



REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GREATER HARTFORD TRANSIT DISTRICT

Hartford Connecticut

March 5, 2020

Stephen F. Mitchell, Chairman

Presiding.....

At 7:04 p.m., a quorum determined to be present; Mr. Mitchell called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Hartford Transit District (the "District") to order in the Conference Room of the District at One Union Place, Hartford, Connecticut. The following Directors were present: Marilyn Pet (2.30), East Hartford; Stephen F. Mitchell (2.00) and Kevin Mooney (2.00), Enfield; Laurel Grow, (1.14), Farmington; Mark Lockwood by conference call (1.01), Granby; Frank Lord (2.79), and Jennifer Cassidy (2.79), Hartford; James McCavanagh (2.61), Manchester; Michael Camillo (1.37), Newington; Ferguson R. Jansen, Jr. (2.11), Simsbury; Gary Pitcock (1.15), South Windsor; *John W. Lyons by conference call (2.83), West Hartford; Ricardo Quintero (1.30) and David Raney (1.30), Windsor. District staff present were Vicki L. Shotland, Executive Director; DJ Gonzalez, Operations Administrator; Nhan Vo-Le, Director of Fiscal and Administrative Service, Mary Deppe, Manager of Grants and Planning. (*The numbers represented in the parenthesis of this paragraph equate to the weighted vote for each Director in attendance.*) *Mr. Lyons vote(s) were not calculated as his connection was dropped a couple of times during the meeting.

Mr. Mitchell introduced and welcomed Mr. Camillo the new board member from Newington, and Mr. Lyons from West Hartford. He mentioned that Ms. Snyder another new appointee was not in attendance, but we look forward to meeting her. He also stated that both Frank Lord and Jennifer Cassidy were reappointed by the City of Hartford.

The Chairman asked if there was any members of the public who wished to address the board. Suzanne Hopgood stated that her husband (Frank Lord) uses the District's ADA paratransit system and she wanted to extend her appreciation for the service. Ms. Hopgood, Chairwoman of the Capitol Region Development Authority also stated that if the XL Center does not receive the funding needed for maintenance and repairs then it will be in a position to be closed. The ramifications to the Greater Hartford region loom large as the XL Center brings in over 600,000 visitors per year into the downtown area. \$100,000 million of funding is needed for repairs and renovations.

Mr. Mitchell then moved adoption of the December 12, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Raney made a motion to accept the minutes which was seconded by Mr. Quintero and approved without modification by a vote of 21.49 yea, 0.00 nay and 2.38 abstention. (Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Camillo)

Mr. Mitchell then asked that Ms. Vo-Le present the financial report. She gave a summary of the District's financial results in comparison to its budget and actuals for the Special Revenue Fund, General Fund, Spruce Street Parking Lot, and the Union Station Transportation Center as of December 31, 2019. She stated the following: the Special Revenue Fund accumulated approximately \$14.1 million in actual revenues, which is 6% or \$0.8 million higher than its budget. This occurred primarily due to higher ADA charges and the premium policy that the Insurance Consortium had paid out in July 2019. General Fund excess of revenues over expenses is slightly under the budget by 4% or \$4,594 primarily due to a write-off of prior year's unpaid member town dues; which is partially offset by higher STIF interest earned than anticipated. As a result of higher parking fee revenues generated, the Spruce Street Parking Lot has yielded a favorable variance of 8% or \$10,282 in excess of revenues over expenses over the \$134,600 budgeted amount. Union Station has also shown a favorable result of \$35,707 in excess of revenues over expenses over the budget. This reflects various operating expenses such as utilities and professional services that are slightly lower than budgeted. Overall, while the District had anticipated a \$215,721 in excess of revenues over expenses through the end of December, it has ended up with a higher excess amount by \$41,395 or 19%.

Mr. Mitchell then asked for acceptance of the financial report as presented. Mr. Pitcock made a motion for acceptance of the financial report which was seconded by Mr. Raney. Mr. Mooney asked how -121% is favorable? Ms. Vo-Le stated that it was a misprint and should reflect 121%. The motion was passed unanimously 23.87 yea, 0.00 nay and 0.00 abstention.

Mr. Mitchell then asked Mr. Gonzalez to present the ADA report. He stated the following:

First Transit has made an offer to a well-season and experienced manager to take over the General Manager role in overseeing the ADA Paratransit service.

The upgrade to the ADA paratransit mobile data units to 4G service is continuing. The vehicles that have been updated seem to be functioning well. The District is implementing the following Trapeze software products for the ADA Paratransit program:

Map upgrade:

- Trapeze has successfully put in a new map into our testing environment. After testing and some alterations the map is being put into our production environment on March 10th.

PASS-Web:

- This program will allow passengers or their supports to do online booking, view trips booked, cancel trips, and see where their ride is through an app function that can be accessed on their smart phone and/or

desktop/laptop. The application is fully accessible and reader friendly. This program will help cut down on the call center volume for passengers calling in to book trips, cancel trips, and asking where their ride is.

EZ-Wallet:

- This application is designed to allow passengers to add funds to their existing pre-paid fare account, print usage reports, and view transactions. This can be accessed through a smartphone and or desktop/laptop. This will help passengers who are unable to independently hand our drivers their payment because of their disability. It can also be used by the CT Department of Developmental Disabilities, which currently gives programs ticket booklets to their clients, and will provide them with the ability to apply funds directly into passenger accounts.

PASS-COM:

- This application enables transit agencies to track and follow up on complaints, commendations, and customer requests.

Mr. Pitcock inquired about primary passenger complaints. Mr. Gonzalez stated that they include late trips and missed trips. Some complaints are valid others are not. Ms. Shotland noted that the overall monthly complaints based on total trips is small and is approximately 1 to 1 ½ %. Mr. Quintero inquired about the app for setting up trips and if it will be similar to Uber. Mr. Gonzalez stated that is a different the application is ADA paratransit specific. It will not show the passenger where the trip is. Mr. Jansen inquired about when the District will try electric vehicles. They are not available yet for paratransit vehicles, but we will be looking at propane and electric in the future. Our next order will also include smaller transit-type vehicles. Ms. Grow asked if these were all Trapeze products. The response was that they are.

Mr. Mitchell then asked for Mr. Gonzalez to present the Operations Report.

- Continuing to work closely with our security firm to hire and maintain a good team for Union Station. The Security Supervisor was recently replaced by a longer term employee.
- The blower that was discussed at the last Board Meeting was replaced by our HVAC contractor.
- The water heater was also replaced in the building.
- One of the two main boilers was replaced.
- As construction work proceeds on the new offices on the south side (where Chango Rosa was), the District has contracted a plumber to cap the gas pipe and to install (3) shut off valves in the leasehold area.

Mr. Mitchell inquired about what is happening with the drains in the wall in the Great Hall behind the benches. The company we have been working with has not been very responsive, but the District is still trying to solicit a quote for the repairs. In the meantime there have been no new leaks, and it is possible that the snaking of the pipes from the roof helped to alleviate the problem (at least temporarily.)

Mr. Mitchell then called upon Ms. Deppe to provide her department's report:

- The District continues to work with the City of Hartford, CTtransit, and other communities to identify additional locations for **bus shelter** installation in the spring of 2020. A shelter will be installed in the near

future at Market and Talcott Streets in Hartford. Two additional shelters will be installed this spring at Asylum Ave. (at Asylum Place) and Farmington Ave. (at Sigourney Street).

- Staff is working on gathering data for the “Post-Project” report for the Hartford Intermodal Triangle project. This is a requirement for the TIGER funding and is due to FTA in May 2020.
- Consultant Lynn Ahlgren is working with the District to develop the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). This is a requirement of the FTA and must be completed and adopted by the Board of Directors no later than July 20, 2020. The District’s intent is to have this reviewed and adopted at the May 2020 meeting.
- Staff has been working with Image Works on upgrades to the District’s website. Staff is currently doing a final review and revisions before going live.

In regards to procurement some of the following tasks have been completed:

- HVAC Preventative Maintenance at Union Station
- ProPark Office Space Construction update

Current procurements underway include:

- RFP for Paratransit Vehicles
- RFP for Paratransit Operations
- RFP for Fuel Tank Conversion at Roberts Street

Mr. Quintero inquired if the TIGER funding is for the project that was completed at Union Station and in downtown Hartford in recent years. Ms. Deppe explained that the TIGER grant is closed out and the report is to provide data on performance measures and how the project has made impacts since its completion.

Mr. Mitchell then called upon Ms. Shotland to provide her Administrative report. She stated the following:

- Received approval from Amtrak to move forward with the public restroom upgrades.
- Awaiting additional information from our attorney to determine if the District will move forward with the Digital Display project in the Spruce Street Parking Lot.
- District staff is also looking into incorporating sales tax into the parking lot rates as we have paid the State the taxes annually. The approximate saving will exceed \$20,000 per year.
- Anticipating the oversight of additional New Freedom Funds of approximately \$260,000 through a transfer from the State.
- Annual capital planning meeting to determine next fiscal year’s funding will be taking place on March 12th with CTDOT staff. Our additional formula funding for FY’20 is projected to be approximately \$3.2ml.
- In regard to the land acquisition at the Roberts Street facility the District is currently awaiting for a Phase I environmental assessment, a boundary line resolution on the property, and an appraisal report for the properties surrounding our current facility.
- Posters and handouts for the public (both at Union Station and on the buses) are being distributed in regard to the Corona Virus. Transit systems are being invited to join leadership from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Transportation Security Administration on March 6th for a call regarding COVID-19 preparedness.

- **Passenger Information Display Terminal Project.** CTDOT wants to improve information to Hartford Line customers at all train stations along the Hartford Line. Their intention is to both upgrade the *CTrail* data feed and take-over station system operation, including at Hartford Union Station. CTDOT wants only one vendor to manage the Hartford Line station info systems. The District has been working with CTDOT to accomplish this objective.

Mr. Pitcock asked if there would also be lockers for patrons in addition to the Amtrak lockers. The lockers will only be for the Amtrak staff in their restroom areas. Ms. Grow asked if we were concerned about the deposit that was committed to the Digital Display project if this project doesn't work out. Ms. Shotland stated that the money will be returned to the District. Ms. Grow asked if you pay for your parking ticket inside the Transportation Center will you not pay a sales tax. The response was affirmative at this time. Ms. Cassidy inquired where the inside pay station is located, and was told that it was next to the security booth. Ms. Grow asked when you push the button in the Spruce Street Parking Lot for assistance, where does the call go. The response was that the Propark Command Center is located in the Great Hall. The Directors were reminded that the District paid an annual cost of approximately \$80,000 per year when the booth was manned. She next asked how often there are problems leaving the lot. Ms. Shotland responded that it happens when a lot of people are trying to leave at once and even though there are infrequent issues with the electronic equipment there are user-related problems on a more recurrent basis. Unfortunately, having only one exit lane has compounded the issue because there is no other means to get out of the lot. Mr. Quintero stated that the credit card machine is not that intuitive and wondered if there is simpler design to use. He was told that this is new and updated equipment and software. Mr. Lord asked if there is more being invested in taxi programs to supplement the Paratransit service. Ms. Shotland noted that the current New Freedom Program assists with rides outside of the standard paratransit program. Ms. Grow asked if the drivers asked for special protections in regards to the coronavirus. She was told that as of this writing they have not. Ms. Cassidy mentioned that it was in the news that MBTA wants the rail cars back from the Hartford Line. Mr. Mitchell stated that he hadn't heard that specifically on the news, but was aware that there are a shortage of rail cars in regard to the MBTA. He also stated that CTDOT will be putting out an RFP for new cars for the rail line. Mr. Quintero asked for more detail on the signage for the rail service. Ms. Shotland stated that it has more to do with the software support for the Passenger Information Display than the display itself.

Mr. Mitchell then called upon Ms. Cassidy to provide the CRCOG Transportation Committee report. Issues on the agenda for February 24th which included information pertaining to:

- **Regional Bikeshare Program:** CRCOG recently signed the master agreement with Zagster. Six Towns are participating: City of Hartford, East Hartford, City of New Britain, Manchester, Newington and West Hartford. Zagster will soon be seeking advertising sponsorship of this bikeshare program.
- **Transportation Funding:** The Federal Bill is up for authorization in September with the possibility of additional funding when the House and the Senate meet.
- **BUILD GRANTS-** U.S. Department of Transportation issued a notice of funding opportunity on February 19 for \$1 billion of fiscal year 2020 funds offered through the agency's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) discretionary grant program. The deadline to submit an application is

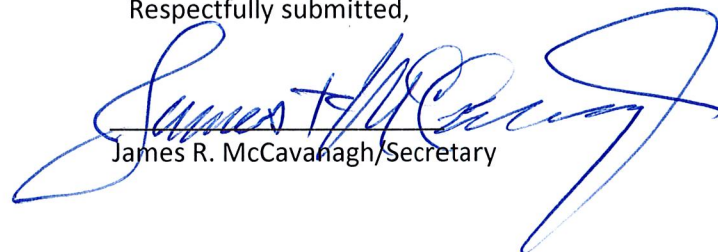
May 18th. CRCOG offers assistance to Towns interested in pursuing a BUILD grant. Grants are for planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure – such as roads, bridges, transit, rail, port and intermodal projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. The BUILD program replaced the TIGER program.

- **Transport Hartford:** There will be a meeting on Transit Equity Day on March 6th at Blue State Coffee, 777 Main Street, Hartford beginning at 7 am until 9:30 am. The goal of this group is to expand public transit and reduce toxic pollutants.

Mr. Lord inquired about the status of the bike share program. Ms. Cassidy stated that Zagster is the company that will be contracted with for the service and more news is forthcoming. Mr. Camillo stated that Newington is listed as part of the bikeshare project, however no one from Newington seems to be aware of this. Ms. Deppe will contact CRCOG staff and provide contact information to Mr. Camillo.

Mr. Mitchell called for new business. He stated that the Nominating Committee had met prior to this meeting. He also reminded the attendees that the next Board of Directors Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2020 which is the Annual Board Meeting. There being no further business brought before the Board, Mr. Jansen moved that the meeting be adjourned. Upon seconding by Mr. Mooney the motion passed by a unanimous vote of 23.87 yea, 0.00 nay, and 0.00 abstention. The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James R. McCavanagh/Secretary

Adopted: 5/21/2020