

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 23, 2016

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on June 23, 2016 at 12:00 pm in the airport's Eastern Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Alexis Ehrhardt, Chairperson	John Moody
Ralph Price, Vice-Chairperson	Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager
Judy Keesee	Councilman James Buckner, Guest
Wade Key	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Councilman Larry Campbell	Lisa Bivens, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

Wade Key moved that the minutes of the January 27, 2016 meeting be accepted as presented and Ralph Price seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman completed a PowerPoint presentation which involved a review of monthly ridership and financial status report data. He indicated that he believes ridership activity has decreased greatly this fiscal year due to low fuel prices. Through May 2016, fixed route ridership decreased approximately 8%, Reserve A Ride ridership decreased 4% and Senior ridership decreased 1%. However, Handivan ridership did increase 13% but this service mode generates a very small percent of total ridership for the system.

Overtime Issues

Adelman reviewed information concerning the significant increase in overtime that has occurred over the past few years. Service data for July through May for FY11-FY16 shows there has been a sixty percent growth in the reservation based service which has a direct correlation with increased overtime for this period. Reservation based service is far less efficient than fixed route service and as demand increases service hours generally increase due to the door to door nature of the operation. It is anticipated that the transit system will exceed \$50,000 in overtime charges by the end of the fiscal year due to increased service hours and workforce availability issues. Discussion continued.

Adelman indicated that the transit system receives very few applications for driver positions. He suggested that the limited interest in the job may be due to a six day work week, shift hours and drivers wages. Danville Transit's salary range is less than that of Danville Public Schools salary range, which allows drivers to start between \$12 and \$20 an hour depending on the applicant's work experience. Danville Transit starts drivers out at \$11.10 per hour. Councilman Campbell commented that if the wage rate for drivers were increased to be more competitive that it's possible overtime may decrease and workforce retention may improve.

Budget Overview

Adelman updated the Committee on the FY2017 budget and highlighted some revenue stream projections for next year. Annual rental income for the Transfer Center building is anticipated to decrease from \$25,500 to \$14,672 due to the termination of Greyhound's operation in April. However, the transit system will receive almost \$110,000 more in state aid during FY2017 than anticipated. Councilman Campbell and Councilman Buckner suggested the possibility of raising drivers' wages due to the increase in state aid. Adelman indicated that he would communicate about the possibility of increasing drivers' wages with Sara Weller, Human Resource Director. Discussion continued.

Information concerning capital projects planned for next year was also discussed with the Committee. Adelman indicated that bids for the dump truck came in under budget at \$97,000. The dump truck will be used to push snow and apply salt brine on bus routes during the winter. Other planned projects discussed included the Enterprise Drive improvements, the acquisition of a carport for the newly refurbished trolleys, the purchase of a new token rolling machine and photo copier for the Mass Transit garage office and the building expansion and parking lot improvements project. The total anticipated cost for all capital improvements is \$1,505,079 but due to available federal and state funding the city's cost is only \$60,316 or four percent. Adelman pointed out that the local match requirement for the building expansion and parking lot improvements project will be provided through the Transportation Fund's unrestricted fund balance.

Status of propane bus use

Adelman said the twenty passenger propane bus that arrived in April only accumulated 1,147 miles before it was removed from service for repair work and noted that the bus should have accumulated 8,000 miles by this time based on average daily use for new demand response vehicles. Presently, the propane bus maintains a software deficiency associated with its power control module and the propane tank manufacturer is trying to resolve this issue. Of significance, in April the propane bus averaged 4.73 miles per gallon compared to similar sized diesel buses that maintain over 9 miles per gallon. Presently, the city of Danville only has a 1,000 gallon propane tank however this September Public Works plans to install a larger 18,000 gallon propane tank. The larger tank is expected to increase the probability of acquiring propane at a reduced rate since larger bulk purchases of fuel will be possible. At that time the transit system should realize more in fuel savings with the propane bus. Currently, the cost per mile for the propane bus is greater than all other buses in the fleet due to its poor fuel economy. Discussion continued.

HB2 Grant update

Adelman updated the Committee on the status of the HB2 grant application to widen Mount Cross Road which also maintains a transit component that would involve Danville Transit providing shuttle service for Averett University. The grant application identified that Danville Transit would purchase two, twenty-eight passenger propane buses to provide the service. Averett would finance the majority of the operating cost at twenty dollars per hour. In July a project agreement should be received from the Virginia Department of Transportation. Public Works is taking the lead on this project because the majority of the grant funds are for road improvements. Transit service could begin the fall of 2017 subject to the availability of grant funds.

Mainline Trolley bus route

Adelman said that Councilman Buckner contacted him recently and expressed interest to expand the use of the trolleys to complete service along Main Street and in the downtown area. This service expansion possibility has been discussed with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager and how service could be provided safely with respect to boarding and disembarking passengers. Councilman Buckner said he has talked with many business owners and residents about this service. He suggested service could be provided along North Main, Craighead and Main Street up to Ballou Park Shopping Center. Ultimately, Buckner said he would like to see Averett get on board with the idea and incorporate the service fee into their tuition for a hop on, hop off pass. Buckner said the hours of operations could be worked out by a committee that would be formed but he is looking at mid-day until about 11:00 pm. Councilman Buckner requested the support of the Transportation Committee to form an exploratory committee for the trolley service, which he would head. Discussion continued. *A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Judy Keese to form an exploratory committee to look into the possibility of starting a mainline trolley bus route as discussed. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

Enterprise Drive project update

Adelman updated the Committee on the status of the Enterprise Drive project. He indicated a grant request was submitted for this project and it has been approved for funding. One bid was received for the project and a pre-construction meeting is scheduled with the contractor in July. The bus shelter will be erected across from Piedmont Primecare and was ordered in April. It is expected the shelter should be delivered by mid-July.

Update on Mass Transit building and parking lot expansion

Marc Adelman updated the Committee on the Mass Transit building and parking lot expansion project and provided sketches of the anticipated improvements. This project is estimated to cost \$1,300,000 which will involve rehabilitating the existing parking lot located on the east side of the transit facility and constructing a new lot on the west side of the facility that would support the development of a 4400 square foot stand-alone building. This project includes a conference room, warming kitchen, drivers' room and will also allow free up existing office space on the second floor for Danville Public Schools to occupy. Discussion continued. The building will be bid out in July and should be complete by the spring/summer of 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.