

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – FEBRUARY 6, 2003
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman McConnell at 8:08 P.M.

Members Present

William Bogard
Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Kerry J. Donley
Paul Ferguson
Jay Fiset
Katherine K. Hanley
Dana Kauffman
Elaine McConnell
Karen Rae
David F. Snyder

Members Absent

David Albo
James F. Almand
William D. Euille
William C. Mims
Gary A. Reese
Scott Silverthorne
Mary Margaret Whipple
Christopher Zimmerman

Staff Present

Rhonda Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Jana Lynott
Adam McGavock
Kala Quintana
Richard K. Taube
Alfred Titus-Glover

Chairman McConnell suggested that the commission begin its meeting with discussion items until a quorum was reached. There were no objections.

Legislative Items

State Legislative Items. Mrs. Hanley stated that most of the proposed legislative initiatives introduced during the General Assembly session that would be of interest to NVTC have not survived the legislative process, although Delegate Rollison's transportation funding bill is still alive. Mrs. Hanley stated that this bill would dedicate a portion of insurance license fees to finance the issuance of bonds in three regions of the Commonwealth, including Northern Virginia. All funds paid from the revenues provided under this act would be required to be matched by equal or greater funds from private entities, localities or both. Mrs. Hanley stated that for this region the following projects would receive funding: the Beltway, I-66, I-95, Dulles Corridor and VRE.

Mr. Taube stated that Delegate Almand's bill that would have increased NVTC's gas tax from two percent to four percent, had a fairly close vote in the House Finance Committee, with seven members voting in favor. He stated that lessons were learned that may help next year if similar legislation is introduced in the General Assembly.

Commissioners Connolly, Donley and Snyder arrived at 8:12 P.M.

Mr. Taube distributed pictures of the VTA transit rally held in Richmond to educate General Assembly members about the benefits of transit.

Federal Legislative Items. Ms. Rae provided a copy to the commission of the New Starts Report, which includes the ranking of projects. She stated that 12 projects in the nation fell from recommended ratings to not rated, based upon new criteria that FTA is using. The Dulles project has remained as a BRT project as of the last cycle, although the project description needs to be updated.

Minutes of the NVTC Meeting of January 2, 2003

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mr. Donley, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

NVTC FY 2004 Administrative Budget

Mr. Taube explained that the commission is asked to approve Resolution #950, which would adopt the NVTC administrative budget for FY 2004. It is the same budget provided in September, 2002 and sent to NVTC's local jurisdictions at that time to assist in their budget planning. It was also offered for review by the commission at its last meeting on January 2nd and has been thoroughly reviewed by local staffs. This budget will allow NVTC to accomplish the 2003 workprogram it adopted at its January 2nd meeting.

The budget holds total local contributions to the same amount (\$310,000) as the last two years. Individual local contributions are based on the shares of financial assistance received through NVTC. This allocation method is required by state statute.

Mr. Ferguson moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve Resolution #950. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

Procurement of Audit Services

Mr. Taube stated that NVTC's contract with its existing audit firm has expired. It was a three-year contract with two, one-year options. The contract covered NVTC and VRE.

With the approval of the commission, a scope of work would be issued for the same term as the current contract. A selection committee has been formed consisting of local, state, NVTC, PRTC and VRE staff. With a deadline for receipt of proposals set for March 10, 2003 and interviews scheduled for the week of March 24th, staff expects to be ready with a recommendation for award of contract by the April 3, 2003 NVTC meeting.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to authorize staff to participate with VRE in a joint procurement of an audit firm by issuing a Request for Proposals. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

Commonwealth Transportation Board's Pre-Allocation Testimony

Mr. Taube reported that CTB has scheduled its annual pre-allocation hearing in Northern Virginia for March 6, 2003. The commission is asked to authorize its chairman (or her designee) to deliver the proposed statement. The statement emphasizes the excellent performance of transit in our region but the

lack of adequate local financial resources to keep these systems functioning effectively without a stronger state effort. He encouraged commissioners to provide comments. He stated that staff will be making changes to page 12 concerning the Metro budget.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to authorize NVTC's chairman or her designee to present the statement, incorporating the recommended changes, at the CTB pre-allocation hearing. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

WMATA Items

Regional SmarTrip System Program Implementation. Several items still need to be negotiated into their final form before they can proceed, including: operating procedures for, and cost-sharing among, participants in the regional clearinghouse; financial guarantees from the proposed clearinghouse provider; and a satisfactory plan which addresses the integration between the VRE Scheidt & Bachmann equipment and Cubic's regional SmarTrip system.

FY 2004 Proposed Fare Strategy. The WMATA Board's Budget Committee began its consideration of fare strategies on January 9, 2003.

Automatic Public Toilet Test. A WMATA committee recommended a one-year test of an automatic public toilet (known as the Exeloo-Galaxy) at the Huntington Metrorail station. The founder of the Public Restroom Initiative, Bob Brubaker, has an informative web-site and is seeking to open the existing Metrorail restrooms to the public. Metro staff expressed concerns with the safety and security of opening the existing facilities but supported this demonstration.

Regional Transportation Items

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. NVTA has directed its interim technical committee to develop selection criteria and application forms for priority regional transportation projects that cost no more than \$2 million and can be completed in a year. This is in response to Governor Warner's \$20 million initiative. Applications are due by February 24th. NVTA expects to recommend the top-ranked projects, following a public hearing, at its March 13th meeting. The source of funding for this initiative has not been specified.

Falls Church's GEORGE Bus System. The opening ceremony occurred on January 10th at the Falls Church Community Center. NVTC staff is working with city staff to identify sources of funding to continue the service beyond the

end of the two-year demonstration. Mr. Taube passed around photos of the event.

Letter to Dr. Gridlock. Ms. Bulova congratulated NVTC on its response to Dr. Gridlock concerning HOV Lanes and she stated that it is important to continue to educate the public.

Research on Transit Ridership Resulting from Bicycle-Friendly Policies. At its December, 2002 NVTC meeting the commission requested staff to identify any published research on the elasticity of investments in bicycle access to transit stations; in other words, to what extent do investments in bicycle access to transit stations and other bicycle amenities lead to increased transit ridership. To date, one research project that gets at this question has been located; namely, a National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) project entitled, Guidelines for Cost-Benefit Analysis of Investments in Bicycle Facilities. The objective of this study is to provide transportation decision makers at the federal, state, and local levels with guidelines to evaluate the projected costs and benefits of bicycle-facility investments. While this research is relevant to the question, the project has only just begun, and thus its findings will not be available for another year or so. NVTC staff will continue to seek other resources.

Public Involvement in Value Pricing: Tools for Success. Mr. Taube stated that Jana Lynott attended a conference session entitled *Public Involvement in Value Pricing* as part of the Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting. This was a timely topic as the Transportation Planning Board recently endorsed the Virginia Department of Transportation's proposal to receive a grant from the Federal Highway Administration to conduct a study on the feasibility of value pricing in Northern Virginia. He asked Ms. Lynott to give the commission a brief summary of the conference session.

Ms. Lynott stated that the focus of the session was on techniques used to involve the public in value pricing projects in the United States and Great Britain, and the successes and pitfalls encountered by the project teams. She stated that an interesting comment made during the session was that if a public opinion survey about value pricing were initiated, the public would say it's a bad idea and would not be supportive. On the other hand, if a proactive public campaign as well as a public information campaign were initiated, the chance of gaining public approval of such a project greatly increases.

Ms. Lynott reported that sponsors of the I-15 project in San Diego (eight miles of reversible HOT lanes) conducted a public opinion survey at the conclusion of three years of value pricing service. The survey targeted commuters who buy into the HOT lanes, those commuters who travel in the mainline but typically do not buy in, and persons from the general population. The survey results show a high level of public support. For example, 92% of carpoolers and 94% of transit riders felt it was fair to them to allow drivers of

single occupancy vehicles to buy in. Ninety-one percent of respondents from the general public felt expansion was a good idea. Of note, individuals from the lower income brackets most favored expansion, which is likely a product of less flexible job schedules.

Ms. Lynott stated that the public needs to associate value pricing with improvements to public transit in order to overcome the perception of the “Lexus lane” phenomenon.

Mr. Connolly stated that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has requested that the commonwealth reevaluate the Beltway widening project to look at HOT lanes. In response to the “Lexus lanes” concept, Mr. Connolly stated that HOT lanes could help low income commuters. For those that use daycare there are stiff monetary penalties for being late to pick up children. Paying a smaller amount to use HOT lanes would help people save money. Even if only the wealthy people used HOT lanes, it would still be beneficial to other drivers because it would relieve congestion. He stated that HOT lanes are worthy of examination.

Chairman McConnell stated that educating the public is an important component.

NVTC Financial Items for December, 2002

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

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and Chief Operating Officer. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read the minutes of the November 15th Operations Board meeting.

Award of General Engineering Contract. Mrs. Bulova explained that the commission is asked to adopt Resolution #951, which would authorize VRE’s Chief Operating Officer to enter into contracts with three firms to provide general engineering services during the next five years. The three firms are DMJM & Harris, HDR Engineering, Inc. and Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas, Inc. The sum of the three contracts would not exceed \$5 million and each task would be initiated based on individual task orders approved by the VRE Board (and/or commissions, depending on the amounts). This is the fourth in the series of VRE GEC contracts.

Ms. Bulova stated that it is her understanding that VDRPT has some concerns whether this is permissible under Virginia law. Therefore, Ms. Bulova moved approval of Resolution #951, with the understanding that Steve MacIsaac, VRE's legal counsel, meet with state officials regarding this issue. Chairman McConnell stated that it is her understanding that Mr. MacIsaac has reviewed this issue and it's all right. Ms. Rae explained that the Commonwealth's Attorney General has some questions.

The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder. (A copy of the resolution is attached.)

Extension of Service Agreement with Amtrak. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #952. This resolution would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to extend the existing operating and access agreement with Amtrak through January 31, 2004 while VRE seeks to negotiate a separate access agreement for Union Station and a favorable new operating agreement with Amtrak. If these negotiations are not successful then VRE will pursue competitive bids for service beyond January 31, 2004.

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

Purchase of Wheelchair Lifts and Overhaul Kits. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #953. The resolution would authorize the VRE Chief Operating Officer to purchase 20 wheelchair lift overhaul kits and two new wheelchair lifts for spares. The resolution would also authorize a work order to remove, overhaul and replace the 20 lifts on VRE's Mafersa cab control railcars. The total authorization sought is \$213,917 of budgeted funds.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve Resolution #953 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

Authorization to Use VRE Equipment and Facilities for Film Production and Related Activities. Mrs. Bulova explained that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #954, which would authorize the VRE Chief Operating Officer to reach out to marketing, advertising and production companies to promote the use of VRE facilities and equipment as a means to

increase VRE revenues. Resulting contracts would be consistent with the approved guidelines for commercial advertising on VRE.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Connolly, to approve Resolution #954 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae and Snyder.

Request for Proposals for Banking Services. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board has authorized VRE staff to issue a request for proposals for banking services, to include a line of credit, reduced processing fees and other services. An option on the resulting contract would allow NVTC (and PRTC) to utilize many of the same services, perhaps on better terms than those currently available to NVTC. If the contract resulting from this VRE procurement is favorable to NVTC, staff will return to the commission for authorization to exercise the option.

Funding of VRE Parking. Mrs. Bulova stated that there are still some outstanding issues that need to be resolved and the commission will be updated on this at a later meeting.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman McConnell adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

Approved this sixth day of March, 2003.

Elaine McConnell
Chairman

Paul Ferguson
Secretary-Treasurer