



**Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 19, 2021 - 7:30 a.m.
101 Queen City Road, Burlington VT 05401**

The mission of GMT is to promote and operate safe, convenient, accessible, innovative, and sustainable public transportation services in northwest and central Vermont that reduce congestion and pollution, encourage transit oriented development, and enhance the quality of life for all.

Present:

Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Waninger
Commissioner Pouech
Commissioner Derenthal
Commissioner Kaynor
Commissioner Buermann
Commissioner Dimitruk
Commissioner Spencer
Commissioner Baker

Commissioner Polyte
Commissioner Bohn
Commissioner Brewer
Commissioner Wallis
Commissioner Sharrow

Absent: None

Jon Moore, General Manager
Jamie Smith, Director of Marketing and Planning
Devin Mason, Transit Planner
Chris Damiani, Transit Planner
Kim Wall, Grants Manager
Trish Redalieu, Director of Human Resources
Nick Foss, Director of Finance
Matt Kimball, Capital Projects Manager
Jordan Posner, Paratransit and Broker Services Manager
Ross MacDonald, VTrans

Public:

Laura Jacoby, Old Spokes Home
Spencer Smith, Member of the Public

1. Open Meeting

Commissioner Waninger opened the meeting at 7:31 AM.

2. Adjustment of the Agenda

None.

3. Public Comment

- Laura Jacoby indicated self as present.
- Spencer Smith was present to hear VTrans report.



4. Consent Agenda (Action Item)

- Commissioner Waninger entertained motion to approve Consent Agenda or remove anything therefrom.
- Commissioner Kaynor motioned to approve but would like to make comments after second to motion.
 - Commissioner Baker seconded.

Further Discussion

- Commissioner Kaynor indicated error pertaining to labels in rural and ADA ridership report, as well as minor typos in minutes. Also commended GMT for training YouTube channel.
- Consent Agenda approved without abstention or opposition.



5. VTrans Update

- Received \$26.7 million in CRRSSA funds. This is in addition to \$13.3 million received in the spring of 2020.
- Ross MacDonald instructed by VTrans to add \$5 million in funding for capital, which will likely allow the State to assist GMT with the purchase of additional cutaway buses.
 - Five or six buses will likely be purchased.
 - This week, VTrans is releasing an RFP and a scope for an electrification plan.
 - **Commissioner Dimitruk:** Will statewide funding allow providers to remain fare-free for FY22? **Ross MacDonald:** Yes, for 5311 (Rural) service. Cannot speak for 5307 (Urban) service.
- **Commissioner Derenthal:** Would fare-free service continue on the rural side, while fares are reinstated on the urban side? **Ross MacDonald:** This would be a decision for GMT's Board of Commissioners.
- **Commissioner Waninger:** Would the capital purchases be 100 percent funded as well? **Ross MacDonald:** They will not; local match obligations would still apply.



6. General Manager Report – Updates and Opportunity for Questions (continued on next page).

- Kim Wall will be providing an update on CRRSSA funding, and any associated potential impacts.
- GMT has a service modification plan in the event of any Inauguration-related protests at the Vermont State House.
 - Jon Moore provided updates regarding staffing-related service suspensions.
- With additional candidates in the recruitment process, GMT hopes to reinstate suspended service once it can be reliably staffed. Due to low ridership, these service reductions should not affect capacity.
- GMT will be receiving \$2.48 million in 5307 (Urban) CRRSSA funds and a \$1.5 reduction in State operating funds. This may present an issue with regards to local match requirements.

CRRSSA Presentation: Potential Impacts on Local-Match Funding

- Even with additional CRRSSA and COVID-19 relief funding, GMT is still projecting a local-match deficit of \$555,962 for FY22.
- **Commissioner Dimitruk:** Would like to see VTrans not reduce GMT's State operating funding by as much.
- **Ross MacDonald:** While the state is working to provide as much assistance as possible, it likely would not be feasible for VTrans to cover GMT's local-match deficit.
- **Commissioner Derenthal:** Does the local match include urban fares? **Jon Moore:** It excludes cash fare but includes unlimited-access revenue.
- **Commissioner Kaynor:** Given that GMT is currently fare-free, why are unlimited-access fares being factored into the budget? **Jon Moore:** For budgetary reasons, fare-collection is set to resume in FY22.
 - **Commissioner Kaynor** indicated curiosity about the possibility of GMT obtaining revenue similar to that of the unlimited-access program without reinstating fare-collection.
- **Commissioner Wallis:** What are GMT's options for closing the local-match deficit? **Jon Moore:** GMT may be able to increase urban assessments. Additionally, ADA funding could be shifted to 5307 (Urban) funding.
- **Commissioner Polyte:** For local matches, have any towns provided pushback? **Jon Moore:** Not thus far, though GMT has power of assessment on the urban side.



6 General Manager Report – Updates and Opportunity for Questions (continued from previous page).

- **Commissioner Baker:** Per the board packet, might some towns also see reduced assessments? **Jon Moore:** These pertain more to the impact of service cuts related to COVID-19, in FY21. That remark does not closely relate to FY22.
- **Commissioner Pouech:** Hinesburg budget will be finalized January 20, by Australian ballot. GMT local match is not a separate ballot item.

Bus Chargers: Contractual Challenge

- Chargers for Proterra buses were intended, per the original RFP, to be programmable to charge the buses only within specific windows of time; this allows for off-peak charging, when, per an agreement between GMT and the Burlington Electric Department, electricity rates are significantly lower.
- Due to programming issues and three instances of human error (one being by a Proterra service technician), GMT has seen utility costs increase by \$20,000 for FY21, after buses were charged during peak hours.
- GMT is working to obtain reimbursement from Proterra for these expenses, which Proterra has thus far refused. GMT's legal counsel has reviewed the contract, and GMT is prepared to take legal action if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved.
- **Commissioner Kaynor:** Cannot the buses themselves be programmed not to charge during peak hours, even if connected to the charger? **Jon Moore:** No.



7. Board Committee Reports

- **Commissioner Buermann (Strategy):** Strategy Committee did not meet in December; preparing for “pseudo-board-retreat”.
- **Commissioner Bohn (Finance):** No major updates, but would like to thank GMT Finance staff for their work in formulating the FY22 budget.
- **Commissioner Sharrow (Operations):** Operations Committee discussed issues with electric bus chargers and the buses themselves, microtransit, and the Paid Time Off (PTO) Agreement.
- **Commissioner Polyte [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)]:** JEDI Committee discussed consultant RFP, committee formation, and committee composition. Devin Mason will become the administrative representative for the committee, replacing Jenn Wood, who left the agency in early-January.
- **Commissioner Pouech – Question:** Will there soon be some type of report on the Proterra buses, detailing matters such as performance and issues? Jon Moore: This is likely something to become available in the February board report.
- **Commissioner Waninger:** For the next board meeting, during executive session, the board will be developing its priorities relating to re-negotiation. Jon Moore will also raise any issues



8. Investment Advisor Contract Award (Action Item)

- New committee created to assist with planning of GMT's retirement funds.
- Committee sought to identify a financial advisor to accomplish this task, awarding a contract to John Servin of NFP.
- Nick Foss and the Committee are recommending that the Board of Commissioners approve this change.
- **Commissioner Waninger:** Should the motion to approve this contract award include the name of the individual to whom it is being awarded? **Nick Foss:** Advisable.
- **Commissioner Wallis** expressed concern regarding potential risks for bad investments. **Nick Foss:** The consultant would work only in an advisory capacity, for individuals with retirement plans, and would not manage the accounts. However, John Servin is also a licensed financial advisor.
- **Commissioner Baker** made a motion to **approve awarding the Investment Advisor Contract to John Servin, of NFP. Commissioner Spencer** seconded this motion, and it carried without abstention, opposition, or further discussion.

9. FY21 Capital Budget Amendment (Action Item)

- Finance Committee approved recommendations.
- Federal and State funding shares were altered for many capital items to reflect additional federal funding, with federal share rising by 5 percent and state falling by the same amount. Shifted funds were for projects such as building repairs and revenue vehicle procurements.
- Line 8D for replacement of Berlin facility above-ground fuel tank was changed to "Berlin Facility Improvements", which allows for greater flexibility in the use of these funds. A new fuel tank is no longer needed, as GMT is working to identify a location for a new facility within the next two years.
- **Commissioner Bohn** made a motion to approve the Capital Budget Amendment. **Commissioner Kaynor** seconded, and the motion passed without opposition, abstentions, or further discussion.



10. FY22 Operating Budget Final Approval (Action Item) (Continued on next page)

- Before approval by the Board of Commissioners, this approval was subject to presentation at a public hearing, which saw no attendance by members of the public. Therefore, staff is not recommending any changes based on public feedback.
- **Commissioner Bohn** made a motion to adopt the FY22 Operating Budget. **Commissioner Kaynor** seconded.

Further Discussion:

- **Commissioner Spencer** requested clarification from Jon Moore regarding the statement that assessments would be increasing, while information from the packet indicated that all ADA assessments would be decreasing except for Colchester's. **Nick Foss**: The 4 percent increase was only for fixed-route service. For FY23, ADA assessments may increase, as Colchester's status change, to a non-voting member, means that capital buy-in will no longer be included in its assessment. Calculation errors were also identified on page 80 of the February board packet, which Nick Foss indicated he would fix.
- **Jon Moore** clarified that the assessment letters would reflect (correct) figures shown in the Excel spreadsheet, not those from the PowerPoint presentation (incorrect).
- **Commissioner Derenthal**: Pre-COVID-19, GMT's average cost per passenger was roughly \$7.00; how does that compare to historical figures? **Jon Moore**: This cost is typical; however, urban trips are significantly less expensive due to the effect of economies of scale.
- Commissioner Kaynor made a motion to approve the FY22 Operating Budget. Commissioner Pouech seconded.

Further Discussion

- **Commissioner Spencer**: Is it possible to delay this vote until February? If not, are there other options which may allow for flexibility with regards to additional received funding from VTTrans and from the federal government? **Jon Moore**: While the staff would prefer to approve the budget today, the only crucial portion is the member assessments; the rest may be able to wait until the February board meeting.
- **Commissioner Polyte**: Concerned that GMT's largest contributors seem to be fairly large increases, percentage-wise. Winooski's assessment is set to rise by nearly 7.5 percent, well beyond the initial 4 percent discussed. Concerned that such municipalities may not be able to provide this funding. **Commissioner Bohn** stated that that ADA assessments are based on ridership and that, for towns with relatively low ADA ridership, it does not take a large number of additional ridership to significantly raise assessments. **Commissioner Kaynor** echoed that ADA assessments normally vary more than fixed-route assessments.



10. FY22 Operating Budget Final Approval (Action Item)(Continued from previous page)

- **Commissioner Spencer:** If the budget is approved today, could language be included stating that there will be additional discussion, before the new fiscal year, of extending fare-free service, and additional discussion relating to the utilization of CRRSSA funding? **Jon Moore:** There is significant potential for variation in CRRSSA funding, but GMT staff would be happy to accommodate this request to the best of its abilities.
- **Commissioner Spencer:** Willing to approve FY22 operating budget with language indicating subsequent discussion of urban fare-free service, as well as options for utilization of CRRSSA funding, prior to the beginning of FY22.
- Previous motion to approve was accepted by the board, with Commissioner Spencer's suggested amendment. None were opposed, none abstained, and no further discussion occurred.

11. COVID-19 Service Suspensions and Local Funding Policy Discussion

- **Jon Moore** outlined current suspensions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the 116 Commuter and certain runs on various other routes.
 - While GMT is saving some operating costs, it is still incurring expenses associated with maintaining the vehicles which will be needed to operate the service once it resumes.
- With some service remaining suspended for the entirety of FY21, Jon Moore would like to see the matter of assessment impacts referred to a committee for further discussion.
- **Commissioner Waninger** proposed moving this matter to the Finance Committee, to which the Board agreed.



12. Chittenden County American with Disabilities (ADA) and Elders & Disabled (E&D) Request for Proposals (RFP) Contract Award (Action Item)

- 29 firms requested copies of the RFP, but only SSTA submitted a proposal.
- GMT has been meeting with SSTA regarding annual rate negotiations.
- Initial contract is three years, retroactive from July 1, 2020. Potential for two one-year extensions, at GMT's discretion.
- Maximum contract value would be \$10 million. Contract contains language incentivizing productivity and penalizing non-productivity.
- **Commissioner Baker** made a motion to award the contract to SSTA. **Commissioner Sharrow** seconded. **Commissioners Bohn** and **Spencer** commended GMT staff for their work on this procurement. The item passed without opposition, abstention, or further discussion.



13. Microtransit Operations Update

- 571 rides from 271 accounts since launch.
- Software issue, relating to breaks, has occasionally resulted in breaks being shortened, removed, or not properly recorded.
 - This can affect rides scheduled after the break.
- The count-down clock for the driver's arrival is also not working properly; it is counting down once the driver arrives, and not once it nears the scheduled pick-up time.
- **Commissioner Sharrow:** If pick-up times are assigned specific time windows, why would a driver arrive early? **Jamie Smith:** Because, with fewer rides, there may be extended periods of times between pick-ups.
- **Commissioner Davis:** If drivers arrive early at a stop while transporting other passengers, would those passengers also need to wait for the driver to get back on-schedule? **Jamie Smith:** Currently, yes. Once the clock is fixed, there should not be any instances of passengers boarding their bus early; if the bus was early, it would simply wait at or near the passenger's location until the scheduled pick-up time.
- **Commissioner Waninger:** Has MyRide seen significant use by seniors and by individuals with disabilities? **Jamie Smith:** Yes, though GMT is keeping in touch with local senior housing facilities to find ways to improve the service for them.
- **Commissioner Waninger:** How does this ridership compare to combined ridership, last year, for the routes replaced by MyRide.
- **Commissioner Buermann:** Would flag-stops still be offered? **Jamie Smith:** Unlikely, as it could throw off the schedule for passengers who booked in advance.
- **Commissioner Buermann:** Has there been outreach to familiarize, with the MyRide service, people who do not have access to a smartphone or other means by which to electronically view schedules or other service information? **Jamie Smith:** Yes, by several local groups and individuals.



14. General Commissioner Comments

- **Commissioner Kaynor** thanked the Operations staff for maintaining service through the pandemic.
- **Commissioner Buermann:** How is GMT doing with regards to sick employees? **Jon Moore:** A small handful of employees are out, either for testing positive or for having come in close contact with someone who has, but there have been no canceled runs since Christmastime.

15. Adjourn

- **Commissioner Polyte** motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bohn seconded. Without opposition, abstention, or further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.