



Commissioners [Andrew A. Glickson, Esq.](#), [Alice McQuaid, Esq.](#)
Chief Executive Officer [Kimberlee A. Morton](#)
Chief Operating Officer [Britt T. Liotta](#)
275 Wilson Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854
Tel: (203) 852-0000 Fax: (203) 299-5166
www.norwalktransit.com

Norwalk Transit District Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2018 at 2:00 PM – Norwalk Transit District

Attending

Norwalk Transit District Commissioners:

Andrew Glickson
Alice McQuaid

Norwalk Transit District Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO
Britt Liotta, Chief Operating Officer
Lori Richards, Procurement and Grants Manager
Richard Meyer, Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Matt Pentz, Director of Finance

Public:

Kelly Kultys; The Hour

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 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 MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2018

The minutes of the December 19, 2018 Meeting of the Commissioners were unanimously approved with the addition of adding Mr. Pentz as present under NTD Staff members.

FINANCE REPORT

February Financial Update

Mr. Pentz presented the February Financial Statement by service and noted the results had been submitted to the State. He highlighted, on the Fixed Route side, for the 8 months through FY 19 the YTD Norwalk Core Service surplus is \$252,894, a \$51k improvement compared to February of the prior year. Due to timing variations in accounting transactions, Mr. Pentz reported that the run rate compared to the prior year is trailing \$14k behind the previous year surplus run rate, he noted he expects this to

flatten out and feels the Districts financial performance on the Fixed Route side is trending comparably with FY 18. Additionally, Mr. Pentz reported that the YTD Coastal Link deficit was \$312,517 through February, which is an increase vs prior year, but also expected the deficit to fall in line after consideration of timing variations in accounting. Mr. Pentz highlighted that the net deficit for total Fixed Route Services was \$59,263, which was \$2 dollars higher than the previous year. Due to the States obligation to fund the Coastal Link, the net Fixed Route deficit is expected to finish comparable to prior year and be covered by the State. It was mentioned that these results indicate improved performance given a 2.5% funding increase, that has been up against an 8% increase in medical benefit costs, a spike in fuel costs, which for diesel has experienced a 41% increase vs FY 18 during the past four months, and escalating utility rates.

On the Paratransit side, Stamford ADA services are balanced within budget; State funding has been adequate due in part to the increased Stamford ADA TOD received at the end of FY 18. For Norwalk ADA, without local funding, the service has incurred a \$185,942 deficit through February. This is \$15k higher than February last year, however \$15k under the full year run rate through 8 months, which after considering timing variations in accounting transactions, indicates improved performance. Mr. Pentz also reported that the Coastal Link ADA service incurred a \$28,572 YTD deficit, which is \$24.5k higher than prior year. NTD has continued to communicate the additional funding needs required to support Norwalk and Coastal Link ADA services.

Mr. Pentz indicated that the District will have a firmer indication on how the year is expected to finish once the 3rd quarter is wrapped up in April.

Cashflow Update

Mr. Pentz provided an update to the line of credit balance, noting that there were no cash flow constraints, an improvement versus historical squeezes due to the collection of long outstanding prior year funding obligations and more timely invoicing. He noted that there is enough operating credit available until 4th quarter estimates are received. Mr. Pentz mentioned the FY 18 union pension payment was made in a timelier fashion vs prior year due in part to the reserve account that has been established and funded each month.

FY 2020 Budget Update

Mr. Pentz presented the FY 20 City of Norwalk budget submission highlighting the 5% increase requested. He mentioned the District attended three budget meetings and that the request was approved.

Pension Plan Trustee Update

Mr. Pentz mentioned that the District was requesting approval for a change to the Pension Plan Trustee list. The proposed changes were for himself to be added in place of the Senior Accountant, who stepped in for the interim during the finance management

changes. The other change was to switch from using names, to titles on the trustee documents to provide additional flexibility in the event of future churn. The proposed update to the Pension Plan Trustee list would now include the CEO and CFO / Director of Finance. The request was approved by the commissioners.

Line of Credit Update

Randy Napoletano, Senior Vice President, Norwalk Bank and Trust, serves as our lending Advisor. Ms. Morton and Mr. Pentz met with Mr. Napoletano regarding the terms of the line of credit renewal which is effective April 1st. Mr. Pentz reviewed the terms. Ms. Morton noted that the bank was extremely happy about our financial progress and noted that we had the line down to a minimal point at one point during the loan period which has not occurred in a very long time.

The loan committee approved the renewal and we are waiting final approval from the Norwalk Bank and Trust Board. Mr. Napoletano has submitted a 30-day maturity extension as a safeguard against any unexpected delays.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Ridership

Mr. Liotta commented that the numbers for February need to be taken with a grain of salt. There have been recent issues involving farebox recordings that has caused the District to do an immediate retraining of all drivers on farebox operation. Mr. Liotta commented that he is working with GFI Genfare to resolve the issues. The numbers are reported for February, and checking into March's numbers, they are showing a trend of being approximately 10k-12K higher than February.

Microtransit Update/Ridership

Mr. Liotta commented that the Microtransit numbers for March were very encouraging. Ms. Morton commented that the ridership on St. Patrick's Day weekend was about 4.5 riders per hour, which was the best reported to date. Mr. Liotta stated that as the weather warms, we should see the continues trend of upward ridership.

TransLoc Microtransit Demonstration Extension and Union Agreement

The District will engage in a two-month extension with TransLoc for its MicroTransit project to allow enough time to complete the competitive proposal process which is currently underway. The Union has verbally agreed to a temporary extension of our agreement which allows us to continue to use full-time drivers with assigned Sunday work as part of their schedule.

Farebox issues/Coin Validators

Mr. Liotta commented that in addition to the retraining of the drivers on farebox usage, the District is in the process of replacing all the coin validators in the local buses with new ones that will be reprogrammed and will now exclude the GBT and CT Transit

tokens from being accepted in our fare boxes. The project will be completed in time for an effective start date of April 15th.

Norwalk Public Schools

Mr. Liotta commented that the District is still slated to start the pilot program of high school trippers in April / May. Mr. Liotta stated that there will be some logistical issues that he is trying to work out with the school.

RouteMatch Tablets

Mr. Liotta stated that due to the continued issues of the current ADA tablet system, which has allowed the District to go paperless, the District has ordered 55 new tablets in partnership with Verizon and Route Match to simplify the process of going paperless. Mr. Liotta expects to have them installed and operation by mid-May to allow all the bugs to be worked out prior to the start of the next fiscal year.

ADA PUBLIC HEARINGS REGARDING SERVICE PROVISIONS

Ms. Morton advised that it is the operation of the ADA program that prohibits the District from paying down the deficit as the program is grossly underfunded by the State. Most of our local funds from the City support this program alone. The District seeks approval to offer public hearing on ADA service requirements which will allow the District to operate its services to the bare bone minimal requirements of the law. Some of our service policies are costing us valuable dollars and streamlining them will be to the benefit of the District. The goal will be to offer services at the minimal requirements under the law and by doing such will put us in a position to file a financial burden waiver with FTA. Areas we will be seeking comment on include but are not limited to advance reservations, elimination of standing orders, and no-show policy.

RADIO SYSTEM AND UPGRADE

Mr. Meyer informed the Commissioners' that the State of CT has approved the District to move to the statewide system. This will enhance our overall communication coverage area. It also eliminates the concern of the pending treat of elimination of the bandwidth. Mr. Meyer reported a Memorandum of Understanding (Agreement between the state and NTD) is under preparation. The state has a biannual refresh where the hardware and software get upgraded. This is subject to fees for ongoing system support. Details will be forthcoming.

An estimated 4 to 6-week lead time for updated equipment list and formal quote is expected. Operation setup details are being worked on. There was some technical back and forth between NorcomCT and CTS concerning connectivity of the NTD console into the radio system. Connecting into the state fiber system (police, fire and schools) will be evaluated as will T-1 connectivity

MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES

Facility Update

Ms. Morton reported that a meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2019. Those present will be CTDOT representatives, NTD staff and A & E representatives from Wendell. We will ask for final review and consideration of the originally proposed expansion component. Planned prioritization of projects will be reviewed with CTDOT.

PROCUREMENT UPDATE

On-Demand Transportation Solution RFP (MicroTransit)

Ms. Richards reported that the microtransit RFP was released on March 22, 2019 and proposals due April 19, 2019.

Driver Uniforms

Ms. Richards presented samples of the proposed new uniform. Ms. Richards requested approval of the new uniform which eliminated the polo shirt and short as options in the future. The change was unanimously approved by Commissioners McQuaid and Glickson.

AVAIL 4G MODEM UPGRADE

Ms. Richards presented the award recommendation to approve the sole source procurement in the amount of \$125,460 for the required 4G modem upgrade.

PLANNING AND MARKETING

Gillig Logo Approval

A draft of the logo was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The support was unanimous for the new logo design.

FT 2019 CERTIFICATION AND ASSURANCES AND ACCEPTANCE

Ms. Morton explained that before FTA may award federal assistance for public transportation in the form of a federal grant certain pre-award Certifications and Assurances are required. Ms. Morton provided the Commissioners with a copy of the FY 2019 annual certifications to be executed by the District's legal counsel. This document delineates the responsibilities of the District. She advised that the Board must annually authorize a representative to select and sign its Certifications and Assurances and bind the NTD's compliance. Commissioner Glickson made a motion to authorize CEO, Kimberlee A. Morton, as NTD's authorized representative to select and sign all certifications and assurances that NTD must provide to support each application it submits to FTA for federal assistance during federal fiscal year (FY) 2019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McQuaid and passed unanimously. Ms. Morton noted that the Certification and Assurance were distributed to all senior staff for review and authorization of compliance.

CEO UPDATE

Legislative Update

State:

Ms. Morton reported Districts agree that we need to make a more concerted effort to formalize membership of the legislative committee. CACT executive members, of which Ms. Morton serves, have opted to assist on this platform of advocacy and leadership.

We will continue with a more concerted effort to promote the good work now underway in the bus transit network in the State including the development of at least two newsletter worthy stories from each agency.

We agreed that the legislative committee will do a review of bills that may impact transit operations and possibly prepare a single response addressing our perspective on all of them (nursing home transportation, veterans, reentry, maintenance inspections etc.).

The State's transportation infrastructure is in need for long-term funding solutions. Many of us, with the support of bus and rail riders from across the State, worked hard during the 2018 session, to find an interim measure, to ensure the solvency of the STF. As part of that effort, the General Assembly calculated and passed a short-term funding measure, to expedite the diversion of the car sales tax from the GF to the STF, which protected bus and rail riders and businesses that depend on public transportation, from massive service reductions, fare increases and project deferments.

Later in 2018, we worked together again, in support of protecting the funds in the STF from being used for non-transportation related expenses, culminating in a ballot measure that passed with eighty-eight percent of the vote. Connecticut residents want a solvent STF and want STF funding to be used on transportation projects. That much is clear.

The enacted transfer of car sales tax into the STF was scheduled to phase-up to thirty-three percent in FY 2020 and reach one hundred percent by FY 2023, preventing service cuts and fare increases. Capping the diversion of the car sales tax to the STF at eight percent now would undo the work that the legislature, riders, and Connecticut voters achieved last year and would be a great detriment to Connecticut residents. It will destabilize the STF once again and lead to the fare increases, service cuts and project deferments, which we all worked so hard to avoid.

While a long-term solution is being debated, please know that the insolvency of the STF will lead to unavoidable and substantial reductions in public transportation services in the State, starting in the next fiscal year. This time last year, Norwalk Transit District was facing a budget cut of \$1.1M, which would have been devastating to our services and would have reversed more than twenty years of progress. Similar cuts were being planned across the State.

The recent proposal to freeze the move of the existing car tax from the General Fund (GF) to the Special Transportation Fund (STF), will among other things, leave bus and

rail riders with higher fares and steep reductions in service. We continue opposition to this. Through this session, NTD will ask the legislature to:

1. Support the STF;
2. Preserve operating investment for bus transit and ADA operations, so that we can continue the work we are doing; and
3. Grow investment in bus services, so we can improve frequencies and service spans and reach new geographic areas not served by bus transit today.

Tolls continue to be front and center and under debate. Ms. Morton reported that revenue generated from tolls could not be used for general transit projects but only for congestion management on the road collected. The end-result is that this would free up other funds from the Transportation i.e. Highway to be used in support of public transportation projects.

Federal:

Ms. Morton reported U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) on Wednesday questioned U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao during a U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and other Related Agencies on the administration's FY 2020 budget request which cuts funding for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), the busiest rail line in the United States. In her department's budget request to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Chao noted that the NEC is one of the most important transportation assets in the United States, but the budget President Trump submitted to Congress earlier this month cuts Amtrak-NEC funding in half and completely eliminates funding for the Federal-State Partnership for the State of Good Repair grant program. As a member of the Appropriations Committee that will approve this funding, Murphy intends to fight against these proposed cuts.

Chao argues that NEC funding is flat, and that Amtrak has more than, \$1 billion in idle cash on their balance sheet. We will keep a watchful eye.

Triennial Training and Review

Ms. Morton reported that the Triennial Review Training hosted by the District on January 17th and 18th. went extremely well despite glitches in the registration process due to the government shutdown. There was a total of approximately 30 attendees including all NTD management team served as a wonderful training/prep opportunity for our upcoming triennial review. Ms. Moron noted that the triennial date has yet to be secured and we wait FTA notification. Our submittal is prepared in response to their directive to submit.

Union Leadership

Ms. Morton noted there has been a change in the union leadership across the board. President, Erick Salomon, Vice President, Willie Medina, Secretary, Emile Michel, Gerald Jean Louis, Treasurer. Also due to illness AFSCME representative is out on long term leave and new representative, Sean Hendricks will serve in the interim. We have a meeting of introduction and issue review scheduled for April 11th.

Westport Budget Process

Last week the Town of Westport, Board of Finance (BOF), voted at their budget meeting to significantly cut the subsidy provided by the Town that supports the Westport Commuter Shuttles operated by the Norwalk Transit District on their behalf. While the battle continues and will mostly likely be appealed for restoration to the RTM of the Town of Westport at a meeting to be held on April 24th and May 6th. Advocates in support of the continuation of the program have requested that the District research any statistical information that may be helpful in support of public transit in a community such as Westport and the benefits that come from having an asset such as commuter transportation services. Ms. Morton has forwarded research material and individual contacts from the WestCOG and APTA in support of the economic benefit of public transit to a community and how it supports economic development and vitality of the general area to be used in preparation for the fight for restoration. It is unfortunate that the finance committee doesn't realize the full benefit of the commuter transit asset especially the role it will play in the future. The face of public transit is changing, and the loss of State subsidy now will be a loss for the Town of Westport forever.

City of Norwalk:

- ✓ Youth Intern Program – The District will look again to participate in this City of Norwalk's 2019 Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. The program began in 1998 and to date has helped over 10,000 youth by finding them employment opportunities. Every year the City receives over 400 applications and this year their goal is to find 200 employment opportunities. The District will look again to participate in this important community program.
- ✓ Mall Construction Ramp Up and Parking Issues – The District was invited to serve as a participant on a Committee to address the challenges of parking as the mall is ramping up its final construction details for its October 2019 opening. Neighborhood issues as well as parking lot overflow and remote parking are the primary challenges.
- ✓ Joint UPWP Technical/Transportation Studies – The District was been requested to serve as a partner with the City for possible funding for the following studies:
 1. **Connection between Merritt 7 & South Norwalk** - The Merritt 7 area is not only important to Norwalk, it's one of the most important economic centers in the State of CT. It is home to some of the most prosperous and innovative companies as well, including Datto & Fact Set. It's continued economic health is vital to the entire state. Building & Land Technology is making a considerable investment in the area to make it a true live-work-play environment. They have over 700 units of residential housing approved or under construction. In addition, they are master planning a new phase to significantly enhance the area. CTDOT is also constructing a new station that will also allow pedestrian access directly to the Merritt 7 properties. South Norwalk is seeing heavy interest in redevelopment near the very busy South Norwalk Rail Station. There are close to 1,000

residential units (including an approximate 100-unit hotel) either approved or under construction within walking distance to the rail station. These South Norwalk projects, in addition the Waypointe projects along West Avenue are helping to define the city's urban core. A study to review transportation alternatives to directly connect Merritt 7 to South Norwalk is a necessity and would look at a dedicated rail line, which CT DOT has expressed interest in the past, bus transit, autonomous vehicles, or other modes of transit to connect the 2 areas to strengthen the economy and to provide people in both locations reliable, safely and timely connections.

2. A study that will look at in detail, **new types of personal mobility**, such as bike, car share, and microtransit that can be used to provide flexible and convenient transportation options across town and how to better implement these services, especially **on some of our heavily travelled and highly congested corridors and in and around the train stations and other major traffic generators**.
 3. An update to the City's 2012 Transportation Management Plan. **This update would involve commissioning a resident transportation need survey**, look at transportation issues in and around schools, touch on bus, microtransit, and bike share opportunities and plans, expand our traffic impact analysis guidelines, review and update traffic calming techniques, research a residential parking program, and identify potential future transportation projects and programs like smart parking, autonomous vehicles, ITS and diversionary projects like transit priority, and the overall operations in and around SoNo train station.
- ✓ Miscellaneous – No items noted.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES/DATA ANALYST/PLANNER

Ms. Morton noted at the last meeting she was authorized to pursue the hiring of a part-time data Analyst/Planner as an Intern with the potential for full-time permanent employment. Ms. Morton requested consideration of a full-time position because of the difficulty in finding individuals in a part-time capacity with the level of expertise needed. Ms. Morton added she discussed the difficulty in the hiring arena with follow transit systems and the WestCOG and all confirm that urban planners are very difficult to find. Given the potential for upcoming technical studies, the existing COA that must soon be underway, and the issues discussed earlier in the meeting regarding ridership accounting, farebox auditing, Microtransit future growth and the data driven environment that we are submerged in with AVAIL, RouteMatch and MicroTransit, makes it imperative to have this professional expertise as part of the team for the future. Ms. Morton added that an eye on the data should increase farebox recovery and awareness by tight oversight of the data trends and prevent problems from getting out of control as recently seen with the farebox issue. Unfortunately, we have all this information but have been unsuccessful in extracting the data and using it to our benefit.

Mr. Pentz discussed the funding availability for the project, proposed organizational changes and overall budget impact. He was confident that the exiting budget would sustain the position given the organization changes in the Marketing and Advertising as discussed. The Commissioners unanimously supported the addition of the new position in full-time capacity within the parameters of our hiring hierarchy.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS

No other business was noted.

NEXT MEETING APRIL 25, 2019 AT 2:00 PM

The next regularly scheduled meeting was scheduled for April 25, 2019 but was cancelled as well as the May 23, 2019 meeting. The May meeting was rescheduled for May 10, 2019 at 2:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee A. Morton

Kimberlee A Morton, CEO
Norwalk Transit District