



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, March 20th, 2024  
Hampton, 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  
Adisa Muse, Hunton Andrews Kurth  
Philip Bianchi, Squire Patton Boggs  
Jessica Dennis, City of Norfolk  
Ed Reed, Two Capitols Consulting

HRT Staff:

Alexis Majied, Chief Communications Officer  
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer  
Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development  
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist, Technology  
Thomas Becher, Communications Manager  
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 February 21<sup>st</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**

Congress passed and President Biden signed the Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill. This legislation provides funding for transit at levels consistent to those agreed upon in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL). A \$1million earmark was also included in the THUD bill to assist HRT in the development of our electric fleet. Planning is underway for a check presentation event with Congressman Scott, Senator Kaine, and Senator Warner.

President Biden has sent his proposed FY2025 budget to Congress. The Administration's budget is typically dead-on arrival with Congress, but it did include a provision which would allow federal formula funds to be flexed to operational expenses for transit agencies. This is in recognition of significant funding needs for transit agencies around the country.



### **State Update**

- The Virginia General Assembly adjourned Sine Die on Saturday, March 9th.
- There were several pieces of legislation HRT opposed that would have redirected, reduced, or completely by-pass Virginia's comprehensive transportation funding formula created in 2020.
  - Combined, these bills would have reduced funding for roadway maintenance by \$835 million, public transit by \$184 million, passenger rail by \$55 million, and ports by 20 million over the next six years.
- Also under consideration by the legislature was the Biennium Budget for FY24-25. The budget adopted and sent to Governor Younkin included an additional \$150 million to help cover funding shortfalls at WMATA as well as \$25,000 to help fund a joint legislative study to address transit funding needs in Northern Virginia.
- While our efforts for supplemental funding and a joint legislative study were unsuccessful this year, we laid the groundwork for additional state assistance in future years.

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

Alexis Majied gave the Marketing & Communications update.

Hampton Roads Transit is hosting its second annual Community Resource Fair, this year renamed as the CORE Fair. Community partners will join HRT for this free event on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Hampton Transit Center and on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Newtown Road Bus Loop area in Norfolk. This year's community partners are Eggleston, Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula, Hampton/Newport News Community Services Board, Hampton Victim-Witness Assistance Program, Sentara Behavioral Health, and TRAFFIX. HRT is excited to share this valuable opportunity with its customers and the community.

Opening day for the Norfolk Tides Partnership is March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. HRT will offer free rides to patrons traveling to the game via the Tide Light Rail. The free rides are limited to the Saturday home games and Wednesday July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. HRT is collaborating with the Downtown Norfolk Council, VisitPortsmouth, and Norfolk Tides to encourage transit use.

HRT is celebrating the installation of 500<sup>th</sup> and 501<sup>st</sup> shelter near Cavalier Hotel on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 11am. More information about this event will be provided to commission members soon.

HRT is partnering with the Virginia International Tattoo. In honor of celebrating the start of International Tattoo season, Bagpipers will be playing on the Elizabeth River Ferry on April 12<sup>th</sup> starting at 4:15PM.

TRAFFIX launched a Connecting Businesses campaign that is aimed towards employers to help them bring their employees back to work.

### **Local Advocacy Day Presentations**

During last month's ELAC meeting, Commissioner McClellan suggested the committee put together a presentation that can be presented during various City Council meetings. The committee continues to work on this idea, and updates will be provided once more information is available.



## New and Old Business

### Earth Day

- Commissioners will host a group bus ride on Earth Day, encouraging members of the community/friends to join them for a short, lunchtime ride, taking a route within their city, in celebration of Earth Day and HRT's free fares. The goal behind these hosted rides is to offer a familiar face for anyone who might be new to trying transit and offer a place for constituent conversation during the ride.
- Staff will determine the best route/timing/meet-up point for the rides.
- Commissioners will be asked to post a graphic on their respective social media accounts, promoting the event ahead of time ("Join me on Earth Day..."-type messaging). Staff will create the graphics and sample copy.
- During the ride, staff will take photos to post to the HRT social media pages and request Commissioners to post the photos on their pages, after-the-fact.
- Additionally, HRT will be hosting clean-up activities during the week of April 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Federal Advocacy Day

DC Advocacy Trip is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. HRT is currently working with Squire Patton Boggs to schedule these upcoming meetings. More information on this will be announced at the next ELAC meeting.

### Student Freedom Pass

Amy Jordan gave update regarding Student Freedom Pass. The HRT Public Outreach team continues to go out into the schools and community. In March, they visited Phoebus High School, where students had the opportunity to obtain their passes.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.