

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, January 5, 2006

Conference Room B

Newington, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Morton N. Katz
Tom A. Chesseman
Linda H. Schnitzel
Yvonne A. Loteczka
N. Terry Hall
Linda Blair
Dick Carpenter

GUESTS

Stephen Foster

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Michael A. Sanders

CDOT STAFF

Dennis Jolly

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes

January 5, 2006

Chairman Cheeseman called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. The meetings of December 1, 2005 could not be approved as written due to the fact that there was not a quorum.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

A guest speaker was not present for this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the Public.

REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES

Michael A. Sanders advised that the CPTC Annual Report had been received. Mr. Sanders advised that the Department of Transportation had meet to discuss the distribution of the recommendations to the various units that would respond in a timely fashion, meeting the deadline set forth by the Connecticut General Statues. Mr. Sanders advised that he thought the recommendations were well thought out and were focused.

Mr. Sanders advised that the Department of Transportation was progressing on the Municipal Grant Program and the grant RFP could be out by the January 20, 2006. Mr. Sanders also stated that he believed that the awards could be out by April and that new services could begin by July1.

According to Mr. Sanders, ridership growth is still holding, despite the fair increase, ridership has grown 4% to 8 % on average with higher numbers for the Commuter Connection as more people are using the trains. ADA ridership has increased also, but that is a continuation of a long-term trend based on increase awareness.

Mark Foran advised that the new Rail Administrator , Eugene Colonese, was now on board at the Department. Mr. Foran also stated that there have been some high level talks concerning AMTRAK and the northeast corridor. He further stated that negotiations are still underway at this time in Washington D.C.

The issue concerning clearing of the platforms in case of snow resurfaced. Mr. Sanders advised that there are only two places to go concerning the problem, either the Greater Hartford Transit District, which maintains the station or AMTRAK, which maintains the platform.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Cheeseman reported that additional 2000 tickets were purchased recently by a social service agency in his district. He was also pleased that this same group came back again this month to purchase more, clearly an indication of increase ridership.

Mr. Cheseman also spoke on a collaborative effort by local Transit Districts and the RGC in terms of the "Transit 101" seminars being conducted in the Middletown, Westbrook and New Haven communities. These seminars were well received by the public, as noted by the numerous follow-up calls.

The Chairman also spoke of a meeting that took place with the Speaker of the House Rep. Amman concerning the Federal funds that were being cut from the Jobs Access program. The Speaker indicated that he would attempt to legislate the difference but could make no guarantees.

OLD BUSINESS

A seventy-six (76) million-dollar federal project on the Thames River Bridge is scheduled for completion in 2007.

NEW BUSINESS

There will be three (3) training sessions for all drivers that transport disabled individuals. Linda Blair of the CPTC will be hired to assist in the training. Ms Blair has personally used the services of this company and has had problems in the past. The Chairman thanked Ms. Blair for taking up the challenge.

It was noted that the Public Hearing held in New Milford concerning the Danbury Branch was well attended. Although there is still work to be done, overall progress was being made.

Mr. Sanders spoke on the challenges of getting from one end of the state to the other without having to make several transfers via-inter district service. One of the major challenges would be overcoming the old New England way of doing business, which is local rule and local transit districts. This remains a problem particularly for urbanized areas. There appears to be a shortfall in this area, not just in para-transit, but in transit in general. The questions remains, is there a better way to provide that service?

Mr. Sanders gave an example of several of the successes made, in addressing the problem. The Coastal Link which runs from Milford to Norwalk and the Route 7 link which runs from Danbury to Norwalk. Mr. Sanders stated that he believed that it could be done but there continues to be the factor of money. He expressed hope that the Governor's initiative, which sets aside 7.5 million dollars for new buses as part of the Governor's larger 1.3 billion dollar transportation initiative, could assist in addressing the problem. Mr. Sanders advised that there would be a service planning process looking at how those funds will be used. He suggested that various communities would be looked to in terms of the recommended usage for the funds.

Chairman Cheeseman stated that he recalled a USDOT memo that was attempting to address this problem via an out of region transportation study due in 2007, which further recognizes this as a national problem.

The CPTC expressed gratitude to Fred Riese for the work that was done in putting together the Annual Report.

Chairman Cheeseman adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.