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Norwalk Transit District Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2019 at 3:00 PM – Norwalk Transit District

Attending

Norwalk Transit District Commissioners:

Andrew Glickson
Alice McQuaid

Norwalk Transit District Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO
Lori Richards, Procurement and Grants Director
Rob Edwards, Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Matt Pentz, Director of Finance
Dennis O'Connor, Manager of Marketing
Lynette Brayboy, Director of Human Resources
Matt Abbott, Data Analyst/Planner
Andrew Gallagher, Manager of Safety and Training
Francis Murray, Transportation Manager

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM and a quorum was determined to be present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public who wished to address the Commissioners were asked to do so. There were none.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Motion was made by Commissioner McQuaid to add the ADA Operations Report. Seconded by Commissioner Glickson. Passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2019

The minutes of the August 8, 2019 Meeting of the Commissioners were unanimously approved.

ROADEO AWARD PRESENTATION

Ms. Morton presented the Roadeo Awards to winning roadeo team.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING FOR COMMENT REGARDING THE PROPOSED FY 2020 BUDGET

At 3:12 PM the public hearing for the purpose of hearing public comment on the proposed FY 2020 budget was formally opened. Mr. Pentz presented the draft budget. There was no public in attendance. The hearing was formally closed for comment.

FINANCE UPDATE

Final approval of the FY 2020 Budget

Mr. Pentz presented the FY 20 Budget as published in the Norwalk Hour on August 22, 2019. He stated that with the 2.5% increase in State funding, the plans embedded in the budget target an annual surplus of \$202k from local funds, which he identified as a goal to pay down District debt. The FY 20 budget was approved by the commissioners. A motion to approve the FY 2020 Budget was made by Commissioner Glickson, seconded by Commissioner McQuaid, passed unanimously.

FY 2019 year-end audit update

Mr. Pentz mentioned the FY 19 audit is close to complete. He stated the latest communication with the lead audit partner at Seward and Monde identified a few minor re-classification items to be addressed before the audited numbers would be finalized, which is expected in the next week.

FY 2020 July Financials

Mr. Pentz presented the July financials, highlighting \$61k of additional expenses incurred vs prior year and listed the items that drove the overage. He stated, although a deficit had occurred, the first month of the fiscal year is a difficult month to gauge actual performance as one-time annual expense items hit, notably prepaid insurances that have a negative impact on the bottom line. While the deficit scenario appears discouraging through July, he indicated they are expected to improve in the upcoming months and fall in line with the prior year and annual budget projections in the upcoming months.

Updated Bank Signatories

Following the resignation of the former COO, Norwalk Transit recommended adding Lori Richards (Hammill) as a signer on the bank accounts as a replacement. The Districts commissioners approved and signed-off on the updated signature cards. This change is expected to be made with the bank on Friday September 27, 2019.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Brayboy presented the following HR Update.

Annual EEO Update

Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis and Goals:

We are following within our expected goals for the Affirmative Action Plan. The Workforce Analysis and Goals chart is a comparison from January 2017 vs. January

2018. There's a 1% increase in our Current % compared to 2017 for Minorities and a 2.1% increase for Females.

Our current workforce as of June 30, 2019 has a projected to hire two minority females in each of the following categories: Officials/Managers, Office and Clerical, and Operators. Also, projected to hire 3 minorities in the Skilled Craftsmen area.

Ms. Brayboy additionally prepared a June 30th year end snapshot of the workforce makeup.

MISCELLANEOUS

Resignations:

- Chief Operating Officer
- PT ADA

Separation:

- PT Wheels Driver

Hired:

- Backfilled the Transportation Manager, Transit Supervisor, Operations Dispatcher, and ADA Specialist roles internally
- PT ADA Driver – class started on August 19th

Transition:

- Part-time ADA Driver transitioned from Full-time to Part-time

Recruiting:

- Mechanic B
- Operations Dispatcher
- Part-time Drivers

Promoted:

- Promoted an ADA Driver to ADA Specialist

Retirements:

- After over 9+ years of ADA Driver decided to retire and last day was August 2nd
- After over 19+ years a Wheels Driver decided to retire and last day will be September 28th

Other Business:

- On October 8th – We are having a Flu Shoot and Blood Pressure Clinic from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at two locations (Driver's Lounge and Main Office)

MARKETING INITIATIVES

Mr. O'Connor reported the following items.

Introduced new Wheels2U app August 29th. As of today, there are 554 downloads, although only about 1/3 of those are actually using the service. We are looking for that to increase.

Wheels2U Video to be displayed at the SONO Collection This afternoon we received a drone video of the W2U shuttle traveling through Norwalk. This will be displayed on a large screen at the new SoNo Collection.

Barter agreement with Connoisseur Media: includes the following:

- \$11,766 in wrap advertising in exchange for the same value of radio air time.
- Advertised on WICC and FOX promoting new Wheels2U app, which used approximately 1/3 of the barter value. We are looking to promote commuter service moving forward.

We are in current discussions with Norwalk Now & Norwalk Chamber as possible bus wrapping opportunities to promote tourism/city events on Coastal Links.

PLANNING UPDATE

August Ridership Report

Mr. Abbott reported the following.

- This month we're continuing to see a downward trend of ridership throughout all of our services. Additionally, we we're down one operating weekday which brought ridership down by a margin of 3-5%. Our weakest area right now is our shuttle services.
- We are seeing a rise in the efficiency of our service as our passenger per mile and hour are rising significantly.
- We are working on APC's validation which is essential to our planning study.
- Westport Transit District is considering the feasibility of utilizing VIA to create a new microtransit service in Westport.
- Greenwich's Western Loop needs immediate attention and we are considering microtransit as a possible option.

Microtransit

The transition from TransLoc to Via was successful. July to August ridership was up by 28%.

ADA OPERATIONS REPORT

Norwalk Transit District is required by ADA law to keep track of several metrics. The metrics are used for submittal to the National Transit Database and will be examined during NTD's Triennial Review.

These metrics include:

- Scheduled Trips
- ADA Trips Provided
- Personal Care Attendants and Companion
- Cancels, No Shows, Denied Trips, Refused Trips and Missed Trips
- Ambulatory status
- Subscription & On Demand Trips

- On Time Performance & Excessive Length Trips
- Telephone Wait Times
- Hours Operated & Miles Operated
- Complimentary & Paid Rides
- Eligible Clients – Two Classifications of ADA Eligible Clients
 - Unconditional
 - Conditional
 - Total of Eligible Clients

Based on national averages and previous experience there are a couple areas of that have been prioritized as areas of focus for NTD, denied trips and subscription trip rate. Although, we are still within the federal guidelines for these two statistics moving forward NTD will aggressively strive to decrease both of these numbers.

The goal for denied trips will be zero and subscription trip rate should ideally be below 40%, we currently have 70% to 75% Subscription rate depending on the day of the week.

What NTD is doing extremely well is on-time performance. We solidly average above 92% on-time performance.

Mr. Murray noted he will implement new reporting enhancements which he anticipates will be ready for the September reporting period. Mr. Murray additionally noted enhancements to the service complaint and Title VI databases. These are additionally monitored on a monthly basis to ensure any trends are addressed from a service perspective.

MANAGED CARE PROGRAM

Mr. Gallagher discussed the financial reasoning for the change from Berkshire Hathaway to New Jersey Manufacturer’s Insurance Company. This has led to our decision to recommend taking the next step and move to NJM’s managed care of our Worker’s Compensation claims in the Optum healthcare network. NJM is making application to CT Workers Compensation Commissioner to institute the managed care program. Kimberlee Morton had previously advised the Union of NTD’s intention to institute the managed care of WC injuries. We are anticipating approval from CT Worker’s Compensation Commission in October. A motion was made by Commissioner Glickson to approve the adoption of a Worker’s Compensation Managed Care Program. Seconded by Ms. McQuaid. Motion carried 2-0.

MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES REPORT

Facility Update

Mr. Edwards reported the following.

Gate Security System

Working with Gordian and Total Fence to come up with a final solution. A new receiver for the front gate along with new gate openers will be quoted.

Bird Netting Installation

All bird netting has been installed; Trapping is complete. Zippers and final clean-up will begin on 9/30/19.

Wheel Alignment System

Researched out possible systems. Performed independent cost study. Visited Waterbury Transit for a demo and talked to LA Metro. Onsite demos will be scheduled for competing vendors.

Fuel Tank Redundancy Plan

Rebuilt current gas pump. Secured a second pump and all related parts are in stock to enable a rebuild or swap of failed components if system goes down. A third option we will work on will include a fuel card to be able to fuel offsite in the event of system failure on site.

On the diesel side, working with current vendors on a wet fueling option as a back up to on site system failure.

PROCUREMENT UPDATE

TSI Camera System for Contractor Vehicles

Project complete - All eight TSI Camera Systems have been installed and verified in the contractor vehicles.

Avail 4G Upgrade

Avail 4G Upgrade installation is complete and cutover of the whole system is scheduled in mid-October.

New Buses

The 8 new buses have arrived and are currently being inspected for final acceptance by NTD.

Bus Wash and Fuel Tanks Rehab

The bus wash and fuel tanks rehab projects are in final design with Wendel and should be ready to release solicitations in Mid-October.

Fuel Bids

NTD will participate in a joint venture for gasoline and diesel fuel procurements being administered by CTTransit for November 1st Contracts.

Uniforms

New uniforms are being distributed to NTD drivers, ADA Staff and Supervisors. Hope to have all distributed and implemented by November 1, 2019.

CEO UPDATE

Triennial Review

Ms. Morton noted that significant time has been spent on the triennial review preparation as the review is scheduled for October 1st and 2nd.

Interim Consultant Contract

The item was tabled.

Tuition Benefit Program.

Ms. Morton requested approval to adopt a tuition program for non-union employees. She advised that she earmark \$10,000 in benefit funds for employees that are attending college and pursuing study in an area that would enhance their job knowledge, credentials and skills on the job. She said it would be a competitive process and employees interested would have to complete a formal application and a formal committee would be established to review and prioritize applications. Ms. Morton noted that the annual maximum an employee can apply for is \$2,000 per fiscal year. And a passing grade would be a requisite for obtaining the benefit. She noted that she would task HR with writing the policy and establishing and tracking its progress. The Commissioners' unanimously endorsed the adoption of the program.

Electric Buses

Ms. Morton explained that CTDOT has included the Norwalk Transit District as a partner in their application for funding under an Electric Bus initiative.

MOU Between Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

The agreement executed allows us to join onto the State radio network. The Connecticut State Police maintain the towers and assign us a frequency which will provide coverage throughout our territory. We will be responsible for our radios and dispatch terminals. Mr. Gallagher added that the City of Norwalk Police Department was moving to this platform too.

Alera Group and Health Care Benefits

Alera Group is our Broker for health benefits. We currently are members of the CT Partnership plan. We have now met the three-year participation requirement under the plan. We can now change carriers without penalty. Alera will formally search the marketplace through the competitive bidding process beginning in April so we will have solid information on all plans in time for contract negotiations which will begin around that time. Alera informed the District that effective July 1, 2020 a new public Act 19-117 will impact our renewal rates by requiring regional rate adjustment by county. Adjustments will be applied to the pooled based rate and phased in over 2 years on July 1, 2020 and July 1, 2021. CT Partnership anticipates an 8% increase to the base plus an additional county adjustment to be phased in at 2% with each new contract renewal. At a minimum a 10% rate increase is expected under the current plan. Alera expects that the CT Partnership rates to be lower. Dental will not be impacted by the Public Act rate adjustment.

ITS-CT

Ms. Morton shared with the Commissioners the innovation award the District was honored with at the ITS-CT annual meeting for its Microtransit project.

Miscellaneous Items

No other items were noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS

No other business was noted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF HEARING VARIOUS PERSONNEL MATTERS

Commissioner McQuaid made a motion to move to Executive Session at 4:20 pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glickson. Motion carried 2-0.

Present during the Executive Session were Norwalk Transit District Commissioners McQuaid and Glickson. Also present was Norwalk Transit District staff, CEO, Morton.

The public Meeting resumed at 4:40 pm.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Ms. Morton presented the attached organizational changes. And corresponding compensation and salary adjustment plan. She advised she had rewritten the job descriptions for the COO and CLO and had removed the education requirements and included a clause that allowed the substitution of related experience in lieu of a degree. Commissioner McQuaid added she felt the organizational structure which included an even disbursement of responsibilities across all Officers of the District for a team-oriented management approach. Commissioner Glickson made the motion to approve the organizational changes, salary plan and adjustments as presented and written. Seconded by Ms. McQuaid. Motion carried 2-0.

NEXT MEETING OCTOBER 24, 2019 AT 2:00 PM

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2019 at 2:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee A. Morton

Kimberlee A Morton, CEO
Norwalk Transit District