

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – JANUARY 4, 2001
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Snyder at 8:11 P.M.

Members Present

James F. Almand
Leo J. Bevon
William Bogard
Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Kerry J. Donley
William D. Euille
Paul Ferguson
Katherine Hanley
Elaine McConnell
David F. Snyder
Mary Margaret Whipple
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

Richard H. Black
Jay Fisette
Dana Kauffman
Roger J. McClure
William C. Mims
Scott Silverthorne

Staff Present

Tamara Ashby
Julie Bourbon
Rhonda W. Gilcrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Sharmila Samarasinghe
Pete Sklannik, Jr. (VRE)
Jennifer Straub
Richard K. Taube
Dale Zehner (VRE)

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of December 2, 2000

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Election of NVTC Officers for 2001

Chairman Snyder reported that NVTC's executive committee, serving as a nominating committee, recommends the following slate of officers for 2001: Kerry Donley (Chairman), Chris Zimmerman (Vice Chairman), and Elaine McConnell (Secretary-Treasurer).

Mr. Euille arrived at 8:13 P.M.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Almand, to approve the recommended slate of officers, recognizing that since the Fairfax County Board does not meet until January 8th to formally select its NVTC's members, this may be subject to change. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Chairman Snyder administered the oath of office to commissioners Donley, Zimmerman and McConnell. The commission congratulated them on their new appointments.

On behalf of the commission, Chairman Donley presented Mr. Snyder with a plaque and VRE memorabilia, thanking him for his year of outstanding service as NVTC's chairman. Mr. Snyder thanked the commission for the opportunity to serve as chairman. He complimented staff on their hard work.

Selection of NVTC Representatives

Chairman Donley announced the following NVTC nominations for the WMATA, VRE and VTA boards, as well as committee assignments:

WMATA Board

Principals: Dana Kauffman, Chris Zimmerman
 Alternates: Kate Hanley, William Euille

VRE Operations Board

Principals: Sharon, Bulova, Dana Kauffman, Elaine McConnell
Alternate: Chris Zimmerman

Virginia Transit Association Board of Directors

Principals: Sharon Bulova, Chris Zimmerman
Alternates: David Snyder, Mary Margaret Whipple, Rick Taube

NVTC Legislative Committee

Kate Hanley, Chairman
James Almand
William Bogard
Kerry Donley
Paul Ferguson
William Mims
Scott Silverthorne
David Snyder

NVTC Executive Committee

Kerry Donley, Chairman
Chris Zimmerman, Vice Chairman
Elaine McConnell, Secretary-Treasurer
Dana Kauffman, WMATA Board
Mary Margaret Whipple, General Assembly
David Snyder, Immediate Past Chairman

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mrs. Whipple, to approve the recommended nominations for WMATA, VRE and VTA boards and NVTC committee representatives. The motion included the provision that it is contingent upon the Fairfax County Board's meeting of January 8th. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

NVTC's Signatories and Pension Trustees

Chairman Donley recommended that NVTC adopt Resolution #862, which would establish Mrs. McConnell as NVTC's newly elected Secretary-Treasurer, to be eligible to sign NVTC's documents (including financial transactions) and to serve as a trustee of NVTC's Employees' Pension Trust.

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #862 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

NVTC's Meeting Schedule, Goals and Workprogram for 2001

Chairman Donley explained that there are several potential conflicts of regular meeting dates set for NVTC's meeting schedule for 2001. Based on a poll of commissioners, he stated that two meeting dates need to be changed. The new dates are February 8th and July 12th. There were no objections.

Mr. Ferguson joined the discussion at 8:23 P.M.

Chairman Donley opened the meeting for public comment on NVTC's meeting schedule, goals and workprogram for 2001. Mr. Ed Tennyson stated that there is already good express bus service being run in the Dulles Corridor. He stated that the money saved from not beginning more bus service could be used to get the rail portion of the project built sooner. He also observed that Secretary Ybarra has estimated that only one percent of traffic on the Wilson Bridge will be transit usage. He stated that a more accurate number would be four percent, which can be the difference of gridlock and cars continuing to move. He also expressed his opinion that WMATA can't afford new railcars in addition to the railcars already being procured. He stated that the Orange Line only needs 12 more railcars for improved service. The problem is that Montgomery County has too many railcars running on the Red Line and wants to extend all trains to Shady Grove, which doesn't increase capacity at all. By changing the headways by a few minutes on the Red Line, it would save railcars that could be used on the Orange Line. This could result in savings of \$11.5 million. In regards to the proposed new transportation authority, Mr. Tennyson expressed his concerns. He stated that WMATA and NVTC can already sell bonds and there will be just more confusion with a new agency.

Mr. Allen Muchnick, board member of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities, stated that better foot and bike access to suburban transit and ridesharing centers is an important but long-neglected need. In addition to NVTC's annual surveys of park-and-ride lots, an upcoming VODT study of dedicated VDOT and county operated park-and-ride facilities will examine deficient foot and bike access and bike parking at the studied locations. VDOT's second new study is a general survey of the existing and locally planned bicycle and pedestrian network in Northern Virginia. Unfortunately, VDOT's park-and-ride study will largely exclude Metrorail and VRE stations and non-dedicated park-and-ride facilities, so another study should be funded to focus on these important locations. Federal or state planning funds should be sought to accomplish this.

Mr. Muchnick stated that WMATA continues to improve bike parking at Metro stations, while bike parking at VRE stations continues to be inadequate. VRE and the relevant local agencies should cooperate to install a minimum number of both sheltered bike racks and rental bike lockers at or near every VRE station. He also provided suggestions for improving bike-on-rail programs. Local bus systems should also follow the lead of many other transit operators by installing bike carriers on the front of all buses. Bike rental and/or repair services, guarded bike parking, and showering/changing facilities at major transit hubs would also encourage more bicycle commuting. He also stated that NVTC should encourage Metrobus and other bus operators to accelerate the clean up of their existing diesel buses. He commended WMATA for recently approving the purchase of 100 CNG buses.

Chairman Donley thanked Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Muchnick for their comments. There were no other comments from the public. Mrs. Bulova requested that Mr. Muchnick's written comments be passed along to Mr. Sklannik of VRE.

Mr. Zimmerman observed that Goal 6, Action 4 reads: *"In the 2020 plan, the term "enhanced bus service" is used. Define specific service characteristics and determine customer attitudes so that this concept can be implemented."* He stated that this is a good goal, but as stated it is too narrow. Mr. Zimmerman noted that NVTC should be the agency to advance the concept of "enhanced bus service." He suggested expanding the goal to look at additional factors, such as volume and what improvements will result in capacity increases. He stated that this should be applied to all corridors in the region.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to approve NVTC's meeting, schedule, goals and workprogram for 2001, including Mr. Zimmerman's clarification. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Draft NVTC Administrative Budget for 2002

Chairman Donley stated that each year the commission is asked in September to forward a preliminary NVTC administrative budget to local jurisdictions for use in their budget planning. The following January, the commission discusses its draft final budget and acts in February on the final budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Chairman Donley stated that total NVTC expenditures would be reduced by 2.6 percent (about \$25,000), and total local contributions would increase to \$310,000, up by \$30,000 compared to the previous budget. The increase is largely due to the reduction of the accumulated surplus that has been spent over past years. Mrs. Hanley noted that of the \$30,000 increase, Fairfax County pays \$19,000 of that because of the revenues it receives from NVTC, which is appropriate.

Legislative Items

Proposed New Transportation Authority. Chairman Donley stated that there have been several bills introduced in the General Assembly calling for the creation of a transportation authority for this region. He expressed concern that this could harm NVTC by taking away its authority and revenues. There are also questions of how it would impact local funding and who would serve on the authority. Chairman Donley explained that it is recommended that the commission refer bills regarding this issue to NVTC's legislative committee for consideration and to develop a position. The committee would monitor this legislation.

Chairman Donley stated that Prince William would be included in the authority but PRTC wouldn't be affected. There is also a concern as it relates to the WMATA Compact. Mrs. Whipple expressed her support for NVTC's legislative committee tracking these bills, since the bills will change throughout the General Assembly session.

Mrs. McConnell stated that she met with Delegate Rollison regarding his bill to seek a referendum on a half-cent sales tax increase for transportation. She expressed her concern that the money would go to the Commonwealth and the state would decide what projects would be funded. She stated that a bill will be introduced by Delegate Dillard that would authorize a one-cent sales tax here (half for transportation and half for education).

Mr. Snyder expressed his opinion that there is no need for NVTC be included in this authority. He stated that there is a funding problem, but not a problem with existing institutions. He is concerned about a loss of focus on mass transit and the importance of transit in this region. He is very reluctant to support any legislation that doesn't include details and specifics regarding an authority.

Mr. Connolly stated that it will be important for NVTC to articulate its position so that it's not construed as just a "turf" issue. There are principles that are important and valid concerns.

Mrs. McConnell suggested that local finance departments compute how much revenue their jurisdictions would receive with a half-cent tax increase. Mrs. Bulova stated that this tax would need to be authorized by referendum.

Proposed Change to State Matching Ratios in VDR&PT's Transit Formula Assistance Program. Mr. Taube explained that Governor Gilmore's proposed budget contains language inserted by VDR&PT that would change the maximum state matching ratios for VDR&PT's Formula Assistance Program. For fuel, tires and maintenance (FTM) expenses, ratios would change to 80 percent state from 95 percent and administrative costs to 80 percent state from 50 percent. There are no changes proposed to the capital program matching ratio (which is 95 percent state) and no increase in funding associated with the proposed changes. There are apparently two

reasons that VDR&PT staff recommended this change: 1) It simplifies the formula program by applying one common matching ratio; and 2) It helps a few properties (especially VRE) keep allocations of state aid that they otherwise would lose. VDR&PT staff believes that no transit system should lose any aid under this proposal with properly defined costs. There is also a "hold harmless" provision, just in case.

Mr. Taube stated that the new budget language does not seem to affect WMATA or NVTC, but does help VRE. The change would create an even greater shortfall for existing transit programs which might strengthen NVTC's argument that more transit funds are needed for existing programs.

Mrs. Bulova asked if NVTC should take a position on this issue. Mr. Taube responded that he wanted to make the commission aware of this budget amendment. Mrs. Hanley suggested that the legislative committee look at the complete budget package to see if it affects transit in any other way before taking a position. Mrs. Bulova asked that the legislative committee monitor this budget amendment. Mr. Bevon stated that to his knowledge there is nothing else in the governor's budget that would adversely affect transit.

WMATA Items

Contract for SmarTrip Customer Service Center. WMATA has entered into a contract with Lockheed Martin IMS to provide customer service support for SmarTrip.

Competitively Negotiated Public Transit Tracking Study. The WMATA Board authorized staff to initiate procurement and award through competitive negotiation a contract for a survey throughout the WMATA service territory of travel behavior, mode choice, origins/destinations, auto availability, and demographic data for planning and evaluation.

Bus Fare Collection System Contract Award. The WMATA Board discussed the contract with Cubic for the bus fare collection system. Local transit systems will have six months to exercise options to purchase SmarTrip-compatible fareboxes after notice to proceed is given on this contract. Delivery of Metrobus fareboxes could begin in June, 2002 and be completed by October, 2002, but testing would continue through January, 2003.

Award of Contracts for 100 CNG Buses and Fueling Facilities. The WMATA Board approved award to New Flyer Industries, Ltd. of a contract for 100 Compressed Natural Gas buses. The contract amount is \$34.4 million. Delivery of the buses will occur between December, 2001 and January, 2002. The Board also approved an \$8 million contract for design, construction, operations and maintenance of a CNG fueling facility at the Bladensburg Metrobus Garage. The contract was awarded to Hanover-Dresser-Rand.

Award of Contract for a Comprehensive Radio Communications System. The WMATA Board awarded a contract for \$60.4 million for a radio system. Radios for Metrobuses, which will begin to be installed by January, 2002, are required before GPS-bus locator features can begin to function.

Vienna Parking Garage. Mrs. Hanley announced that the new Vienna parking garage will have an opening ceremony on January 18, 2001. Commissioners were invited to attend.

Metrorail Extension Along I-66. Mrs. Hanley reminded commissioners that when TPB amended the Constrained Long Range Plan, it included a study of the I-66 extension of Metrorail. Borrowed funds (FRANS) are being used to pay for the study.

Regional Transportation Items

SJR 121 Subcommittee. The joint subcommittee studying creation of a Northern Virginia Regional Authority met on December 13th, chaired by Delegate Rust. Subcommittee members were divided on the wisdom of recommending legislation to be enacted at the 2001 General Assembly session to create a new authority. Ultimately a motion to support such legislation failed seven votes to nine. An unanimous vote followed in favor of seeking the continuation of the subcommittee for another year to allow a consensus on the authority to be reached. Chairman Donley noted that as discussed in an earlier agenda item, there are other legislative proposals regarding an authority that have been introduced in the General Assembly.

Chairman Donley also reported that Delegate Rust proposed a work program for the subcommittee for 2001 that would focus on the four TCC priorities: funding; governance; implementation; and integrated policies regarding transportation, air quality and land use. Four working groups were created, with NVTC commissioners chairing three of the groups.

Mrs. Hanley stated that this was to be a two-year study, with the understanding that no new legislation regarding a new authority would be introduced during this period of time. Now the focus has been changed at the last minute by several members of the General Assembly introducing legislation for a new authority. She expressed her concern that creating a structure without revenue is major problem. Chairman Donley stated that if an authority is created without funding, the appearance will be that the region's problems are solved and obtaining funding in the future will be difficult.

Capital Beltway Rail Feasibility Study. On November 30, 2000, the Policy Advisory Committee met to discuss station locations and facility types for the five remaining alternatives (including heavy rail, light rail, and monorail). The committee recommended that a heavy rail station in the Springfield Central Business District area be added for future analysis. The study team will continue alternatives analysis over the

next six weeks. Results will be presented related to ridership, cost, and environmental and land use impacts in January.

Mr. Zimmerman left the meeting at 8:38 P.M. and did not return.

NVTC Financial Items

The financial report for November, 2000 was provided to commissioners. Mr. Taube introduced Scott Kalkwarf, NVTC's new Director of Finance and Administration.

Commuter Rail Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. Commissioners were urged to read the minutes of the December 15, 2000 VRE Operations Board meeting.

FY 2001 Reforecast and 2002 Operating and Capital Budget. Chairman Donley reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #863, which would adopt the revised FY 2001 and recommended FY 2002 VRE operating and capital budgets. Once approved by NVTC, the budgets will be forwarded to its participating and contributing jurisdictions for inclusion in their budgets according to the terms of the Master Agreement. Major items included in the budget are to continue a 30-train operation; recommend a four percent fare increase; and recommend no increase in overall level of subsidy from local governments.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve Resolution #863 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, and Whipple.

Engineering for Gallery Car Renovation. Chairman Donley reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #864. The resolution would authorize the VRE Chief Operating Officer to amend a current task order with RailPlan International for an additional \$276,150 to address added expenses and changes to the scope of the Gallery Car renovation project. These additional funds would address structural and construction defects that were not evident during the initial engineering analysis as well as allow compliance with new safety standards. The original task order amount was for \$298,000, bringing this task order up to \$574,190. In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Mr. Zehner of VRE, stated that the funds for the task order revision would come from a federal grant, in addition to state matching funds.

On a motion by Mr. Euille and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, and Whipple.

Construction of Third Platform at Manassas. Chairman Donley stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends commission approval of Resolution #865, which would authorize PRTC's executive director to award the Manassas Third Platform construction contract to the sole bidder, Sumter Contracting, for \$286,309, with a 10% contingency. This construction project will allow more passengers to board and alight the train at any given time as the current platforms are not long enough to allow all train doors to open upon arrival at the station. This platform will also decrease the distance passengers have to walk to the majority of the parking spaces at that station. Funding is available in VRE's approved CIP.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve Resolution #865 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, and Whipple.

VRE Strategic Plan. Chairman Donley reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #866, which would authorize the VRE Chief Operating Officer to issue a task order for \$350,000 to Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas, Inc. to provide comprehensive planning services. These services include developing a scope and framework for the entire VRE strategic plan and completing the first phase. As provisions for future expansions and service increases were not addressed in the Master Agreement and no significant planning exercises have occurred since the early 1990's, a comprehensive planning effort is needed. This plan will help to develop goals as well as define a staged plan of service expansion for VRE, and will be structured using short, mid, and long-term objectives. Funding for this plan is included in the approved VRE CIP.

On a motion by Mrs. McConnell and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #866 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder and Whipple.

Other VRE Business. Mr. Sklannik announced that Matt Benka of VRE staff, has resigned to take a position at VDOT in Richmond.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Hanley and a second by Mr. Almand, the commission unanimously agreed to adjourn. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder, and Whipple. Chairman Donley adjourned the meeting at 9:18 P.M.

Approved this 8th day of February, 2001.

Kerry J. Donley
Chairman

Elaine McConnell
Secretary-Treasurer