



DRAFT – REVISED 7/14/17

Westport Transit District Directors' Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2017 at 10:00 AM – Westport Town Hall, Room 201

Attending

Westport Transit District (WTD) Directors:

Patsy Cimarosa
Martin Fox

Norwalk Transit District (NTD) Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO
Steve Burka, CFAO

Public:

Peter Gold (Chairman of RTM Transit Committee)

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM.

Public Comment

Members of the public who wished to address the Directors were asked to do so. Mr. Gold shared with the Directors potential future developments regarding the availability of parking spaces for commuters at the two Westport train stations, including:

- Ferry Lane West (Saugatuck station) – The Town of Westport is considering converting some existing parking spaces to commuter use.
- The addition of 40-50 spaces at Greens Farms is being considered for the future.
- Lot 5 (59 spaces at Saugatuck station) will be closed during the summer. There is expected to be little impact on parking availability for commuters given the lower summer activity.

Mr. Fox added that the RR parking waiting list is down 27% from last fiscal year-end due primarily to a 9% increase in the number of spaces available at the train stations.

Approval of Minutes of March 28, 2017 meeting

The minutes of the March 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 the continuing shuttle ridership decline. Ridership was down about 20% in the month of April 2017, when adjusted for the one fewer day in April 2017 vs. April 2016. He noted that the addition of parking spaces at the train stations and the associated increase in parking permits issued has had a significant negative impact on ridership.

Ridership on the G2 and S4 routes remains a concern. While ridership levels on all routes have been impacted by the number of new RR parking permits issued during the current fiscal year, the S4 and Imperial Avenue shuttle have been most heavily affected.

Mr. Fox then reviewed Door-to-Door ridership, which has been lower than expected during the current fiscal year. Overall, Door-to-Door ridership is down 12.6%, year to date through April. 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 indicated that little, if any, of the \$87,500 Westport special appropriation would be needed for the current fiscal year. Mr. Fox indicated he would initiate a request for carryover of unused funds from the Town into the new fiscal year.

FY 2018 proposed budget

Mr. Fox stated he and Ms. Cimarosa met with the RTM Transit Committee on April 19th to discuss the WTD's proposed fiscal 2018 budget, which had previously been approved by the Westport Board of Finance. On May 1, 2017, the full Westport RTM approved the Town's \$371,000 contribution to the WTD budget, which was the last step of the FY 2018 budgetary process.

Connecticut Funding Update

Ms. Morton stated that CT DOT has not provided guidance regarding funding for the FY 2018 budget. Ms. Morton then gave an update on the Municipal Grant program and indicated that the required information and certifications would be submitted by NTD on behalf of Norwalk and Westport by the required June 2nd deadline.

Marketing

Mr. Fox stated that there haven't been any significant proactive marketing activities for the commuter shuttles for a significant period of time. He noted that, as a first step, the WTD recently developed a WTD page for the biennial Westport Weston Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide and Membership Directory.

Mr. Fox reported that he had interviewed a number of experienced marketing professionals about assisting the WTD with a new marketing campaign to increase awareness of the shuttles and highlight the benefits of taking them. He noted that after these discussions, he and Ms. Cimarosa decided to work with Rob Feakins, an award-winning advertising executive who has developed a number of successful advertising campaigns for well-known companies over his career. Mr. Fox added that the new campaign will leverage the recent availability of the myStop app as part of this effort. Mr. Feakins and the WTD Directors have also been working with Jyoti Dasgupta, Founder and Creative Strategist at GreatOwl Creative, who is developing new designs for the campaign.

The campaign will include:

1. A series of email messages to railroad parking permit holders and people on the permit waiting list that will be sent out in June and the Fall.
2. New posters placed at the Saugatuck and Greens Farms rail stations and other locations around Westport later in the summer.
3. Cards showing the shuttle route map and other information, including the website.

Route Planning Preparation

Mr. Fox then gave an update on the preparatory steps underway to support the upcoming review of the WTD's route structure and schedules. These include:

1. Plotting of the addresses of RR parking permit holders and people on the RR parking wait list addresses on a Town map, which also shows the existing WTD routes. This will enable the WTD to clearly see the relative density of potential shuttle riders by area. Mr. Fox expressed his appreciation to the WestCOG GIS team for their significant assistance with this project.
2. Passenger spotting of current users by where they board and depart the shuttles.
3. Analysis of productivity by trips and routes.

Results of this review will be forthcoming later in the calendar year.

Other Business

Ms. Morton then updated the Directors on the NTD's RFP process for subcontractors for Door-to-Door services. She indicated that based on a review of the submitted proposals the NTD had decided to reduce the number of subcontractors from 6 to 2 for efficiency reasons and that the change would become effective July 1, 2017. Ms. Morton also noted that after this change is made, the NTD will be instating other measures to improve integration of the subcontractors into NTD's dispatching. She also indicated that the NTD had recently commenced scheduling Door-to-Door trips using newly implemented software and that in this context Door-to-Door riders were now being asked the time of their appointment for dispatching purposes (vs. a requested pick-up time).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2017 at 10:00 AM at Westport Town Hall in room 201.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Fox
Westport Transit District Director