



## **Westport Transit District Directors' Meeting Minutes**

**November 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM – Westport Town Hall, Room 309**

### **Attending**

#### **Westport Transit District (WTD or District) Directors:**

Martin Fox

#### **Norwalk Transit District (NTD) Staff:**

Kimberlee Morton, CEO

Matthew Pentz, Chief Financial Officer

Matthew Abbott, Transportation Planner

Francis Murray, COO

The meeting was not called to order due to lack of a quorum. A general discussion of the agenda items occurred with no formal action items.

### **Public Comment**

It was noted that Westport RTM member Sal Liccione joined the meeting during the budget discussion. No other members of the public were present.

### **Approval of Minutes of September 12, 2019 meeting**

No motion was made to approve the minutes due to lack of a quorum. This item will be moved to the next meeting for formal approval.

### **FY20 YTD Ridership**

Ridership reports for the October 2019 YTD period were discussed. When reviewing the recent ridership trends for the commuter shuttles, Mr. Fox noted again that commuter shuttle ridership correlates inversely with the quantity of railroad parking permits issued; additional permits were issued in August which is negatively impacting shuttle ridership. Mr. Fox commented that the Westport Police Department advised him that they would be issuing some additional permits in the next few months based on the completion of parking lot construction projects and their continuing analysis of parking

space usage – and that partly offsetting this impact will be the usage of the shuttles by some new residents moving to Town in the Spring / Summer period. Mr. Abbott added that bus ridership is down nationally which is directionally consistent with Westport ridership trends.

Mr. Abbott noted that the quantity of rides not counted by the fare box are reviewed monthly and are within acceptable variances.

Mr. Fox said that Door-to-Door ridership continued its recent downward trend in the FY20 YTD period. He added that he expects that the Door-to-Door ridership numbers will continue to experience volatility due to the fact that a high percentage of the trips are taken by a relatively small number of riders

### **FY20 YTD Budget Update**

YTD September financial results were presented by Mr. Pentz. He then reviewed the composition of fare revenue by media type. Cash fares were flat to the prior year and Unitickets were up 1%. The new 10-trip Ride cards have experienced minimal customer usage so far. Mr. Fox commented that the WTD's new marketing campaign will further educate commuters on the 4 ways they can pay for shuttle rides and highlight the availability of the new 10-trip fare card.

Mr. Fox then said that it would be helpful to understand why year-over-year ridership trends are lower than year-over-year revenue trends, and asked that an analysis of the quantity of uncounted rides ("dumps") be performed to see if they materially affect ridership trends.

Mr. Pentz then reviewed Westport shuttle expenses. While total expenses were flat to prior year, there has been an increase in fringe benefit cost related to an 8% increase in health care costs and uniform replacements absorbed across all services. In addition, there was a 24% reduction in material and supplies expense which was driven by invoice timing. Normalized for this timing issue, commuter shuttle expenses are projected to be up approximately 4% vs the prior year.

Mr. Fox noted that the Town of Westport's FY21 budget process will begin in late January, and there will be a number of meetings with Town officials to discuss the WTD's proposed WTD FY21 budget, which will be developed by early February.

### **Connecticut Funding Update**

Ms. Morton advised there is nothing new to report.

## **Marketing**

Mr. Fox gave an update on marketing initiatives that continue to progress as planned. These include (1) six new emails promoting the commuter shuttles and educating consumers on how to use the shuttles, which will be sent to Westport residents between now and mid-December, (2) new posters installed at the Saugatuck train station and (3) new 5X7 Take One cards displayed at key locations, including real estate agencies.

## **Microtransit**

Mr. Fox said that he believes that the initial November 18, 2019 planning meeting with VIA, NTD's microtransit software vendor, was productive. Mr. Fox commented that he continues to believe that a deployment of microtransit in Westport could be beneficial, while also noting that significant additional analysis is required to determine the best path forward. The meeting attendees are looking forward to seeing a preliminary simulation of a test of microtransit in the Greens Farms area, which is expected to be reviewed with the parties on December 12, 2019.

## **Other Business**

Ms. Morton presented the new organizational structure adopted by the NTD Commissioners at their October meeting. Duties of the former COO were divided among the three Officers reporting directly to the CEO. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Matt Pentz, is responsible for Finance, Grant Administration, Pension and Human Resources; he also serves as the EEO Officer. The Chief Operating Officer (COO), Francis Murray, is responsible for the operation of all fixed route, paratransit (including ADA compliance), commuter shuttle and microtransit services; he also serves as the Title VI Officer. Ms. Lori Hammill serves as the Chief Logistics Officer (CLO) and is responsible for procurement and maintenance; she also serves as the DBE Officer.

## **Next Scheduled Meeting**

The date of the next scheduled meeting, which is expected to be in early February 2020, will be determined when the Westport Transit Directors post the meeting schedule for the upcoming year. Ms. Morton noted that a schedule for the 2020 calendar year needs to be established and formally adopted at the next meeting.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Fox  
Westport Transit District Director