

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MEETING

Thursday, August 7, 2003 - 1:30 PM

D.O.T. Headquarters, Conference Room B

Newington, Connecticut

1. Approval of the July 10, 2003 meeting minutes
2. Melissa Leigh, Special Projects Manager, South Western Regional Planning Agency
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

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CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, July 10, 2003

Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1B

Hartford, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

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

GUESTS

Alvin Douglas
Moriah Moriarty
Gene Pottinger
David Sampson
Anthony V. Savino
Bradshaw Smith
Katie Zito

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Laila Mandour
Cindy Gollareny
Harry Harris
Len Lapsis
Peter Richter
H. James Boice

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes

July 10, 2003

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 5, 2003

Mr. Cheeseman had at the June 5 meeting mentioned that there will be no more state matching funds for paratransit vehicles and other paratransit capital needs. Mr. Cheeseman revised his comment by stating that the state will continue to match funds for both.

Accepted as revised.

FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS

David Sampson, Group Vice President of Urbitran Associates, Inc., reported on the “Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study”. The study consists of three phases to develop a governance policy and financial policy for rail station operations to improve the quality and current conditions of service for rail riders in Connecticut.

Mr. Sampson reported on the tasks of Phase I: *Self-Evaluation* which included stakeholder interviews, a customer opinion survey, parking inventory and utilization, an engineering conditions survey, station lease review, station operations and management review, and finally station financial review. As a result of the physical inventory of the stations, it would cost an estimated \$11,162,000 to bring all 29 stations to a “state of good repair”. \$7.1 million of this would be for improvements on mainline stations.

As a result of these tasks, some underlying issues to be addressed include home rule vs. ConnDOT control; division of responsibilities; tracking costs and revenues; contractual relationship with Metro North; parking; lease clarification; and definitions of maintenance.

Phase II: *Governance Opinion* will involve a survey of industry practices as well as a presentation of alternative methods of governance.

Phase III: *Final Report*, due this December, will be the development of incorporating the work completed in Phase I and II.

The “Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study” has a website at www.ctrailgovernance.com.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No individuals spoke however, Ms. Jean Pottinger submitted two letters. The first discusses her concerns with the proposed lease/leaseback of DOT equipment, which is addressed by Mr. Harry Harris below. The second discusses her concern with recent changes in an alternate bus route due to recent changes in CTTransit bus service from Bloomfield to West Farms Mall on Saturdays. The alternate route recommends taking the U-route to downtown Hartford and Ms. Pottinger advised the U-route bus does not go downtown.

REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES

Mr. Harry Harris, Bureau Chief of Public Transportation clarified the proposed Lease to Service Contract Transaction, which permits DOT to lease/leaseback a portion of its rail and transit rolling stock to another lessee, transferring the tax ownership of the property. This allows the lessee to write off the tax depreciation of the equipment, which the State is unable to do. The lease would run for a period of 15 to 30 years. The DOT would still retain ownership, operational control and maintenance of the property. A defeasance account would be set up with the proceeds from the lease agreement. This would provide a “one time, one shot infusion of capital” to be used to support the M-2 railcar overhaul program. Mr. Harris noted that other large operators such as MTA and New Jersey Transit have already entered into such lease/leaseback agreements to take advantage of recent tax law changes. A meeting with the many consultants and advisors involved in this transaction is scheduled to take place next week.

Mr. Harris reported on the rail fare increase that went into effect on July 1, 2003 on Metro-North. Preliminary calculations indicate a 1% reduction in monthly commuter tickets based on advanced ticket purchases and a 150% increase in 10-trip ride tickets, which are good for one year. There has also been a substantial decrease in the number of tickets purchased on the train due to the \$3.00 penalty that has been imposed.

Mr. Harris also reported that the series of public hearings proposing to increase transit base fares from \$1.00 to \$1.25 have been concluded. Currently, analysis to endorse the increase is being prepared. As a result of concerns expressed at the hearings, ticket packaging will be amended to better meet the needs of the riders.

Fred Riese reported that consultants have developed designs for the interchanges on the expansion of I-95 from Branford to the Rhode Island line and have presented them to the Southeast Corridor Advisory Committee. On behalf of Russell St. John, Mr. Riese also announced that the first revenue movement on the Wethersfield Secondary took place today.

Richard Schreiner attended a meeting on June 26, which involved an Advisory Committee on the issue of re-electrification of the Danbury Branch Line. Mr. Schreiner reported they are also exploring other means of improving the service including the

extension of the line to New Milford. One issue with this expansion is the success of the Housatonic Railroad since they operate the track between Danbury and New Milford.

Linda Blair reported that the CPTC website information has been submitted to DOT officials for implementation.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Cheeseman reported that due to projected budget deficits, Middletown Transit District has implemented a fare structure of \$1.50 per ride effective July 1. Early projections do not show a decrease in reservations. A safety net system has been put into place in the event an individual cannot afford to ride. This system would offer free transportation on the fixed route bus service for individuals living along those routes. To date, there has not been a request for this pass.

Mr. Cheeseman also stated his disappointment that the provision on the Medicare bill to allow transit districts to provide non-emergency transportation to eligible clients was not enacted. This change could save millions of dollars compared to using ambulance services to provide non-emergency trips.

OLD BUSINESS

Fred Riese reminded the commission members to submit January through June reimbursement forms.

Mr. Riese mentioned three fall public hearings will take place in Danbury, Torrington and Bristol in September and October. Dates and times will be announced upon confirmation.

NEW BUSINESS

Linda Blair attended both bus fare increase hearings in New Haven and the reported that the consensus was that a moderate increase would be acceptable if service was improved and expanded.

The October and December monthly meetings in New Haven will be held in Conference Room A at Union Station.

(Meeting adjourned at 2:41 P.M.)