



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
Norfolk, VA  
1:30 PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

August Bullock, Chair, ELAC  
Commissioner Andria McClellan, Norfolk  
Alt-Commissioner Brian Swets, Portsmouth

Attendees:

Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters  
Gretchen Heal, Hampton Roads Chamber  
Patricia Doersch, Squire Patton Boggs

HRT Staff:

Alexis Majied, Chief Communications Officer  
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer  
Gene Cavasos, Director of Marketing and Sales  
Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development  
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 the minutes from the January 17<sup>th</sup> 2024, 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- Patricia Doersch**

- Current federal transportation programs are operating under a 7-week short-term spending bill which ends on March 1.
- A Bipartisan, bicameral transportation/HUD spending bill continues to be worked on that would fund all transportation programs through end of FY 2024.
- We could see up to \$1 million for the purchase of electric buses for HRT's Southside Bus Operating Facility in the final appropriations bill.
- Planning is underway for a DC advocacy visit tentatively scheduled for May 8-9th.

**State Update- Noelle Pinkard**

- Budgets were released by the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees last Sunday.
- HRT continues to work on the inclusion of study language in the final version of the biennium budget to examine multimodal transportation needs in Hampton Roads.



### **Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update**

Alexis Majied presented Marketing and Communications updates. Majied discussed ongoing recruitment advertising. HRT is experiencing a shortage of bus operators and mechanics. In response, the marketing team has been investing in recruitment advertising to help with this issue. This recruitment campaign that started in January 2023 has just been refreshed and includes a wide variety of channels like billboards, social media, radio and television.

Hampton Roads Transit held a ribbon-cutting ceremony On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to celebrate the arrival of two new ferries. A hundred people gathered on the dock at Waterside to help welcome Elizabeth River Ferries VI and VII to the fleet.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, HRT celebrated Transit Equity Day and the recently passed Rosa Parks / Transit Equity Day Resolution. In addition, HRT provided free fares on all services: bus, light rail, ferry, and paratransit. The event was held at the Hampton Transit Center. William Harrell, President and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit; Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Hampton; Gaylene Kanoyton, President, NAACP Hampton Chapter; and Gilbert Bland, President, Urban League of Hampton Roads were the guest speakers at this event.

### **New and Old Business**

#### **Transit Advocacy Day - Richmond**

Noelle Pinkard gave an update regarding Transit Advocacy Day that was held on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. HRT staff and its commissioners, including August Bullock, Andria McClellan, Dr. Amelia Ross Hammond, Roland White, Steve Johnson as well as TRAC Chair Denise Johnson, used this opportunity to meet with legislative representatives in Richmond.

### **Student Freedom Pass**

Amy Jordan gave an update regarding the Student Freedom Pass program. In the past month, the HRT public outreach team visited two schools from Newport News: Menchville and Warwick High School where students had an opportunity to gain their pass.

### **Transit Equity Day**

In February, the marketing team also kicked off a reading program in the schools for elementary and preschool classes. The "I am Rosa Parks" book by Brad Meltzer was read in schools in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Hampton.

Commissioner McClellan suggested Commissioners put together a presentation that can be presented during various City Council meetings. Committee approved of this idea, and will work on it in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

