



**Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**November 12, 2024 – 7:30 a.m.**  
**101 Queen City Road, Burlington VT 05401**

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*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.*

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**Attendees may join in-person or remotely via Zoom.**

**To join the meeting via Zoom:**

Video Conference: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7507551826>

1. 7:30 AM – Meeting Called to Order
2. 7:31 AM – Adjustment to the Agenda
3. 7:33 AM – Public Comment
4. 7:45 AM – Consent Agenda
  - a. Board Meeting Minutes (October 29, 2024) **Pages 3-5**
  - b. Check Registry **Pages 6-11**
5. 7:50 AM – Action: Approve Refund Policy **Page 12-14**
6. 8:00 AM – Action: Approve Rule 1 – Governance **Page 15-18**
7. 8:10 AM – Action: Approve Legal Services Procurement **Page 19-20**
8. 8:20 AM – Action: Approve March Service Reductions/Modifications
9. 8:35 AM – Action: FY26 ADA Assessment Level
10. 8:45 AM – Action: FY26 Fixed Route Assessment Increase
11. 8:55 AM – Action: Approve Interim Legislative Report **Pages 21-40**
11. 9:20 AM – Committee Reports
12. 9:25 AM – Commissioner Comments
13. 9:00 AM – Adjourn



## NOTES

- Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in programs or activities are encouraged to contact Jamie Smith at 802-540-1098 at least 48 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. Hearing disabled patrons can contact GMT through the Vermont Relay Service (711).
- Free transportation to and from GMT Board Meetings is available within the GMT service area. To make advance arrangements, please call GMT's Customer Service Representatives at 802-540-2468.



1           **Green Mountain Transit Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**  
2                           **Tuesday, October 29, 2024 | 7:30 AM**  
3                           **101 Queen City Road, Burlington VT 05401**

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4  
5           *The mission of GMT is to promote and operate safe, convenient, accessible, innovative, and sustainable*  
6           *public transportation services in northwest and central Vermont that reduce congestion and pollution,*  
7           *encourage transit-oriented development, and enhance the quality of life for all.*

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10       **Present:**

11       Commissioner Amy Brewer, Williston  
12       Commissioner Henry Bonges, Milton  
13       Clayton Clark, General Manager  
14       Commissioner Bob Buermann, Grand Isle County  
15       Commissioner Phil Pouech, Hinesburg  
16       Commissioner Catherine Dimitruk, Franklin County  
17       Commissioner Chapin Spencer, Burlington  
18       Commissioner Michael Scanlan, South Burlington  
19       Commissioner Andrea Suozzo, Burlington  
20       Commissioner Austin Davis, Winooski  
21       Commissioner Christian Meyer, Washington County  
22       Connor Smith, Capital Projects Manager  
23       Alt. Commissioner Kyle Grenier, Grand Isle County  
24       Alt. Commissioner Chapin Kaynor, Williston  
25       Alt. Commissioner Tom Derenthal, Burlington  
26       Commissioner Paul Bohne, Essex  
27       Tyler Austin, Maintenance Manager  
28       Monica White, Director of Central Vermont Services  
29       Jon Moore, Assistant General Manager  
30       Chris Damiani, Director of Planning  
31       Jamie Smith, Director of Rider Experience  
32       Dan Greaves, FGI Dispatch  
33       Corey Wolcott, FGI Operations Manager  
34       Kelly Bean, Accounting Clerk  
35       Tim Bradshaw, Director of Grants  
36       Nick Foss, Director of Finance  
37       Kim Smith, Staff Accountant  
38       Tammy Masse, Controller  
39       Erika Osorio, Transit Data Analyst  
40       Deepak Pokhrel, Urban Operations Supervisor



41 Mark Stupik, Rural Operations Supervisor  
42 Stephanie Reid, Director of Human Resources  
43 Matt Kimball, Director of Transit Infrastructure  
44 Ross MacDonald, VTrans  
45 Dan Currier, VTrans

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48 **Meeting Called to Order**

49 Chair Brewer opened the meeting at 7:32 AM.

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51 **Adjustment to the Agenda**

52 None

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54 **Public Comment**

55 None

56

57 **Consent Agenda**

58 Commissioner Dimitruk made a motion to approve the consent agenda, and  
59 Commissioner Spencer seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

60

61 **Action: Update to Capital Budget Policy**

62 Director Kimball gave an overview of the updated policy. Commissioner Suozzo  
63 made a motion to approve the updated policy, and Commissioner Scanlan  
64 seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

65

66 **Action: Update to FY25 Capital Budget**

67 Director Kimball gave an overview of some available cutaway vehicles that  
68 GMT could take possession of quickly.

69

70 Commissioner Dimitruk made a motion to amend the FY25 capital budget to  
71 incorporate the changes outlined above and to authorize the General  
72 Manager to issue a purchase order not to exceed \$337,760.00 to DeVivo Bus  
73 Sales for two (2) 14-passenger Turtle Top Odyssey buses with up to 100% local  
74 match funds, and Commissioner Bohne seconded. All were in favor and the  
75 motion carried.

76

77 **Discussion: Change in ADA Assessment Level**

78 Director Foss gave an overview of the ADA Assessment methodology. There was  
79 a discuss by the ADA assessments and potential future action.

80



81 **Discussion: Review Potential February/March Service Reductions/Modifications**  
82 Director Damiani gave an overview of the memo from the Board packet. The  
83 Board discussed potential options for LINK Express service, and well as the  
84 upcoming plan for the next Board of Commissioners meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

85  
86 **Discussion: Draft Interim Legislative Report**  
87 GM Clark reviewed the draft interim Legislative Report.

88  
89 **Discussion: Planning for Legislative Session**

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91 **Committee Reports**  
92 Committees gave an overview of items discussed.

93  
94 **Commissioner Comments**  
95 None

96  
97 **Adjourn**  
98 Commissioner Scanlan made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Bonges  
99 seconded. All were in favor and the meeting ended at 9:33 AM.

Vendor ID	Vendor Name	Document Date	Document Number	Document Amount	
v1926	Bruce Wilson	10/3/24	102519	50.00	
V2242	City of So Burlington	10/3/24	102520	300.00	
V659	City of Winooski	10/3/24	102521	75.00	
V313	Travelers	10/1/24	102452	512,993.75	Insurance
V1884	Donaghy Peardon	10/4/24	102453	65.66	
V1450	English, Leslie	10/4/24	102454	24.12	
V2032	Merrill John	10/4/24	102455	397.98	Volunteer
V1911	O'Donnell Kathleen	10/4/24	102456	36.85	
V181	Owen, Helen	10/4/24	102457	1,650.88	Volunteer
V2158	Richardson Martha	10/4/24	102458	91.12	
V1800	Sells Catherine	10/4/24	102459	29.48	
V2163	Stone Rebekah	10/4/24	102460	250.58	Volunteer
V2006	Wisell Evan	10/4/24	102461	34.17	
V2175	Woods Barbara	10/4/24	102462	248.57	Volunteer
V1334	Background Investigation Bureau, LLC	10/4/24	102463	324.00	
V2196	Brady Industries	10/4/24	102464	1,378.55	9 Maintenance Supply Invoices
V225	Burlington Electric Department	10/4/24	102465	11,724.35	6 Electric Bills
V1227	Burlington Public Works-NON Water!!!	10/4/24	102466	336.00	
V226	Burlington Public Works-Water	10/4/24	102467	893.44	
V981	Burlington, City of	10/4/24	102468	668.32	
V851	Champlain Medical	10/4/24	102469	220.00	
V237	Comcast	10/4/24	102470	137.89	
V2084	Consolidated Communications	10/4/24	102471	119.21	
V928	Conway Office Solutions	10/4/24	102472	954.86	
V1973	Cummings Electric, P.C.	10/4/24	102473	2,358.18	Repair Invoice
V2154	Curry River	10/4/24	102474	86.43	
V240	D & M Fire and Safety Equipment	10/4/24	102475	1,728.00	Safety Inspection
V2134	D'Amico Mike	10/4/24	102476	157.45	Mileage Reimbursement
V2241	Dowling Chris	10/4/24	102477	110.00	Shoe Reimbursement
V250	Fisher Auto Parts	10/4/24	102478	1,642.65	8 Part Invoices
V252	FleetPride, Inc	10/4/24	102479	859.68	
V253	FleetWave Partners, LLP	10/4/24	102480	3,887.10	3 Radio Repeater Invoices
V799	Gauthier Trucking Company, Inc.	10/4/24	102481	561.23	
V257	Gillig Corp.	10/4/24	102482	5,630.70	2 Part Invoices
V2027	Goss Dodge	10/4/24	102483	38.28	
V259	Grainger	10/4/24	102484	1,924.30	7 Maintenance Supply Invoices
V261	Green Mountain Power	10/4/24	102485	24.98	
V2102	Hanshaw Shelly	10/4/24	102486	443.00	FSA Reimbursement
V1658	J. David White Associates, Inc.	10/4/24	102487	1,600.00	Part Invoice
V2094	Josephson Taylor	10/4/24	102488	2,524.34	Lawn Care Invoice
V473	Limoge & Sons Garage Doors, Inc.	10/4/24	102489	214.00	
V1923	Mcgee Ford Of Montpelier	10/4/24	102490	561.39	
V2240	Mesa Contract Incorporated	10/4/24	102491	9,434.12	Office Equipment Berlin
V278	Mohawk Mfg. & Supply Co.	10/4/24	102492	750.94	
V792	Myers Container Service Corp.	10/4/24	102493	287.90	
V996	New England Air Systems	10/4/24	102494	1,805.08	Repair Invoice
V223	O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC	10/4/24	102495	971.42	
V1878	Otis Elevator Company	10/4/24	102496	549.08	
V1906	Pete's Tire Barns Inc	10/4/24	102497	535.70	
V2048	Pokhrel Deepak	10/4/24	102498	259.00	FSA Reimbursement
V2227	Rollins Inc	10/4/24	102499	128.00	
V298	Sanel Auto Parts Co.	10/4/24	102500	50.07	
V414	Seon Systems Sales Inc.	10/4/24	102501	937.00	
V301	Sovernet	10/4/24	102502	1,897.76	2 IT Invoices
V2085	Summit Fire and Security	10/4/24	102503	2,029.84	Fire Alarm testing
V2225	Sunoco LP	10/4/24	102504	18,674.51	Fuel
V2107	Sylvester Gary	10/4/24	102505	376.58	FSA Reimbursement
V2074	T-Mobile	10/4/24	102506	2,572.80	IT Invoice
V186	Tech Group, The	10/4/24	102507	85.00	

V273	Transit Holding, Inc.	10/4/24	102508	3,365.38	Part Invoice
V2239	Transportation Safety Institute	10/4/24	102509	840.00	
V1030	UniFirst Corporation	10/4/24	102510	915.98	
V391	Verizon Wireless	10/4/24	102511	2,151.65	IT Invoice
V68	Vermont Agency of Transportation	10/4/24	102512	11,012.70	Over payment
V468	Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles	10/4/24	102513	33.00	
V410	Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.	10/4/24	102514	642.83	
V537	Vermont Public Transportation Association	10/4/24	102515	159.49	
V1683	VHV Company	10/4/24	102516	160.00	
V336	W.B Mason Co., Inc.	10/4/24	102517	138.97	
V2182	White Monica	10/4/24	102518	49.87	
V2186	Barabe James	10/4/24	EFT000000017973	263.98	Volunteer
V1150	Bruley SR, Mark	10/4/24	EFT000000017974	1,490.75	Volunteer
V548	Burnor, David	10/4/24	EFT000000017975	899.14	Volunteer
V1707	Chase, Betty	10/4/24	EFT000000017976	897.80	Volunteer
V2231	Cohen Lori	10/4/24	EFT000000017977	260.63	Volunteer
V1676	Croteau, William	10/4/24	EFT000000017978	1,724.58	Volunteer
V1820	Franklin County Transportation	10/4/24	EFT000000017979	3,548.00	Cab Service
V170	Hertz, Kenneth	10/4/24	EFT000000017980	675.36	Volunteer
V2185	Hoke Elizabeth	10/4/24	EFT000000017981	103.85	Volunteer
V70	LeClair Raymond	10/4/24	EFT000000017982	1,015.05	Volunteer
V2118	Marsh Donald	10/4/24	EFT000000017983	166.83	Volunteer
V86	Pike, Gail	10/4/24	EFT000000017984	1,415.04	Volunteer
V1725	Utton, Debra	10/4/24	EFT000000017985	1,038.50	Volunteer
V1066	Cassell, Robert Jr.	10/4/24	EFT000000017986	31.28	
V38	Moore, Jon	10/4/24	EFT000000017987	161.54	DCAP Reimbursement
V2218	Pelchat Melissa	10/4/24	EFT000000017988	267.16	FSA Reimbursement
V1994	Reid Stephanie	10/4/24	EFT000000017989	50.83	
V1713	DeVivo Bus Sales	10/4/24	102522	735,344.10	6 Cutaways Rural

Vendor ID	Vendor Name	Document Date	Document	Document Amount	
V1305	Allegiant Care	10/11/24	102523	277,406.00	Health Insurance
V219	Aubuchon C/O Blue Tarp Financial, Inc.	10/11/24	102524	21.98	
V563	Bank Supplies	10/11/24	102525	60.97	
V2196	Brady Industries	10/11/24	102526	1,879.60	7 Maintenance Supply Invoices
V981	Burlington, City of	10/11/24	102527	1,462.50	Permit
V220	Class C Solutions Group	10/11/24	102528	3,006.49	3 Part Invoices
V2116	Elizabeth Green	10/11/24	102529	4,000.00	Driver Training Invoice
V321	Empire Janitorial Supply Company	10/11/24	102530	63.86	
V250	Fisher Auto Parts	10/11/24	102531	506.05	
V252	FleetPride, Inc	10/11/24	102532	167.91	
V253	FleetWave Partners, LLP	10/11/24	102533	3,887.10	3 Radio Repeater Invoices
V799	Gauthier Trucking Company, Inc.	10/11/24	102534	569.65	
V257	Gillig Corp.	10/11/24	102535	1,303.39	2 Part Invoices
V2027	Goss Dodge	10/11/24	102536	1,390.79	2 Part Invoices
V259	Grainger	10/11/24	102537	167.04	
V260	Green Mountain Kenworth, Inc.	10/11/24	102538	81.25	
V1283	Kelley Bros of NE, LLC	10/11/24	102539	3,322.70	Repair Invoice
V328	Kirk's Automotive Inc.	10/11/24	102540	1,132.67	2 Part Invoices
V1509	Lawson Products, Inc	10/11/24	102541	153.8	
V270	Lowe's	10/11/24	102542	312.32	
V1162	Lowell Mcleods Inc.	10/11/24	102543	255	
V278	Mohawk Mfg. & Supply Co.	10/11/24	102544	1,419.66	2 Part Invoices
V1709	Monaghan Safar Ducham PLLC	10/11/24	102545	1,032.50	2 Legal Invoices
V283	Neopart LLC	10/11/24	102546	291	
V223	O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC	10/11/24	102547	640.92	
V1484	Parsons Environment & Infrastructure Group Inc.	10/11/24	102548	36.16	
V1906	Pete's Tire Barns Inc	10/11/24	102549	1,115.60	Tire Invoice
V1165	Posner, Jordan	10/11/24	102550	845	
V297	Safety-Kleen Systems, Inc.	10/11/24	102551	255.97	
V298	Sanel Auto Parts Co.	10/11/24	102552	19.2	
V637	Snap-on Equipment	10/11/24	102553	138	
V1875	Sunwealth Project Pool 14 LLC	10/11/24	102554	4,455.05	Solar Invoice
V734	Thermo King Northeast/Dattco	10/11/24	102555	247.26	
V273	Transit Holding, Inc.	10/11/24	102556	101	
V1030	UniFirst Corporation	10/11/24	102557	825.53	
V2133	Vital Delivery Solutions LLC	10/11/24	102558	77.43	



Vendor ID	Vendor Name	Document Date	Document	Document Amount	
V1099	Barnett, Wendy	10/18/24	102559	943.36	Volunteer
V2243	Elliott Brooke	10/18/24	102560	218.4	Volunteer
V1868	King Brenda	10/18/24	102561	41.54	
V2032	Merrill John	10/18/24	102562	332.99	Volunteer
V181	Owen, Helen	10/18/24	102563	1,137.66	Volunteer
V962	Williams, Kenneth	10/18/24	102564	148.26	Volunteer
V2175	Woods Barbara	10/18/24	102565	824.77	Volunteer
V279	ABC Bus Companies-Muncie	10/18/24	102566	6,316.50	5 Part Invoices
V1248	Abolox LLC	10/18/24	102567	1,010.10	2 Safety Vest Invoices
V1817	Air Compressor Engineering CO., INC	10/18/24	102568	2,516.50	Repair Invoice
V415	Amazon Capital Services	10/18/24	102569	3,010.47	23 Office Supply, Parts and IT Invoices
V934	Artistic Landscaping	10/18/24	102570	4,300.00	Concrete Pad Removal
V2196	Brady Industries	10/18/24	102571	1,101.71	4 Maintenance Supply Invoices
V2146	Brady Tammy	10/18/24	102572	411.79	FSA Reimbursement
V284	Brenntag Lubricants Northeast	10/18/24	102573	3,695.06	2 Part Invoices
V226	Burlington Public Works-Water	10/18/24	102574	1,915.77	2 Water and Sewer Bills
V227	Burlington Telecom	10/18/24	102575	2,313.15	IT Invoice
V228	C.I.D.E.R., Inc.	10/18/24	102576	38,400.41	Medicaid and E&D rides
V1564	Connolly Heather	10/18/24	102577	500	
V2084	Consolidated Communications	10/18/24	102578	129.52	
V434	Couture, James (JimE)	10/18/24	102579	100	Shoe Reimbursement
V652	Cummins-Allison Corp.	10/18/24	102580	1,383.90	Cash Machine Maintenance
V417	Dion Security, Inc.	10/18/24	102581	7.47	
V2127	EZ Container Services, Inc.	10/18/24	102582	99	
V250	Fisher Auto Parts	10/18/24	102583	331.37	
V252	FleetPride, Inc	10/18/24	102584	2,282.42	3 Part Invoices
V256	Genfare	10/18/24	102585	10,314.67	Payment Processing Invoice
V257	Gillig Corp.	10/18/24	102586	5,503.55	7 Part Invoices
V2027	Goss Dodge	10/18/24	102587	787.78	
V259	Grainger	10/18/24	102588	24.8	
V117	Guyette, Howard	10/18/24	102589	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V1898	Hernandez Alex	10/18/24	102590	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V328	Kirk's Automotive Inc.	10/18/24	102591	11,109.60	4 Part Invoices
V268	Loomis	10/18/24	102592	197.61	
V436	Mabee, Jonathan	10/18/24	102593	100	Shoe Reimbursement
V1004	Marcu, Daniel	10/18/24	102594	188	FSA Reimbursement
V2245	McCracken Enterprises, Inc.	10/18/24	102595	8,100.00	Bus Storage Invoice
V1891	Minuteman Security Technologies	10/18/24	102596	592.25	
V1547	Mohamud, Adan	10/18/24	102597	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V278	Mohawk Mfg. & Supply Co.	10/18/24	102598	1,617.31	5 Part Invoices
V283	Neopart LLC	10/18/24	102599	1,231.52	2 Part Invoices
V1551	Nshimyeimana, Alex	10/18/24	102600	21.16	
V223	O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC	10/18/24	102601	357.05	
V863	P & P Septic Service, Inc	10/18/24	102602	2,950.50	Wash Rack Pump invoice
V1906	Pete's Tire Barns Inc	10/18/24	102603	7,327.37	4 Tire Invoices
V1671	Plantier, Steve	10/18/24	102604	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V1653	Pradhan, Tilachand	10/18/24	102605	100	Shoe Reimbursement
V294	RHR Smith & Company	10/18/24	102606	8,200.00	Auditor Invoice
V864	Rick's Towing & Repair, Inc.	10/18/24	102607	500	
V298	Sanel Auto Parts Co.	10/18/24	102608	455.42	
V144	Slingerland, Michael	10/18/24	102609	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V301	Sovernet	10/18/24	102610	452.02	
V2139	Stertil Koni USA Inc	10/18/24	102611	49,406.00	Final lift Install Invoice
V2244	Stoddard Tracy	10/18/24	102612	100	Shoe Reimbursement
V2225	Sunoco LP	10/18/24	102613	43,095.00	Fuel
V734	Thermo King Northeast/Dattco	10/18/24	102614	709.62	
V2020	Thomson Gary	10/18/24	102615	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V273	Transit Holding, Inc.	10/18/24	102616	6,864.51	7 Part Invoices
V315	United Parcel Service	10/18/24	102617	22.81	
V351	Vantage Press	10/18/24	102618	304.05	

V876	Vehicle Maintenance Program, Inc.	10/18/24	102619	427.86	
V68	Vermont Agency of Transportation	10/18/24	102620	149,244.32	5311 Over Payment
V335	Vermont Department of Labor	10/18/24	102621	2,153.87	Unemployment
V410	Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.	10/18/24	102622	86.14	
V1459	Vermont Information Consortium LLC	10/18/24	102623	426	
V2226	Vermont News And Media LLC	10/18/24	102624	599	
V1683	VHV Company	10/18/24	102625	1,963.25	Repair Invoice
V2133	Vital Delivery Solutions LLC	10/18/24	102626	117.02	
V2186	Barabe James	10/18/24	EFT00000C	160.13	Volunteer
V1150	Bruley SR, Mark	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,573.16	Volunteer
V548	Burnor, David	10/18/24	EFT00000C	944.03	Volunteer
V1707	Chase, Betty	10/18/24	EFT00000C	924.6	Volunteer
V2231	Cohen Lori	10/18/24	EFT00000C	140.03	Volunteer
V1676	Croteau, William	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,468.64	Volunteer
V170	Hertz, Kenneth	10/18/24	EFT00000C	711.54	Volunteer
V2185	Hoke Elizabeth	10/18/24	EFT00000C	161.47	Volunteer
V70	LeClair Raymond	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,232.13	Volunteer
V86	Pike, Gail	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,245.53	Volunteer
V771	Sammons Chandra	10/18/24	EFT00000C	38.86	
V1725	Utton, Debra	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,269.65	Volunteer
V1879	Bean Kelly	10/18/24	EFT00000C	75	
V104	Chagnon, Robert	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V354	Devarney, Rodney	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,400.00	Tool Allowance
V38	Moore, Jon	10/18/24	EFT00000C	161.54	FSA Reimbursement
V1994	Reid Stephanie	10/18/24	EFT00000C	168.33	FSA and Mileage Reimbursment
V303	SSTA	10/18/24	EFT00000C	160,268.90	ADA And Job Recovery
V308	Steadman Hill Consulting, Inc.	10/18/24	EFT00000C	20,204.50	Consulting Invoices
V537	Vermont Public Transportation Association	10/18/24	EFT00000C	1,053.17	Hardship Reimbursments
V1856	Via Transportation Inc.	10/18/24	EFT00000C	2,000.00	Micro Transit Invoice

Vendor ID	Vendor Name	Document Date	Document Number	Document Amount	
V217	Airgas USA, LLC	10/25/24	102627	170.05	
V2196	Brady Industries	10/25/24	102628	127.47	
V284	Brenntag Lubricants Northeast	10/25/24	102629	2,066.35	Part Invoice
V225	Burlington Electric Department	10/25/24	102630	6,193.54	7 Electric Bills Urban
V851	Champlain Medical	10/25/24	102631	220	
V2104	Community Rides Vermont, Inc.	10/25/24	102632	28,413.96	Rides E&D, RJA, MFA, And Mobility Management
V241	D & W Diesel, Inc.	10/25/24	102633	898.7	
V250	Fisher Auto Parts	10/25/24	102634	2,373.02	18 Part Invoices
V252	FleetPride, Inc	10/25/24	102635	4,614.47	Part Invoice
V257	Gillig Corp.	10/25/24	102636	266.38	
V259	Grainger	10/25/24	102637	1,176.87	2 Maintenance Supply Invoices
V260	Green Mountain Kenworth, Inc.	10/25/24	102638	2,450.84	3 Part and Repair Invoices
V261	Green Mountain Power	10/25/24	102639	1,773.39	3 Electric Bills
V328	Kirk's Automotive Inc.	10/25/24	102640	4,377.40	3 Part Invoices
V647	Lake Street Auto Sales & Service	10/25/24	102641	41.2	
V1509	Lawson Products, Inc	10/25/24	102642	250.6	
V2015	M&T Bank	10/25/24	102643	11,246.29	Parts, Training, Travel and Meal Invoices
V1923	Mcgee Ford Of Montpelier	10/25/24	102644	1,197.79	2 Part Invoices
V278	Mohawk Mfg. & Supply Co.	10/25/24	102645	549.75	
V1878	Otis Elevator Company	10/25/24	102646	190	
V1906	Pete's Tire Barns Inc	10/25/24	102647	7,451.35	5 Tire Invoices
V545	Pitney Bowes - Leasing	10/25/24	102648	119.01	
V294	RHR Smith & Company	10/25/24	102649	900	
V864	Rick's Towing & Repair, Inc.	10/25/24	102650	400	
V298	Sanel Auto Parts Co.	10/25/24	102651	58.76	
V637	Snap-on Equipment	10/25/24	102652	255.96	
V451	Stowe, Town of Electric Department	10/25/24	102653	81.7	
V2225	Sunoco LP	10/25/24	102654	21,547.50	Fuel
V1883	TDI Repair Facility LLC	10/25/24	102655	560	
V734	Thermo King Northeast/Dattco	10/25/24	102656	62.2	
V2050	Thomas Parker	10/25/24	102657	319.95	
V1030	UniFirst Corporation	10/25/24	102658	35.06	
V315	United Parcel Service	10/25/24	102659	81.41	
V410	Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.	10/25/24	102660	812.59	
V352	Wiemann-Lamphere Architects Inc.	10/25/24	102661	7,732.06	7 Consulting Invoices



TO: GMT Board of Commissioners  
FROM: Jamie Smith, Director of Rider Experience  
RE: Refund Policy  
Date: November 7, 2024

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This memo outlines the reasons for implementing a fare refund policy within our transit fare system, ensuring transparency, accountability, and customer satisfaction.

As our transit service evolves and adopts a more digital fare system, there has been an increase in the request for refunds. Without a structured refund policy, we lack a clear method for addressing and compensating riders when system glitches impact their payments or service experience.

### **Rationale for Policy:**

#### **1. Customer Trust and Satisfaction**

Implementing a refund policy is key to building trust with our riders, showing that we prioritize fair treatment and are committed to correcting system errors.

#### **2. Operational Transparency**

A standardized policy improves operational transparency, providing riders with a clear understanding of how their funds are managed and ensuring they are not penalized for issues beyond their control.

#### **3. Efficiency in Issue Resolution**

A formal policy allows our team to handle refund requests swiftly and consistently, reducing the need for ad-hoc decisions and ensuring each case is managed fairly.

The proposed policy would cover refunds for system malfunctions and processing errors, providing account credit rather than direct refunds. This approach balances customer satisfaction with financial stability.

### **Items to consider:**

- This Policy was reviewed by the Governance Committee. Staff had originally proposed a 5-day reporting time for discrepancies and after the committee discussed the policy, there was tentative agreement on 30 days. As you can see below, the new draft policy recommends 15 days. This is due to the following:
  - In the event that we have to investigate an on-bus technical error, we are not likely able to pull data and video footage 30 days after the event.
  - A majority of requests for refund are happening within days of the issue.
  - The monthly cap goes into effect after 12.5 days of riding.



- 15 days is a recommendation to help set an expectation, however if a rider discovers after the 15 days that there is a major issue, staff is able to investigate the issue as needed.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend implementing this policy as soon as possible to uphold our commitment to reliability and rider satisfaction. This proactive step supports both our operational integrity and our relationship with the community we serve.



## **DRAFT Refund Policy**

At Green Mountain Transit (GMT), we strive to ensure a seamless and reliable experience for our riders. Please review our refund policy regarding funds added to rider accounts.

### **1. No Refunds on Added Funds/Stored Value**

Once funds are added to a rider's account for smart cards or other E-Fare payment method, they are non-refundable. This applies to all payment methods used for fare purchases, including but not limited to cash, credit/debit cards, and mobile payment platforms.

### **2. System Errors and Glitches**

If a system error or technical glitch occurs that results in incorrect charges or issues with accessing your funds, we will investigate the situation. In the event that a system glitch is confirmed, a credit will be issued to your rider account for the amount affected.

- Riders must report any discrepancies within 15 days of the incident to be eligible for a credit.\*
- Requests for credit due to system errors should be submitted by phone at 802-540-2468 or by email to [info@ridegmt.com](mailto:info@ridegmt.com).

### **3. Unused Fares from Previous E-Fare Systems**

GMT will continue to accept unused paid fares from any previous GMT system and will add the value of the unused fares as credit to your rider account.

### **Final Decisions**

All refund and credit decisions are at the discretion of Green Mountain Transit. We reserve the right to deny any requests not supported by evidence of a system error.

\* If a major issue happens and a rider is unable to alert the agency within 15 days, staff can determine what level of investigation is possible with the given technology.

**Past Revision Dates:** NA

**Summary:** To establish a rule regarding governance, including but not limited to rules established by the Board of Commissioners (Board), policies established by the General Manager (GM), and practices developed by Supervisory Staff.

**I) Authority**

- A) In accordance with V.S.A. 24 Appendix § 801-4 (c)(12), the Board may adopt rules necessary for the operation of Green Mountain Transit (GMT).

**II) Responsibilities**

- A) The Board shall promulgate and amend rules, as necessary. The Board shall consist of a Governance Committee that shall recommend the creation and amendment of rules.
- B) The GM shall ensure rules are adhered to and shall promulgate and amend policies, as necessary. The GM shall make recommendations regarding rules to the Board.
- C) Directors, Managers, and Supervisors (Supervisory Staff) shall ensure rules and policies are adhered to and shall promulgate and amend practices, as necessary. The Supervisory Staff shall make recommendations regarding policies and rules to the GM.

**III) Rules**

- A) The Board shall determine what rules are necessary, except for rules required by federal or state law, rules, or regulations to be approved by the Board.
- B) At a minimum, rules shall be established regarding: Advertising; Assessments; Capital Budget; Fares; Fund Balance; Investments; No Trespass; Non-Union Wages, Employee Benefits, and Protections; Public Hearings; and Purchasing.
- C) Purpose and philosophy: the Board establishes its expectations through rules. Organizational activities are built around the expectations established in the rules, so changes should be thoughtfully considered. Rules should avoid including procedural elements that are not pertinent to the expectations.
- D) Process:
  - 1) Draft rules will be reviewed by the Governance Committee.
  - 2) Draft rules will be provided to the GMT legal counsel for review and comment.
  - 3) When draft rules meet the satisfaction of the Governance Committee, the committee will recommend rules to the Board for adoption.

- 4) Rules will become effective immediately except when a later date is identified in the rule.
- E) Distribution:
  - 1) Rules will be published on the GMT website.
  - 2) Rules will be distributed to the Board.
  - 3) Rules will be emailed to all staff with email. Print copies will be provided to staff without email address if it pertains to their normal work functions.
- F) Numbering:
  - 1) Rules shall be numbered, beginning with 1.
- G) Format:
  - 1) Rules will be modeled after this rule regarding the numbering of sections and paragraphs.
  - 2) Rules shall include their name prominently displayed at the top, to include the rule number; the revision date at the top; a listing of previous revision dates, if any; a summary displayed near the top of the first page; the file location of the rule on the GMT shared drive shall be displayed at the bottom of each page; and the page number will be displayed at the bottom of each page.
- H) Rescinding rules:
  - 1) Only the Board may rescind approved rules.

#### **IV) Policies**

- A) The GM shall determine what policies are necessary, with the advice of the Board and staff.
- B) The GM may enact:
  - 1) Policies, as necessary, for the operation of GMT within the expectations of Board rules.
  - 2) Policies required by federal or state laws, rules, or regulations, except when required to be issued by the Board. Policies noting the requirement to follow federal or state laws, rules, or regulations, except when required to be issued by the Board.
  - 3) Work rules not established by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).
- C) Purpose and philosophy: the GM establishes their expectations through policies consistent with the rules established by the Board. Policies may be updated more quickly than rules to match changing conditions. Policies should avoid including procedural elements that are not pertinent to the expectations.
- D) Process:
  - 1) The GM shall oversee the drafting of policies.
  - 2) Draft policies may be reviewed by the GMT legal counsel at the discretion of the GM.
  - 3) When the draft policy meets the satisfaction of the GM, the GM will sign and issue the policy.
  - 4) Policies will become effective immediately except when a later date is identified in the policy.



- E) Distribution:
  - 1) Completed policies will be provided to the Governance Committee, Board Chair, and Board Vice Chair.
  - 2) Completed policies will be emailed to all staff with email. Print copies will be provided to staff without email address if the policy pertains to their normal work functions.
- F) Numbering:
  - 1) Policies shall be numbered, beginning with 1.
- G) Format:
  - 1) Policies will be modeled after this rule regarding the numbering of sections and paragraphs.
  - 2) Policies shall include their name prominently displayed at the top, to include the policy number; the revision date at the top; a listing of previous revision dates, if any; a summary displayed near the top of the first page; the file location of the policy on the GMT shared drive shall be displayed at the bottom of each page; and the page number will be displayed at the bottom of each page.
- H) The Employee Handbook shall be considered a policy.
- I) Rescinding policies:
  - 1) The board and GM may rescind approved policies.

**V) Practices**

- A) The GM and Supervisory Staff shall determine what practices are necessary.
- B) The GM and Supervisory Staff may enact practices, as necessary, for the operation of GMT within the expectations of rules and policy.
- C) Purpose and philosophy: Practices provide employees with the specific information necessary to perform their responsibilities consistently and in compliance with rules and policy. Practices are living documents that should be updated regularly to match changing conditions and to expand employees' overall knowledgebase for how to respond to specific circumstances. Practices should include procedural elements to guide employees, where applicable.
- D) Process:
  - 1) Supervisory Staff shall oversee the drafting of practices.
  - 2) When the draft practice meets the satisfaction of the supervisor, the staff member will submit the practice to the first Director, Assistant General Manager, or GM in their chain of command.
  - 3) When the draft practice meets the satisfaction of the Director, Assistant General Manager, or General Manager, they will sign and issue the practice.
  - 4) Practices will become effective immediately except when a later date is identified in the practice.
- E) Distribution:
  - 1) Completed practices will be delivered to all members of the applicable department/sub-division of GMT.

- 2) Completed practices will be delivered to the GM.
- F) Numbering:
  - 1) Directors may use numbers to identify practices within their span of control, but they are not required.
- G) Format:
  - 1) Supervisory Staff will determine the appropriate formatting for the practice.
- H) Rescinding practices:
  - 1) The Board, GM, and authorizing Supervisory Staff may rescind approved practices.

DRAFT



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Rd., Burlington, VT  
05401

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Berlin, VT 05602

375 Lake Road, Suite 5  
St. Albans, VT 05478



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Berlin:  
T: 802-223-7287  
F: 802-223-6236

St. Albans:  
T: 802-527-2181  
F: 802-527-5302



info@RideGMT.com  
www.RideGMT.com

**November 7, 2024**

**To:** GMT Board of Commissioners  
**From:** Nick Foss, Director of Finance  
**CC:** Clayton Clark, General Manager  
Jon Moore, Assist. General Manager

**RE: Legal Services RFP**

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In preparation of advertising the RFP for legal services the documents were drawn up in-house and sent to Dan Currier at VTrans for approval. Once the RFP documents were reviewed and approved by VTrans, GMT was able to move ahead with the RFP procedures.

The Request for Proposal method of procurement was chosen because it allows us to evaluate the experience of the proposers as well as their fee scale. The Legal Services contract will be a cost reimbursement contract, not to exceed \$500,000 over the life of the contract, which is up to five (5) years.

In order to retain legal services, GMT issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, with a due date of October 23, 2024. The RFP was advertised on GMT's website using its Beacon Bid software, as well as the Vermont Bid Registry. Monaghan Safar PLLC and Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. requested copies of the RFP, as well as several bid alert companies. Only Monaghan Safar PLLC submitted a proposal on or before the deadline. Staff reached out to Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C to ask for feedback on why a proposal was not submitted and was told that the firm was specifically seeking opportunities to serve as bond counsel, which they service numerous transit client for. GMT does not currently issue any debt and has no immediate plans to.

The Proposal received was evaluated by a team of four (4) evaluators according to the criteria outlined in the RFP. The criteria, with the maximum point values in parentheses were: Experience and expertise of proposed attorneys (30), Relevant overall experience and expertise of the firm (30), Documented specialized expertise in governmental issues (25), and Rate system and pricing (15).

GMT's Procurement Officer evaluated the proposal from Monaghan Safar PLLC for its responsiveness to the required proposal contents on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The evaluation determined that the proposal provided by Monaghan Safar PLLC met all the requirements of the RFP. Monaghan Safar PLLC was also confirmed not to be debarred on the SAM.gov website, which was determined by GMT's Director of Finance on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Monaghan Safar PLLC:**

**Experience and Expertise of Proposed Attorneys:**

Representing municipalities in a variety of issues, some of the areas they provide advice in include planning/zoning, labor law, union procedures, collective bargaining, mediation/arbitration, workers' compensation laws/regulations<sup>19</sup>and the

many aspects of employment law, construction law, municipal law, as well as local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to public entities. (3.25)

Relevant Overall Experience and Expertise of the Firm:

At Monaghan Safar Ducham PLLC, five of their six attorneys focus a significant portion of their time practicing law related to public entities. The Firm regularly represents public entities throughout the state, including the Towns of Wilmington, Colchester, Shelburne, Fairfax, the Village of Essex Junction, and various others. They have also represented numerous municipalities throughout the State on discrete matters through the VLCT-PACIF liability defense program and VLCT-PACIF's Employment Practices Liability counseling program. (3.75)

Documented Specialized Expertise in Governmental Issues:

The Firm has advised municipalities on grant application requirements including federal and state grants and has advised on compliance with grants once procured. Monaghan Safar Ducham PLLC is familiar with 49 USC 5333(b) and is confident they have the experience and legal resources to advise on such. (4.0)

Conclusion:

Based on the information stated above, GMT has determined that Monaghan Safar PLLC is responsive, responsible, and qualified to provide legal services to GMT. The rates provided are within industry standards; a price analysis has been completed to justify the basis for their fees. Monaghan Safar PLLC exhibits a level of experience that GMT would expect from a legal firm. Therefore, GMT has recommended the contract be awarded for up to five (5) years with a not to exceed limit of \$500,000 for the duration of the contract.

## **Green Mountain Transit Interim Legislative Report**

To: House Committee on Transportation  
Senate Committee on Transportation

From: Clayton Clark  
General Manager

Date: November 15, 2024

In accordance with Act 148, Section 9(e):

(e) Conditions; report. As a condition of receiving the grant funding, Green Mountain Transit shall do all of the following:

(1) begin collecting fares for urban and commuter transit service not later than June 1, 2024;

(2) in coordination with the Agency of Transportation, Special Service Transportation Agency, Rural Community Transportation, and Tri-Valley Transit, evaluate alternative options for delivering cost-effective urban fixed route transit service, rural transit service, commuter service, and any other specialized services currently provided, and prepare a proposed implementation plan, including a three-year cost and revenue plan, for recommended service transitions; and

(3) submit to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation an interim report on or before November 15, 2024 and a final report on or before February 1, 2025, detailing the findings, recommendations, and implementation plan as described in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

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# Report from Green Mountain Transit (GMT)

## Relevant Background

The Report from Steadman Hill Consulting on the Transfer of GMT Rural Service provides background on the circumstances leading to the necessity of this report. GMT will expand on this background below in a few key areas.

### Vermont's High Return on Investment for Public Transit

We must start with acknowledgement that Vermont should be proud of its robust public transit system.

In its *Report on Funding Sources for Public Transit Nonfederal Match* from January 2024, the Vermont Public Transportation Association (VPTA) showed the ways VTrans and the Legislature have taken positive action to fund public transit, demonstrating that no other rural state invests more per capita state dollars in public transit than Vermont. This extends to how VTrans and the Legislature allocate federal funds to augment transit, where again Vermont is leading the way.

This level of spending would only be positive if the investment was providing a service that was used by our citizens. We can get an idea of how we compare to other similar sized agencies by looking at our federal appropriation.

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) measures the performance of small urban transit agencies across six measurements. These measurements are called Small Transit Intensive City (STIC) Factors. The FTA awards additional funds to agencies that have above average results for these six STIC factors.

GMT is above average on four of the six STIC Factors. Only 11% of transit agencies of comparable size are awarded four or more STIC Factors. Looking at the factors:

- Two of the factors measure the amount of service compared to our population. We are above average on both, showing that we have a comparably high level of service for a community our size. This means our higher investment has led to more service being available.
- Two of the factors measure the population's usage of transit. We are above average on both, showing that we have a comparably high level of ridership for a community our size. This means our citizenry is using our service at an above average rate.
- Two of the factors measure efficiency, by looking at the relationship between preventative maintenance of vehicles and service miles and hours. These are the

two areas we score below average. Part of our long-term funding plan will be finding ways to increase our scores on these measurements as well.

Collectively these measures indicate we have invested in our service and our population is using it, to all our benefit. It also demonstrates we have the potential to manage our service more efficiently.

In FY25 GMT will receive \$2 million in performance awards from these STIC factors, creating a virtuous circle where municipal and state investment is rewarded with additional federal dollars.

### **Organizational Assessment Identifies Root Cause of Performance & Fiscal Challenges**

GMT conducted an organizational assessment in 2023 and 2024, with the final recommendations of the assessment issued in June of 2024. The assessment was completed by Steadman Hill Consulting and Aplomb Consulting, with their findings included in this report.

The GMT organization assessment was requested by VTrans in the Fall of 2022 in response to a leadership staffing crisis where three of the six senior managers at GMT had submitted their resignations, to include the General Manager. VTrans supported the creation of an Assistant General Manager position to augment the GMT management team, and thankfully the General Manager at the time agreed to continue in this new role. This contributed to the retention of the other departing staff, who decided to remain.

The assessment provided a clear conclusion that was rooted both in staff surveys and interviews, as well as the consultant's independent analysis: staff were stressed, there was organizational and interpersonal dysfunction, and the lack of staffing was the root cause. As described by Steadman Hill Consulting in their report below, there was a 42% reduction in managerial staff from 2012 to 2023.

This loss in management capacity led to a perpetual crisis mode where remaining staff didn't have the time to focus beyond the daily fires associated with operating Vermont's largest transit organization. The analysis showed that GMT barely had the capacity to operate a small, urban transportation network, let alone rural service in four other counties.

Here are examples of how the lack of capacity negatively impacted GMT's ability to serve as a reliable partner to VTrans, the Legislature, and the communities we serve:

- In the Fall of 2022, at the same time as the leadership staffing crisis, the GMT Board developed a budget that would include the return to fares on July 1, 2023. Unfortunately, GMT was not operationally prepared to restart fare service. During



the period of fare free operation, roughly half of GMT's fare boxes became obsolete when the manufacturer discontinued support. The lack of clear communication between the board and staff on this issue can be attributed to the departure in mid-2022, without replacement, of GMT's Transportation Director, who was responsible for managing fare hardware. As a result of this internal lack of communication, GMT needed to work with the Legislature and VTrans during the 2023 legislative session to fund a pathway to fare restoration, which disrupted VTrans' previous budgetary work and required additional funds planned for use elsewhere.

- For much of 2022 to the present, GMT has been unable to operate full service in Washington County due to a shortage of CDL drivers. This led to conflict with local communities, most significantly Barre City. The root of this conflict was the lack of a GMT presence in the communities served. At the time, 100% of staff located in Berlin to support Washington County service were operational in nature, meaning they all drove, maintained, cleaned, dispatched, or scheduled buses and vans. Unlike in 2012, there were no staff focused on maintaining local relationships, which is critical for generating local match, developing a broad volunteer network to reduce costs and increase capacity, modifying transit services to meet community needs, and establishing trust with communities served. Management of Washington County service was done remotely by staff located in Burlington. The lack of local control both embittered relations with the communities we served and created a morale crisis where staff in Berlin felt powerless and unsupported, amplifying the retention challenges that were behind our inability to maintain driver staffing levels.
- The lack of capacity has hindered the ability of GMT to both innovate and meet ongoing needs. Staff who are struggling to manage to the end of the day have been naturally resistant to disrupting existing systems, even when they recognize these systems are imperfect. In terms of innovation, GMT struggled to implement the state's first microtransit service during the pandemic and to migrate our fleet away from internal combustion engines. In terms of ongoing needs, we have been unable to move forward with a critically needed new facility in Washington County, leaving us using a facility that was flooded in 2023, with another near flood later that year.

Although it is true that GMT serves the two highest cost-of-living counties in Vermont (Chittenden and Washington), the high cost of GMT's service can only partially be attributed to higher wages and benefit costs in these areas. The bottom line is that GMT operates more service than it can effectively manage with its current staff size, and this has generated higher costs. Here are examples:

- As noted in the attached report from Steadman Hill Consulting, in Franklin County we are over-reliant on taxi service due to shortages in drivers, vehicles, and volunteers. Like Berlin, our operations centered in St. Albans have no non-operational staff and rely on the overstretched central office staff to resolve these local challenges, which is especially problematic for volunteer recruitment and support. About a third of the estimated cost savings associated with transferring service would come from avoiding the use of taxi service.
- In Washington County we recruited an experienced leader to provide local management in Berlin. At the time, forced overtime was the primary method for maintaining service while short-staffed. This led to serious morale issues and higher costs, as most employees forced to work overtime were paid double-time. New employees, those with the lowest seniority, would be forced most often and would frequently leave shortly after completing training. This new local manager partnered with the local union stewards to identify how to reduce forcing. Their locally generated solution has all but eliminated forcing in the past three months. Not shockingly, a September 2024 Employee Engagement Survey of Berlin staff showed huge improvements in staff morale, and we are able to provide the same level of service more cost effectively.

### **The GMT Unicorn – A Rare Urban and Rural Transit Agency**

The GMT organizational assessment also identified how rare it is for a transit agency to operate both urban and rural service. The FTA funds urban and rural transit through separate programs, and with a few exceptions these funds cannot be transferred between these programs.

As a result of this fiscal separation, GMT is like two separate transit agencies that share a common management team. The separation extends beyond just funding, however, because urban and rural transit operate very differently from each other, with urban and rural drivers having separate collective bargaining agreements.

With its high population densities, urban service is focused on fixed route service. GMT establishes a schedule and picks up riders at set locations at set times. This creates predictability and there is only one rule set for how to operate. Most importantly, there is no pre- or post-ride interaction with GMT required to use the service.

Rural service is much more complex. In addition to fixed route, rural transit offers a variety of door-to-door services that require eligibility verifications, ride scheduling, following multiple rule sets for multiple funding sources, complex reporting requirements, etc. Rides generally require a personal interaction with a scheduler or dispatcher, and each day is a unique set of trips to manage. Medicaid transportation, which accounts for a large portion

of rural demand response service, entails yet more staff administration, as client appointments need to be verified by transit agency staff, and reams of federal Medicaid rules consume many hours of staff time.

Outside of California, we have only been able to identify one other transit agency that had a dual urban and rural mission. And, since that other agency doesn't provide seasonal service like GMT, it can reasonably be argued that GMT's depleted management team is operating one of the most diverse transit agencies in the nation.

### **Genesis of GMT Urban Service Reductions**

In early 2020, just prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, GMT began the process of reducing its service due to financial constraints. A round of reductions went into place across both our urban and rural systems in June of 2020.

One of the few positives of the pandemic was federal relief funds. As a municipality, GMT received \$17.8 Million from the federal government. These funds could replace local match, which allowed maximum flexibility in how they were used.

This created a situation where a rising tide lifted all boats. The additional funds, and their flexibility, decreased our reliance on state funds. VTrans was able to decrease GMT's state contributions in FY21 and FY22, allowing them to use funds to support other providers.

Most importantly, however, these funds allowed GMT to fill the gap between quickly rising costs and slowly rising revenue so that full service could continue to be provided to our communities (where staffing allowed). We project the last of these relief funds to be exhausted in early Fiscal Year 2026.

With relief funds exhausted, GMT, VTrans, urban municipalities, and the Legislature have a Hobson's choice: implement severe urban service reductions, or identify additional funds for transit. This choice is being made all across our country and Canada, as urban transit systems find themselves in similar circumstances.

As projected by VPTA's *Report on Funding Sources for Public Transit Nonfederal Match*, GMT urban is the first of Vermont's providers to hit their fiscal cliff, but rural providers and VTrans have their own cliffs that will soon put them in similar circumstances.

## **Public Transit Funding Solution Elusive, Leaving Urban Municipalities Strained**

As described in Steadman Hill Consulting's attached report, there have been nine transit funding studies conducted since 1998 to consider how to fund public transit in Chittenden County. None resulted in changes to the funding model.

As a result of our robust urban system, Chittenden County is the only place in Vermont where municipal contributions exceed state contributions for public transit. Collectively, GMT's urban members will contribute \$3.8 million towards urban transit in FY25. In comparison, even with an extra \$630K provided to help address GMT's fiscal cliff, state taxpayers will contribute \$2.6M.

The burden is the worst on the City of Burlington, whose 44,743 residents contributed \$1.9 million in FY25. In comparison, the combined municipal contributions towards public transit of all municipalities outside Chittenden County, with a population of 477,763, is only \$1 million.

## **Recent One Time Support to Urban Public Transit**

GMT received additional funds in Fiscal Years 2023 to 2025 for the following purposes:

- In FY23, the state provided \$1 million as its share to continue zero fare service. At the time, zero fare service was the practice across the state, and there was support in the Legislature for its continuation. The loss of revenue from fare service was approximately \$2 million, with the remaining \$1 million paid for by relief funds.
- In FY24, the state provided GMT with \$850K to extend fare free service into FY24, allowing GMT to perform the necessary upgrades to its fare system as described above.
- In FY25, the state provided an additional \$630K to help preserve GMT's relief funds and to decrease the service reductions necessary in FY26.

## **Moving Forward – GMT Internal Response**

### **Continued Response to Organizational Assessment**

The organizational assessment identified a wide range of areas of improvement for GMT, with suggested improvements as specific as changing radio practices to as broad as a total reorganization. Here are the larger themes GMT will be addressing internally.

## **Increase Staff Capacity**

The most clear conclusion of the assessment is that GMT dysfunction is rooted in decreased staff capacity. This means GMT is faced with the daunting task of increasing staff capacity while also reducing expenditures.

The first approach GMT will take in addressing this issue is to maximize alternative revenue sources for staff capacity. For example: we were able to utilize funds from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's Unified Planning Work Program to increase our transit planning FTEs from 1.0 to 3.0, with GMT only required to provide a 20% local match. These planning positions will be critical for creating more efficient service across urban and rural service areas, and it will help alleviate frustrations felt by our municipal partners in regard to the timeliness of service modifications.

The second approach may be less tolerable, as GMT needs to adjust its values to recognize that some service may need to be reduced so that all service can be better managed. If past financial challenges had led to across-the-board reductions instead of managerial reductions only, GMT would have continued to be a more reliable partner and provider. The Vermont transit providers thriving today invest more in their managerial staff, and GMT needs to follow their lead.

## **Decentralization of Rural Management**

It can sometimes take years to learn if changes in organizational structure are beneficial. Moving significant management authority from Burlington to Berlin for the team providing Washington County service showed immediate positive results.

GMT recruited Monica White to be Director of Central Vermont Services after she departed state government as the Commissioner of the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in January 2024. In the seven months since she arrived at GMT, this team has made huge strides in performance and workplace culture.

GMT's organizational assessment, provided later in this report, offer employee engagement survey results from Berlin in October 2023 and September 2024. They show remarkable improvement in the work experience of local staff. One key stat...

- in 2023, 0% of staff surveyed indicated the organization was moving in a positive direction, with 44% believing the organization was heading in a negative direction.
- In 2024, 52% of staff expressed positivity, with only 8% expressing things were getting worse.

The delegation of decision making to address site specific issues immediately improved the employee experience. Most critically for our ability to provide full service, the biggest improvement in morale was amongst drivers. Solutions include the near elimination of forcing, which was described above.

Another key decision was turning over supervision of the Montpelier Transit Center (MTC) to an onsite supervisor. Previously, both the Downtown Transit Center in Burlington and the MTC were supervised by the same person, with the supervisor working from Burlington. This limited the support on-site staff could receive, which was especially problematic when managing difficult customer situations. Since adding an onsite supervisor with experience both in human services and law enforcement, we have seen a marked decrease in the number of no trespasses issued to clients using the MTC because of their expertise in de-escalation. This keeps transit accessible to these dependent riders and has improved the sense of safety for both riders and staff.

The last example of immediate progress was in community engagement. GMT is now participating in local healthcare and human services efforts, such as becoming a partner with the Central Vermont Prevention Coalition. This has helped the community better understand the transit resources available, and helped GMT better understand the needs of the community. One improvement coming out of this local work is distributing Narcan from the MTC.

As you'll see from the 2024 survey, one of the key worries of this team is that a transfer to another service provider will derail ongoing improvements after a long period of trauma. This team has struggled through floods, staff-based service reductions, vilification of their efforts from local communities frustrated with decreases in service, fears over their personal safety, lack of support, and internal dysfunction. Discussion of transfer just when things are looking better is unfortunate timing in terms of overall employee stress.

As with the previous section on increasing staff capacity, if GMT retains its rural service, it will need to find a pathway that is both economically feasible and increases overall capacity to manage our service.

### **Efficiency of Service**

The organizational assessment also identified that GMT's urban route efficiency is lower than its peers. The assessment identified that scheduling practices, which were developed to improve the employee experience, may result in less cost-effective transit.

Changing scheduling practices, however, would require negotiations with the urban operators' union, who would likely and reasonably resist changes to scheduling practices that would be perceived as detrimental to its members. This will be a focus during upcoming negotiations with urban drivers, which will start before the end of the calendar year.

## **Return to Financial Sustainability**

During the 2024 legislative session, legislators on both the House and Senate Committees on Transportation communicated their expectation that GMT needs to operate within its existing funding levels. Here are the steps GMT will take to meet these expectations.

### **Reducing Costs – Service Reductions**

With the attrition of managerial staff, the only place for large-scale cost reductions within GMT's urban budget are related to service.

In the Fall of 2024, GMT went through a public meeting process to gather input on potential service reductions. Staff identified savings of up to \$3 million based on input from riders, municipalities, and the Board of Commissioners. The input established transit values that:

- Prioritizes local service over commuter service.
- Prioritizes weekday service over weekend service.
- Focuses reductions based on ridership and cost-per-rider, which would largely leave the most efficient service fully intact.

The first round of service reductions and eliminations will take place on December 2, 2024. The GMT board has already approved reductions that will result in savings of approximately \$750 thousand each year. Later in the report is a listing of the service cut, service still under consideration for reduction, and public comment on the reductions.

The public comment is broken into two categories... Input from organizations and from members of the public. The comments indicate potential negative impacts on a wide assortment of priorities for the State of Vermont. The following themes were repeated throughout the process:

- Access to work. Many participants emphasized their dependence on transit to access work, to include during off peak times when there is lower ridership, which is critical for workers in the service industry. Individuals

determined to be mission essential during the pandemic indicated transit was how they were able to serve.

- Access to housing. Many participants discussed using public transit to travel between work and locations with housing they could afford. Many participants also described choosing their housing location specifically because of public transit access. We also heard from local municipal planners who had made permitting decisions regarding parking based on public transit access.
- Access to healthcare. Many participants talked about the ability to get from outlying areas to medical appointments. This included access to daily dosing for citizens battling opioid addiction. This included concern from organizations who rely on public transit for their clients to access medical care, and the potential budgetary impact for them in needing to arrange alternative transportation. There was also concern expressed about increasing missed appointments.
- Access to human services and activities of daily living. Many participants talked about access to food shelves, counseling services, pharmacies, shopping, social engagement, etc. This included concern from organizations who rely on public transit for their clients to access services, and the potential budgetary impact for them in needing to arrange alternative transportation. There was also concern expressed about increasing missed appointments.
- Concern that reduced transit will increase traffic congestion in Chittenden County.
- Concern that reduced transit will interfere with the State of Vermont's climate mitigation goals.

### **Reducing Costs – Non-Driver Staff Reductions**

Although there are limited opportunities to provide savings through non-union staff reductions, we have created some savings. We chose not to fill a vacant Operations Supervisor position. This will save just under \$100 thousand in pay and benefits, although it does lead to less oversight and support of our operations, as well as increased workload to other supervisors. We will continue to evaluate positions, although we do not anticipate further reductions at this time.



## **Increasing Revenues**

In order to avoid a series of damaging service reduction cycles, GMT will need to identify new ways to generate revenue that go beyond existing practices and is less reliant on municipal and discretionary state spending.

### **Urban Assessment Methodology to be Updated in 2025**

The statute creating GMT gave it assessment authority over its urban members. Changes to the assessment methodology require the approval of the legislative bodies of 75% of its urban members. With 10 urban members at present, this would require eight positive votes in city councils and selectboards to change.

The current assessment methodology was established in 2008. At the time, the primary concern of members was assessment volatility, so a methodology was established that would maximize budget predictability. Municipal budget planners could expect annual increases for fixed route service to be in the 3% to 4% range. The process achieved its predictability goal, but in doing so it created a relatively rigid structure that made it challenging for GMT to modify service or to react to changing world conditions.

Over the next year the GMT Board of Commissioners will go through the process of updating the assessment methodology with its urban members. We are hopeful members will approve changes in time for FY27 budget cycle, which starts November 2025.

### **Urban ADA Assessment Methodology**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires GMT to offer paratransit service to riders who live within 3/4 of a mile of a local fixed route bus and have a disability that prevents them from using bus service.

For rural transit, ADA service is generally handled by having the smaller, rural bus deviate from the fixed route to pick up the rider at their location. As a result, rural ADA service is supported so that local municipalities and organizations only need to provide their 20% local match.

This is not the cast for GMT urban. City buses move too many people to make deviations a viable option, especially when considering navigating a 40-foot bus through residential neighborhoods with narrower streets and turns.

GMT has a contract with the Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA) to provide door-to-door paratransit. This service, which cost \$2.3 million to operate in FY24, is paid for 50/50 between urban municipalities and GMT's federal appropriation (\$4.3 million in FY25). As a result, roughly a quarter of our municipal and direct federal revenue is used for this service.

As part of updating urban assessments, GMT will need to consider increasing the municipal contribution towards ADA service. Separately, GMT will raise this issue with VTrans and the Legislature as it considers future funding practices.

### **Special Assessment Limitations Hinder GMT's Ability to Meet Funding Crisis**

The statute creating GMT gave it authority to issue special assessments to fill funding gaps. This is a wonderful idea in concept, but is set up in a way to ensure it is rarely, if ever, used.

The special assessment requires the unanimous approval of the legislative bodies of all urban members. Furthermore, the assessment must be collected across the members in the same manner as the regular assessment, not allowing for flexibility to adapt the assessment, which is critical when also considering service reductions.

In order for GMT to receive revenue from a special assessment in FY26, it would have to convince all 10 of its urban members to voluntarily pay more. Several of these communities will potentially have drastic reductions in their service.

Not surprisingly, city councils and selectboard have expressed opposition to increasing their contributions while service in their community is being cut. Urban voters share in the frustration over high costs, and paying more for less is not a politically viable option. Since service reductions are likely to be part of the response to any fiscal crisis GMT urban faces, this makes any meaningful special assessment a near impossibility.

With that said, GMT will be asking its members for a \$316K special assessment in FY26. To overcome concerns of paying more for less service, this assessment will be for non-service related expenses, with the bulk of the revenue used to offer a retirement buy out option to reduce our workforce.

## **Expansion of Non-Municipal Local Match**

As described above, GMT's authorizing statute gives it the power to assess. This is unique amongst Vermont transit providers. This power allows GMT to efficiently generate local match, which is critical because of the leanness of our staff.

For GMT to adapt to the current environment, however, it will need to emulate rural service providers and think beyond municipalities.

Vermont's rural providers do not have assessment authority. As a result, the local funds they raise come from a variety of sources. The funds are also raised through negotiation by showing a return on investment to those entities that provide local match. This creates a virtuous cycle where there is never a separation between the service provided and the payer of that service. Rural providers handle this extra work by investing more of its resources into their non-operational staff.

## **Fares**

Fare revenue has been a critical component of GMT's funding. In FY13, 22% of GMT revenue was generated from fares. The percentage of revenue coming from fares gradually declined until 2020 when fares were suspended because of the pandemic.

GMT returned to its practice of collecting fares on May 20, 2024. The fare system had a goal, established in the FY24 Transportation Bill, of generating 10% of its revenue from fares, and the fare structure was set up for that target. Although it is still too early to tell if GMT will achieve its fare target, it appears that revenue may be slightly lagging expectations. There is some good news, however, as GMT is exceeding expectations for revenue generated from unlimited access agreements. These unlimited access agreements provide free transit for members, which is ideal both for the rider and GMT. Unlike fare revenue, FTA rules have allowed these funds to be considered local match, making them more useful.

In the coming months, however, the Board of Commissioners will need to review fare revenue data to determine whether adjustments should be made. This will also need to include a discussion about whether 10% is the right target considering the financial challenges ahead and the desire to retain service.

Separate from bus fares, the Board did approve increasing ADA fares from \$3 to \$4. This is the fare for using the paratransit service offered by SSTA described above. The fare increase will be effective January 1, 2025.

## **Green Mountain Transit Foundation & Association**

The GMT Board of Commissioners recently approved the creation of an affiliated not for profit organization to increase opportunities for revenue generation. The Green Mountain Transit Foundation and Association will give GMT the ability to directly fundraise, will increase access to grant opportunities, and will offer more tools to solve problems. We do not anticipate this to have a large impact immediately, but over time our hope is to self-fund a portion of our revenue growth.

## **Moving Forward – GMT’s Collaborative Response**

GMT is a partner within Vermont’s public transit system. Addressing the challenges of the moment will require collaboration with other partners.

### **Transfer of Rural Services**

The biggest question to answer from this report is whether GMT should continue to be a dual urban and rural transit agency. To meet the requirement of the FY25 Transportation Bill, GMT collaborated with Rural Community Transit (RCT), Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA), Tri Valley Transit (TVT), and VTrans. In May 2024 we agreed that Steadman Hill Consulting was in the best position to independently evaluate the situation, and their report immediately follows ours.

The report, which also expands upon GMT’s limited managerial capacity, shows that there is the potential for cost savings by transferring all of GMT’s rural service to other providers and returning GMT to its urban roots.

The GMT Board of Commissioners will consider the report and issue their recommendations in the our final report to the Legislature, which is due February 1, 2025. GMT is committed to being a positive partner with VTrans and the other providers. We wish to be part of any solutions to our collective funding predicament. We also want to make sure we fully understand the potential impact these transfers will have on our riders, employees, and communities served before taking a position.

### **Public Transit Funding Recommendation**

As discussed in the relevant background, there have been nine studies on how to finance public transit in Chittenden County. With rural providers approaching their own fiscal cliffs, now is the time to either act on one of the solutions recommended

in the *Report on Funding Sources for Public Transit Nonfederal Match*, or enact another solution.

GMT is aware of Governor Phil Scott's stated opposition to new fees, as well as the changes in the makeup of the Legislature that will likely prevent the override of vetoes. Without a public transit funding solution, however, Vermont will either need to flex more of its federal highway funds to transit or accept lower service levels across the state. Neither seems a good long-term strategy.

### **Mind the Gap – Urban Projections for FY27 and FY28**

Cutting ~\$2 million in service for FY26 will not end the financial crisis for GMT urban. Even with this reduction, we have a projected deficit in FY27 of ~\$2 million and FY28 of ~\$1 million. Three years of service uncertainty and reductions will undermine our ability to meet community needs. Overall savings to the State of Vermont are unlikely to materialize as healthcare providers and human services agencies take on more costs associated with transporting clients, and replacement transportation services will likely have a much higher cost per passenger than public transit.

### **Layoffs**

If GMT enters FY26 with the ~\$2 million funding gap projected, we estimate the need to layoff 10 full-time drivers and all 12 part-time drivers, for a total of 22 employees. The layoff action would occur June 2025. Our part time drivers are our most economical labor pool, but our collective bargaining agreement requires their separation before full-time drivers can be laid off.

The scarcity of CDL drivers in Vermont has been well documented. We believe a layoff action would create future labor scarcity. The drivers that would be laid off would be those with the lowest seniority, leaving drivers with higher seniority. Many higher seniority drivers are approaching retirement age. Replacing them after they retire will be exceedingly difficult, especially if GMT's reputation for employment is soured by a layoff action.

As a result, GMT will seek to raise funds to offer a buyout option that would give drivers with higher seniority the opportunity to voluntarily depart GMT. If GMT were to offer 1 weeks' pay for 1 year of service, the estimated cost of a buyout of 10 drivers would be \$240K. It is unclear if this level of payment would produce the volunteers necessary to avoid layoffs.

## **Rural Transfer Areas of Continued Examination**

Steadman Hill Consulting's report projects that transferring service would provide long term cost savings. Prior to issuing a recommendation on transferring service, GMT will explore issues beyond the finances:

- GMT values our workforce. We do not want a transfer of service to negatively impact on employees. GMT is concerned about the fallout of transferring union positions to a non-union provider in Franklin County. We will continue to work with VTrans and the other providers to address these issues.
- GMT wants to hear from the communities we serve, both riders and municipal partners. We will conduct outreach to get this input prior to our final report.
- GMT will examine the internal financial impact. Any negative impact to GMT's urban financials resulting from a transfer will need to be mitigated... transferring service can't amplify urban's financial crisis.

## **Preview of Final Report**

GMT appreciates the opportunity to provide both an interim and final report. Our final report will include:

- A recommendation on whether to transfer rural service to other providers.
- Greater clarity on local service reductions anticipated for June 2025. By the time the FY26 Transportation Bill is being crafted, Transportation Committee members will have a waterfall list to use to show what would be cut at different funding levels.
- Recommendations for statutory improvements (separate from those required for rural transfer). This will include suggestions that would give GMT greater flexibility regarding special assessments in order to address funding crises.
- Steadman Hill Consulting will have revised financial projections to reflect new collective bargaining agreements with GMT's rural operators and maintenance staff, which went into effect in August and September 2024.

## Conclusion

The biggest takeaway of this interim report is that the status quo is not an option:

- Even if rural service is not transferred to other providers, GMT will make fundamental shifts in how we manage our rural services. As described above, GMT will learn from its peers to increase local control and to improve community integration. This will improve the work experience for employees, the transit experience for riders, and funding options from local partners.
- Staff capacity will be increased so that we can stop asking staff to work harder instead of smarter. This may mean some additional losses in service, but the result will be an organization that is more flexible and has greater ability to adapt to community needs.

For now, we would ask legislators to consider the following:

- The limited number of non-operational staff remaining at GMT are doing the best they can to be a good partner to VTrans and the State of Vermont. Past missteps are not rooted in managerial malfeasance or incompetence but overall capacity.
- GMT is governed by a volunteer Board of Commissioners who are doing the best they can to manage a very complex organization, one of the most complex small transit agencies in the nation, with minimal staff capacity. Up to 28 volunteers serve on the board as primary and alternate commissioners.
- Progress is being made to reduce urban service costs with limited impact on communities and riders, but there is no avoiding the fact that these reductions will harm some of our most vulnerable community members. There is also no avoiding the fact that some of the transit being eliminated is among the most cost effective in the state.
- Progress is being made to improve rural operations, benefiting both the communities we serve, our riders, and employees.

## Bonus Section: Why So Many Big, Empty Buses?

At all nine public meetings to discuss service reductions, GMT was asked some variation of the following questions:

- Why does GMT use such big buses when often there are only a handful of riders?
- Wouldn't GMT save a lot of money if it used smaller buses?

I can relate to these questions, because I asked them on January 10, 2023... My first day as GMT's new General Manager.

The surprising answer is “No.” Here’s why.

- A full-size city bus has a lifespan of at least 12 years. About a third of GMT’s urban buses are 12 years or older. These behemoths are more like a boat than a car, meaning retrofits like installing a new engine is somewhat commonplace.
- Smaller buses have a lifespan of roughly 6 years. The initial cost is about half the price of a full-size bus. This means the long-term capital costs of large buses are roughly the same as smaller buses.
- Labor is the single biggest cost of our operations. A smaller bus would still carry more than 14 riders, which means that a CDL driver is still required. This means no labor savings from a smaller bus.
- Buses are filled during peak times along our major corridors. Swapping buses during non-peak times would greatly diminish overall labor efficiency.
- Using large buses exclusively means that any urban bus can operate any urban route. This limits service disruptions, especially during times when more buses are temporarily non-operational.
- Every new vehicle type also means a new parts inventory to maintain and more training for maintenance staff, both of which increase costs and overall complexity of the operation.
- There currently are no smaller options for electric battery buses, which is the direction GMT is moving towards as we replace internal combustion engines.