

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Minutes of July 14, 2011

Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut

**Attendance: Members:** Christopher Adams, Morton Katz, Ron Kilcoyne, Yvonne Loteczka, Edward McAnaney, Kevin Maloney, Robert Rodman, Kieran Ryan, Russell St. John, Richard Schreiner, Richard Sunderhauf, Alan Sylvestre, John Zelinsky. **Ex-officio members:** Susan Simmat (OPM). **ConnDOT staff:** Dennis King, Michael Sanders. **Guests:** Jonathan Rubell, Karin Christley -Kennedy Center

Chairman Maloney opened the meeting at 1:35 p.m. The minutes of the meeting of June 2 were approved

**Featured Speaker**

Jonathan Rubell of the Kennedy Center provided a presentation on the organization's mobility services program. The mobility services program provides travel training services, transit education, ADA paratransit eligibility training and mobility management for the Southwest region. The Trumbull-based agency recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Kennedy Center is funded through a ConnDOT grant to provide travel training services for seniors and persons with disabilities on bus and rail transit. The program is customized to fit the needs of the individual clients, although group training does take place as well. The program looks at every aspect of the individual's trip, ranging from issues such as telling time, to route planning, to paying fares, as well as boarding and getting off transit vehicles.

Approximately 70% of those successfully trained are still using public transit a year later. Those that don't continue typically have health issues or stop working. Others, often in high school settings, were provided training to get the experience of traveling by public transit but don't have a need to access transit regularly.

Kennedy Center received a New Freedoms grant for mobility management this past January, with efforts recently beginning. The mobility management program looks a gaps in public transit services especially focusing on seniors, persons with disabilities and veterans. The process begins by looking at what services are available. The mobility management program will include focus groups of seniors, persons with disabilities and veterans, what are needs and how might they be met. One suggested solution that has emerged is a taxi voucher program where a \$25 voucher provides \$50 worth of taxi rides. The agency hopes to build up the mobility manager as a one stop shop for transit information with a website and guidebook.

The agency has provided Transit 101 workshops since 2003. This short program provides a crash course for social service providers in how best to access existing transit services. Information on the accessibility and availability of services, how to pay fares and use

transit services is provided. Each attendee receives the regional copy of Getting on Board, a document that details local transit opportunities and how to use them. The most recent group of transit 101 workshops, held in July, was sponsored by CACT in the Southeast and Hartford areas.

Kennedy Center's mobility services program also provides training for transit operators in wheelchair lift securement, sensitivity to persons with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act and blood borne pathogen awareness.

Recently, Kennedy Center worked with New Jersey Transit to provide training for a northern New Jersey nonprofit to begin a travel training program in that state.

### **Comments from the public**

Terry Hall announced that Amtrak's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary train exhibit would be at Union Station in New Haven on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of July, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **Comments from Operating Entities**

Rich Sunderhauf provided information on recent service changes in the CT TRANSIT system. Cuts to Jobs Access funding have resulted in reduced bus service to Stew Leonard's on the Berlin Turnpike. Direct bus service to C&S Warehouse in Suffield is being discontinued, although a nearby stop will allow for continued service to the location.

Russ St. John reported that Providence and Worcester Railroad is upgrading track between Willimantic and Plainfield. This will give the railroad improved access to the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National rail networks via a connection with New England Central.

Michael Sanders reported on state and federal budget issues. The governor was due to release a plan later today with a department by department breakdown of reductions. 1 in 4 positions within DOT would be eliminated or left vacant.

At the federal level, Congressman Mica issued a proposal for a 6 year transportation bill which reduces funding by about 30%. This translates into a loss of about \$200 million annually. The senate is proposing a 2 year bill that keeps funding at current levels, but does not include a mechanism for funding. A bill is expected to be completed by October 1. Other provisions being discussed would be a consolidation and streamlining of programs including the elimination of NEPA requirements for transportation projects and the consolidation of the JARC, New Freedoms, and section 5310 programs.

The full funding agreement on the Hartford-New Britain busway has been submitted.

## **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Maloney related the contents of a letter from Linda Blair, former CPTC commissioner to Acting DOT Commissioner James Redeker. Ms. Blair had a bad experience traveling by intercity bus between New Haven and Hartford. She encountered buses that were inaccessible or had inoperable lifts.

Chairman Maloney mentioned an article by D. Dowd Musko that described the resurgence of intercity buses and which opined that they are much more effective than rail, being four times more fuel efficient.

It was announced that Ron Kilcoyne was resigning from the commission, as he is leaving the state to run the transit system in Eugene, Oregon. Mr. Kilcoyne was thanked for his contribution to the CPTC during his tenure.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

There was a brief discussion on the location of the fourth fall public hearing. Acting on a suggestion by Commissioner Sylvestre and a show of hands, Plainville was selected as the hearing location.

It was suggested that the CPTC have a future speaker address the need for inter-district travel by persons with disabilities.

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