



DRAFT

Westport Transit District Directors' Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2017 at 7:30 PM – Westport Town Hall, Room 201

Attending

Westport Transit District (WTD) Directors:

Patsy Cimarosa
Martin Fox

Norwalk Transit District (NTD) Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO
Britt Liotta, COO

Town of Westport

Foti Koskinas, Chief of Police
Sam Arciola, Deputy Chief

Public:

None

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

Public Comment

Members of the public who wished to address the Directors were asked to do so. There were no comments offered.

Approval of Minutes of February 28, 2017 meeting

The minutes of the February 28, 2017 meeting of the Directors were approved as presented.

FY17 YTD Ridership

Mr. Fox reviewed the monthly ridership report prepared by Mr. Liotta. He noted that the more negative trend in commuter shuttle ridership that started in January continued into February. Mr. Fox added that this change in shuttle ridership trends occurred about the same time as there was an increase in available railroad parking spaces and additional parking permits were issued. Chief Koskinas and Deputy Chief Arciola noted that there has been a 9% increase in available railroad parking spaces since the Fall. Chief Koskinas and Deputy Chief Arciola also noted that they believe that commutation from the Westport rail stations has been less than usual in January and February overall, as they observe that the use of available parking spaces has been less than they expected during this period, in addition to the shuttle ridership being lower.

Ms. Morton added that she believes that it's clear that there has been a negative impact on ridership from the added parking. Ms. Morton expressed a concern that reductions in ridership could ultimately contribute to a reduction in the level of State funding support for the Westport shuttles.

Mr. Fox and Mr. Liotta then reviewed the trends in the number of Door-to-Door trips by category, which continued the lower year-over-year ridership trends of recent months. Mr. Fox noted again that the Door-to-Door ridership varies significantly over time because the majority of trips are taken by a small number of riders.

FY17 Budget Update

Mr. Fox commented that the latest WTD FY17 financial forecast, completed in early February, projected that WTD would only require about \$23,000 of the \$87,500 supplemental appropriation approved by the Town of Westport late last year. This is due to expenses being lower than the revised WTD budget prepared last Fall. Mr. Fox then said that if the recent lower Door-to-Door ridership continues for the rest of the fiscal year, it's likely that even less than \$23,000 of the Westport supplemental appropriation would be required.

Mr. Fox said that the cost reductions have been generated primarily from the elimination of dedicated vehicles for the "Within Westport" Door-to-Door services by integrating these trips into the overall Norwalk Transit system, savings in healthcare costs based on NTD's decision to move to the State medical plan, enhanced management of parts inventory, as well as the lower than forecast Door-to-Door ridership. Ms. Morton noted that union negotiations are ongoing and wage rates continue to be unresolved.

FY 2018 proposed budget

Mr. Fox reviewed the WTD's FY18 budget and provided an update on the WTD's discussions with the Westport Board of Finance. He indicated that on March 15th, the Westport Board of Finance approved a \$371,100 contribution to the WTD budget for FY18. He added that the next steps in the Westport budget process are a meeting with the Westport RTM Transit Committee and then consideration of the WTD FY18 budget by the full Westport RTM in early May.

Ms. Morton advised that the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Grant application was submitted on behalf of the Town of Westport and the Norwalk Transit District. Mr. Fox thanked the NTD for leading this effort. Ms. Morton further advised that there continues to be no news on the Connecticut Municipal Grant Program at this time. Mr. Fox noted that last year the Municipal Grant application had been made available earlier in the calendar year and the due date had been March 31.

Ms. Morton stated that CT DOT has not provided guidance regarding funding for FY 2018. She indicated that the CT DOT had advised Norwalk Transit that it would issue a contract in the amount of 50% of the FY 2017 contract value to facilitate Norwalk Transit's cash flow until such time they finalize the FY 2018 funding. Ms. Morton indicated that the final resolution could be months into the fiscal year and will be dependent on the Governor's final budget details.

Marketing

Mr. Fox gave an update on WTD marketing. He presented the recently developed WTD page that will be included in the biennial Westport Weston Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide and Membership Directory. He noted that he has been and will be speaking with a number of marketing professionals in the coming weeks about assisting WTD with a marketing program. Mr. Fox stated that the objective of the WTD marketing initiatives will be to positively impact ridership by increasing awareness of the shuttles and highlighting the benefits of riding them. He commented that WTD intends to leverage the recent availability of the myStop App as part of this effort.

Route Planning Preparation

Mr. Fox then gave an update of the preparatory steps underway to support the WTD's upcoming review of its route structure and schedules. He indicated that the WTD plans to complete this project in the second calendar quarter.

Mr. Fox then said that he has been working with WestCOG personnel to produce a Town map plotting the addresses of Town residents with railroad parking permits and

who are on the waiting list for such permits, to enable the WTD to clearly see the relative density of potential shuttle riders by area.

Mr. Fox then thanked Mr. Liotta for the passenger spotting he and Stephanie Scavelli (NTD's Manager of Planning and Marketing) had completed for all of the WTD routes (other than the Imperial shuttle). Mr. Fox then indicated that he and Ms. Cimarosa would take care of mapping the data for the 3 routes that didn't yet have a graphical representation.

Mr. Fox then asked Mr. Liotta if the NTD could do an update of the trip level productivity for the month of April to support the WTD's evaluation of its schedules. Mr. Liotta indicated that he would arrange for this to be done.

Ms. Morton then encouraged the WTD to consider modifications to its route structure based on analysis of all of the information that the WTD has been gathering. Mr. Fox commented that the WTD's target is to have a preliminary plan available for discussion and comment at the next WTD Directors' meeting.

Other Business

Ms. Morton reported that it was recently brought to her attention that there aren't any governing by-laws for the Westport Transit District. She recommended that the Directors consider adopting by-laws to avoid problems that could occur in the future for failure to have any in place. She also advised that absent by-laws the Directors' could choose to adopt Roberts' Rules of Order until such time by-laws can be prepared. Ms. Morton suggested that this be a subject of formal discussion and added to the next meeting agenda.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2017 at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Fox
Westport Transit District Director