



Commissioners [David L. Jaeger, Jr.](#), [Alice McQuaid, Esq.](#)
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**NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING MINUTES
JULY 22, 2021, AT 1:45 PM – NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT
CONDUCTED VIA TEAMS MEETING**

ATTENDING

Norwalk Transit District Commissioners:

David Jaeger, Jr., Teams Participant
Alice McQuaid, Esq., Teams Participant

Norwalk Transit District Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO, Teams Participant
Matt Pentz, CFO, Teams Participant
Leslie Grattan, HR Consultant
Jennifer Flores, HR Generalist
Paul Chenard, Manager of Planning and Marketing
Andrew Gallagher, Manager of Safety and Security
Katherine Hebert, Consultant
Claude Harrison, Bus Operator
Allen Blade, Union Vice President

Public:

Rene Hamill, AFSCME Representative

The meeting was called to order at 1:55 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public who wished to address the Commissioners were asked to do so. There were no other public participants in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FOR THE JULY 22, 2021 MEETING

Commissioners McQuaid and Jaeger unanimously approved the adoption of the agenda with the addition of an Executive Session for the purpose of hearing legal personnel matters.

COMMENDATION FOR EXCELLENT JOB PERFORMANCE BUS OPERATOR – CLAUDE HARRISON

Ms. Morton reported on the morning of July 7th, 2021, a passenger onboard of the Route 4, expressed he needed medical assistance to a fellow passenger explaining to that person he was experiencing a cardiac event. Soon after notifying his fellow passenger, the passenger collapsed to the floor of the bus in a medical emergency. The fellow passenger quickly called out to bus operator, Claude Harrison, for assistance. Claude sprang to action quickly and safely pulled the bus over, and radioed dispatch requesting emergency medical services. Claude Harrison demonstrated exceptional commitment to customer service, exemplifying Norwalk Transit District's pledge to go above and beyond for its passengers to ensure they have a safe and enjoyable experience while riding our buses.

In appreciation for his exemplary job performance Ms. Morton presented Mr. Harrison with a certificate of appreciation and a gift card.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2021

The minutes of the May 28, 2021, meeting of the Commissioners was unanimously approved as presented by Commissioners McQuaid and Jaeger.



NTD

Commissioners' Meeting Minutes 05282021.doc

FINANCE UPDATE – MATT PENTZ

June Financial Update – FY 21

Mr. Pentz summarized the preliminary fiscal year-end June financial results highlighting a \$1.2m deficit from operations for the year. He stated that the results were in line with expectations as there was a \$718k YoY fare loss related to the suspension of fares from the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary results indicate that NTD is limited to an 82% expense reimbursement from DOT for Fixed Route services. On the expense side, expenses were down 11% YoY driven by service impacts related to COVID 19. NTD achieved savings in payroll, fuel and purchased transportation; while professional services (legal), insurances and non-reimbursable (morale) expenses exceeded PY levels. Mr. Pentz stated the district was fortunate to have CARES Act relief funds to help offset the operating loss, most of which had already been drawn down, with the final drawdown pending with the year-end audit that is underway. He stated that the district did a good job maximizing local, City of Norwalk funding as intended for the purpose of

Budget Update - FY 2022

Mr. Pentz mentioned that NTD submitted their FY 22 operating budget to DOT on-time and were waiting for the annual operating agreement. He stated that the City of Norwalk approved NTD's budget submission, and that FY 22 local funding was being processed.

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Mr. Pentz formerly introduced Jennifer Flores, NTD's new HR Generalist. He stated that Ms. Flores was hired in January as a financial analyst, who upon joining the district had an interest in HR. Upon the recent restructuring, Ms. Flores moved to a full-time HR position that is slated to be the lead HR role in the organization. He also introduced Leslie Grattan, the new HR consultant who brings over 30 years of HR experience to the district. Ms. Grattan is leading the mentorship and transition of the district's HR department.

COVID Update

Ms. Grattan provided a vaccination summary highlighting that 56% of NTD Employees are fully vaccinated while 44% are not vaccinated at all. She stated that the highest percentage of vaccinated employees are in administration with 76% fully vaccinated. Ms. Grattan stated there have been no additional positive cases since mid-April. NTD is considering additional initiatives in effort to increase the vaccination percentage in the workforce.

Staffing Update

Ms. Grattan stated that NTD is currently recruiting for 7 positions, and provided the following updates:

- COO position continues to be open and challenging to fill. She stated there may be several reasons for this. First, it is difficult to find candidates with public transportation operational experience who are both hands on as well as executive caliber. It has also been challenging to find such candidates at the salary level being offered. Reference was made to a desirable candidate who is earning \$235k a year in an equivalent position within a larger system. The position has been advertised for a continuously long period of time. Ms. Grattan suggested that NTD may want to press pause and re-set the stale listings or possibly revisit the applicant pool in attempt to identify some trade-offs that might be necessary in securing quality.
- Procurement Specialist has been a difficult position to fill. New key words have been added to the search engines which have identified a few new candidates to be screened.
- Financial Analyst – NTD has a lead candidate with a few others recently screened for additional consideration in effort to find the ideal candidate as part of the process.
- Transit Supervisor was recently posted on 7/19.
- PT & FT Drivers - Ms. Grattan stated that Ms. Flores has done a great job filling 3 FT and 1 PT driver for the upcoming training class on Monday 7/26, with a continued effort to interview for another class to start this fall.

- Mechanic - Good mechanics are in high demand and have many opportunities for work. NTD has some applicants however the district is waiting on ideal candidates at this point.
- Money Room Counter – applications have been received with an expectation that the position will be filled by the end of September.

Ms. Grattan stated that identifying the best level of hire for each of these positions is an ongoing challenge as various trade-offs in the applicants are evaluated. This has slowed the process however NTD's objective is to identify the right hire at the right level for each of these roles.

HR Initiatives

Ms. Grattan provided an update on HR projects intended to have a positive impact on both the organization and the work experience at NTD. First mentioned was the creation of new tools which included a highlight sheet that spells out the necessary procedures for administering FMLA leaves. The highlight sheet serves as an informative tool to guide managers when handling leaves. Additionally, a consolidated leave tracker for FMLA, STD and WC absentee monitoring is being implemented as well as a benefits continuation letter for added transparency, and enhanced monitoring for both HR and impacted managers. The HR department is reviewing STD policy language with the intent of tightening-up parameters around absences to avoid errors and reduce the potential for abuse.

Furthermore, a real-time mass communication platform is being procured to enhance messaging capabilities to all or targeted employees via text, email, or phone messages. Mr. Pentz stated that with the recent trend of disruptive weather, such communication system will be helpful from a safety communication standpoint.

Ms. Grattan mentioned that the HR department is also working on expanding recruiting platforms, ways to enhance employee relations, policy review and an exploration of how the HR department can have a further recognizable positive impact on NTD.

MARKETING AND PLANNING UPDATE

Ridership Update

Mr. Chenard reported fixed route ridership was down by 40% when we compared FY21 to FY19

Mr. Chenard said total fixed route ridership was 806,225 for FY21 and FY19 Ridership was 1,334,350. However, Mr. Chenard indicated ridership trend lines show ridership is growing with June FY21 ridership up 6.17% when compared to June FY20 ridership.

Mr. Chenard said paratransit ridership is down by 58% when he compared FY21 to FY19. Mr. Chenard said paratransit ridership for FY21 52,632 passengers. That said, Mr. Chenard said ridership trends on paratransit are also showing growing ridership.

Outreach Initiatives

Mr. Chenard also discussed outreach efforts recently undertaken to promote NTD ridership. Mr. Chenard said he attended two festivals on behalf of the transit district. One festival was the Norwalk Art Festival that took place on June 26th and 25th. The other event was the Nice Festival that took place on July 10th. Both events had a couple thousand attendants which allow the transit district to engage numerous individual and tell them about the district transit services.

PROCUREMENT

Ms. Morton reported in the absence of Ms. Hammill and requested approval for the following procurement related recommendations.

Award Recommendation for Avail Technologies, Inc. for Annual ITS System Maintenance and Support Agreement

Request concurrence in awarding a sole source procurement in the amount of **\$164,329.18** to Avail Technologies, Inc. for the Annual ITS System Maintenance and Support Agreement for period August 1, 2021, through July 31, 2022 contingent upon acceptance of all FTA and State contract clauses and certifications.

Award Recommendation for Gillig Bus Order – 1-29’ Low Floor Bus.

Request concurrence in awarding a large purchase procurement to Gillig Bus for 1 – 29’ Low Floor Gillig Bus in the amount of **\$566,435.00**. Existing equipment has reached its useful life. All procurement regulations and requirements have been met.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Goal and Methodology for FY 2022-FY2024

The FTA Triennial DBE Goal and Methodology for FY2022-FY2024 submission is due August 1, 2021. Norwalk Transit District’s overall goal is set at 6.08% in accordance with 49 CFR § 26.45. Request concurrence to adopt the **6.08%** overall DBE goal for FY2022-FY2024.

Award Recommendation for Wendel Companies for Major Renovation Project Administration Re-Design and Land Use Attorney.

Request concurrence in awarding a large purchase procurement to Wendel Companies for the Major Renovation Project – Additional Services required to continue forward with the project, which are to include: 1) Administration re-design and permitting, and 2) Land Use Attorney. Total proposed fee for the additional services is **\$112,000.00**. All procurement regulations and requirements have been met.

A motion to approve the presented procurement related transactions was made by Commissioner Jaeger and seconded by Commissioner McQuaid, passes unanimously.

MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES UPDATE

Training

Our maintenance technicians received DEF (diesel exhaust fluid) training on July 14, 2021. This is an emissions specific training module to help our team diagnose and repair the emissions systems in our buses.

Fuel Island

Work completed. A few outstanding punch list items remain and are in process of being repaired.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Quarterly Workers' Compensation and Accident Review

Mr. Gallagher presented the Quarterly Workers Compensation and Accident report, and review of the safety committee minutes. In summary there were:

- three WC claims generated in the quarter with one driver still on Light Duty.
- eleven vehicle accidents for the quarter. One minor injury to passenger who fell off their mobility scooter. Company-wide refresher training on Wheelchair Securement conducted in June.
- One S.I.R. claim pending completion of repair. One suspension and six written warnings for the preventable accidents during the quarter.
- Berkshire Hathaway is our new Workers Compensation insurer as of 7-01-2021

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF HEARING VARIOUS LEGAL PERSONNEL MATTERS

Commissioner McQuaid made a motion to move to executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Jaeger. Passes unanimously. The time is 2:20 PM. At 2:45 PM. Executive session concluded, and the regular public session resumed. No action was taken in or because of the executive session.

CEO UPDATE

Miscellaneous Items

No additional reports were made.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

No other business was noted.

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 26, 2021, 2021 AT 1:45 PM

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 26, 2021, at 1:45 PM. The Commissioners' discussed changing the time for the upcoming meeting to 10:00 AM. Time change will be noted.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Jaeger. Seconded by Commissioner McQuaid. Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee A. Morton
CEO