



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board

Jennifer L. Mitchell
Chairperson

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APPROVED Minutes of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
Monday, MAY 24, 2021 · 10:00 am
Electronic Board Meeting

In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, where it is impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location, and as allowed by the General Assembly during the continuing state of emergency, this meeting to take action to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operation, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority held an electronic meeting on May 24, 2021.

All board members participated remotely using a GotoMeeting platform. Members of the public were able to witness the meeting online via live-streaming and were provided with the opportunity to provide public comment telephonically at the outset of the meeting using a dial in number provided in the online meeting public notice. The online internet public notice for the meeting noted that this meeting would be conducted using an electronic process due to the COVID-19 state of emergency and as a precaution to reduce the risk and spread of the novel coronavirus. The online meeting public notice also furnished the Agenda and Board materials as well as information regarding the availability of online live-streaming of the meeting at the noted link. Online viewers were furnished a telephone number to call to notify staff of any interruption of the live streaming of the meeting in accordance with Item 4-0.01.g. of Chapter 1289 and Section 2.2- 3708.2 of the Code of Virginia.

The audio and meeting documents and presentation materials are on the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's website,
<http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/>

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Bulova, Deborah Butler Painter, Paul Nichols, Patricia Doersch, Cynthia MosesNedd, Jay Fissette, James Spore, Mariia Zimmerman, Jennifer Mitchell (Chair).

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF PRESENT

Bridget Davis, Joy Harris, Michael McLaughlin, Steve Pittard, DJ Stadtler, Ashwini Tamhane, Michael Todd and Andrew Wright.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Joseph Jagdmann and Michael Westermann (Office of the Attorney General).

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Chair, Jennifer Mitchell, presided and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the procedures and instructions for the electronic meeting, including all votes will be conducted by roll call vote. The following statement was made:

"On November 19th, Governor Ralph Northam signed House Bill 5005, Virginia's revised biennial budget, which includes new language for meeting electronically. In light of the continuing state of emergency declared by Governor Northam, we are conducting this meeting in a remote setting, keeping safety top of mind and mitigating the impacts and spread of COVID-19."

Executive Assistant Joy Harris then called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mitchell opened the meeting up for public comment. There was none.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

The following item was presented for information:

Board Chair Update

Presented by: Jennifer Mitchell, Chair

Chair Mitchell provided the following updates:

June VPRA Board Meeting

- The chair welcomed everyone, and gave a brief update regarding the change for the meeting in June. She informed the board that due to the governor's orders changing, the plan is to have the next meeting in-person, on June 28th. She

informed everyone to be on the lookout for additional logistical information and highly encouraged in-person participation.

Western Rail Initiative

- On May 5th, the CEO of Norfolk Southern, James Squires and governor Northam announced the Western Rail Initiative.
 - This is the binding contract with NS for 257 million dollars to extend a second train to Roanoke.
 - This includes 38.5 million for the acquisition of the Virginian line between Salem and Christiansburg.
 - There is 36 million for Roanoke Yard improvements and additional improvements between Manassas and Roanoke.
 - An additional 50 million dollars a seven mile siding between the Nokesville Corridor.
 - The next steps are to begin negotiations with Norfolk Southern to obtain agreements

May CTB Meeting Updates:

- Received Conditional approval of budget from CTB with recommended amendments that was presented to the finance committee, which voted to adopt the amendments.
- CTB approved recommended smart scale scenario, for the utilization. This allows the use of smart scale funding across the state.
- CTB submitted an application for 50 million dollars in funding for the Western Rail Initiative, and it was approved and recommended to go into the six year plan, which will be approved by CTB at June meeting.
- Meeting with I81 Advisory Committee: Staff recommended funding from I-81 multimodal transportation fund in the amount of one hundred million dollars collected from special fuel taxes and fees in the I-81 Corridor.
- This plan includes funding for road improvements, including highway improvements as well.
- This plan will be brought before the CTB in June for approval.
- CTB approved technical revisions that were made to MOU between DRPT, VDOT, and NVTC regarding the use of toll revenues for various multimodal projects.
- The language was revised to clearly communicate the allocation of funds, and the waterfall of funds to be utilized for debt services for the Long Bridge Project.

Executive Directors Report

Presented by: DJ Stadtler, Executive Director

Executive Director Stadtler provided the following updates:

[Amtrak Ridership: FY2021 Monthly Ridership](#)

- Virginia supported monthly ridership in April 2021 was higher by +7,731 compared to the previous month.
- April 2021 has been the month with highest ridership in FY21.
- Ridership is usually historically low during the winter months and starts to increase as the weather improves.

April Ridership: Year-over-Year Percentage Change

- Monthly ridership in April 2021 was +974.4% higher than April 2020 for Virginia supported Amtrak routes. In April 2020, Virginia supported Amtrak service was operating at 50% of pre-pandemic service level. Both Norfolk and Newport News service was reduced from two roundtrips down to one roundtrip. Richmond route train was suspended, but Richmond was still being served by Newport News, Norfolk and Long Distance Amtrak trains.
- Monthly ridership in April 2021 was 54.2% lower than April 2019 pre-pandemic ridership for Virginia supported Amtrak routes. In April 2021, Virginia supported Amtrak service was operating at 80% of FY2019 (pre-pandemic) service level. All other routes were operational in April 2021 except the Washington-Richmond route which stands suspended since April 2020

Financial Year-to-Date Ridership (Oct-April 2021, 2020, 2019): Year-over-Year Percentage Change

- FY2021 year-to-date (YTD) ridership as of April 2021 was 59.2% lower compared to FY20 YTD ridership in April 2020.
- FY2021 year-to-date (YTD) ridership in April 2021 was 64.7% lower compared to YTD ridership in April 2019

On-Time Performance

- Amtrak trains are considered on time if arrival at the endpoint is within 15 minutes of scheduled arrival time.
- March On-Time Performance: Speed restriction due to defects or slow orders on host railroads was the biggest factor affecting on-time performance in March 2021.

Load Factor

- Load factor measures usage by capacity. It is calculated by dividing passenger miles (the aggregation of trip lengths for individual passengers) by seat miles (the sum of the products of total seats available and total miles traveled for individual trains).
March Load Factors: 2021, 2020, 2019
- Monthly load factors for the three Virginia supported routes operational in March 2021 were higher year-over-year compared to March 2020.
- However, load factors in March 2021 were lower for all three operational routes compared to the same time period two years ago (2019)

Capital Projects Updates:

Michael McLaughlin provided the following updates:

- Mr. McLaughlin provided the board with updates of each in-flight capital projects, which included the RF&P Corridor (CSX) as well as Western Rail Initiative (NS)

Financial Update:

Steve Pittard provided the following updates:

- Mr. Pittard provided the board with updates regarding VPRA operating expenses, capital projects budget, capital grants budget, and additional financial updates, to include VPRA investment earnings.

Transforming Rail in Virginia Milestones

FTA Core Capacity Application: Long Bridge and Alexandria Fourth Track

Presented by: Michael McLaughlin, COO-VPRA

Mr. McLaughlin provided the following information:

3.7 Billion Agreement with CSX, Amtrak, and VRE

- On December 19, 2019 Governor Northam and Secretary Valentine announced \$3.7B landmark rail initiative with CSX, Amtrak, & VRE
 - On March 30, 2021 Virginia, Amtrak, VRE, CSX & US DOT Secretary Buttigieg announced the signing of the Definitive Agreements.
 - On May 5, 2021: Expansion to New River Valley announced
 - CSX-Amtrak-VRE Agreements
 - Includes both acquisition and infrastructure projects.
 - The acquisition map stretches from the nation's capital to the Allegheny Mountains to North Carolina.
 - Virginia is purchasing half of the RF&P right of way, which will allow Virginia to construct a dedicated 2-track passenger corridor.
 - Full acquisition of the Buckingham Branch from Doswell to Clifton Forge
 - Acquisition of CSX property along the abandoned S-Line from Petersburg to NC
 - Infrastructure Phases 1 and 2 are concentrated on the RF&P from Washington to Richmond.
 - The completion of each Phase will trigger additional VRE and Amtrak service.
 - Additional information was provided to the board regarding the Core Capacity Program, to include eligibility project development & approval and project schedule
- Next Steps
- Finalize Alexandria 4th Track 30% Design Plans
 - CSX commences 4th Track Final Design, includes track design agreement with VPRA
 - Continue Preliminary Engineering for Long Bridge
 - Apply to enter FTA's Core Capacity Project Development Phase
 - 2 year window to exit project development Requirements:

- Environmental Clearance (complete with FRA, but FTA will take action to bless FRA findings) (Notes: CE for 4th track, and will adopt Long Bridge ROD)
- 30% Design (Complete for 4th track, not for Long Bridge)
- Refining of cost estimates based on increase in level of design • Risk assessment

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Budget Update

Presented by: Steve Pittard, CFO-VPRA

Mr. Pittard provided the following information:

- Mr. Pittard updated the board on activity with the budget since it was recommended to send to CTB for approval.
- Recommended budget was presented to and CTB feedback was received and recommended
- Finance Committee approved amendments to capital portion of the budget, which was taken to CTB for approval.
- The condition was that full VPRA approves recommended budget with approved amendments.

Budget Timeline

- December 9th - Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) presentation of the proposed format of the VPRA budget to elicit feedback.
- February 1st - VPRA recommended budget to the CTB
- February 17th – CTB briefing on the budget
- May 14th – VPRA Finance Committee approval of Budget Amendments.
- May 19th – CTB approval of the capital budget as amended
- May 24th – VPRA Board adopts final budget

Recommended Budget Amendment

- Recommending adding \$14.0M to the Capital Grants budget to increase total for FY21-FY27 from \$401.5M to \$415.5M
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) needs at acquired stations of \$7.5M
- Required Capital Maintenance Reserve in final Amtrak agreement of \$5.0M
- Added \$1.5M for State of Good Repair (SOGR) needs in FY27
- In the Capital Grants section of the budget, the ADA and SOGR additions will be added to the Amtrak Station State of Good Repair line item and a new line item will be added for the Reserve
- Mr. Pittard also discussed information relating to the Amended Capital Grants Budget, Available Revenues FY21 – FY27, Budget Line Item Amendment Details and Code Language for Budget

MOTION TO APPROVE RECCOMENDED AMMEDMENTS TO FY22 BUDGET

A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Deborah Painter-Butler to **APPROVE** recommended amendments to FY22 budget.

The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Jay Fissette and **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** by Board roll call vote.

Assignment to VPRA of Comprehensive Rail Agreement and Ancillary Agreements; Transfer of Property Rights

Presented by: Joseph Jagdmann and Michael Westermann

Mr. Jagdmann and Mr. Westermann provided information about:

- The assignment of CSX agreements from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation over to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. That includes comprehensive rail agreement, joint operations and maintenance agreements with CSX, and a number of ancillary agreements other agreements and attachments.
- The deeds of property that were transferred from CSX to DRPT upon sale date one, which is our financial close. We went to financial close with CSX on April 14, 2021.
- Major business terms and overall transfer of property that will be occurring from CSX to the Commonwealth as a result of this transaction.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENTS AND TRANSFER OF PROPERTY

A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Sharon Bulova to **APPROVE** the agreements and transfer of property.

The **MOTION** was **SECONDED** by Ms. Cynthia Moses-Nedd and **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** by Board roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joy Harris, Executive Assistant

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