



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board

Jennifer L. Mitchell
Chairperson

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MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Monday, January 10, 2022 · 10:00 am

VDOT Central Auditorium · 1221 East Broad Street · Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board held a regular meeting using electronic communications means on January 10, 2022. The primary location was VDOT Central Auditorium, located at 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond Virginia 23219.

MEMBERS PRESENT

The Chair Jennifer Mitchell, Sharon Bulova, Deborah Butler Painter, Patricia Doersch, Rod Hall, Jay Fisette, Victor Cardwell, and Rich Dalton (ex-officio)

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY

Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Wick Moorman, Mariia Zimmerman and Bruno Maestri (ex-officio).

MEMBERS ABSENT

Paul Nichols, Hossein Sadid, James Spore

VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY STAFF

DJ Stadtler, Michael McLaughlin, Steve Pittard, Joan Panik, Shannon Perry, Michael Westermann, Jeremy Latimer, and Ashwini Tamhane.

DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF

Emily Stock.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Robert Churchman

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Mitchell presided and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the procedures and instructions for the electronic meeting and indicated that all votes will be conducted by roll call vote.

Joan Panik then called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments presented or received.

BOARD CHAIR WELCOME

Presented by: Jennifer Mitchell, Board Chair

Chair Mitchell welcomed everyone, and gave a brief overview of the agenda and called the meeting to order

MOTION TO APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Hall and seconded by Ms. Bulova to approve the previous board meetings minutes. The motion was carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND STORM UPDATE

Presented by: DJ Stadtler, Executive Director, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Mr. Stadtler gave a brief overview of the executive director's report. He then presented slides on the January 3, 2022, winter storm that disrupted Amtrak service on state-supported and long-distance Amtrak trains in Virginia. The presentation outlined how the winter storm exceeded predicted precipitation levels causing high accumulation and hundreds of downed trees and power lines on rail tracks.

Mr. Maestri provided comments on the challenges faced by Amtrak during the storm event and Mr. Dalton provided insight on VRE service disruption due to the storm. A brief discussion ensued on lessons learned and ways to improve communication during future service disruptions.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT OVERVIEW

Presented by: Ms. Devon Barnhart, Capitol Transportation Consulting, LLC

Ms. Barnhart gave an overview of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) including funding availability, comparison of funding levels to previous appropriations, existing and new grants made available through IIJA, various types of transit and rail grants, Amtrak funding allocations, FRA objectives for funding projects and timeline for when the grants will be made available to states. A discussion ensued regarding a need for a strategy for applying to FRA grants to fund Virginia's rail projects.

FY22 BUDGET AMENDMENT AND FY23 BUDGET

Presented by: Steve Pittard & Shannon Perry, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Mr. Pittard and Ms. Perry presented the FY22 budget Amendment and the FY23 budget including details about operations, capital projects and capital & operating grants. They discussed primary drivers for FY22 amendment and FY23 budget allocations and timeline for approval of the FY23 budget.

MOTION TO APPROVE FY22 BUDGET AMENDMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Painter and seconded by Ms. Bulova to approve the FY22 Budget Amendment. The motion was carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

VPRA AUDIT RESULT

Presented by: Rob Churchman, Cherry Bekaert CPAs & Advisors

Mr. Churchman briefed the board on result of VPRA's financial audit and that there were no findings resulting from the review.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY STUDIES

Presented by: Emily Stock, Rail Chief, Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Ms. Stock gave an overview of three General Assembly studies, the Bedford Rail Station Feasibility Study, Extension of Intercity Passenger Rail to Bristol, VA and the Commonwealth Corridor Feasibility Study. The studies outline potential costs and ridership increase resulting from each proposed improvement.

MOTION FOR CLOSED SESSION

Following the presentations, Ms. Bulova made the following motion:

"I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing a project involving the investment of public funds where bargaining is involved and where the financial interest of the Commonwealth would be adversely affected if the discussion were made public at this time, And, Pursuant to Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(8), for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel regarding provisions in the agreement requiring legal advice. "Additionally, I move that staff and attorneys attend the Closed Session because their presence is deemed necessary, and will aid the Board in its consideration of this matter."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Wick Moorman and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

The Board suspended the open session at 1:40 p.m. on January 10, 2022 to move into closed session.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The vice chairperson reconvened the open session meeting at 2:05 p.m. on January 10, 2022. Upon reconvening the meeting, the Vice Chair made the following statement:

"We are now going to take a roll call vote, and I ask that each member indicate their agreement with the following:

To the best of my knowledge, during the Closed Meeting, the only matters heard, discussed or considered were those matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened."

The roll was then called, with all members indicated their agreement to the statement.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE EXECUTION OF NORFOLK SOUTHERN COMPREHENSIVE RAIL AGREEMENT

Ms. Bulova motioned to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Norfolk Southern Comprehensive Rail Agreement and was seconded by Mr. Hall. Mr. Moorman and Ms. Painter abstained, but the motion passed by a majority Board roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mitchell, Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2:33 p.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at <http://vpra.virginia.gov/about/board-meetings>.

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