



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Hampton, VA  
1:30 PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

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

Attendees:

Phil Bianchi, Squire Patton Boggs  
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 December 6th, 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**

Phil Bianchi, Squire Patton Boggs, reported that the Senate passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government through the first week in March. The measure passed the Senate by a bipartisan vote of 77 to 18, after which the House passed the legislation under suspension of the rules relying on Democratic support to reach the required two-thirds vote. As a result, Congress has avoided another government shutdown and members were able to leave town for recess.

**State Update- Noelle Pinkard**

Noelle Pinkard reported that the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) is sponsoring Transit Advocacy Day on January 22. During this event, HRT commissioners and staff will be meeting with members of the Hampton Roads General Assembly delegation. Senator Warner will be meeting with VTA members to discuss transit issues and express support for the advocacy event. The day will end with a reception at Richmond's Main Street Train Station.



Pinkard concluded that HRT Staff continues to monitor progress on the state budget and other legislative issues which might impact HRT.

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

Alexis Majied presented Marketing and Communications updates. HRT developed a Crisis Communications Plan that was put in effect during shooting accident on Tide on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This document will continue to evolve as we gain additional experience through various incidents.

In January, Hampton Roads Transit, in partnership with TRAFFIX, launched its Van-uary campaign. It is an opportunity for HRT to highlight the Vanpool program through our marketing efforts. February will also be "Rideshare the love" and is an opportunity for HRT to promote finding rideshare match through the ConnectingVA mobile app and the numerous benefits that ridesharing provides.

The ribbon cutting event for two new ferries is scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 11am, at the Waterside Ferry dock.

Majied also pointed out ongoing marketing efforts for recruitment advertising. HRT is currently experiencing a shortage of bus operators as well as mechanics. In response, the marketing team has been investing in recruitment advertising to help with this issue.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, HRT will recognize Transit Equity Day and the recently passed Rosa Parks Resolution. The event will be held at 11am at Hampton Transit Center. HRT will reserve a front seat on each HRT bus. Also, all the buses will have their headlights turned on that day to shine a light on Rosa Parks and her contribution to transit equity.

In addition, plaques will be hung in Hampton and Norfolk HRT locations to commemorate the passage of the Rosa Parks resolution.

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

Amy Jordan gave an update regarding Student Freedom Pass. The public outreach team issued 423 passes at various schools in Hampton Roads, which is more than half of all Student freedom passes issued this FY24. These efforts included two successful Student Freedom Pass Back to School Kickoff events in Norfolk and Newport News in August and September. It was a chance for HRT to welcome parents who otherwise cannot make it during the transit center operating hours to get Student Freedom Passes for their children.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.