

## AGENDA

### CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, March 4, 2004 - 1:30 PM

D.O.T. Headquarters, Conference Room B

Newington, Connecticut

1. Approval of the February 5, 2004 meeting minutes
2. Linda Osten, Principal Community Development Planner, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CGROG) will speak on the New Britain-Hartford Busway Station Area Planning Project
3. Edgar T. Hurlle, Transportation Planning Director, Policy and Planning, ConnDOT will speak on the CT Rail Station Governance Study
4. Comments from the public
5. Report from operating entities
6. Chairman's report
7. Old business
8. New business

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CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, February 5, 2004

Union Station, Conference Room A

New Haven, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Dorothy Adamson  
Linda Blair  
Richard Carpenter  
Tom Cheeseman  
N. Terry Hall  
Morton Katz  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Schreiner  
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Gloria Mills  
Elaine Kolb  
Hiawa Salowitz  
Leo Petry

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny  
Harry P. Harris  
Michael A. Sanders  
Carmine Trotta

# CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Minutes

February 5, 2004

(Meeting convened at 1:31 p.m.)

Mr. Cheeseman opened with a moment of silence in memory of the late Mayor Sebastian Garafolo (former Commission member).

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – January 8, 2004

Accepted as revised.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Ms. Elaine Kolb, expressed several concerns with the introduction of the new CTTransit buses in the New Haven area in relation to wheelchair situations: (1) the ramps are designed to open onto a curb, but in many winter situations, the lifts have to open onto the street making the ramp extremely steep and dangerous to get on or off the bus; (2) where entry is made into the main bus isle there is an approximate 1.5 inch bump, which is difficult to get over; (3) the location and height of the fare box is too high for wheelchair users; (4) there is a smaller turning radius on the bus making it very difficult to maneuver; and (5) the bus drivers should be better trained. Ms. Kolb also explained that there is not a railing on the ramp to assist individuals who walk with difficulty and prefer to use the ramp. Also, the lack of a railing increases the risk of a wheelchair falling off of the ramp.

### **FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS**

Gloria Mills, Executive Director, Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), substituted for Jeffrey Beadle. Ms. Mills reported that the CACT Committee has begun to meet to discuss some of the issues and challenges in delivering Dial-A-Ride services and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) services in the state.

Dial-A-Ride services are funded by various State and local sources. These demand-response services provide essential access to the community for persons who are elderly or have a disability and often make the difference between their ability to live at home or being institutionalized.

The Dial-A-Ride appropriation was established by the General Assembly in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1999 to replace \$3.0 million in lost federal operating funds used to provide Dial-A-Ride Services in the urban areas of Bridgeport, Milford, New Haven, Hartford, and Middletown. Since its inception, funding has remained at the same level although the demand and cost for services has increased. Therefore, services funded by the Dial-A-Ride appropriation have been diminishing, as the mandated ADA services have required a larger share of the available funds.

One issue with Dial-A-Ride and ADA mandated services is transportation is not available to all residents in Connecticut. The public took 36.8 million bus rides during SFY 2002 (Urban, Rural, Dial-A-Ride, and ADA Paratransit) at a cost to the State of \$2.11 per ride. The operating deficit for providing these services was approximately \$81.8 million and the General Assembly appropriated approximately \$78 million to provide these services. The requirement for a 17% local match to the 33% state share is something that many towns cannot afford. Service providers have proven resilient to date and have found ways to continue services rather than to cut them in part, this effort to continue services stems from not knowing what happens to the riders when cuts are made. Do they find alternative arrangements or do they just not make the trip anymore?

The \$2.5 million pot of Dial-A-Ride funds is not growing. Also, in addition to the 5 systems mentioned earlier that this money was originally intended to support, the systems in Norwalk, Stamford, New Britain and Bristol have since been reclassified by FTA into the large urban category and have lost their eligibility for federal operating support. So the \$2.5 million in state funds is now split among even more systems.

Ms. Mills reported that it is estimated in SFY 2005 that 95%-98% of Dial-A-Ride funding will be used for ADA mandated services, resulting in a reduction of Dial-A-Ride service. Therefore it is crucial that State policymakers and public transportation advocates continue their work to encourage the successful reauthorization of federal legislation to include operating support which is important to the State to help maintain both the level and quality of public transportation.

## **REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES**

Michael Sanders, Transit Administrator, ConnDOT, reported that there are 62 different programs at the federal level that have transportation money and only two of them are in the Department of Transportation. Therefore, there is a lot of opportunity to try to find ways to access those transportation dollars. There is also a leadership forum at the end of the month bringing high-level policy decision-makers from the 50 states together to talk about coordination.

Mr. Sanders reported that the Federal reauthorization is progressing. However the latest version of the highway bill shows only a 10% increase for CT. Due to recent efforts by Senator Dodd, the transit portion of this bill went from a 19% increase to a 49% increase for CT. The Governor has released his budget and the ADA Paratransit service will be receiving a 3% increase. The Governor has asked for a 5% rail fare increase effective July 1, 2004 to assist in the rail deficit, and would like to accelerate the bus fare increase of \$1.25 on state owned systems to go into effect July 1, 2004 rather than January 1, 2005. Mr. Sanders said this not possible unless the time frames in the fare regulations can be changed.

Mr. Sanders announced that the 2,000 seats of new rail car capacity funded by the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) would be ordered in 2006 when the funding authorized by the General Assembly to the TSB is fully realized and banked. Under state law, the new rail cars cannot be ordered until ConnDOT has the cash in hand.

Richard Schreiner announced that Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) is currently seeking proposals to manage the sale of advertising space on HART buses. The Request For Proposals (RFP) is available on the HART website at [www.hartct.org](http://www.hartct.org).

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Cheeseman reported that the Senate recently approved a \$56.5 billion mass-transit budget and he will continue to monitor the appropriations.

Mr. Cheeseman received a letter from Edgar T. Hurlle, Transportation Planning Director, Policy and Planning, ConnDOT advising that Phase I of the Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study has been completed which will be presented at the March 4, 2004 meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Fred Riese announced that the spring public hearing schedule would be discussed at the March 4, 2004 meeting.

Mr. Cheeseman to contact David Lee, General Manager of CTTransit, to address the concerns of Ms. Kolb.