

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – JANUARY 6, 2005**  
**NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Vice Chairman Ferguson at 8:15 P.M.

**Members Present**

Sharon Bulova  
Gerald Connolly  
Adam Ebbin  
Paul Ferguson  
Jay Fiset  
Ludwig Gaines  
Catherine M. Hudgins  
Dana Kauffman  
Karen Rae  
David F. Snyder  
Mary Margaret Whipple  
Christopher Zimmerman

**Members Absent**

David Albo  
Jeannemarie Devolites Davis  
William D. Euille  
Timothy Hugo  
Elaine McConnell  
Gary A. Reese  
Scott Silverthorne

**Staff Present**

Rhonda Gilchrest  
Jana Lynott  
Scott Kalkwarf  
Steve Maclsaac (VRE)  
Adam McGavock  
Kala Quintana  
Elizabeth Rodgers  
Jennifer Straub (VRE)  
Richard K. Taube  
Dale Zehner (VRE)

## Public Hearing on and Approval of NVTC's 2005 Workprogram

Kala Quintana explained that the draft 2005 NVTC Workprogram and Schedule includes NVTC's mission statement, seven goals and over 60 specific actions for 2005. Ms. Quintana stated that Scott Kalkwarf would begin the staff presentation, which will review the past year's accomplishments and look to the coming year in their respective areas.

Mr. Kalkwarf reported that NVTC received a clean audit for 2004, with no management comments. NVTC also managed about \$100 million in revenue for FY 2004. In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Mr. Kalkwarf stated that there was gas tax revenue credited to the city of Fairfax which should have been credited to Fairfax County. Last year NVTC staff notified the gas tax auditors and it was finally corrected in December. The correction should be reflected in the March, 2005 NVTC gas tax revenue report.

Chairman Ferguson observed that the quorum was in jeopardy and asked staff to continue their presentation after the action items since there were several commissioners that had to leave early from the meeting.

Chairman Ferguson opened the meeting for public comment about NVTC's 2005 workprogram.

Dick Peacock, a VRE rider, stated that he favors a half-cent sales tax increase for Metro. Metro is very valuable to the region. Senator Whipple stated that she will be introducing legislation during this upcoming General Assembly session that would increase the NVTC gas tax to four from two percent. Mr. Peacock stated that he would support this.

Ed Tennyson encouraged NVTC to keep up the good work. He stated that he would also support a four percent NVTC gas tax. In rebuttal of recent attacks on Amtrak stating that VRE could save money by getting rid of its Amtrak contract, he reminded commissioners that VRE is among the lowest cost operators in the United States.

Mr. Snyder arrived at 8:23 P.M.

Mr. Tennyson stated that the nine percent ridership loss reported for FY 2004 for Metrobus should be researched. Metro is the best system in the country by many measures, but still the system needs targets, such as 28 passenger-miles per car-mile, 12 passenger-miles per bus-mile, no standees during off peak hours, no fare increase beyond half of the inflation rate, and no borrowing for a project unless there's a return on the money. Funding for the Dulles Corridor Rail program is also important.

Mr. Tennyson stated that NVTC should continue transit advertising and educational activities, but encouraged NVTC to provide more specific

information. WMATA service should be coordinated with jurisdictional service to avoid duplication.

Mrs. Bulova observed that as mentioned by Mr. Tennyson a letter from the National Taxpayers Union has been circulating attacking Amtrak. The letter has been published in some papers in other areas and will probably make its way into this region. She stated that NVTC should be prepared to respond to it.

There were no more citizens wanting to speak and Vice Chairman Ferguson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Taube reviewed NVTC's schedule of meetings for 2005. Staff is still trying to determine the date for its February meeting to try to have as many commissioners as possible available to participate. Vice Chairman Ferguson suggested holding the meeting in Richmond on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, since many commissioners will be there for local government day. Ms. Rae offered to provide a conference room. Mr. Zimmerman observed that if NVTC legislators are going to be encouraged to attend, the meeting room should be in the General Assembly building.

Mr. Zehner reported that the VRE Operations Board has directed VRE staff to schedule a train event in Richmond during the General Assembly session. It is scheduled for February 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. at the Main Street Station in Richmond. There will be a train for people to board and look at the equipment. Ms. Bulova suggested scheduling NVTC's meeting to coincide with the VRE event. Vice Chairman Ferguson stated that commissioners will be polled about their availability for both these dates.

Delegate Ebbin arrived at 8:31 P.M.

#### Minutes of NVTC Meeting of December 2, 2004

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Gaines, to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

#### Election of 2005 Officers and Oath of Office

Vice Chairman Ferguson explained that Senator Whipple has agreed to administer the oath of office to the new officers since Chairman Euille was not able to attend this meeting. He stated that NVTC's Executive Committee, serving as the Nominating Committee, has recommended the following slate of officers for 2005:

Chairman: Paul Ferguson  
 Vice Chairman: Gerry Connolly  
 Secretary-Treasurer: David Snyder

Senator Whipple moved to accept the slate of officers and Mr. Gaines seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Senator Whipple then administered the oath of office to Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Snyder.

A gift of appreciation will be provided to Mr. Euille for his outstanding service as chairman during 2004.

#### Selection of NVTC Representatives to Boards and Committees

Mr. Taube announced that Eugene Delgaudio from the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has been appointed to serve on NVTC, replacing Mick Staton. Mr. Delgaudio will be sworn in at a future meeting, since he was not able to attend this meeting.

Mr. Taube also explained that the following board and committee assignments would be subject to Fairfax County approval, since the County Board has not officially met this year to make its appointments:

#### WMATA Board

Principals: Dana Kauffman  
 Chris Zimmerman

Alternates: Catherine Hudgins  
 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**

Gerry Connolly, Chairman  
 Gary Reese (House of Delegates)  
 Mary Margaret Whipple (Senate)  
 Bill Euille  
 Paul Ferguson  
 Scott Silverthorne  
 Dave Snyder  
 Eugene Delgaudio

**NVTC Executive Committee**

Paul Ferguson, Chairman  
 Gerry Connolly, Vice Chairman  
 Dave Snyder, Secretary-Treasurer  
 Dana Kauffman, WMATA Board  
 Chris Zimmerman, WMATA Board  
 Mary Margaret Whipple, General Assembly  
 Bill Euille, Immediate Past Chair

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Gaines, to approve the board and committee assignments. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

**Revise NVTC Signatories and Pension Trustees**

Senator Whipple moved approval of Resolution #1056, which would authorize Mr. Snyder, as the new Secretary-Treasurer, to serve as a signatory for NVTC documents, including financial transactions, and to serve as a trustee of NVTC's Employees' Pension Trust. Mrs. Bulova seconded the motion. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman. (A copy of Resolution #1056 is attached.)

**WMATA Items**

**Blue Ribbon Panel on Metro Funding.** Mr. Taube reported that the panel has completed its report and held a media conference today. The report didn't change from the version NVTC discussed at its last meeting. The panel has recommended a uniform sales tax at a rate of about a quarter cent with the proceeds dedicated to WMATA. The boundaries of the taxation district would include only current compact members, excluding Loudoun County. The panel also recommended in effect that the allocation formulas for the funding gap be set aside through the mechanism of having a uniform tax rate. The panel's data show that about 48 percent of the sales tax revenues would be paid within Virginia's compact jurisdictions, whereas the bills that would have otherwise come to Virginia would have been about 24 percent of the total.

Mr. Connolly moved that NVTC endorse serious consideration of a regional sales tax applicable to the WMATA compact jurisdictions as put forth by the Blue Ribbon Panel, provided it is apportioned equitably and reflects the

current allocation formula as shared by the respective compact jurisdictions. Mr. Zimmerman seconded.

Mr. Connolly stated that any letter NVTC sends to the panel should include praise for their work and their willingness to meet the deadline. He stated that it is important to understand that the current way WMATA is funded is not sustainable long-term. The panel, as well as NVTC, recognizes that there is a federal piece in which the federal government needs to step up to its responsibility. He also reminded commissioners that the panel was not charged with reconfiguring the allocation formula, which is really WMATA's responsibility.

Mr. Taube noted that the panel has disbanded and suggested sending the letter to the heads of the Federal City Council, the Board of Trade and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Mr. Connolly stated that the letter to COG should go to its chairman. Chairman Ferguson stated that the letter should also be sent to the individual members of the panel.

The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Metrochek Benefits Rise to \$105 Monthly. As of January 1, 2005, the maximum tax-free transit benefit has been adjusted upward by \$5 per month by the IRS. Currently about 151,800 federal workers receive the benefit. Maximum parking benefits also rose by \$5 to \$200 per month.

Proposed FY 2006 and 2007 Operating and Capital Budgets. Given early deadlines for state aid applications, the adoption of a two-year WMATA budget would assist NVTC in submitting accurate grant requests, among other benefits.

Final EIS for Dulles Corridor Project. The final Environmental Impact Statement is complete. Following circulation and review, FTA will issue a "Record of Decision" which will complete the federal environmental review process.

Table of Average Metrorail Fares and Subsidies. In response to a discussion by commissioners at the December meeting, staff compiled a table showing how Metrorail maximum and average fares have moved upward since FY 1978, at a much greater rate than the average subsidy per passenger.

## VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. Mrs. Bulova commended the minutes of the December 17, 2004 VRE Operations Board meeting to commissioners.

Outreach to Outlying Counties. Mr. Taube explained that VRE and PRTC have been in contact with representatives from Spotsylvania and Fauquier counties regarding participation in VRE and membership in PRTC. VRE ridership from these two counties alone exceeds 12 percent. Spotsylvania County is not contiguous to NVTC but Fauquier County is (it borders Loudoun County), so theoretically it could join NVTC. Mr. Taube asked for direction from commissioners as to whether NVTC should be involved in the discussions with Fauquier County regarding participation in VRE and membership in either PRTC, NVTC or both.

Mr. Fisette joined the discussion at 8:45 P.M.

Mr. Connolly stated that it would be more appropriate for Fauquier County to join PRTC. While a case can be made for the connections between Fauquier County and Northern Virginia proper, it could also be made for other counties, such as Stafford, Spotsylvania and Clark counties, as well as Jefferson County, West Virginia. Where does it end? The Northern Virginia region has enough problems that it is managing right now.

Ms. Rae stated that this will become more and more of an issue. If a dedicated rail fund is established during the legislative session, jurisdictions all over the commonwealth will be seeking funding.

Mrs. Bulova expressed her opinion that membership in PRTC would be a better fit for Fauquier County. In response to a question from Mrs. Bulova, Mr. Zehner stated that VRE representatives are scheduled to meet with the Fauquier County Board on January 13, 2005 to discuss options. One issue is that VRE is already overwhelmed with high ridership and the system is continuing to grow. Spotsylvania and Fauquier County elected officials are starting to feel the pressure from their own constituents to participate in VRE.

After further discussion, Chairman Ferguson noted that the consensus of the commission is that Fauquier County should be encouraged to join PRTC.

Audited VRE Financial Reports for FY 2004. Mrs. Bulova reported that VRE's auditors, PBGH LLP (also NVTC's auditors) have reported a "clean" audit of VRE. The VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1057, which would accept the 2004 VRE audit and authorize staff to distribute it to regulatory bodies, bondholders, other agencies and jurisdictions, and the public. The auditors met with VRE's Audit and Finance Committee as well as the Operations Board. A letter to VRE management contained several recommendations and VRE management has responded to each point raised by the auditors.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Connolly, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fisette, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

FY 2006 VRE Budget and FY 2005 Budget Revisions. Mrs. Bulova explained that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1058, which would approve the FY 2006 VRE budget together with FY 2005 budget revisions. The resolution would also authorize forwarding the budgets to NVTC's VRE participating and contributing jurisdictions for their consideration under the terms of the VRE Master Agreement. She stated that to meet an approximately \$1 million net increase for station maintenance, security, Amtrak access, fuel and insurance, fares would increase by 2.75 percent and subsidies would cover the remainder. This approach was recommended by VRE's CAO Budget Review Task Force.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Mr. Kauffman, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fiset, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Quantico Station Construction Contract Amendment. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1059, which would authorize VRE's CEO to amend the construction contract with Monarc Construction, Inc. to increase the value by \$203,795 to a total of \$1,051,618. This is required due to the discovery of additional asbestos.

Mrs. Bulova moved to approve the resolution (copy attached). Mr. Zimmerman seconded the motion. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fiset, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

General Security Services Contract Authorization. Mrs. Bulova explained that Resolution #1060 would increase the contract authorization for Virginia Uniformed Security Services by \$100,000 for each year of its existing three-year contract. The new authorization would be \$350,000 annually. Since the March, 2004 bombings in Madrid, Spain, the firm has been providing additional services, such as bomb sweeps at VRE yards. The VRE Operations Board recommends this action.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fiset, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Norfolk Southern Access Agreement Extension. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1061, which would extend the existing access agreement with Norfolk Southern through July 31, 2005 on terms identical to the current agreement which expires January 15, 2005.

Mrs. Bulova moved to approve Resolution #1061. Mr. Connolly seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fisette, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman. (A copy of the resolution is attached.)

CSXT Access Agreement Extension. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1062, which would extend the existing access agreement through July 31, 2005 on terms identical to the current agreement which expires January 15, 2005. Negotiations have not resolved substantial differences regarding liability and insurance.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Senator Whipple, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fisette, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Richmond Event. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #1063. The resolution would authorize VRE's CEO to spend up to \$25,000 to arrange an event in Richmond for General Assembly members to view a VRE train with a variety of railcars, which was discussed at length earlier in the meeting.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Gaines, to approve Resolution #1063 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fisette, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Senator Whipple suggested VRE arrange bus transportation with GRTC for this event in Richmond. In response to a question from Delegate Ebbin, Mrs. Bulova stated that VRE has not done an event like this before during the General Assembly Session.

#### Approval of NVTC's 2005 Workprogram

Chairman Ferguson asked staff to continue with their presentation on the workprogram. Mr. Taube stated that the workprogram has been revised to incorporate several performance measures as discussed at the December meeting. He suggested waiting for a presentation on this until after the General Assembly Session so that more commissioners could be part of the discussion. There were no objections. In response to a question from Chairman Ferguson, Mr. Taube stated that it was his understanding that the new measures would apply to next year's budget, since this fiscal year's budget was prepared last September.

Kala Quintana reported that she will be providing assistance to the Virginians for Better Transportation, a statewide coalition to educate voters about transportation needs. Senator Whipple cautioned that this will be a big job, since

it is a transportation group, not a transit group. It will take some energetic efforts to keep transit an important component. Mr. Connolly agreed and stated that VACO was asked to join this coalition but demurred because there was concern that it wasn't sufficiently balanced between transportation and transit. Mr. Zimmerman stated that VTA felt that it would be more advantageous to be part of the group to keep it balanced.

Ms. Quintana also reported that she is serving on the new "511" project feasibility study team. In response to a question from Chairman Ferguson, Ms. Quintana explained that "511" would be a centralized telephone number travelers could call to get information, including route and weather conditions for their specific region. NVTC will advocate including transit information. Work still needs to be done on this technology and to determine which agency would be responsible for maintaining and updating the information. VDOT has applied for federal funding on behalf of the Washington Metropolitan region for this project.

Jana Lynott reported that she will continue to work on emergency planning and research issues for 2005. In response to a question from Mr. Kauffman, Ms. Lynott stated that the senior mobility study is underway looking at demographics of seniors (primarily 75 and older). NVTC is also working to expand its GIS capabilities. There are three projects to which NVTC is currently applying GIS technology, including the senior mobility study, 2030 plan update and emergency planning. Ms. Lynott estimated that NVTC will save approximately \$40,000 in 2005 doing this in-house. In response to a question from Ms. Hudgins, Ms. Lynott stated that jurisdictional staff is participating in the senior mobility study and there is good coordination across the region.

Chairman Ferguson noted that Mr. Gaines needs to leave for another meeting, so while there is a quorum, he asked for a motion to approve the workprogram. Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to approve the 2005 workprogram. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bulova, Connolly, Ebbin, Ferguson, Fisette, Gaines, Hudgins, Kauffman, Rae, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Mr. Gaines left at 9:13 P.M. and did not return.

Adam McGavock reported that 387 SmarTrip fareboxes are due to be installed during June or July, 2005. He also reported that the FTA funds have been reinstated for this project.

Mr. McGavock also reported that the GEORGE bus has a ridership of 7,500 passengers per month and continues to grow. The city of Falls Church is expected to take over funding of the system in April, 2005. With the service changes and adjustments, funding was stretched to cover 27 months of operations, instead of the anticipated 18 months.

Ms. Quintana introduced Elizabeth Rodgers, NVTC's new intern, who is working on GIS related projects. This position has been funded by a VDRPT

intern grant. Ms. Rae noted that the intern grant funds across the commonwealth were in jeopardy of being cut at one point. Ms. Rodgers gave an overview of the GIS work she has been doing. She is also in charge of updating NVTC's website and working on a new media presentation for the 2030 plan update.

In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Ms. Lynott stated that the media presentation for the 2030 plan update is for NVTA. After it is finalized, it will be reviewed by NVTA. She stated that it will not be posted on NVTC's website until it is reviewed. In response to a question from Mr. Kauffman, Ms. Lynott explained that it will be a PowerPoint presentation that is directed at the average citizen to encourage them to: get involved in community events, be educated about transportation funding issues, provide input to the process and fill out a scientific questionnaire. Mr. Kauffman stated that the presentation could be used as a tool to bring the defeated sales tax referendum back to life. Mr. Snyder stated that this is an excellent suggestion. He stated that beyond the surveys and presentations, other innovative efforts are being done, including educational efforts at major events, such as the Fairfax County fair.

Ms. Lynott also reported that at the request of NVTA, jurisdictional staff has initiated a scientific telephone survey as part of the 2030 plan update. Mr. Connolly explained that NVTA envisioned having more public input beyond the public hearings. At hearings often opponents are heard loud and clear, and this survey would provide a broader audience and would be able to really test public opinion. Ms. Bulova stated that this is a good idea.

Mr. Taube reported that his role is to lead the staff and to keep board members and staff advised of current studies and research. Mr. Zimmerman stated that NVTC is one of the best places for data. NVTC's website has a very accessible format and succinct summaries of data that can be very useful. Mr. Connolly suggested that the website have a "frequently asked questions" section.

#### NVTC Draft FY 2006 Administrative Budget

Mr. Taube reported that at its September, 2004 meeting the commission discussed the preliminary FY 2006 administrative budget and authorized staff to forward it to NVTC's member jurisdictions to assist in their budget preparations. Traditionally, NVTC discusses its budget again each January prior to formal action in February. There were no questions or comments.

#### Legislative Items

Senator Whipple announced Governor's Warner's transportation funding proposals include \$40 million for Metro railcars, \$20 million for VRE railcars, \$23 million for infrastructure partnerships with freight railroads and \$10 million for statewide bus purchases, all of which would be of immediate benefit to NVTC

and its jurisdictions. She noted that the House proposal seems to only have \$40 million for transit, which is considerably less than the Governor's proposal. Out of the \$300 million proposed to pay the debt of projects that are built but not yet operating, it seems that Northern Virginia gets less than 10 percent of that debt repayment funding. She stated that Northern Virginia needs to be treated fairly and one way to accomplish that is to see that transit elements of the various proposals are fully funded.

In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Senator Whipple stated that the philosophical position of the Senate is that general funds shouldn't be raided for funding transportation projects in an election year. Mr. Connolly observed that it's not cost free, since it takes away money from other important parts of the budget.

Commissioners were provided with a copy of Delegate Reese's proposed legislation establishing a Virginia Transportation Priority and Funding Commission. Delegate Reese is also introducing legislation that would try to capture certain growing tax revenues and send them back to NVTA to help pay for transportation projects. The bill would also set up a new transportation authority in the Hampton Roads area. Mr. Connolly stated that in principle it would be hard for him to oppose legislation that would allow Northern Virginia to retain some of its own revenues. The Commission may want to take a look at this when it is introduced and take a position.

### Regional Transportation Items

Second Report of the High-Occupancy Vehicle Enforcement Task Force. Mr. Taube stated that in a VDOT news release the HOV Enforcement Task Force has recommended that the hybrid vehicle exemption be allowed to expire in July 2006. Ms. Lynott stated that the full HOV task force report is on NVTC's website. Mr. Connolly stated that a presentation at a future NVTC meeting would be helpful. Ms. Rae stated that during three days in December the HOV lanes along the I-95 Corridor were running much slower than the conventional lanes. Ms. Hudgins stated that the Dulles Toll Road is often at a standstill and at those times there is no advantage to taking HOV.

Mr. Kauffman asked if the General Assembly will revisit this issue and eliminate the hybrid exemption. Senator Whipple expressed her opinion that she hasn't seen evidence that hybrid vehicles are a big problem on HOV lanes. Delegate Ebbin stated that there is an environmental benefit in using hybrids. Mr. Zimmerman agreed that there is an environmental benefit and the incentive to let hybrids use HOV was a good idea at the time, but the HOV lanes are now clogging up. From March to October of last year, hybrid vehicle usage doubled making Virginia second only to California in the number of such vehicles. They are starting to fill the HOV lanes and the HOV lanes will fail if the hybrids exemption isn't phased out. Senator Whipple stated that it would be helpful to have more data on this issue.

### Other NVTC Business

Mr. Snyder asked staff to look at next steps that should be taken to initiate a regional tax to support Metro. Mr. Connolly stated that it would be useful to have Rudy Penner meet with NVTC to give his perspective as a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel. Chairman Ferguson suggested that this happen at the March meeting. Mr. Taube reported that the Board of Trade is forming a new group to move the panel's recommendations forward. Mr. Connolly stated that NVTA's resolution, Mr. Snyder's letter and NVTC's position be provided to NVTC's legislative members so that Richmond knows that regional bodies are already on record supporting the Panel's recommendations. Senator Whipple suggested briefing the Northern Virginia delegation at one of their Monday meetings in Richmond.

Ms. Rae introduced Jennifer Pickett, VDRPT's new Public Information Officer. Ms. Bulova stated that Ms. Pickett did an outstanding job working with the Governor's Rail Commission.

Mr. Taube stated that commissioners will be receiving a survey--supported by NVTC's executive committee-- to fill out on how NVTC board members could improve their experience as commissioners.

### NVTC Financial Reports for November, 2004

Commissioners were provided with the financial reports and there were no questions.

### Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Bulova and a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the commission unanimously agreed to adjourn. Chairman Ferguson adjourned the meeting at 9:47 P.M.

Approved this third day of February, 2005.

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Paul Ferguson  
Chairman

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David F. Snyder  
Secretary-Treasurer