

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 11, 2018**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on June 11, 2018 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Ralph Price, Chairperson	Erik Chambers, Public Works
Alexis Ehrhardt, Vice-Chairperson	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Larry Campbell	Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director
Judy Keesee	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant
James Buckner, Guest	

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Alexis Ehrhardt moved that the minutes of the January 25, 2018 meeting be accepted as presented and Larry Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Recognition of Bus Driver

Marc Adelman informed the Committee of an incident that occurred on June 8th in which a transit driver, Kim Atkins, noticed a young child was attempting to interact with other drivers on Riverside Drive. The driver called the police and assisted the child until they arrived. Adelman said he was very proud of how the driver handled the situation and for her initiative to protect the interests of a child while operating a transit vehicle. Chairman Ralph Price also commented that Kim Atkins should be commended.

Danville Transit Bus Locator System Demonstration

Adelman informed the Committee that during FY18 transit buses were equipped with digital radio communications equipment that maintain GPS capabilities. Adelman said Erik Chambers, Public Works Communications Manager suggested to use available surplus funds from the radio project to install antennas to support an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system that would work with the new digital equipment. As a result, the public would be able to track the location of fixed route buses via the internet by using smart phones, tablets and computers. This system also has the capability to send email messages to transit staff if a vehicle is going over a certain speed limit set for certain parameters.

Erik Chambers completed a presentation for the Committee to illustrate how the automatic vehicle locator system will operate. Adelman said that plans call for this system to be completed by the fall of 2018. Information about the new bus locators system will also be provided in the new route and schedule guides that will be distributed in August.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status report data through April 2018 with the Committee. The transit system is under budget for operating revenue by 10.1% or \$36,265. Total operating expenses are also under budget by 5.2% or \$101,668. Since operating expenses are under budget and the deficit is under budget the transit system's eligibility for federal operating aid is also less by \$48,718. However, due to the loss of State aid for the senior service, the local match is over budget by \$21,766. The local match for the base service is under budget by \$16,000, which helps to offset the loss of state operating aid for the senior service. In addition, operating revenue levels have been impacted by the decline in paid fixed route ridership and the cap placed on the Reserve A Ride service since January 2017. Anticipated contract revenue related to the Averett service is also lower than budgeted since the desired service level for the operation was not received from Averett until after the FY18 mass transit budget was submitted in 2017.

Status of FY18 Capital Projects

Adelman updated the Committee on the status of the 2018 Capital projects:

- All parking lots were seal coated at the beginning of the fiscal year. The project came in under budget of the \$20,000 grant amount.
- Bus stop signs for the Mainline trolley service were installed prior to the service starting in August 2017. The grant amount was \$5,000.
- The coin-counting machine was replaced at the beginning of the fiscal year. The grant amount was \$12,000.
- A bus shelter was installed and sidewalk improvements were completed during the winter on Memorial Drive close to the Adult Education Center. The grant amount was \$59,600.
- Four, new 14-passenger buses, an 8-passenger high roof van and a 20-passenger bus were delivered and placed in service this spring. The grant amount for the vehicles was \$652,000, which included funds for modifications to convert gas buses to a propane bi-fuel arrangement.
- All buses have been equipped with digital radio communications equipment. The grant amount for this project was \$64,600, which included surplus funds to purchase antennas for the AVL and bus locator system previously discussed.
- The propane refueling station is expected to be completed by the end of July.

Adelman said he recently completed an analysis of the fuel cost for the small buses used in the fleet. The analysis showed the propane buses used for reservation-based operations were less costly to operate per mile by 30% during the month of April compared to other gas and diesel buses of similar size. He added that the price per gallon and fuel efficiency for the different types of fuel contributes greatly in determining overall fuel cost but the price of fuel can fluctuate significantly.

FY19 Approved State and Federal Funding Levels for Operating and Capital Assistance

Adelman said the city was recently made aware this spring of the State's recommendations for funding levels for capital project requests and operating assistance for FY19. He mentioned that all capital projects will require a 4% local match.

- Federal and state funding levels for expansion buses to support the regional bus operations were approved to support a 4% local match requirement versus the anticipated 10% funding level. Danville City Council will consider appropriating funds for the regional buses next month.
- Funding was approved to replace the A/C recharging unit at \$6,000.
- Funding was approved for the mobile column lift at \$30,000,
- Funding was approved to purchase and install a bus shelter at Wal-Mart at \$17,000. Walmart has approved a location to install the shelter across from the Garden Center however, this project will require an approved deed of easement. Public Works Engineering prepared a draft deed of easement and it was provided to the Wal-Mart Manager for execution.
- State operating aid was approved for about \$8,400 more than was anticipated at \$409,316.
- State funding approved through the Senior Transportation Assistance Program at \$16,600. State funding was also pursued through the New Freedom grant program that could provide increased funding, however this grant request was not approved.
- Federal Operating Assistance was approved to finance 50% of the deficit.

Mainline Trolley Service Update

The Mainline Trolley Planning Committee recently met to discuss to make recommendations for route and schedule changes for the Committee's consideration. Adelman reviewed ridership and recommendations for changes to the route path with the Committee. Adelman said that these recommendations were based on survey results. The survey results were distributed for the Committee for review.

Highlights of the Mainline Trolley Survey results:

- 245 survey responses received
- 71% of the respondents have not ridden the Mainline Trolley to date
- 83% of the respondents indicated they would use the service to or from their home if the trolley would go off route within a ¼ mile
- 73% of the respondents confirmed they would use the service if the route was extended to Trade Street and Riverside Drive
- 68% of the respondents indicated they would most likely use the trolley from 8 pm to 12 am
- 58% of the respondents indicated they would most likely use the trolley from 5 pm to 8 pm
- 8% - 11% of the respondents indicated they would use the service in the morning
- 11% - 13% of the respondents indicated they would use the service in the afternoon
- 34% of the respondents indicated they would most likely ride during the winter

Mainline Trolley Survey Highlights (continued)

- More respondents identified they would like the trolley to operate along West Main Street west of Ballou Park (41%), than other areas of the city identified which varied between 9% and 26%

Adelman identified the following proposed Mainline Trolley Route and Service Schedule Modifications:

- Extend the route to other areas of the city to increase passenger demand
- Permit same day requests until 2 pm for the trolley bus to go off route up to ¼ mile to improve passenger convenience and access to the route
- Permit same day reservations to link the route to the Danville Golf Club
- Add five (5) minutes to the timetable to support off-route deviations (50 minutes)
- Offer service during the summer, spring and fall
- Offer service from 6 pm to 12 am on Fridays and Saturdays, this also will help to avoid duplication of existing fixed route service

Discussion regarding the recommendations continued. ***After discussion, a motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Judy Keesee to accept the recommendations made by the Mainline Trolley Subcommittee to make the route changes and modifications to the Mainline Trolley service that were discussed. All were in favor and the motion passed.***

Regional Bus Service Update

Marc Adelman mentioned the State has approved federal and state funding to purchase the buses for the county service and on July 17th, City Council will consider appropriating the funds to acquire the buses. Once the funds are appropriated, the buses will be ordered and could potentially take up to ten months to be delivered. The operating grant to support the service will be submitted by February 1, 2019. If approved the service could not start before July 1, 2019. The local match for this operating grant if approved would be provided by a grant from the Tobacco Commission that was secured by the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center for Halifax and Pittsylvania counties.

Discussion regarding potential service schedules for the regional bus operation were discussed by the Committee. Adelman updated the Committee concerning his interest to meet with various groups to obtain input to develop the service schedules for both counties. Adelman mentioned that the timetable for the service must allow enough time to meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to go off route up to ¾ mile to transport persons with disabilities and complement shift time requirements for businesses along the route path. He also added that planning activities completed over the next few months will likely influence the development of the service schedule and route path.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 pm.