

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – APRIL 4, 2002
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Zimmerman at 8:14 P.M.

Members Present

James F. Almand
Leo J. Bevon
William Bogard
Sharon Bulova
Kerry J. Donley
William D. Euille
Paul Ferguson
Jay Fisette
Katherine K. Hanley
Dana Kauffman
Scott Silverthorne
David F. Snyder
Mary Margaret Whipple
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

Richard H. Black
Gerald Connolly
Elaine McConnell
William C. Mims

Staff Present

Rhonda Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Stephen MacIsaac (VRE)
Mark Roeber (VRE)
Kala Quintana
Sharmila Samarasinghe
Pete Sklannik (VRE)
Jennifer Straub (VRE)
Alfred Titus-Glover
Richard K. Taube

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of March 7, 2001

Without objection, the commission unanimously accepted the minutes as presented.

Falls Church Bus Project

Mr. Snyder stated that Resolution #915 would authorize NVTC's executive director to procure four Thomas-Built diesel buses (with exhaust gas recirculation filters) as an option on a state procurement contract. The resolution would also authorize the executive director to apply for an additional federal grant on behalf of Falls Church that was earmarked in the FY 2001 federal transportation appropriations act. Finally, the resolution would authorize him, contingent on the wishes of Falls Church, to negotiate and execute an agreement with E-Bus, Inc. for an additional leased or purchased hybrid-electric bus to test in service together with the clean diesel buses. The resolution has been reviewed by Falls Church, WMATA and legal counsel. Mr. Snyder reported that NVTC's Executive Committee reviewed the resolution and recommends an amendment that would bring back the E-Bus procurement for final NVTC approval. Mr. Donley explained that Falls Church wants to consider this procurement further so the amendment would allow it to be brought back to NVTC for formal approval.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Chairman Zimmerman stated that the project is being funded by remaining funds from state and federal grants and the funds recovered from AVS. Additional funds from the Falls Church earmark may be needed.

Mr. Snyder moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve the amended Resolution #915 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Fissette, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Mr. Taube stated that it is expected that there will be air quality benefits with the clean diesel buses with EGR filters. Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR) filters are a new technology that can be applied to clean diesel buses in order to reduce emissions further. It is believed that buses configured with EGR filters can significantly reduce NOx emissions, as well as other pollutants, and thereby help the region achieve its 2005 emissions targets. The Falls Church project would be a good proving ground for this new EGR technology, which WMATA is actively considering for its fleet.

SmarTrip Farebox Procurement for Loudoun County

Mr. Taube reported that Loudoun County has asked to join the regional procurement of SmarTrip compatible fareboxes managed by NVTC with VDRPT funding. The county requested 29 fareboxes and a new garage revenue collection system. While these are available as an option to NVTC's existing contract with Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. (CTS), they would cost approximately \$500,000. In addition, NVTC's farebox consultants, IBI Group, Inc. (IBI), would need to be tasked with assisting Loudoun County with installation, which is estimated to cost about \$35,000. Because not all of Loudoun County's bus fleet will be available at the time of expected delivery of the fareboxes (early in 2003), VDRPT has agreed to fund only 19 fareboxes and the garage revenue collection system. Mr. Bevon stated that VDRPT is prepared to provide additional funding to NVTC in the amount of \$264,712 to increase total project funding to \$5,324,712.

Mr. Taube explained that Loudoun County will now become part of the regional SmarTrip network and will have a voice in ongoing discussions about the nature of the clearinghouse that will be established to facilitate these transactions.

Mr. Donley moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to authorize NVTC's executive director to execute a grant contract amendment with VDRPT for \$264,712 and to execute a change order with CTS. The motion would also direct him to send a letter to Loudoun County explaining the terms and conditions of this action. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Legislative Items

State Items. Chairman Zimmerman expressed his opinion that no letter needs to be sent to the Northern Virginia General Assembly delegation in response to actions taken during the 2002 legislative session since the veto session hasn't occurred. There was no objection.

Federal Items. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) held its annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C. earlier in March. The focus was on the reauthorization of TEA-21 next year.

A resolution has been introduced by Representative Tom Davis and others recognizing the House of Representatives Intelligent Transportation Caucus and its goals and objectives. The IT Caucus consists of 22 members. Its goals are seven fold: To educate members of Congress on ITS technologies;

to seek strong commitments to ITS projects in the reauthorization of TEA-21; to enhance homeland security; to forge alliances with other congressional bodies such as the Wireless Caucus, Internet Caucus, etc.; to encourage U.S. companies to invest in ITS research and development and ultimately support commercialization of ITS applications; to monitor and support the growth of ITS projects and architecture; and to include emergency response as a part of future ITS architecture modules.

NVTC Statement for CTB Hearing

Mr. Taube stated that on April 15th, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will conduct a financial planning and programming hearing in Fairfax City Hall. A draft NVTC PowerPoint presentation was provided to commissioners for discussion. NVTC's MAC group previously reviewed this document.

Mr. Donley stated that it is a good presentation but needs to be sharper on several points. A stronger case needs to be presented for the financial hardships this region is facing. Currently, the region is under funded by \$60 million compared to what it is eligible for. It should be stated that the region is not wasting money and a lot could be done with additional funding. The local jurisdictional budgets need to be outlined to show how they have grown over the years. Local contributions, both for capital and operating, have grown faster than state allocations. Additionally, ridership of all the local transit systems should be emphasized, including how they help to ease congestion. Mrs. Hanley agreed and further stated that the testimony should draw the comparison between the percentage of transit ridership in Northern Virginia versus the entire state. Local dollars put into transit throughout the state would be a huge percentage in Northern Virginia. She also suggested shortening the testimony, including taking out any reference to TERM's.

Mr. Bogard arrived at 8:25 P.M. and Mr. Ferguson followed at 8:26 P.M.

Mr. Donley moved, with a second by Mr. Almand, to approve the testimony with the suggested changes and to authorize NVTC's chairman to present the testimony at CTB.

Chairman Zimmerman suggested that the testimony include examples of the problems the region is facing, such as the overcrowding on rail systems. The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

WMATA Items

Status of SmarTrip Farebox and Clearinghouse Procurements. Mr. Taube reported that the fareboxes were to have been undergoing testing in the factory. Software problems have delayed this. It is still possible that the schedule for installation by the end of this year can still be maintained.

Metrorail Ridership. Mrs. Hanley reported that Metrorail ridership has rebounded with over 700,000 daily trips systemwide.

Metrobus 5A. WMATA staff has recommended to the WMATA Budget Committee that Metrobus Route 5A be converted starting with FY 2003 to a regional route from a demonstration route. WMATA staff suggested a special subsidy formula that would alter local shares compared to the regular regional formula. The committee deferred action and asked for more information on ridership.

NVTC Products and Communications

Media Campaign. Ms. Quintana reported that the radio ads are continuing. The impact of these ads, which promote transit ridership and reassure riders about safety while referring them to the CommuterPage.com website, continues to be strong as measured by the increased volumes of hits on the website and visitor sessions. The ads are also available on NVTC's website in audio format.

NVTC Brochure. Ms. Quintana stated that NVTC's brochure has been updated and provides a clear and concise statement of NVTC's purpose that is useful for citizens, elected officials and others at public events and other ongoing NVTC public outreach events. She stated that the brochure has been reviewed at several meetings by NVTC's MAC group and their comments have been incorporated. The brochure will also be available on NVTC's website in a printable Pdf format. 5,000 copies will be printed.

Mrs. Bulova stated that staff did a good job on the brochure and it provides a good summary. Mr. Donley observed that the some of the important information gets lost and suggested that it be bolded or highlighted in some way. Mrs. Bulova suggested highlighting it in blue.

Mrs. Hanley asked if the 273,000 transit riders/trips per day for Northern Virginia is correct. After commission discussion, Mr. Donley requested staff to verify this number before the brochure is printed.

NVTC Radio Interviews. Ms. Quintana also reported that radio interview opportunities have been arranged with Jerry Phillips of Metro Talk on April 17th

and the proposed topic is the VRE strategic plan. For May, the proposed topic is MetroTram. These will be taped interviews and commissioners are encouraged to participate.

Chairman Zimmerman and others noted that there is a conflict on April 17th (and the third Wednesday of each month) with the TPB meeting. Ms. Quintana stated that she will try to reschedule. Mr. Donley suggested that staff look at other regional (WMATA, TPB, VRE, etc.) calendars to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Transit Systems Emergency Response, Coordination and Communication.
Mr. Taube stated that on March 27th, at a combined meeting of MWCOG's M&O/ITS Committee and the regional transit operators, NVTC's bus bridge proposal was presented and discussed with District of Columbia officials who have devised emergency routes and signs.

An emergency route map for the greater Washington, D.C. area was on display for commission review. It was produced by the D.C. Department of Transportation. Chairman Zimmerman and Mrs. Hanley both commented that the greater Washington, D.C. area goes beyond the Beltway, even though the map only goes to the Beltway. Mr. Taube stated that both Virginia and Maryland DOT's will have a chance to review the map.

Mrs. Hanley pointed out that getting people to the Beltway won't get people to their destination. Mr. Kauffman stated that state troopers would need to play an integral part by directing people.

Mr. Snyder stated that NVTC's work on the bus bridge proposal is a good first step. NVTC staff did a good job on bringing together various transit agencies and other organizations after September 11th to begin a transit systems emergency response.

In reviewing copies of a Wall Street Journal article provided by staff, Mrs. Hanley stated that in the past MWAQC asked for ridership data for Code Red days, but discovered that the data were not useable. There needs to be a way to find out if Code Red Days really work. Mr. Ferguson observed that Cincinnati, Ohio has a seasonal approach that offers cut-rate fares from Memorial Day to Labor Day, hoping to lure commuters out of their cars during the months when ozone problems are most likely to occur. Mrs. Hanley stated that it would be important to know the cost of such an approach. Mrs. Whipple requested staff to find out more details about the Cincinnati discounted fare project.

NVTC Quarterly Transit Service Change Report. The report, also available on NVTC's website, includes changes through April, 2002. The WMATA Board has approved a public hearing on a proposal by the city of Alexandria to replace Metrobus Route 28C with DASH service.

Regional Transportation Items

Metropolitan Washington Regional ITS Architecture. NVTC is included as a designated repository of transit performance information.

Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit. The draft EIS is available for review with public hearings scheduled for next month. When the locally preferred alternative is selected (probably by Summer, 2003), more detailed financial analysis will be possible. The draft financial plan in the EIS shows that the viability of the project will depend on the successful implementation of a new tax district.

Mobile Commuter Store. The successful Commuter Store concept is now mobile and being delivered straight to the commuters of Northern Virginia. Northern Virginia's two new Mobile Commuter Stores, featuring state-of-the-art satellite technology, were launched April 2, 2002. They will be making regularly scheduled stops at business districts and shopping centers throughout the area. Mrs. Hanley asked how the schedule of where and when the buses will be stopped will be published. Mr. Hamre, of Arlington County staff, responded that a marketing firm is setting up a regular schedule. Mrs. Hanley stated that this information needs to be provided on websites, kiosks, Metro stations, etc. Mr. Bevon stated that the buses will have a regular circuit of stops, but will also be available for special events. Ms. Quintana stated that staff is working to have a bus on display for the May 2nd NVTC meeting. Mr. Hamre stated that one of the buses is a former Fairfax Connector Bus.

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. There are efforts underway in South Florida to establish a regional authority. There are some interesting parallels to the Northern Virginia situation.

NVTC Financial Items for February, 2002

Commissioners were provided copies of the financial reports. Mr. Kalkwarf explained the gas tax adjustments. He stated that Exxon misreported several gas stations in Manassas over a four-month period, which results in a \$314,000 adjustment for NVTC jurisdictions. Mr. Kalkwarf also reported that in the next few months, Loudoun County will be credited with approximately \$524,000 because of a similar Exxon problem that dates back to 1999.

Mr. Donley asked that given these reporting problems, what checks and balances exist to insure compliance. Mr. Kalkwarf stated that there are two motor fuels tax auditors in the region, one for NVTC and one for PRTC. Mr. Donley stated that this is a lot of money and expressed his concern that more than one auditor may be needed to cover all of NVTC jurisdictions. He suggested that NVTC's Legislative Committee discuss this issue for the next General Assembly session. Mrs. Hanley stated that there are two issues, including making sure stations are in compliance as well as verifying in which jurisdictions the gas stations are located. Mr. Euille stated that the real problem is that there are not enough auditors.

Mr. Donley requested that staff determine if a formal request for additional auditors is needed. Mrs. Whipple stated that a letter could be sent to the Virginia Department of Taxation.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. The minutes of the VRE Operations Board's March 15th meeting were provided to commissioners. Mr. Sklannik reported for March 96% on-time performance with over 12,450 daily trips.

VDRPT Technical Assistance Grant Application. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board has asked NVTC to agree to forward a grant application to VDRPT for a study of extending VRE service into western Prince William County and Fauquier County. VRE staff will manage the study which is to be funded in part with private contributions. NVTC's standard role is to submit the application on behalf of VRE. Resolution #916 would accomplish this.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fissette, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Purchase of Three Additional Ticket Office Machines. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends commission approval of Resolution #917, which would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to purchase three additional VRE ticket office machines using budgeted grant funds. The additional cost would not exceed \$135,154, including four years of maintenance and spare parts. A purchase of 10 machines was previously authorized.

Mrs. Bulova moved to approve Resolution #917 (copy attached). Mr. Donley seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Increase Funding Level of Maintenance Contract. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #918, which would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to increase VRE's facilities maintenance contract with D&L Contractors by \$85,000. This action increased the total contract to \$635,000. Budgeted funds are available.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve Resolution #918 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Funding of VRE Parking Lots. Mrs. Hanley observed that the matrix lists the funding source for the Manassas parking lot as unknown. Mr. Bevon explained that the existing lot was part of the original train station. Jennifer Straub, of VRE staff, stated that some costs are unknown because they were incurred by the jurisdictions and not VRE.

Plans for 10-Year VRE Anniversary. Mr. Donley congratulated VRE on its upcoming 10-year anniversary. Mr. Sklannik announced that special events are being scheduled for VRE's anniversary, including June 22nd for the Manassas Line and July 20th for the Fredericksburg Line.

Adjournment

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mrs. Whipple, to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, Kauffman, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman. Chairman Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 9:11 P.M.

Approved this 2nd day of May, 2002.

Christopher Zimmerman
Chairman

William Euille
Secretary-Treasurer