

Westport Citizens Transit Committee Meeting Notes July 31, 2012

Attendees:

Jim Ross
Eugene Cederbaum
Carl Lindhal
Pete Gold
Carolyn Sigal
Dale Call
Steven McClenning

Public Attendees: Jennifer Johnson, Jon Pincavage (RTM), Reporter

Meeting Notes:

Next scheduled guests

- Bud Titsworth and Jim Hood – Aug. 9
- Sue Prosi, Sr. Regional Transportation Coordinator. SWERPA – Aug. 21

Targets for future guests

- Lou Gagliano Downtown 2020 Committee
- Gerard Bernacchia, Chairman Liberty Lines Westchester County
- Jim Cameron Chairman of the CT Metro-North Rail Commuter Council
- Sandra Evangelista, Transportation Coordinator Westport Public Schools
- Representative from the Realtor Community
- Representative from the Westport Chamber of Commerce
- Representative of the Downtown Business Association
- Representative of the Saugatuck Business Community (i.e. congestion)
- Representative for the Elderly / Disabled Community

Action items

Place notices for invitations from other community members to speak to the committee by placing notices on westportct.gov and various local media

Jim Ross reported on a conversation he had with Doug Holcomb, CEO

of Greater Bridgeport Transit.

- Bridgeport Transit is a very different system
- Bridgeport serves dense, urban population vs, Westport suburban and infrequent routes
- Holcomb called Norwalk Transit "blue ribbon standard"
- Bridgeport looks to Norwalk Transit as a model to emulate.

Jon Pincavage (RTM) presented to the Citizens Transit Committee

Mr. Pincavage gave a wide-ranging presentation that touched on many important issues facing the Westport Transit system. The presentation focused on:

- Transportation Economics 101
- Transit District Past
- Costs
- Ridership and Resources
- Secrets to Success

The conversation focused on Fixed Route Services provided by Norwalk transit.

Regarding Fixed Route Service economics

- 95% of costs are determined when the routes are set.
- 5% are variable costs such as fuel, weather related expenses, other unforeseen risk
- Key to creating an efficient and cost effective system is in setting the routes.
- The goal is to match capacity with demand
- Over the past 6 years the average ridership of the commuter shuttles has been very consistent about 60,000 rides a year
- Over the past 6 years the Westport Subsidy has also been very consistent as a percentage of the costs (about 19%)
- The CT Subsidy has also been very consistent (about 67%)

Only minor changes to the schedule and routes in recent years:

January 6, 2012

Base Fare: increase (\$1.25 to \$1.50)

E/D Fare increase (\$.60 to \$.75)
ADA Fare increase (\$2.50 to \$2.60)
Uniticket Fare (by State) \$27.00 to \$28.00

Changes Effective August 1, 2011

Daytime Route

Eliminated mid-day service; incorporated remainder into new S-1

Pepperidge Farm

Post Road West service incorporated into new S-1

Norden Park

Eliminated as Westport Service

Nyala Farms

Eliminated 2 morning and evening trips. Single morning and evening trips are part of deadhead service

S-3

Eliminated 1 morning trip

S-2,3,4 and G-1 and 2

Eliminated 1 evening trip on each route

Imperial Lot

Eliminated 1 evening trip

After School Service

Changed to part-time work

These changes had little effect on ridership numbers. There has been little attempt to maximize the ridership by either

- marketing the system better
- analyzing the routes to increase capacity

- propose other means of improving efficiency

Board would like to see a more detailed budget plan from future Transit District budgets that address some of the following:

- plans to maximize ridership
- plans to improve efficiency
- Includes funds to analyze populations versus routes
- Include a marketing plan
- Find ways to use railroad-parking funds
- Advocate for Westport to the Norwalk Transit District, i.e. Lobby for grant money that could be used for Westport over other districts served by Norwalk Transit District

End of presentation

Transit Committee members discussed the difficulty that the Transit District may have in achieving the goals suggested by the Pincavage because among other issues:

- Westport Transit District Board is a volunteer position with no staff or budget
- Norwalk Transit who provides many of the budget details is a vendor who has many competing interests besides Westport