

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – APRIL 6, 2000**  
**NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The monthly meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Snyder at 8:12 P.M.

**Members Present**

Leo J. Bevon  
William Bogard  
Sharon Bulova  
Gerald Connolly  
Paul Ferguson  
Jay Fisette  
Katherine K. Hanley  
Dana Kauffman  
Elaine McConnell  
David F. Snyder  
Marian Van Landingham  
Mary Margaret Whipple  
Christopher Zimmerman

**Members Absent**

L. Karen Darner  
Kerry J. Donley  
Scott Silverthorne  
Lois L. Walker

**Staff Present**

Rhonda W. Gilcrest  
DeLania Hardy  
Gyles Norwood  
Stephen T. Roberts (VRE)  
Jennifer Straub  
Richard K. Taube

## Minutes of the March 2, 2000 NVTC Meeting

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Fisette, to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Snyder, Van Landingham, Whipple and Zimmerman.

### Legislative Items

Mr. Taube explained that usually after the General Assembly session, the commission writes to the members of the Northern Virginia General Assembly delegation. Also, a draft letter to Secretary Ybarra has been prepared since she has postponed the pre-allocation hearings. The letter reflects what NVTC would have included in its testimony for the hearing.

Mr. Taube reviewed actions taken by the General Assembly during the 2000 session. He stated that NVTC's requests for technical corrections to the 1998 Northern Virginia Transportation District bonds were not accomplished, but a source of funds was identified for annual debt service for the 1999 bonds. New funds for public transit were assigned to a new Priority Transportation Fund to be allocated at the discretion of the CTB primarily for projects designated by the General Assembly. Many transit capital projects should be funded at higher matching ratios, but NVTC's formula assistance shortfall (about \$12 million annually) was not addressed. For Northern Virginia, designated transit projects include I-66 widening and rail extension, Metro parking, VRE express trains, Metro rolling stock, and Ballston Metro. In addition, \$745 million of statewide projects were designated, and—assuming high-speed rail funds all go for VRE projects—Northern Virginia (broadly defined) will benefit from \$139 million, including Fredericksburg high-speed rail capital, Northern Virginia high-speed rail capital, and Dulles BRT/rail.

Mr. Taube reported that on the federal front, there have been efforts to roll back some of the federal gas tax, which would adversely impact federal funding of transit projects. On April 6, 2000, the Senate overwhelmingly voted not to change the existing gas tax levels. Several bills have also been introduced that would require the Clinton Administration to issue an executive order mandating federal agencies to provide Metrochek benefits to employees.

NVTC's General Assembly members were asked to review the recent session. Delegate Van Landingham stated that the transportation package was a disappointment and she voted against it because it didn't do what it was supposed to do. Senator Whipple also commented.

Mr. Snyder asked if there was consensus on sending a letter to the Northern Virginia General Assembly delegation. Mr. Connolly stated that it may be better to not send a letter because NVTC would not want to be seen as agreeing on the outcome of the session. Commissioners agreed not to send a letter. Chairman Snyder thanked NVTC's legislators for their efforts during the General Assembly session.

Mrs. Hanley asked if the commission should wait to send the letter to Secretary Ybarra until after the Governor signs the transportation legislation. Mr. Bevon responded that the governor is expected to sign it, without any substantial changes to the transit portion of the bill. He stated that the General Assembly did acknowledge transit and that it should play a greater role. Many rural legislators voted for transit for the first time. Mrs. Whipple agreed. Mr. Taube stated that the letter could wait until after the governor signs the legislation.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mrs. Bulova, to authorize the letter to be sent to Secretary Ybarra, conditional on no major changes to the legislation. Chairman Snyder stated that the letter should mention the 2020 Plan. Commissioners agreed. Mrs. Whipple suggested using bold lettering for important points. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Snyder, Van Landingham, Whipple and Zimmerman.

#### VDR&PT Proposal to Change State Transit Formula Assistance Allocation Procedures

Chip Badger, of VDR&PT, gave a presentation on his department's report to the Virginia General Assembly (House Document No. 52) in response to a legislative request (HJR 720, 1999 Acts of Assembly). Mr. Badger reviewed the different allocation formula options that VDR&PT looked at and he discussed their advantages and disadvantages.

Mr. Badger explained that VDR&PT has recommended the following regarding the state distribution formula: 1) beginning in FY 02, use fiscal stress factors; 2) hold harmless any transit system that would see a decrease in assistance as a result of using fiscal stress factors; 3) eliminate the "efficiency penalty" by holding harmless from a loss of state aid any transit system that maintains service levels; and 4) use a single participation ratio (95%) for all categories of eligible expenses. Comments are due June 1<sup>st</sup>. Any recommended changes would be included in the budget submittal for FY 02.

Mrs. Hanley observed that only Northern Virginia is negatively impacted from the recommended changes to the formula.

Mr. Bernie Caton of Alexandria, stated that Northern Virginia has the worst traffic congestion in the Commonwealth and the Washington, DC metropolitan area is second in the nation. Northern Virginia already pays four times more per capita for transit compared to other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth. This shows our region's fiscal

stress. Mr. Connolly observed that the General Assembly's mandate was based on equity issues, so that such a disparity is significant. Mr. Caton added that Northern Virginia pays six times per capita more than Hampton Road pays. He also reviewed other problems jurisdictional staff has with the recommendation, including using adjusted gross income which distorts fiscal stress indicators. Mr. Connolly stated that the recommendation seems to help Hampton Roads at Northern Virginia's expense.

Mr. Kauffman asked if NVTC should submit comments on VDR&PT's recommendation. Mr. Bevon explained that this is the third time the General Assembly has asked for recommendations to change the formula. He encouraged NVTC to comment. Mr. Ferguson suggested that NVTC could send a letter expressing its strong disappointment that the recommendation would provide a loss of funds to the region. In response to a question from Mrs. Whipple, Mr. Bevon stated that comments would be attached to the report to the legislature.

Mr. Connolly stated that the comments should consider equity issues and make a case for equity for this region. Northern Virginia's population is much bigger and other factors should be addressed. Mrs. Hanley suggested staff draft a "minority report" that addresses these issues. Mrs. Whipple suggested recommending a transportation stress index. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the region generates tax returns for the state and transit contributes greatly to this region's economic success. Chairman Snyder agreed that if the region gets fewer dollars for transit and can't solve its transportation issues, businesses might relocate to other states. VDR&PT's recommendation should be opposed because it is bad for Northern Virginia and for the entire Commonwealth. Mrs. Hanley stated that jurisdictional budget staff may be able to help to determine the compounding effects of stress as it relates to education stress factors. Mr. Bevon stated that commissioners have made some good points and challenged NVTC to submit an alternative, including the concept of a transportation stress index. Mr. Connolly reiterated that this all ties into the equity issue.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Connolly, to direct staff, with the assistance of jurisdictional staff, to prepare a response to the VDR&PT recommendation for commission review at the May, 2000 NVTC meeting. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Ferguson, Fissette, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Snyder, Van Landingham, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Chairman Snyder asked that the comments be circulated in advance of the meeting and the discussion would occur at NVTC's business meeting following the joint meeting in May.

Mrs. McConnell left the meeting at 9:35 P.M. and did not return.

### Agenda for May 4, 2000 Joint Meeting with PRTC

Mr. Taube stated that NVTC's next joint meeting with PRTC is scheduled for May 4, 2000 at 7:30 P.M. at the Springfield Hilton. He stated that the VRE Operations Board is expected to recommend an interim VRE director for commission approval at the meeting. Chairman Snyder asked commissioners to provide any comments on the agenda to staff in the next two weeks.

### WMATA Items

WMATA's Infrastructure Renewal Program. Mr. Taube reported that WMATA sent a letter to TPB concerning the Constrained Long Range Plan since WMATA has learned that its Infrastructure Renewal Plan (IRP) may not be fully funded. The TCC Executive Committee will also discuss this issue at its April 7, 2000 meeting. Mrs. Hanley stated that toll revenues are also an issue with which NVTC needs to be concerned. She expressed concerns that the clean air requirements will also not be met.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Kauffman, to send a letter to TPB expressing concerns about clean air requirements and the commission's dismay about funding for WMATA's IRP. Mrs. Hanley stated that the toll road revenue issue should also be included in the letter.

Mr. Ferguson left the meeting at 9:46 P.M. and did not return.

The commission then voted on the motion. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, Snyder, Van Landingham, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Pentagon Restoration Project. Mr. Taube stated that a letter from Senator Warner to Secretary Cohen supports WMATA's request for improvements for the new bus bays at the Pentagon. A copy of the letter was provided.

Falls Church Hybrid-Electric Bus. WMATA staff is extensively testing the AVS pilot bus. The WMATA Board viewed the bus on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Chairman Snyder thanked NVTC commissioners and staff who participated in the event in Falls church highlighting the arrival of the bus.

Diesel Fuel Costs. The recent surge in fuel prices has had an impact on WMATA. Each five cent increase per gallon costs WMATA \$700,000 annually.

Commissioners Fisette and Zimmerman left the meeting at 9:48 P.M.

## Regional items

Dulles Corridor. On April 14, 2000, the Dulles Area Transportation Association will host a seminar on progress on the BRT/rail project.

Framework for Continuation of Bus Fare Buydown Program. Local staff proposed a framework to continue the bus fare buydown program. The program is designed to mitigate the air quality and revenue impacts associated with the HOV requirement on I-66 inside the Beltway changing from three to two passengers. The proposed program will rotate corridors in order to provide maximum benefit to the region. The rotation will begin with the I-66 corridor, followed by I-95 (Springfield Interchange), the Dulles corridor, and Route 1.

New TCC Task Force on Land Use/Transportation. Chairman Snyder is chairing this new task force. Chairman Snyder announced that the next meeting is scheduled prior to the next TPB meeting.

NVTC Quarterly Transit Service Change Report. The report has been reviewed by local staff and will be posted on NVTC's website.

## Progress on NVTC's Workprogram

Mr. Taube reported that staff continues to make progress on NVTC's workprogram. A written memorandum summarized activities of each member of the NVTC staff.

## NVTC Financial Report for February, 2000

The financial report was provided to commissioners. There were no questions.

## Commuter Rail Items

Report From the VRE Operations Board. Mrs. Bulova commended to commissioners the minutes of the March 17, 2000 VRE Operations Board meeting.

Recruitment Process and Schedule for VRE Director of Operations. Mrs. Bulova announced that Steve Roberts has submitted his resignation effective June, 2000. He will be going to Atlanta to lead the development of a new commuter railroad. Therefore, the Operations Board recommends commission approval of Resolution #833, which would authorize the process for filling the Director of Operations position.

Mr. Kauffman suggested that the resolution be changed to include VRE's Chief of Staff as a member of the selection panel for the initial screening of candidates, but not

for the final interview and ranking of the top candidates. Mr. Kauffman moved to approve the amended resolution, with a second by Mrs. Bulova. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Hanley, Kauffman, Snyder, Van LANDINGHAM and Whipple.

### Adjournment

Mr. Kauffman moved to adjourn and Mrs. Hanley seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Hanley, Kauffman, Snyder, Van LANDINGHAM and Whipple. Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 9:55 P.M.

Approved this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2000.

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David F. Snyder  
Chairman

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Christopher Zimmerman  
Secretary-Treasurer