

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Minutes of December 3, 2015

ConnDOT Headquarters, Conference Room B
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Attendance: Members: Kevin Maloney, Richard Schreiner, Ed McAnaney, Robert Rodman, Richard Sunderhauf, Russ St. John, Bill Kelaher, Alan Sylvestre, Robert Hammersley, Francis Pickering. **Ex-officio members:** Frederick Riese (DEEP). **ConnDOT staff:** Sherry Osterling. **Guests:** Stephen Troster.

Chairman Maloney opened the meeting at 1:34 pm. The minutes of the meeting of November 5 were accepted as written.

Comments from the Public

None.

Reports from Operating Entities

Rich Sunderhauf distributed information on bus route and schedule changes on CT Transit going into effect on December 13, including new service to the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Windsor. CT Transit also began replacing fare boxes on all its buses last month.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Maloney reported on an article last week in the Hartford Business Journal stating that a study by Washington, D.C.-based TRIP, a non-profit organization that does transportation and economic research, estimated that Connecticut motorists experience \$5.1 billion in extra costs annually due to delays, congestion, extra operating costs and accidents caused by inadequate transportation infrastructure. This equates to more than \$2,000 per driver. For Hartford, Stamford and Bridgeport area motorists, the figure tops \$2,200 per year. An increase in vehicle miles traveled on our roads gets most of the blame for the congestion.

Kevin also reported that the mock CPTC public hearing November 16 at UConn went very well. It was well attended and the students offered interesting testimony.

Lastly, Kevin attended the BEST Summit in Westbrook last month, a gathering of business leaders and some State officials. Kevin participated in a breakout session on transportation and infrastructure. No formal recommendations from the forum have been issued yet.

Old Business

Fred Riese mentioned that the Federal Railroad Administration's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the NEC Future strategic plan was released on November 9. It outlines and analyzes a range of alternatives and investment levels for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. The comment period on the EIS will run until January 30.

New Business

Bill Kelaher brought up the House passage of the new \$325 billion Federal transportation bill, which will cover five years of transportation investment. The bill proposes a 15% increase in highway spending and an 18% increase in transit funding.

Francis Pickering reported that consulting firm VHB made a presentation to Connecticut's Councils of Governments on the upcoming Statewide Bus Study. This will be the first comprehensive look at the state's bus transit system since 2000. Pickering said a major objective of the study is to develop a more seamless transportation system for rides crossing operational boundaries. Pickering also mentioned that a bill to create a transit corridor development authority will be presented again next year.

UConn Transportation Forum

Fred Riese elaborated on the November 16 mock hearing at the UConn student transportation forum. The forum was well attended by approximately a dozen UConn graduate students, all studying some aspect of transportation, as well as by UConn's Logistics Administration and its Transportation Planner, the Administrator and the Operations Manager of the Windham Region Transit District, and two ConnDOT staff. The dominant topics raised were a desire for later evening bus service on WRTD's Storrs-Willimantic route to allow participation in evening classes and campus activities, bus service to Manchester to access affordable housing opportunities there, connections from Storrs to Bradley Airport and Union Station for out-of-state travel, and interest in the proposed CTfastrak *east* service and connections from campus to it.

Discussion of Annual Report Recommendations

Six candidate recommendations for the 2015 Annual Report were discussed and approved. The first recommendation supports Governor Malloy's call for a constitutional amendment to protect the Special Transportation Fund from reallocation of its resources to other state uses. But this support is conditioned on any such constitutional amendment not only safeguarding the existing balance in the Fund but also protecting all revenue streams that are by law programmed to go into the Fund from being diverted to other uses before they are collected and deposited in the Fund. The latter situation is what has historically occurred with diversions from the Special Transportation Fund. This recommendation was unanimously approved.

A second recommendation concerning standardizing fare collection technology between transit operators through the use of a universal pass which can be processed through mobile devices was also approved unanimously.

A need for better communication between transit operators, both rail and bus, and their passengers, was also approved without dissent. This recommendation addresses the need for better communication to rail passengers on train platforms about delays and track changes, information to bus riders about bus arrival times and route changes, and communication to passengers on trains which are stopped for unusual or emergency situations.

Measures to encourage the expansion of the successful taxi voucher program and the more widespread use of accessible taxi vehicles are recommended in the fourth draft which was considered. This recommendation was approved by an 8-2 vote.

A recommendation for the extension of bus service to the Pershing Drive commercial area along the Derby/Ansonia border was adopted by a 9-1 vote after an extensive discussion as to whether recommendations of a local nature were appropriate.

The final recommendation, approved by a 6-1 vote with one abstention, endorsed the extension of Shore Line East service eastward to Westerly, Rhode Island as soon as practical, even if the initial extension of service operates at a minimum level.

Lastly, concerning the Annual Report, the topic of the report's cover photo was discussed. It was decided to feature the new bus facility of the Windham Region Transit District on the cover. This facility went into operation this year.

Chairman Maloney closed the meeting at 3:43 pm.