



1 **Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners**
2 **Meeting April 20, 2021 - 7:30 a.m.**
3 **101 Queen City Road, Burlington VT 05401**

4 **Held virtually due to ongoing public health concerns.**
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6 *The mission of GMT is to promote and operate safe, convenient,*
7 *accessible, innovative, and sustainable public transportation services in*
8 *northwest and central Vermont that reduce congestion and pollution,*
9 *encourage transit oriented development, and enhance the quality of life*
10 *for all.*
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12 **Attendance**

13 **Board of Commissioners**

14 Chairperson Waninger

15 Vice-Chairperson Davis

16 Commissioner Baker

17 Commissioner Bohne

18 Commissioner Buermann

19 Commissioner Derenthal

20 Commissioner Dimitruk

21 Commissioner Kaynor

22 Commissioner Polyte

23 Commissioner Pouech

24 Commissioner Sharrow

25 Commissioner Spencer

26 Commissioner Wallis

27 **Staff**

28 Jon Moore, General Manager

29 Nick Foss, Director of Finance and Grants

30 Trish Redalieu, Director of Human Resources

31 Jamie Smith, Director of Planning and Marketing

32 Debbie Coppola, Senior Accountant

33 Matthew Kimball, Capital Projects Manager

34 Karen Plante, Staff Accountant

35 Kim Wall, Grant Manager

36 Chris Damiani, Transit Planner

37 Devin Mason, Transit Planner

38 Pam McDonald, Accounting Coordinator

39 **Public/Stakeholders**

40 Ross MacDonald, Public Transit Manager (VTrans)
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43 **Open Meeting**

44 Chairperson Waninger opened the meeting at 7:31 AM.

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46 **Adjustment of the Agenda**

47 No adjustments to the agenda.

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49 **Public Comment**

50 No members of the public present.

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52 **Consent Agenda (Action Item)**

53 **Commissioner Kaynor:** Minor re-wording on line 264 of previous month's minutes.

54 **Chairperson Waninger:** Exclude minutes, pending revisions. Minutes do not currently include motion and second for adjournment of March meeting.

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56 **Commissioner Kaynor** motioned to approve Consent Agenda, with minutes excluded.

57 **Commissioner Pouech** seconded. Motion passed without opposition, abstention, or further discussion.

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60 **VTrans Update & FY20 Route Performance Report Presentation**

61 Ross MacDonald (VTrans) provided an update on transit service in Vermont, including potential services changes and post-pandemic restoration of some intercity transit service.

62 **Commissioner Wallis:** What will federal funding look like two or three years from now? Will there be additional financial pressure on municipalities? **Ross MacDonald:** The intent of the federal funding is to reduce the need for local matches for new facilities and similar projects.

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67 **Commissioner Dimitruk:** Remarked on how transit agencies with a higher proportion of volunteer drivers still seem to have a higher per-passenger cost than does GMT. Was curious to know why. **Ross MacDonald:** Longer trips and more demand-response trips, whereas most of GMT's ridership occurs along fixed routes, and often for shorter distances.

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72 **Chairperson Waninger:** Is mileage something that is likely to be reflected in future productivity charts? **Ross MacDonald:** This is doable and may currently exist in the bulk data.

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85 **General Manager Report – Updates and Opportunity for Questions on the Report**

86 General Manager, Jon Moore, indicated that GMT is currently working to recruit more volunteer
87 drivers in its rural service areas, which GMT has identified as a potential opportunity for
88 considerable financial savings.

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90 Two potential sites for new Berlin facility; selection study likely to be presented to the Board of
91 Commissioners in the coming months.

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93 **Commissioner Kaynor:** How often is increased ridership requiring GMT to operate
94 supplemental service to maintain physical distancing aboard buses? **Jon Moore:** Very few
95 issues. Most such service has been provided along the Red Line to Williston. Anticipating
96 capacity issues once the Burlington School District returns to for-day-weekly in-person learning.
97 Potential for raising occupancy limits aboard Burlington buses.

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99 **Board Committee Reports**

100 **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) – Commissioner Polyte**

101 The JEDI Committee selected Talitha Consults, LLC (Tukwila, Washington) to assist it in its
102 justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. The Committee has held its initial meeting with
103 Talitha, to determine GMT’s needs and to set an initial course of action.

104 **Finance – Commissioner Bohne**

105 Committee reviewed Fund Balance Policy and recommends amendment thereto. Finances may
106 be somewhat distorted by the inflow of federal funds, but expenses are down.

107 **Operations – Commissioner Sharrow**

108 Committee did not meet in March.

109 **Strategy – Commissioner Buermann**

110 Discussed transit strategic plan timeline.

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112 **Fund Balance Policy Update Presentation (Action Item)**

113 Nick Foss provided an update on the Fund Balance Policy.

114 **Commissioner Baker** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Polyte** seconded. Policy approved
115 without opposition, abstention, or discussion.

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127 **FY22 Zero-fare Policy Discussion (Action Item) (p. 1/2)**

128 Jon Moore provided an update on the zero-fare policy and indicated that the Vermont Legislature
129 intends to provide the funding that would be necessary for transit providers to remain fare-free
130 for FY22.

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132 **Commissioner Baker:** Motioned to approve staff recommendation.

133 **Commissioner Derenthal:** This is likely to benefit those who depend upon GMT the most and
134 could be a good marketing tool to attract new ridership post-pandemic.

135 **Commissioner Sharrow:** Opposes using COVID funding (e.g. from the CARES Act) for fare-
136 free service. Would like to see that funding be used to temporarily relieve member municipalities
137 from their contributions.

138 **Commissioner Kaynor:** Gained ridership from continued fare-free service could help GMT to
139 regain lost STIC factors, which would result in a \$200,000 increase in federal funding.

140 **Commissioner Polyte:** This could be a way to attract passengers who are “on the fence” and
141 may otherwise be unwilling to try GMT’s services. Also believes that the pandemic will likely
142 continue to present public health issues this year, and that continuing fare-free service would
143 keep drivers safer.

144 **Commissioner Walis:** Believes GMT should be more financially-conservative in this regard.
145 Also disagrees with Commissioner Sharrow, regarding the potential of temporarily leaving
146 member municipalities “off the hook” for their contributions, as this may create resistance when
147 contributions resume. Generally uncomfortable with this proposal.

148 **Commissioner Dimitruk:** Research shows that transit ridership often increases when fare is
149 removed, and fare-free service could also be beneficial from an equity standpoint, as there are
150 racial and income disparities associated with car ownership in Vermont. As part of motion, would
151 also like to understand what budgeting process the Board will use for the FY23 budget, as
152 budgeting discussions begin in the Fall.

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154 **Jon Moore:** Legislation making its way through congress could provide GMT with additional
155 funding that it could use for continued fare-free service.

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157 **Commissioner Bohne:** What percentage of GMT drivers have received their COVID-19
158 vaccination? **Jon Moore:** Likely in the range of 25% to 30%.

159 **Commissioner Bohne:** Does not support continued fare-free. With COVID-19 winding down,
160 drivers should be obtaining their shots to protect them in their interactions during fare-collection.

161 **Commissioner Baker:** Indicated feeling more optimistic than Commissioners Bohne and
162 Sharrow about potential legislative developments pertaining to mass transit, both on the state
163 and federal level.

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166 **FY22 Zero-fare Policy Discussion (Action Item) (p. 2/2)**



167 **Commissioner Wallis:** Would like to see fare-free service targeted, rather than being
168 systemwide. Is otherwise concerned that the lack of funding may leave GMT in a position where
169 it must reduce service.

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171 **Jon Moore:** Staff are of the perspective that fare-free service should not come at the expense
172 of existing service and would not recommend the continuation of fare-free service if service
173 reductions were likely.

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175 **Commissioner Davis:** While some Vermonters do not have access to an automobile, some
176 such individuals are still unable to use GMT's services due to location or schedule, but they
177 would still be paying for service through taxes.

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179 **Commissioner Baker** motioned prior to discussion. Vote was not unanimous. Please see below
180 for each commissioner's vote:

- 181 • Commissioner Sharrow: Nay.
- 182 • Commissioner Buermann: Aye.
- 183 • Commissioner Pouech: Aye.
- 184 • Commissioner Kyanor: Aye.
- 185 • Commissioner Polyte: Aye.
- 186 • Commissioner Bohne: Nay.
- 187 • Commissioner Baker: Aye.
- 188 • Commissioner Dimitruk: Aye.
- 189 • Vice-Chairperson Davis: Aye.
- 190 • Commissioner Spencer: Aye.
- 191 • Commissioner Wallis: Aye.
- 192 • Chairperson Waninger: Aye.

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194 **June 2021 Service Changes Discussion (Action Item)**

195 Jamie Smith provided an update on proposed changes pertaining to the Williston Red Line and
196 to the St. Albans LINK Express, as well as reversion to numbered routing.

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198 **Commissioner Kaynor:** Glad that the changes for the Red Line were well-received.
199 Disappointed that the color-coding of lines did not work out.

200 **Commissioner Kaynor** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Bohne** seconded.
201 Recommended service changes adopted without opposition, abstention, or further discussion.
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208 **Executive Session: 1 VSA 313(a) (1) (b), labor relations agreements with employees.**

209 *Is there a motion to find that premature public knowledge regarding Collective Bargaining*
210 *negotiations would place GMT at a substantial disadvantage?*

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212 *Is there a motion to enter executive session pursuant to 1 VSA 313(a) (1) (b) to discuss*
213 *labor relations agreements with employees?*

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215 **Commissioner Wallis** motioned. **Commissioner Dimitruk** seconded. Motion passed without
216 opposition, abstention, or further discussion.

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218 **Commissioner Buermann** motioned to enter an executive session. **Commissioner Polyte**
219 **seconded. Jon Moore** invited Nick Foss to the executive session.

220 Motion passed without opposition, abstention, or further discussion. Executive
221 session commenced at 9:05 AM. Commissioner Kaynor motioned to end the
222 executive session, with no action taken. Commissioner Sharrow seconded, and the
223 executive session ended at 9:25 AM, without objection, abstention, or discussion.

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225 **General Commissioner Comments**

226 **Commissioner Wallis:** Will the board soon be discussing the potential of in-person meetings,
227 per the Governor's recommendations? **Jon Moore:** It is possible that in-person board meetings
228 could resume as soon as May. Proposed discussion during May Leadership Committee meeting.

229 **Commissioner Kaynor:** Appreciates the thoughtful discord that has occurred, even if the Board
230 is not in unanimous agreement.

231 **Commissioner Bohne:** Would it be worth polling Admin and the Board to determine what
232 percentage are or intend to be fully vaccinated by May or June. **Jon Moore:** GMT has not yet
233 obtained an official legal opinion on this and therefore has not yet determined the legality of such
234 a poll. Frontline staff are being offered up to eight hours' pay for recovery from any vaccine-
235 related symptoms, in which case they would need to provide evidence. Proof would not be
236 required for any frontline staff who are not seeking paid time for the vaccine. Administrative staff
237 are not eligible for vaccine pay, so reporting of vaccination is voluntary.

238 **Chairperson Waninger:** Can GMT legally ask Board members about vaccination? **Jon Moore:**
239 Likely on a voluntary basis.

240 **Vice-Chairperson Davis:** Based on advice received from other legal counsel, there may be
241 legal issues associated with providing additional benefits to individuals who receive the vaccine.
242 Furthermore, the line of questioning is important. If an individual answers no, an employer cannot
243 ask why; this would simply be considered an ADA accommodation.

244 **Commissioner Dimitruk:** Would like to see a continued option for remote participation, both for
245 access and environmental reasons.

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249 **Adjourn**
250 Commissioner Baker motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Sharrow seconded. Motion passed
251 without opposition, abstention, or further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 AM.
252 Next GMT Board of Commissioners Meeting Date: **May 18, 2021.**