

POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (PRTC)

OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

DATE: December 1, 2011  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center  
14700 Potomac Mills Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811

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1. CALL TO ORDER

In Chairman Jenkins' absence, Vice Chairman Way called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with a quorum present.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

*Richard Anderson	Virginia House of Delegates
*Maureen Caddigan	Prince William County
*Wally Covington	Prince William County
*Fred Howe	City of Fredericksburg
*Frank Jones	City of Manassas Park
*Jerry Logan, Secretary	Spotsylvania County
*Michael May, Immediate Past Chairman	Prince William County
*Jackson Miller	Virginia House of Delegates
*Frank Principi	Prince William County
*Gary Skinner	Spotsylvania County
*Susan Stimpson	Stafford County
*Jonathan Way, Vice Chairman	City of Manassas

MEMBERS ABSENT

Thelma Drake	Department of Rail and Public Transportation
John Jenkins, Chairman	Prince William County
Paul Milde, Treasurer	Stafford County
Marty Nohe	Prince William County
Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate

ALTERNATES PRESENT

\*Lorraine Lasch

Prince William County

ALTERNATES ABSENT

Ateeb Ahmad

Prince William County

Hilda Barg

Prince William County

Hap Connors

Spotsylvania County

Harry Crisp

Stafford County

Mark Dudenhefer

Stafford County

Brad Ellis

City of Fredericksburg

Matthew Kelly

City of Fredericksburg

Suhas Naddoni

City of Manassas Park

Hal Parrish

City of Manassas

Steve Pittard

Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Benjamin Pitts

Spotsylvania County

Sorine Preli

Prince William County

Corey Stewart

Prince William County

John Stirrup

Prince William County

William Wren

City of Manassas Park

\*Voting Member

STAFF AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Nick Alexandrow

PRTC Transit Project Manager

Gina Altis

PRTC Executive Assistant

David Awbrey

DRPT Urban Transit Program Administrator

Monica Backmon

PWC Regional Transportation Planner

Doris Chism

PRTC Dir., Customer Service & Dispatch

Patrick Durany

Senior Aide, Supervisor John Jenkins

Joyce Embrey

PRTC Dir., Finance & Administration

Shanta Garth

FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Accounting & Admin.

Al Harf

PRTC Executive Director

Angela Horan

PRTC Legal Counsel

Robb Howell

FIRST TRANSIT General Manager

Ryan Jones

PRTC Special Projects Coordinator

Eric Lee

FIRST TRANSIT Safety & Training Manager

Bob Leibbrandt

PWC Budget & Analysis

Eric Marx

PRTC Dir., Planning & Operations

Betsy Massie

PRTC Dir., of Grants & Project Management

Paul Pitchke

FIRST TRANSIT AGM-Operations

Dale Zehner

VRE Chief Executive Officer

3. INVOCATION

Led by Commissioner Howe.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commissioner Logan.

5. CITIZENS' TIME No citizens came forward.

6. PRESENTATIONS

[First Transit] A. First Transit General Manager Robb Howell – Employee Recognition and Operations Report.

Mr. Howell noted that the Emergency Service Plan (ESP) is operating this evening as a result of the “National Tree Lighting Ceremony” taking place in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Howell recognized the October 2011 Operator-of-the-Month Michael Debrah. Mr. Debrah has been a bus operator since 2008 and currently operates the bus service on the Woodbridge B OmniLink route. Mr. Howell reported 52 commendations were received during the month of November (directed to 32 different operators).

Continuing, Mr. Howell reported that the fall service change took place on November 14<sup>th</sup>. While an increase in complaints following a service change is expected, he noted that the “spike” in complaints was uncharacteristically higher, particularly during the first week following the service change. While complaints abated thereafter (the average daily number of complaints dropped 41% for the remainder of the month), the uncharacteristically high spike is cause for fresh stock-taking and training adjustments going forward as First Transit is doing.

Comparing year-to-date totals for 2010 and 2011, Mr. Howell went on to report that the OmniRide complaint rate per 10,000 trips is higher, while the complaint rate for OmniLink is basically on par. He attributed a significant portion of the OmniRide complaint rate increase to overcrowding in the months prior to the implementation of the overcrowding relief plan. “Complaint rate” reductions thereafter (e.g. September and October) evidenced this. Mr. Howell went on to report that the accident frequency rate for the month of November is 1.9 per 100,000 miles (4 preventable/4 non-preventable). He explained that most of the non-preventable collisions occur as a result of “mirror clips” by passing vehicles in downtown DC.

With regard to staffing levels, Mr. Howell reported that a turnover of 24 operators has occurred since October 1<sup>st</sup>. He attributed the high operator turnover to disciplinary terminations and extended medical leaves, in addition to the normal “turnover” factors. As a result, strategic buses are being used to compensate for operator shortages, which is not what’s intended. Clarifying this point further, Mr. Howell said strategic buses are intended to assist in the event of mechanical breakdowns, traffic congestion, collisions, etc. Continuing, Mr. Howell reported that 16 people are currently in operator training with three people poised to graduate next week. Four people are scheduled to return within the next two weeks from long-term medical leave and people who already have a CDL license will be accelerated through their route training. Another class is scheduled to commence on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Moving to another subject, Mr. Howell reported that the fleet-wide installation of new “drive cam” cameras is now complete. He noted that the new drive cam camera system is now a “managed service,” such that “drive cam” personnel in California are viewing the videos to ferret out “false alarms.” This allows First Transit to devote its time to reviewing only meaningful incidents leading to follow-up one-on-one training as required.

Concluding his report, Mr. Howell noted that the October 2011 “Customer Satisfaction Survey” results are located elsewhere in the Board Kit. He also noted that the next “Fleet Maintenance Audit” will commence the week of December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chairman Way asked what constitutes a preventable incident. Mr. Howell explained that preventable incidents mean that the operator of the bus didn’t do everything reasonable to prevent the incident from happening. Mr. Harf added that the distinction between preventable and non-preventable incidents is important from a disciplinary perspective as culpability is assigned based on that distinction.

Referring to the eight preventable/non-preventable incidents, Commissioner Skinner asked for further clarification of “incidents.” Mr. Howell replied that incidents are labeled as such whenever there is contact of any sort, no matter how minor. Mr. Howell went on to observe that even non-preventable incidents can be an impetus for follow-up training, since bus operator trends are also reviewed (e.g. if an operator experiences a lot of mirror clips, then a review takes place about how the bus is being parked, etc.). Commissioner Skinner also asked how many of the eight incidents were related to other vehicles hitting the bus. Mr. Howell noted that two buses hit fixed objects (e.g. pole, etc.) and six involved other vehicles.

Commissioner Principi asked if “near misses” are being tracked such as the airlines and the shipping business track. Mr. Howell replied “yes,” and explained that an “entry prevention program” is in place and each bus operator is given a book for reporting. If a bus operator encounters a near miss, the book contains a “slip” to report the near miss. Also, a “hot bus board” map is located in the PRTC Transit Center operators’ lounge where a mark is placed on the map to track where high numbers of near misses occur.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RES 11-12-01                      Minutes of November 3, 2011.  
[PRTC]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner May, to approve the Minutes, as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\MAY; WITH MAJORITY VOTE, COVINGTON\PRINCIPI ABSTAINED)

8. AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 11-12-02                      Agenda of December 1, 2011.  
[PRTC]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner May, to approve the Agenda, as amended. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\MAY, UNANIMOUS)

9. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

RES 11-12-03                      Consent Agenda of December 1, 2011.  
[PRTC]

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Skinner, to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. (CADDIGAN\SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-04              A.      Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Period Ended  
[PRTC]    September 30, 2011.

Accepted the Jurisdictional Financial Report for the Period Ended September 30, 2011, as presented. (CADDIGAN\SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-05              B.      PRTC 2012 Meetings Schedule.  
[PRTC]

Accepted the July 5, 2012 meeting change to July 12, 2012 and adopted the 2012 Meetings Schedule, as presented. (CADDIGAN\SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-06              C.      Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Annual Certifications  
[PRTC]    and Assurances.

Authorized the Executive Director to execute the appropriate FTA certifications and assurances, with concurrence of PRTC's and VRE's legal counsel, and execute the FTA grants awarded to PRTC on behalf of VRE and itself, as presented. (CADDIGAN\SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-07              D.      City of Manassas Request for \$85,000 in Motor Fuels Tax  
[Manassas]    Funds to be Budgeted and Appropriated for the Liberia  
   Avenue Third Lane Project.

Authorized the expenditure of \$85,000 of the City of Manassas' 2.1% motor fuels tax funds for the Liberia Avenue Third Lane Project, as presented. (CADDIGAN\SKINNER, UNANIMOUS)

10. VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE)

[VRE]                              A.      Operations Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes of  
   November 18, 2011. There were no comments.

[VRE]

B. Chief Executive Officer's Report (11/11).

Mr. Zehner reported that system wide on-time performance for the month of November is 95%, with the Fredericksburg line slightly higher than the Manassas line. He went on to report that VRE's highest on-time performance occurred in the month of October. System wide on-time performance was 98.17% in October (97.86% and 98.44% on the Fredericksburg Line and Manassas Line, respectively). He attributed this to the many initiatives recently undertaken to improve VRE, including new locomotives and track replacement programs implemented by the host railroads. Mr. Zehner also reported that the average daily ridership for the month of September was 19,543. Also, three of the top ten ridership days occurred in November, higher than October which had two top ten ridership days.

Continuing, Mr. Zehner announced that the "Operation Lifesaver Santa Trains" will operate on December 10<sup>th</sup> leaving from the Fredericksburg, Woodbridge, Manassas, and Burke Centre stations. Tickets went on sale on November 28<sup>th</sup> (half sold on-line and the other half sold at five different locations). The on-line tickets sold out in 12 minutes (7,600 tickets sold) and by 2:00 p.m. at the five different locations. The annual VRE Toys for Tots campaign will be held on December 7<sup>th</sup> and toys will also be accepted during the Santa Trains event.

Concluding, Mr. Zehner reported that on Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, a five member delegation from the Chinese Railway Group and two individuals from the Governor's office will ride the train from Union Station to Broad Run and return. He noted that the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) arranged this event.

Commissioner Principi asked for an update on the Rippon crossing. Mr. Zehner noted that the situation was discussed at the November VRE Operations Board meeting. The issue for VRE is "liability." He explained that VRE's agreement with CSXT indicates that the facilities built are for commuter rail purposes only. The question asked is that since VRE already has the pedestrian bridge at the Rippon station, can it be used for other purposes other than commuter rail. VRE is currently working with Prince William County and the Division of Risk Management, which handles VRE's insurance program, to ensure the cost can be covered. Commissioner Principi also asked if a time line is known. Mr. Zehner replied approximately two to three months.

With regard to the new locomotives, Commissioner Skinner asked if all 20 locomotives have been placed in service. Mr. Zehner replied "yes," and noted that all but two of the old locomotives have been sold and moved off the property. VRE is currently attempting to sell the remaining two.

RES 11-12-08  
[VRE]

C. Forward the FY 2011 Audited Financial Statements and Management Letter to the Commissions.

Commissioner Stimpson moved, with a second by Commissioner Principi, to authorize the VRE Chief Executive Officer to forward to the Commissions VRE's financial statements



Director At-Large #1 (to be determined)  
Director At-Large #2 (to be determined)

Vice Chairman Way noted that the nominations will be voted on at the January Commission meeting, with the “to be determined” positions possibly deferred until the February Commission meeting when the jurisdiction members will be known.

[PRTC]                    B.        Review of the PRTC FY 2011 Audit.

Mr. Harf noted that PRTC Chairman Jenkins is of the mind that the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for January 5<sup>th</sup> can be cancelled, inasmuch as its sole purpose is to preview the FY 2011 audit slated for presentation to the full Commission later that evening. With no reason to expect a problematic audit, Chairman Jenkins has suggested the Executive Committee meeting be cancelled. Hearing no objections from the Executive Committee members, Vice Chairman Way confirmed its cancellation.

## 12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TIME

[PRTC]                    A.        Executive Director’s Report.

Mr. Harf reported on federal authorization progress. On the House side, an outline of a five year bill has been released, and the House leadership has said it intends to enact a bill before the end of the calendar year. On the Senate side, a two-year bill has been released (highway section only), so the two chambers have decidedly different intentions. Both bills envision sustaining funding at the current SAFETEA-LU levels, which will be a challenge for both chambers because the highway gas tax is not generating as much revenue as required to sustain these funding levels. Both chambers are discussing supplementing the highway gas tax with other sources to fill the gap. The gap on the Senate side is \$12 billion and to date no source has been identified. The House envisions off-shore oil revenues as a source, which will be a tough sell in the Senate. SAFETEA-LU expires at the end of March so “the heat is on” for the two chambers to seek a mutually agreeable accord. It’s an open question as to whether they will succeed between now and March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Turning to state matters, Mr. Harf confirmed that the legislatively-mandated study of transit funding allocation formulas (SJ 297) will not be completed as quickly as originally planned. Only an interim report will be produced by the start of the upcoming General Assembly session, reporting on work completed to-date and pledging that a final report will be forthcoming before the start of the 2013 General Assembly session.

Moving to another subject, Mr. Harf reported that the Governor’s Reform Commission (GRC) met on November 14<sup>th</sup>. He noted that one of the recommendations made was to transfer the 2.1% motor fuels tax collections/enforcement responsibility from the Department of Taxation (“Taxation”) to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which is currently before the Governor. It is expected that the Governor will embrace the recommendation and legislation will be introduced in the upcoming General Assembly session directing the responsible agencies to fashion a “transfer plan” so that the transaction

can be accomplished by July 2013. Once the Governor has adopted the recommendation, DMV and Taxation will begin work on the legislative drafting, which both agencies view as a “short” piece of legislation simply directing the responsible agencies to produce the transfer plan.

Continuing, Mr. Harf explained that PRTC has been in discussions with both DMV and Taxation about the “statute of limitations” issue. He reminded the Commission that there’s a three year limit on this tax and, since distributor-levied taxes began in January 2010, the statute of limitations will begin to rear its head at the end of calendar year 2012. Referring to the November Commission meeting briefing on the status of the audits to-date, Mr. Harf reiterated that out of the 100 plus distributors, only 17 audits are in some stage of completion (meaning that in 20 months, only 17 audits are underway). PRTC has asked Taxation how many more audits it expects to complete by the end of calendar year 2012 and how much exposure PRTC is likely to face vis a vis the statute of limitations, with no response as yet. Mr. Harf noted that depending on the response, it may have to urge Taxation and DMV to deal with the statute of limitations question as part of the legislation introduced during the 2012 General Assembly session.

Mr. Harf also reported that the Governor’s office issued a press release calling for the consolidation of NVT A and NVTC. The recommendation is different from the consolidation proposal discussed a year ago that encompassed PRTC and VRE as well as NVT A and NVTC. He explained that there are still implications with regard to VRE, because the consolidation of NVT A and NVTC has the effect of putting jurisdictions at the consolidated agency’s governance “table” that do not have a financial interest in matters coming before the agency for decision-making. For example, Prince William County doesn’t have any interest in WMATA and Loudoun County doesn’t have any interest in VRE. If the consolidation comes to pass, issues of this sort would need to be worked out. Consolidation is not impossible Mr. Harf observed, but it is complicated.

With regard to the fall schedule change, Mr. Harf noted that it was not one of PRTC’s more stellar schedule changes. He went on to note that the “spike” in complaints is a concern and management is troubleshooting what’s at the root of the spike. Management believes that in part it’s a consequence of rolling out for the first time the SmarTrip card pass products, which involves complicated transactions at the farebox that are new to the bus operators.

Concluding his report, Mr. Harf noted that PRTC conducts a bus “Customer Satisfaction Survey” once every four months. He further noted that the survey results appearing elsewhere in the Board Kit feature higher marks than any time in the recent past. What matters most to customers on the OmniRide bus service is having a seat, on-time performance, and bus cleanliness. Customers’ marks were high in these categories as a consequence of the self-financed, additional bus trips introduced over the August to October time frame to alleviate overcrowding. PRTC also introduced “headway-based scheduling” in the afternoons departing from DC whereby buses depart DC on their route once every specified number of minutes instead of the customer having to depend on a paper schedule to know the precise time that a bus is departing. Mr. Harf noted that the headway-based scheduling practice coupled with the overcrowding relief trips, are the principal reasons for

the “satisfaction” improvement. He further noted that PRTC also made adjustments on the OmniLink bus service to counteract the effects of on-time performance difficulties. The adjustments lengthen the time intervals slightly during certain times of the day on successive buses on the OmniLink routes, which is PRTC’s “coping strategy” to compensate for the fact that more local traffic congestion and more traffic signals lengthens the time required for a bus to traverse from one end of the route to the other. As a result, satisfaction with on-time performance has improved significantly.

[PRTC]                      B.      Action Items:

RES 11-12-11              1.      2011/2012 State Legislative Agenda.  
[PRTC]

Commissioner Howe moved, with a second by Commissioner Lasch, to endorse the state legislative agenda for 2011/2012 and authorized the transmittal to the appropriate state legislative and congressional delegations. There was no discussion on the motion. (HOWE\LASCH; WITH MAJORITY VOTE, ANDERSON\MILLER ABSTAINED)

RES 11-12-12              2.      Gillig (OmniLink Replacement Bus) Award.  
[PRTC]

Mr. Harf noted that PRTC has sixteen 2004-vintage OmniLink buses (buses of this type ideally are kept in active service for ten years or 350,000 miles, whichever comes first). The buses are poised for replacement in calendar year 2013 based on mileage. The action before the Commission will enable PRTC to use residual grant funds to purchase five of the sixteen buses for delivery at the time the buses age up to retirement age based on mileage. The remaining eleven buses will be purchased as part of the FY 2013 grant cycle proposed as part of the FY 2013 budget and as part of the FY 2013 state capital grant application. The buses will be purchased without the need for an independent procurement, because PRTC assisted the VDRPT and General Services in launching a statewide bus procurement. That procurement has been completed and buses comparable to PRTC’s OmniLink buses are now available for purchase off the state contract.

Commissioner Caddigan moved, with a second by Commissioner Lasch, to authorize the Executive Director to execute a purchase order for the production and delivery of five 30-foot Gillig buses and to make use of \$110,765 residual funds as a contingency allowance to cover unforeseen related expenses. There was no discussion on the motion. (CADDIGAN\LASCH, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-13              3.      Travel Training Contract Award.  
[PRTC]

Mr. Harf noted that the Commission is being asked to authorize the hiring of a contractor to assist PRTC in developing a travel training curriculum targeting seniors, people with disabilities, and low income households within PRTC’s transit service area, who are not currently using the bus system to its full advantage. The purpose of the travel training



RES 11-12-16  
[PRTC]

6. Expression of Appreciation to Commissioner Jerry Logan.

Commissioner Skinner moved, with a second by Commissioner Stimpson, to express the Commission's appreciation for Mr. Logan's service and contributions as a PRTC Commissioner/Officer (Secretary) from March 2010 to December 2011. There was no discussion on the motion. (SKINNER\STIMPSON, UNANIMOUS)

RES 11-12-17  
[PRTC]

7. Expression of Appreciation to Manassas City Manager Lawrence Hughes.

Vice Chairman Way moved, with a second by Commissioner Caddigan, to express the Commission's appreciation to Mr. Hughes for his service and contributions as the Manassas City Manager since April 1999, ending his service as City Manager effective December 31, 2011 and serving as a PRTC Commissioner from April 1999 to July 2008. There was no discussion on the motion. (WAY\CADDIGAN, UNANIMOUS)

[PRTC]

C. Information Items:

1. Fall 2011 Bus Service/Customer Satisfaction Survey. There were no further comments.
2. PRTC Service Performance Reports. There were no comments.
3. PRTC Budget-to-Actual Comparison. There were no comments.
4. Communications:
  - a. Related to Funding. There were no comments.
  - b. Related to Jurisdiction. There were no comments.
  - c. General Interest. There were no comments.

13. OTHER BUSINESS/COMMISSIONERS' TIME

There was no other business to come before the Commission.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice Chairman Way adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 5, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: PRTC Transit Center  
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Woodbridge, VA 22192-6811  
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