Green Mountain Transit
Board of Commissioners Meeting – GMT Board Room

101 Queen City Park Road, Burlington, VT 05401

November 26, 2019, 7:30AM

Present:

Commissioner Pouech

Commissioner Chittenden

Commissioner Sharrow

Commissioner Bohne

Commissioner Kaynor

Commissioner Spencer

Commissioner Waninger

Commissioner Gallagher

Jon Moore, Interim General Manager

Jamie Smith, Director of Marketing and Planning

Trish Redalieu, Director of Human Resources

Chris Damiani, Transit Planner

Debbie Coppola, Senior Accountant

Matt Kimball, Capital Projects Manager

Kim Wall, Grants Manager

Nick Foss, Director of Finance

Milia Bell, Marketing Coordinator

Jordan Posner, Mobility Manager

Jenn Wood, Public Affairs Coordinator

Ross McDonald, VTrans

Bridget Morris, Bolton Valley Resort

Lindsay DesLauries, Bolton Valley Resort

**Open Meeting:**
Commissioner Chittenden opened the meeting at 7:31AM

**Adjustment of the agenda:**
Commissioner Waninger asked to discuss a letter the Board of Commissioners received from a GMT staff member regarding the health insurance contribution. Commissioner Chittenden asked that the board held that discussion until later in the agenda when the board would be discussing the employee health insurance contributions.

Bridget Morris was introduced to the board, she mentioned that she and Lindsay DesLauries would like to make a statement during the GMT FY21 budget discussion.

**Public comment:**

No additional public comment.

**Consent Agenda:**

Commissioner Kaynor moved to accept the consent agenda, noting all the good work that goes into reports. Commissioner Bohne seconded. There was a brief discussion about ridership. Commissioner Waninger had a question about the HR Report and asked if the full Board would receive implicit bias training? Commissioner Waninger also made a comment that on page 2 of the minutes, item 5, there should be mention of whether or not action was taken. Additionally, on item 7 Berlin should be Town of, not city of.

Commissioner Kaynor accepted the amendments. All were in favor, and the motion carries.

Commissioner Chittenden welcomed new Burlington board alternate, Commissioner Gallagher.

**GM Report:**

Mr. Moore went through his General Manager report, noting that GMT did not receive Volkswagen Funds for additional electric buses. He spoke about the opening of the Montpelier Transit Center on Monday, December 2, 2019. Although GMT would be operating from the MTC, the building would remain closed until a few additional construction items were addressed and staffing was in place. Mr. Moore and Mr. Kimball met with Bill Frasier, from the City of Montpelier, to finalize the operating agreement. Outreach has begun and staff would be present at key stops with the opening.

Mr. Moore gave an update on Swiftly, noting that GMT may be a test site for an on-board log-in module to help with app reliability. Mr. Moore acknowledged all the work that Chris Damiani has been doing with Trillium to clean data and mentioned being pleased with our communication with both Trillium and Swiftly. Mr. Moore gave a brief update on a new module that VTrans helped GMT secure, which would allow staff to dig deeper into reliability data.

Mr. Moore noted that Barbara Donovan would be retiring in December; he noted this was a big loss for transit providers in the state.

Mr. Moore gave an update about a meeting he had with Tim Ashe and Kurt McCormick to discuss fare free transit in the state.

Mr. Moore spoke about the Ron Smith letter (included in the board documents) outlining some of the items Mr. Smith identified regarding GMT’s growth. Commissioner Chittenden mentioned that he requested the letter from Mr. Smith after an earlier conversation about budget concerns and GMT’s “birthrights”.

Mr. Moore talked about a meeting he had at 10:00AM with the Vermont Labor Relations Board to discuss supervisor bargaining unit.

Mr. Moore gave and update on GMT’s PMPW rate. At the last VPTA meeting, the VPTA Board voted to change the PMPW rate for each transit property. Commissioner Bohne asked about the contract terms; noting that he thought the VPTA contract went through December and that the current rate would remain through the contract. Mr. Moore mentioned that GMT wasn’t able to have a representative at the meeting, and the Board held the vote without GMT at the table.

Commissioner Waninger asked a question about how GMT capture costs by program, and how do we prevent a situation in the future where we don’t capture all of our costs? Mr. Foss mentioned that we were capturing all of the costs of the Medicaid program, just some of the costs were not allocated to Medicaid. Commissioner Waninger asked if GMT is allocating expenses directly to the Medicaid contract and if this how GMT manages all programs/grants? Ms. Wall explained that some grants fund multiple columns of our cost allocation plan. The way we are treating Medicaid is consistent with the way we treat all other grants.

Commissioner Sharrow complimented the Maintenance Department on completing preventative maintenance on-time, noting this will save GMT on future maintenance costs.

Commissioner Pouech asked if a portion of indirect costs are included in the allocation? Mr. Foss noted that yes, GMT uses the FTA indirect rate.

Commissioner Kaynor spoke about the VTrans Section 20 study. One area to look at is overlapping services with other types of service.

Commissioner Spencer asked if the PMPW decrease would increase the funding gap in FY20. Mr. Moore noted that if we can’t get that rate back up, it would further the funding gap in FY20 and FY21.

Commissioner Waninger noted that the Board appreciates the staff time to answer these tough questions and to find items of concern; noting this will help to answer questions later.

**VTrans update:** Mr. McDonald gave an update on Medicaid. VTrans wants to work with VPTA to maintain the same service delivery. VTrans has funded the VPTA study, waiting on final report.

Funding: VTrans is aware of the issues that GMT is facing. They continue to bring updates up the chain so there are no surprises later. Mr. McDonald is hopeful the same level of effort conducted by staff to find efficiencies for FY20 will happen for FY21 as well.

Mr. McDonald spoke about the staffing changes at VTrans, including Barbara Donovan retiring in December.

Marketing efforts: Mr. McDonald gave an update of VTrans 6-month ridership campaign. He talked about working directly with local providers to help boost marketing efforts already happening across the state.

Mr. McDonald gave a brief update on the Mobility for all grant, VTrans would like to run toward that with an application that presents a suite of services that communities can choose from (ie. Essex model, senior van… or the MRV model) including Microtransit type options.

Commissioner Waninger mentioned the Transportation Community Action Program, and asked if that group could somehow link with the efforts of VTrans.

Commissioner Pouech spoke about transportations contribution to environmental issues, noting that we are going in the wrong direction in terms of reducing emissions. The focus has been on electrification of vehicles, and that is not having the impact Vermont thought it would; it’s a pacifier. He’d like to see the conversation on a state and local level focus more on environmental impacts. Commissioner Kaynor disagrees that electrification is a pacifier. It’s part of the solution, even if incremental.

Commissioner Pouech mentioned the need to change the social perception.

**FY21 Budget Discussion:** Mr. Foss discussed the budget for FY21. He talked about budgeting and how he planned for the worse. As a result, the FY21 budget is showing a substantial deficit. Mr. Foss believes and area to focus efforts is the 50% ADA discount each member town receives, noting that it accounts for $600,000 in revenue that doesn’t come in on the urban side.

Commissioner Bohne spoke about the 50% ADA discount is defined in the Charter. He believes that GMT should be ready to review and revamp the charter going into the next session. There was a brief discussion regarding assessments and the need to communicate to each member community leading up to FY21.

Commissioner Spencer asked for a timeline of what happens when in the budget process. This allows board members to work with their towns and helps determine when to engage with the process.

Commissioner Kaynor talked about the FY20 assessment vote and the agreement of the board to adjust the assessments for FY21. It appears that conversation should be suspended and that this may not be the time to rebalance assessments. He mentioned that every effort being used to balance the local issue takes away from the big picture of regional funding.

Lindsay DesLauries, from Bolton Valley Resort, spoke about the ski resort. They currently see 150,000 skier visits in the winter season, and they are interested in growing. 70% of the visit are local, and a majority from Chittenden County. She observes that a high percentage are single occupancy vehicles and Bolton Valley currently doesn’t have the space for all the vehicles. Limited parking is preventing them from growing as a business. In addition to the people who would benefit from a bus line to ski, she spoke about the need for staff to have another option. Hundreds of employees are seasonal and those positions are hard to fill due to the commute. Seasonal jobs are not high paying and a bus line to help employees get to/from the resort would help with recruitment efforts. Additionally, 400-500 residents that live at the mountain would benefit from having a transportation option on and off the mountain. She closed by stating Bolton Valley is more than an employer, it’s a cool and vibrant rural community.

Mr. Moore mentioned that the Strategy Committee would discuss Bolton at the next meeting.

Commissioner Waninger requested the budget timeline well in advance of the next meeting.

**Colchester agreement:** Mr. Moore discussed the renewal, noting the staff recommendation would be to renew the contract with Colchester. The benefit for both GMT and Colchester is this agreement sets Colchester up for joining as a member in the future. Staff supports the 10-year agreement.

Commissioner Bohne made a motion to authorize the General Manager to negotiate a contract with Colchester (pending legal review), Commissioner Pouech seconded.

Commissioner Waninger noted the Colchester Agreement was not warned as an action item, and recommended legal review prior to voting.

The motion was withdrawn and the item was tabled until the next Board Meeting.

**Employee Health Care:**

Mr. Moore gave a brief update on the employee health care plan. Commissioner Bohne brought forward a concern that the decision to ask the administrative staff to start contributing 18-months prior to the union seemed unfair. He asked that the Board of Commissioners reconsider the decision.

Commissioner Waninger pointed out that the board delegated this to management at a prior meeting and would recommend the Board of Commissioners not pulling that approval back. Commissioner Waninger appreciates the statistics provided and would also like to see compensation package review.

Commissioner Pouech agreed with Commissioner Waninger that the Board authorized the General Manager to make this decision.

Commissioner Kaynor mentioned the need to take a look at the cash-out policies noting this is not normal practice for businesses.

Commissioner Waninger thanked staff for the willingness to contribute and recognizes that staff didn’t have a choice.

Mr. Moore left the meeting at 9:09AM

**Committee Reports:**

Leadership: Commissioner Chittenden officially resigns as Board Chair in January 2020; Commissioner Waninger will step into the role. The committee is still seeking a vice chair.

Strategy: Commissioner Spencer discussed the service guidelines policy which will help the Board evaluate new services and how to determine service modification. The Strategy Committee will work through that process and will bring a recommendation to the full Board in December. The Committee decided to hold off on Strategic Plan work until we have a new General Manager and to focus on the hire, budget and near-term projects.

Finance: Commissioner Bohne discussed the first quarter, noting that GMT is putting ourselves at a disadvantage because some of the options for changes will come on the heels of the budget approval.

Operations: Commissioner Chittenden spoke about new data from Swiftly to help track on-time performance. The Committee discussed the Berlin facility. Commissioner Waninger mentioned that she would not be involved in Berlin facility decisions as CVRPC has been asked to contribute a study by Department of Natural Resources.

Commissioner Updates: Commissioner Kaynor appreciates the buses running in bad weather. Commissioner Chittenden apologized for having to cancel the last Board Meeting due to weather and thanked the Commissioners who were able to attend this meeting. Commissioner Waninger thanked the GMT staff for continuing to work under staffed. She then gave a brief update on the General Manager hiring process.

Adjourn:

Commissioner Pouech made motion to adjourn, Commissioner Sharrow seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:32AM.