



DRAFT

Westport Transit District Directors' Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2018 at 10:00 AM – Westport Town Hall, Room 201

Attending

Westport Transit District (WTD or District) Directors:

Patricia Cimarosa

Martin Fox

Norwalk Transit District (NTD) Staff:

Kimberlee A. Morton, CEO

Britt Liotta, COO

Town of Westport: Sarah Harris, Director of Operations

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 AM.

Public Comment

Members of the public who wished to address the Directors were asked to do so. There was no member of the public in attendance, so no comments were offered.

Approval of Minutes of March 28, 2018 meeting

Motion for approval of the minutes of the March 28, 2018 meeting was made by Patricia Cimarosa, and seconded by Martin Fox. Motion approved.

FY18 YTD Ridership

The FY18 Ridership was reviewed by all present. A summary of the overall ridership trend was:

- Ridership for May 2018 Commuter services was up 10.7% over FY17.
- Ridership for May 2018 Door to Door services was up 10.8% over FY17.

Mr. Fox noted that shuttle ridership trends improved in both April and May, and that the improvements were broad based across all routes. Mr. Liotta commented that notwithstanding the recent improvement in ridership, the commuter services are still running approximately 13.6% lower year to date versus last year, and Door to Door services are running approximately 26.0% lower than last year. Mr. Fox commented that the Westport Police Department will be issuing more railroad parking permits starting in July 18 which will likely adversely affect future shuttle ridership.

FY18 Financial / Budget Update

Mr. Liotta gave a brief review of the fiscal year to date financials for the District, through April:

- \$767,489 year to date expenses
- \$470,511 year to date assistance from State fixed route and Matching Grant funding
- \$74,219 of Revenues
- \$222,760 Westport assistance

Mr. Fox commented that based on current projections, the WTD will not be using all of the approved State Matching grant funding in FY18 due to a reduction in “Within Westport” ridership, which in turn causes Westport’s expenditures for “Within Westport” trips to be less than FY17. The NTD will review its cost allocations to these trips.

FY 2019 WTD budget

Mr. Fox commented that the WTD’s proposed FY19 budget for Westport’s assistance to the WTD was approved by all required Westport Town bodies. Ms. Morton commented that Transit District budgets need to go through the proper channels for approval. This process includes:

- Vote for approval of the budget by the District’s Directors
- Public posting

Ms. Cimarosa made a motion to approve the FY19 budget, which was seconded by Mr. Fox. The FY19 budget was approved.

Mr. Fox will send the details of the final FY19 budget to Ms. Morton and Mr. Liotta to make sure that the NTD has the final version of the FY19 WTD budget. In addition, an evaluation will be made as to whether the public posting of the details of the WTD

budget on the Town of Westport website, as well as discussion of the budget at the Board of Finance and RTM Transit Committee meetings, are sufficient to satisfy the public posting requirement. The final Town of Westport budget provides up to \$338,300 for Transportation related services and \$20,000 for marketing.

Connecticut funding update

Ms. Morton commented that the State restored all of its fixed route funding by moving the revenue generated from the new car sales tax from the General Fund to the Special Transportation Fund. She further commented that while this will fix the issues for FY19, but funding for the next fiscal year is still uncertain. The NTD was told to expect a 2.5% increase of funding this upcoming fiscal year to reflect labor and fuel increases. There is no impact to the Westport Door to Door service funding (State Matching Grant program) at this time.

Marketing

Mr. Fox gave an update on the WTD's marketing program. The highlights included:

- WTD ran an ad in WestportNow from April 21st to May 21st. The Directors received a lot of positive comments on this advertisement. Given that this was the WTD's 3rd major advertising effort since November, there was not an uptick in the number of visits to the Westport Transit website.
- Email blasts of the current series of 8 email messages will be sent out one more time this upcoming summer.
- The District has already placed close to 3,000 "Take One" cards at various key locations around Town.
- There will be a new effort to target businesses and employees in town. In the coming months, new email messages will be created for employees of businesses in town to encourage use of the shuttles.
- The Directors are planning to contact the leasing agent of the new 94 apartment complex opening on Post Road between Maple Street and Turkey Hill and provide them with handouts about the shuttles for prospective tenants. In addition, Mr. Fox indicated that handouts of the WTD's Take One cards and a current schedule will be placed at the 597 Westport Avenue apartment building, which is at the beginning of the S1 route.
- An update of the WTD's 2016 survey is planned for mid-to-late September, with the results available in late October. It is expected that the majority of the questions asked in the 2016 survey will be repeated to help the WTD see how perspectives have evolved since 2016. In addition, new questions will be asked probing citizen attitudes about (a) possible alternatives to the current commuter

shuttles such as “microtransit” and (b) the level of financial support the Town of Westport should provide to the WTD to fund its operations under various scenarios.

Other Business

Ms. Morton spoke briefly about a new NTD pilot program in Norwalk starting in late summer utilizing “MicroTransit.” It will be an on-demand phone app based program that will be geared towards an evening ride service between the restaurant / night life areas and TOD housing district. The service is expected to move people within the zone at a lower cost than utilizing Uber or Lyft. The passengers will travel within the zone to pre-determined common spots. Ms. Morton mentioned that it may also be beneficial to replace a low ridership fixed route with a similar microtransit service. The funding for the NTD pilot, which was partially provided by the developer of the new Norwalk mall, is allowing NTD to do a simulations of the microtransit operation prior to its commencement.

Mr. Fox then asked if simulations could be done for certain Westport areas to see what kind of services would be needed if the WTD were to replace some low ridership shuttle routes with an on-demand type of service. Mr. Liotta indicated that the vendor, Transloc, has already been provided with some Westport data that could be used for such an analysis, but that there would be a cost to doing the analysis. Mr. Fox and Mr. Liotta will follow up on this in the coming months.

Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, September 18th, 2018, at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held at Westport Town Hall, Room #201

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Fox
Westport Transit District Director