



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

DJ Stadtler  
Executive Director

919 East Main Street, Suite 2400  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 303-8700  
[www.vpra.virginia.gov](http://www.vpra.virginia.gov)

Tiffany Robinson  
Chairperson

### **MINUTES**

#### **Meeting of the Board of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority**

Thursday, January 16, 2025 · 10:30 am

919 East Main Street · Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board held a regular, in-person meeting (with certain members participating remotely) on January 16, 2025 at 919 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON**

Tiffany Robinson, Chairperson, Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, Rich Dalton, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Moses-Nedd, John Watkins

John Watkins joined in person at 10:50 AM

#### **MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY**

Victor Cardwell, D.J. Jordan, Bruno Maestri, Beth Rhinehart, (see attached approval forms noting the reason for remote participation and the location from which each Board member participated)

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Charles Payne

#### **VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY STAFF**

DJ Stadtler, Michael McLaughlin, Steve Pittard, Joan Verbonitz, Michael Westermann, John Kostyniuk, Lamar Bates, Geoff Pelletier, Cosmin Udrea, Kim Coleman, Charles Nelson, Shannon Perry, Dawn Durrett, Erica Sayre, Selma Nuhanovic, Fyiad Constantine, Shirlene Cleveland, Jonathan Capek, Jeremy Latimer, Zach Collier, and Mary Estelle Douglas.

#### **GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT**

Emily Stock, Department of Rail and Public Transportation

#### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Robinson presided and called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. Mary Estelle Douglas called Roll and confirmed an in-person quorum was physically present.

## **BOARD CHAIR WELCOME**

*Presented by: Tiffany Robinson, Board Chairperson*

Tiffany Robinson welcomed everyone to the January 16, 2025 Board meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

VPRA did not receive any public comments.

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## **MOTION TO APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Patty Doersch and seconded by Cynthia Moses-Nedd to approve the Board meeting minutes from November 19, 2024. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

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## **BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by John Delandro to approve additional Board committee members. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

Sandy Bushue asked about additional committees for VPRA. Board Chair Robinson invited board members to provide her with committee suggestions in writing.

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## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

DJ Stadtler presented the Executive Director's report to the Board. He reviewed recent VPRA updates, updated AIP goals, and shared Virginia and comparable state-supported service ridership.

In response to an update on some Virginia trains canceled during the early January snowstorms, Patty Doersch asked who makes the call on when to cancel trains due to inclement weather. DJ Stadtler responded.

Neal Crawford asked if the construction of the casino in Norfolk would affect our ridership. DJ Stadtler responded. Thelma Drake asked where parking for Amtrak will be at the Norfolk Amtrak Station. DJ Stadtler and Jeremy Latimer responded.

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## **SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Presented by: *Jeremy Latimer, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Jeremy Latimer reviewed Amtrak Regional and long distance performance of trains. Amtrak Airo train sets are coming soon. The new trainsets have dual-mode power, and therefore do not require a locomotive change at Washington Union Station, which is much more efficient.

Cynthia Moses-Nedd asked what the remedy was for freight train interference and Jeremy Latimer responded.

Zach Collier reviewed the VPRA Rider Program and provided Board members with access to the online survey.

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## **MOTION FOR CLOSED SESSION**

*Budget and Project Updates*

Thelma Drake made the following motion:

*"I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session:*

- *(i) pursuant to Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3711(A)(29) for the discussion of public contracts relating to VPRA's Transforming Rail in Virginia projects involving the expenditure of public funds, including discussion of the terms or scope of such contracts, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position and negotiating strategy of VPRA.*

The motion was seconded by John Delandro to move into a closed session. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

## **RECONVENE IN AN OPEN SESSION**

The chairperson reconvened the open session meeting. Upon reconvening the meeting, Thelma Drake 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 indicating their agreement with the statement. Those indicating agreement were Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

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## **REVENUE SOURCES**

*Presented by: Steve Pittard, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Steve Pittard reviewed VPRA's revenue sources.

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## **FY26 BUDGET**

*Presented by: Shannon Perry, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Shannon Perry reviewed the proposed FY26 Budget. She provided an overview of the capital budget that would be presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. She also reviewed the management reserve.

A motion was made by Patty Doersch and seconded by Thelma Drake to approve FY26 Capital Budget for submission to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

A motion was made by Patty Doersch and seconded by Darien Flowers to approve the December 2024 management reserve. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

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## **CONTRACT ACTIVITY APPROVALS**

*Presented by: DJ Stadtler, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

A motion was made by John Delandro and seconded by Darien Flowers to approve VPRA to execute the project addendum for Franconia-Lorton Third Track and Railroad Bridges over Newington Road Projects. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

A motion was made by Patty Doersch and seconded by Thelma Drake for ratification of authority to execute Manassas Line Funding Agreement between VPRA and VRE Commissions. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

A motion was made by Patty Doersch and seconded by Cynthia Moses-Nedd to approve VPRA to award design-build agreement for Long Bridge Project – South Package. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Victor Cardwell, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patty Doersch, Thelma Drake, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Beth Rhinehart, and John Watkins.

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### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

*Joan Verbonitz, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Joan Verbonitz reviewed the cultural foundation of VPRA, including the development of our values, early employment engagement interviews, and recent focus group results.

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### **ADJOURNMENT**

Tiffany Robinson, Chairperson, adjourned the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

All presentations to the Board and meeting videos can be found at <http://vpra.virginia.gov/about/Board-meetings> and on the VPRA YouTube site.

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