



Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

MINUTES OF THE CAPE FEAR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING March 25, 2021 Mr. Sterling Cheatham, Chairman, Presiding

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Sterling Cheatham, Chairman, City of Wilmington Manager
Mr. Kemp Burpeau, New Hanover County, Attorney
Ms. Deb Hays, New Hanover County Commissioner
Mr. John Joye, City of Wilmington, Attorney
Mr. Mike Kozlosky, WMPO, Executive Director
Mr. Paul Lawler, City of Wilmington Appointee
Ms. Laura Mortell, City of Wilmington, Budget and Research Director

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Chris Coudriet, Vice Chairman, New Hanover County Manager
Ms. Lisa Wurtzbacher, New Hanover County, Chief Finance Officer

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Marie Parker, Executive Director
Ms. Megan Matheny, Deputy Director
Mr. Joe Mininni, Director of Finance & Administration
Ms. Vanessa Lacer, Mobility Manager
Mr. Cliff Rode, Paratransit Manager
Ms. Mary Crawford, Accounting Coordinator

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Matthew McBride, General Manager, First Transit
Ms. Noel Fox, Craige and Fox PLLC, Attorney
Mr. Bill Harned, Area Vice President, First Transit

GUESTS PRESENT

Ms. Abigail Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO
Mr. Tom Pacelli, Transportation Program Coordinator, NHC Senior Resource Center
Ms. Martha Wayne, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, New Hanover County

CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Cheatham called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm
- The meeting began with a moment of silence

ROLL CALL

- Mr. Cheatham conducted virtual roll call with all members confirmed as present except Vice Chairman Coudriet and Ms. Wurtzbacher

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

- Mr. Cheatham presented the March 25, 2021 meeting agenda
- He solicited changes or modifications to the meeting agenda
- Hearing none, he moved to the public comment period

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Secretary - Wave Transit

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mr. Cheatham opened the public comment period
- Receiving no requests from members of the public to provide comment, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

CONSENT AGENDA

- Mr. Cheatham presented the March 2021 consent agenda for approval
- Mr. Kozlosky stated the title for item #2 should be revised to *Purchase order for two-way radio equipment*
- Ms. Parker offered a reminder on item #3 *Purchase order for planning software* confirming the cost for securement of the Remix software is not included in the current budget
- Ms. Matheny notated a correction to the February 2021 meeting minutes on page 5 of the agenda packet
- Matheny stated the Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm instead of 12:00 pm
- Ms. Mortell made a motion to approve the consent agenda with revisions as stated
- There was a second by Mr. Kozlosky and the motion carried by roll call vote
- Hearing no further comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

FUNDING UPDATE

- Mr. Cheatham provided an update on the funding model
- He stated a joint meeting between the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County was held on February 27th with discussion on a sustainable revenue stream for Wave Transit occurring during the meeting
- Mr. Cheatham stated staff was charged with conducting research on the possibilities discussed including, a room occupancy, additional sales, and a food and beverage tax
- Ms. Hays stated it is important to note that both the city and county are very dedicated to securing a permanent funding source for Wave
- She said they hope to revisit these options for further discussion during the next joint meeting scheduled for April 27th

STAFF REPORT

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Ms. Matheny to provide the staff report
- Ms. Matheny provided a project overview and presented on specific activities and associated timeline as outlined in the communications plan
- She highlighted key milestone dates and public engagement activities underway and scheduled through the project implementation date of August 15, 2021
- Ms. Matheny confirmed the ninety-day public comment period, opened formally on Monday, March 8th, will close on Sunday, June 6th
- She stated the project webpage went live as did the public comment survey
- Informational tables were installed at both transfer stations and additional updates and large format visual display boards will be added as the project progresses
- Ms. Matheny confirmed a formal public hearing is slated for April 22nd at 12:30 pm and informational sessions, which will occur at both transfer stations and virtually, are scheduled for Tuesday, May 4th and Thursday, May 6th from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm and Saturday, May 8th from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Hearing no questions, Ms. Matheny provided an update on data presented in the Operational Statistics Report
- Ms. Matheny confirmed a total of 115 trips were provided to/from vaccination appointments from mid-January to the close of February

- She confirmed vaccination transportation efforts will continue through each phase of the vaccination distribution process
- Hearing no further comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next staff item

FEBRUARY 2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Mr. Mininni to provide an update on this agenda item
- Mr. Mininni provided an update on the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) and spoke to potential implications for the Authority
- He stated of the \$1.9 trillion-dollar plan, \$30.5 billion is earmarked for transit
- Mr. Mininni stated urban transit systems will receive about 26 billion in funding
- He stated the appointment table for the ARP funds has not been published by the FTA
- Staff remains diligent in their monitoring efforts and updates will be provided once received
- Mr. Mininni reiterated the Authority is anticipating a million-dollar deficit in operating revenues with the close of the fiscal year
- He confirmed additional CARES Act funding is required to cover the deficit as expected and will be drawing down some additional funds from the CARES funding
- Mr. Mininni stated expenditures are projected to come in roughly \$700,000 below adopted budget levels
- He stated CARES Act funding is needed to cover the total variance of \$300,000 in expenditures and revenues as referenced
- Mr. Mininni stated the balance in CARES Act funding remaining effective FY22 will be \$3.7 million dollars
- He stated the period of performance for CARES Act funds concludes January 2024
- Mr. Mininni confirmed FY22 budget preparations are well underway
- He stated service hours for fixed route are provided at 59,000 and Paratransit at 15,000
- Mr. Mininni said that next year's budget is looking at 59,000 in fixed route and about 15,000 paratransit service hours
- He stated things will begin to come into focus over the next thirty to sixty days as contracts with the University and Non-emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokers are finalized
- Mr. Mininni stated FTA strongly encourages expenditure of Cares Act funding in advance of traditional or other funding sources
- He said the Authority is projected to expend the CARES Act funds by the close of FY22; meaning a permanent funding source would be needed effective FY23
- Mr. Mininni stated the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funding may provide relief into FY23 and beyond
- Ms. Mortell inquired as to why the \$4.7 million dollars of CARES Act funding is being expended first if funds can be used through January 2024
- Mr. Mininni stated FTA is encouraging the drawdown of Cares Act funds to show progress and demonstrate need
- Utilization of funds and expenditure of the grant will demonstrate the Authority's need for additional relief under future grant opportunities
- Ms. Mortell suggested finding out if other agencies at other locations have used all their CARES Act funding before receiving other funding
- Mr. Kozlosky asked for an update on restoration of SMAP funding for FY22
- Mr. Mininni stated SMAP is anticipated and therefore budgeted until they approve it at the state level, but there is also additional funding that can be drawn if it does not get approved
- Mr. Mininni stated the Authority is eligible to apply for a 5307 allocation that is not reflected in the draft budget
- Mr. Mininni stated if the Authority expends the CARES Act money first, and if SMAP funds in the amount of \$500,000 are restored for FY22, this would leave one year of 5307 funds in reserves

- Mr. Kozlosky suggested renaming the NCDOT SMAP line item
- Ms. Parker agreed to retitle the line item until confirmation is secured
- Mr. Lawler asked if the Authority would still be eligible for 5307 funds if the CARES Act funds, or are these funds being used in lieu of other federal monies
- Mr. Mininni stated the 5307 funding is an annual allocation in the amount of \$2.3 million dollars and can be received at any time once the funds have been applied for
- He said the Authority has up to three years to apply for 5307 funding before the funds lapse
- Hearing no further comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Ms. Lacer to present on the Community Grant Program
- Ms. Lacer confirmed this is an annual grant opportunity under the *Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program* available to nonprofits, local government providers and transportation providers that serve older adults and people with disabilities
- She said the Authority received grant requests totaling \$74,000 from the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center and Elderhaus at the Lake
- Ms. Lacer said grant applications were reviewed and scored by the WaveConnect Advisory Group
- Ms. Lacer stated the Authority is requesting support for award of the two grant applications, totaling \$74,000, for FY22 under the Community Grant Program through adoption of the resolution as presented on page 21 of the agenda packet
- Mr. Kozlosky made a motion to approve the *Resolution Supporting the Award of Section 5310 Community Grant Project Funds for FY22* as presented
- There was a second by Ms. Mortell and the motion carried through roll call vote
- Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

UPDATE ON GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Mr. Joye to provide the update
- Mr. Joye stated the governance structure is still under draft
- He stated the dedicated funding and governance structure are so intertwined it is challenging to finalize the governance structure without direction on a permanent funding source
- Mr. Joye stated additional guidance might be provided during the April 27th joint meeting as referenced

CONTRACTOR REPORT

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Mr. McBride to give the report
- Mr. McBride confirmed a service delivery schedule of just under 100% for the month February
- He reported five (5) road calls and one preventable accident for the month
- Mr. McBride stated a safety standdown focused on backing and following distances was held for operators
- He stated safety training efforts such as the standdown referenced are ongoing
- Ms. Mortell inquired about the increase in overtime
- Mr. McBride confirmed the increase is related to a shortage of operators in February
- He confirmed a training class of new operators is underway and once completed, we will experience a decrease in operator overtime as reported
- Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BRIEFING

- Mr. Cheatham recognized Ms. Parker to provide the Executive Director update
- Ms. Parker stated in addition to the system network redesign, two major projects are underway, RFP for management services contract and the RFP for Microtransit services
- She confirmed the transit management service contract, currently being held by First Transit, is set to expire on June 30, 2021
- Ms. Parker stated the RFP for transit management services was completed and published on March 16th
- She said proposals will be received through April 23rd with award made on May 27th and contract commencement on July 1st
- Ms. Parker provided a brief snapshot on sort of a last chance opportunity on the systems position over the past three months, December-February of ridership as compared to the same period of the prior year, prior to the pandemic
- She presented data for all fixed route systems in the Southeast region
- Ms. Parker stated systems are reporting 44% of passengers as compared to where they were last year
- She confirmed the Authority is recovering at a higher rate than the region at 59% as compared to the same time last year with vanpools and paratransit in the 50% range
- The total ridership for the entire system is 40% and that includes all modes and service for the quarter and that is directly attributed to the reduction of UNCW passengers
- Ms. Parker said that Wave will strategically, and in a safe manner, start to encourage the community to return to public transit
- Ms. Parker presented the on-time performance report for fixed route bus and trolley service from November 1, 2020 through March 23, 2021
- She stated every route except one has demonstrated improvement and performing better than the prior month through program adjustments, staff meetings with operators and operational solutions to timing issues
- She said that good progress has been made as it relates to on time performance and are expecting more improvements over the months ahead
- Mr. Kozlosky asked what is the industry standard for on time performance
- Ms. Parker said that the baseline for fixed route across the nation is around 85%, but 90% is the goal to achieve
- She said that a lot of effort is going into making sure that this is a good product and that the documentation is right and good
- Mr. Lawler stated that 79% is not where we want to be, but it is a big improvement over where it was
- Ms. Parker's final topic is Covid 19 vaccinations
- Ms. Parker said that statewide there are 68 transit systems that have provided almost 5,500 trips and Wave has provided over 3% of those
- Ms. Parker said that she would like to recognize our tem for continuing to support this initiative
- She said that New Hanover county is just below 25% partially vaccinated
- Ms. Parker stated that through a successful partnership by staff, the clinic and educational outreach, Wave is extremely excited to report that our workforce is currently 73.4% partially or whole vaccinated
- She said this provides a safer traveling environment for passengers, a safer workplace for employees and most importantly, supports the health and wellness of our employees
- Ms. Hays added the county is grateful for Ms. Parker and Wave's assistance in helping with the vaccination and getting those citizens that have limited transportation options getting them to vaccines and the incredible dedication and diligence that has been done in a very short period of time
- Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Cheatham moved to the next item on the agenda

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Cheatham entrained a motion for a standing meeting time of 12:30 pm
- Ms. Mortell made a motion for a meeting time of 12:30 pm for regularly scheduled meetings moving forward
- There was a second by Mr. Kozlosky and the motion carried by roll call vote

ADJOURNMENT

- Mr. Cheatham made a motion to adjourn the March 25th meeting
- There was a second by Ms. Mortell and the motion carried by roll call vote

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

- The next board meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2021 at 12:30 pm
- The meeting will be held remotely

Respectfully Submitted,



Megan Matheny
Deputy Director
/Kathy Williams