



Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners
August 18, 2020 - 7:30 a.m.
101 Queen City Road, Burlington VT 05401
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Meetings

Present:

Commissioner Sharrow
Commissioner Buermann
Commissioner Poeuch
Commissioner Waninger
Commissioner Bohn
Commissioner Baker
Commissioner Wallis
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Kaynor
Commissioner Dimitruk
Commissioner Poylte

Jamie Smith, Dir. of Marketing and Planning
Milia Bell, Marketing Coordinator
Karen Plante, Payroll Administrator
Jennifer Wood
Ross MacDonald, VTrans
Jon Moore, General Manager
Kim Wall, Grant Manager
Debbie Coppola, Senior Accountant
Matt Kimball, Capital Projects Manager
Nick Foss, Dir. of Finance
Trish Redalieu, Dir. of Human Resources
Chris Damiani, GMT Transit Planner

Public:

Susan Spencer Smith
Representative Curt McCormack

- **Open Meeting**

Commissioner Waninger opened the meeting at 7:32AM.

- **Adjustment of the Agenda**

There was no adjustment to the agenda.

- **Public Comment**

Ms. Smith came on to hear about electric vehicles, microtransit, and to hear from Representative McCormack.

- **Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Buermann noted that he was not present at the last board meeting on July 21, 2020. There was a request to remove the Marketing and Planning report. Commissioner Dimitruk made a motion to approve the consent agenda with Commissioner Buermann's edit and without the Marketing and Planning report. Commissioner Baker seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried. Commissioner Kaynor asked about the combination of the Orange Line/Silver Loop schedule. Mr. Moore noted that the changes should allow us more operational efficiency. Commissioner Kaynor commented that he is pleased to see projects like Microtransit moving forward. Commissioner Kaynor made a motion to approval Marketing and



Planning report, Commissioner Baker seconded. Commissioner Wallis asked for a brief update on Seasonal Service. All were in favor and the motion carried.

VTrans Update

- Mr. MacDonald gave an update on seasonal service, noting that flexibility is going to be necessary as we navigate COVID-19.
- VTrans received a grant for fleet improvements across the state and will be exploring options for smaller, sprinter type vehicles.
- Legislative Session is back in order; Mr. MacDonald thanked administration for continued support. He said that the VTrans budget has been passed.
- Mr. MacDonald said that he was pleased by the amount of proposals received in response to the On-Demand Microtransit Software RFP.
- VTrans is working with transit providers to get enough PPE.

Commissioner Sharrow asked what makes and models are currently available for cutaway vehicles? Mr. MacDonald deferred to Mr. Moore who said Phoenix, AZ is currently using a model of EV cutaway.

- **General Manager Update**

Mr. Moore provided a written update in the board packet, Commissioner Waninger asked board members if there were questions provided a written update. Mr. Moore added he made updates to the invited for all Board Committees. He also mentioned that VPTA was supposed to hear back on the award of the NEMT contract, but hadn't yet.

Commissioner Kaynor thanked Mr. Moore for the report and the detail provided. He asked Mr. Moore for more information on the Street Outreach team through the Howard Center. Mr. Moore said that the Howard Center would conduct trainings with the Operations Department in September; training would include when it's appropriate to call Howard Center versus the police and de-escalation training as it related to mental health and substance abuse issues.

Commissioner Baker recommended Mental Health first Aid training through the Howard Center. Commissioner Bohne asked if we had access to case workers in other communities. Mr. Moore said that there is a parallel program called Community Outreach, which we would have access to.

Commissioner Waninger congratulated GMT on both electric buses being back in service.



- **Finance Report**

Mr. Foss provided a written report in the board packet, he asked if any board members had questions related to the Finance Report. Commissioner Kaynor noted that page 32, second paragraph, “we have spent XXX on hazard pay **since** July”. He noted that he didn’t realize the additional costs associated with adding hazard pay HP to overtime, payroll tax, etc.

Commissioner Wallis asked what the net outcome was of transferring routes to RCT. Mr. Foss said that we received a capital investment. Mr. Moore mentioned that the Planning staff has a meeting with RCT to discuss the local funding.

- **Board Committee Reports**

Leadership: Commissioner Waninger said that the committee discussed resuming in-person meetings, and the group didn’t come to a consensus so they are asking the full Board to weigh-in. After a discussion, the Board agreed that if in-person participation is the only option for someone to participate, accommodations could be made, but they don’t encourage in-person meetings at this time.

Commissioner Waninger asked the same question regarding an in-person board retreat. The Board agreed that meeting is important and wants to explore holding multiple meetings, digitally, to discuss important issues. Commissioner Poylte said that she believes that the Board needs need to hold meetings, segmented by issue using online resources to breakout into groups.

Strategy: Commissioner Buermann gave an update related to the meeting last week and mentioned that Mr. Moore’s written GM update provided details on the strategic plan discussion. The goal of the new Strategic Plan is to expand to a more in-depth document that will set GMT up for future efficiency.

Operations: Commissioner Sharrow gave an overview on the committee meeting, mentioned that there is an ongoing issue resulting in the committee not having a quorum. He said Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be reformatted and represented to the Board in a few months. He said the PIP is beneficial for monitoring the performance of the organization.

Finance: Commissioner Bohne started by saying that GMT was under stress going in FY21 and COVID-19 helped some. He mentioned the Finance Committee is going to work on a plan for how all the CARES funding and hazard pay pieces fit together.



Inclusion and Diversity: Commissioner Poylte gave an update on the first meeting. She said this would be slow and focused work and noted that it's challenging that the committee can't meet in person. She is conducting some research for how to lead organization in next steps. In order for the culture shift to be successful, team building and growth/learning exercises would be important, but it's hard in the current COVID-19 environment. In the next meeting, the committee will formalize the mission statement, determine who can be brought into the leadership fold, and partner suggestions. Commissioner Poylte said that the committee would benefit from additional members. Commissioner Waninger suggested that the committee include a volunteer driver for their perspective and experience with current riders.

- **FY21 Capital Budget Adjustment**

Mr. Foss provided a Capital Budget adjustment in the packet and said the Finance Committee voted to approve the adjustment as outlined in report to the board. Commissioner Kaynor asked for clarification on how some of the numbers were presented. Mr. Foss confirmed that the parenthesis meant some of the line items had increased. Commissioner Dimitruk moved to approve the FY21 Capital Budget adjustment, Commissioner Wallis seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- **Capital Budget Policy Update**

Mr. Foss presented an update to the Capital Budget Policy noting that the changes would allow the staff some flexibility to make decisions. He said the policy update was presented to and approved by the Finance Committee. The biggest change in the policy would mean that staff doesn't have to wait for line items to be underspend in order to shift funds and authorizes staff to create a new line item. The policy also clarifies that funds cannot be shifted between urban and rural. Commissioner Baker asked if the change is a shift in responsibility to the GM versus the board, and how does that get reported back to the Board that changes are being made? Mr. Foss said any changes would be reported in the monthly capital projects report.

Commissioner Bohne made a motion to approve the Capital Budget Policy update, Commissioner Baker seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- **Microtransit Request for Proposals (RFP) Contract Award**

Mrs. Smith gave an overview of the RFP process for On-Demand Microtransit Software and Support. In the end, the scoring committee recommended Via Mobility LLC as the vendor of choice and requested approval to award the contract accordingly. Commissioner Kaynor made a motion to award the contract for a two-year pilot project to Via Mobility LLC, Commissioner Poeuch



seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- **Microtransit Approval to Implement**

Mrs. Smith outlined her memo to move forward with the next step in the Planning process, as defined by the New Service Policy. Commissioner Baker made a motion to approve the implementation of the On-Demand Microtransit Pilot project. Commissioner Kaynor seconded and commented that he appreciated the detail provided and was amazed that the scoring committee was able to get through 11 proposals. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- **Legislative Transit Priorities – Representative Curt McCormack**

Mr. Moore introduced Representative McCormack to the GMT Board. Representative McCormack gave an update on the Legislature and their roles, and idea to increase ridership.

Representative McCormack mentioned the PTPP and noted that he would like to implement all the recommendations eventually. He said that he recently asked partner committees to weigh-in on thoughts for the upcoming T-Bill. He asked the GMT Board thoughts on Electric Vehicles and mentioned that he spoke with local utilities to ask thoughts on increased electric buses, possibly charging at peak times. The general thought was electric utilities feel that an increased number of electric vehicles would be welcomed. Representative McCormack asked the GMT Board thoughts on fare free service, especially as it's been in effect due to COVID-19? He also mentioned that microtransit is a supported project and mentioned that increasing service is great, but ridership needs to match the increase in order to lower CO2 emissions.

Commissioner Kaynor spoke about electrification and noted that the upfront cost is the impediment to buying additional EV vehicles. He also spoke about the electric utilities leasing the batteries upfront to help justify the cost of the bus. Representative McCormack noted that he had heard that proposal and thanked Commissioner Kaynor bringing that back to the forefront.

The board continued to discuss ideas on fare free service and the financial impacts. Commissioner Waninger made a comment that the state is not making it inconvenient for people to drive and asked if the Board had thoughts on balancing infrastructure needs and getting people on board the bus. Commissioner Davis said he believes that frequency should be a priority in order to increase ridership. Commissioner Phil mentioned that it would be helpful to start committee discussions related to fare free. There is need for a long-term strategy. Commissioner Baker mentioned that the Transportation Committee may need to weigh-in on things that may seem out of the



prevue, such as the land use bill and housing bill.

Commissioner Dimitruk spoke about the continued challenge for rural communities to provide the local match.

Commissioner Bohne noted that as long as parking is convenient and travel times are easy to manage, there is not likely a way to increase ridership. He mentioned that fare free would be nice, as long as there was enough funding to backfill foregone fares. He is not sure fare free would increase ridership as long as driving is convenient. Commissioner Sharrow mentioned that he is not in support of fare free service and believes that GMT wouldn't be able to maintain the funding sources needed to continue fare free. He said that he would support program subsidies to help folks in need of fare. He also mentioned that facility improvement and investment in first mile, last mile improvements would help.

Commissioner Waninger spoke about a study, conducted in Barre City, looking at population of single mother, head of household went from 36% to 56% in a three-year period. These households are living below the poverty level. A recommendation from the study is helping families relocate to areas with greater transportation infrastructure. These households mentioned that they spend a large portion of their day getting to and from the places they need to be (work, medical appointments, etc.). Commissioner Davis also mentioned a need to look at the interaction between transit and public schools.

Commissioner Kaynor sees the changes that need to be made as transformative and not incremental because our problems are so dug-in. Mr. Moore mentioned that this conversation really shows the need for the new Strategic Plan and suggested the Board provide Representative McCormack with a priority list.

- **Executive Session: 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(D), Arbitration or Mediation**

There was a finding to enter executive session to discuss pending arbitration. Commissioner Dimitruk made a motion to enter executive session to discuss pending arbitration as premature public knowledge would place GMT at substantial disadvantage, Commissioner Bohne seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Commissioner Sharrow made a motion to enter executive session inviting Mr. Moore, Commissioner Baker seconded. All were in favor and the GMT Board entered executive session.



- **Premium Pay Extension**

Mr. Moore gave an update on urban CARES funding and said that there would be a much more in-depth update on CARES funding at the September Board Meeting. Mr. Moore spoke about upcoming decisions that need to be made; how long to provide fare free service, how long to provide premium pay (and to what work groups), and how much CARES funding would be needed in FY22 and beyond. He also spoke about the upcoming spending projections and the impacts of fare free service, a reduction on state funding, and premium pay. Premium pay was designed to recognize staff who were at risk of exposure. The staff recommendation is to end Maintenance premium pay effective 8/16/20; end Operations premium pay effective 8/30/20; and end Driver premium pay effective 9/27/20. Commissioner Bohne commended staff on a thoughtful proposal and made a motion to accept the recommendations from staff, Commissioner Davis seconded. Commissioner Sharrow expressed concern about the Maintenance staff earlier than other work groups. Mr. Moore noted the pending arbitration is the reason for the earlier ending of premium pay. Commissioner Kaynor agrees that extending the premium pay for drivers with the start of in-person school and recommends all other work groups end with 8/30/20. Commissioner Bohne asked for clarification on why Maintenance would end earlier. Mr. Moore said that they pending arbitration would allow Maintenance staff to make up the difference in other ways. Commissioner Bohne amended his motion to end Maintenance, Operations and Admin staff premium pay effective 8/30/20 and Drivers effective 9/27/20. All were in favor and the motion carried.

- **Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Sharrow said that Mr. Moore was doing a great job. Commissioner Kaynor thanked all staff for continuing to operate under strained circumstances.

- **Adjourn**

Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Sharrow seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.