program.

The final version of the Rosa Parks resolution was presented to committee members by Noelle Pinkard. No changes have been made since the last meeting. Chairman Bullock asked for motion for the Rosa Parks resolution to be recommended at the TDCHR meeting. Commissioner Andria McClellan made a motion for recommendation, seconded by Chairman Bullock. This resolution will be presented at the TDCHR Commission meeting on December 14th, 2023, for adoption.



The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.
Next meeting will be on January 17th, 2024.