

## MINUTES

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting  
VDOT Central Office-HR Training Room  
1221 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
January 14, 2020  
8:30 am

The meeting began at 8:34 am.

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: Ray Smoot, Mary Hynes, and Stephen Johnsen.

1. Approval of December 10, 2019 Minutes-  
Stephen Johnsen moved to approve the minutes. Ray Smoot seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Director's Update/2020 Look Ahead-Jennifer Mitchell

Jennifer Mitchell gave a presentation on the Director's Update/2020 Look Ahead. The following comments were noted.

- Stephen Johnsen congratulated DRPT for their involvement with the Virginia rail agreement and CSX and asked if independent revenues would be required to support the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. Jennifer Mitchell said the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would have some financing authority such as passenger fare, real estate and other revenue sources, however, they would not be able to bond against state tax supported revenues.
- Mary Hynes asked if the any consideration had been given to the relationship between the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and the existing owners. Jennifer Mitchell pointed out that the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would have the same relationship that DRPT has with VRE. There would be no changes to VRE's government structure and operating authority. VRE would maintain the funding and oversight relationship with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. Virginia Passenger Rail Authority was created to have some independence, however it would maintain a close relationship with DRPT and the Commonwealth Transportation Board.
- Mary Hynes asked if the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would have the capacity to demand funding. Jennifer Mitchell said they would not have the capacity. The transportation Omnibus bill will introduce a new Commonwealth Transportation Fund that will be divided between the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and DRPT. The funding that is allocated to the Virginia Passenger Rail

Authority is designated for the advancement of rail capital improvement projects.

- Stephen Johnsen asked if any consideration had been given to the proposed amendments to move projects rapidly with regard to the federal government and the potential impact it may have on rail. Jennifer Mitchell noted that DRPT had been following the proposals, however she did not have any specific comments to share.
- Ray Smoot congratulated the DRPT staff for their work and asked about the status of expanding service from Alexandria to Lynchburg with Norfolk Southern. Jennifer Mitchell shared that DRPT is maintaining an on-going discussion with Norfolk Southern to add a train to Roanoke and expanding service for the Manassas Line.

### 3. Transit Program Updates-Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl gave a presentation on transit program updates. The following comments were noted.

- Stephen Johnsen asked for the estimated cost of an electric bus. Jennifer DeBruhl said the estimated cost was \$750,000 to \$1,000,000, which is determined by its size and equipment.
- Ray Smoot asked if DRPT had involvement in the electric school bus initiative. Jennifer DeBruhl said that DRPT is not involved in the electric school bus program.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if any funding would become available from the Volkswagen settlement. Jennifer DeBruhl shared that a portion of funding was allocated in the FY20 six-year program. DRPT has been working with DEQ to determine if there is potential to be granted additional funding.
- Mary Hynes if the 172 million annual riders for transit ridership in Virginia included Metro. Jennifer DeBruhl shared the total included Virginia's portion of Metro.
- Ray Smoot asked how it was determined whether a municipal transit system would be included in the data presented. Jennifer DeBruhl shared that only 17 out of 41 ridership programs that had an increase in FY19 was included in the presentation.
- Ray Smoot asked if \$42M per year in additional capital revenues should come from local funds to offset the shortfall in statewide capital funds. Jennifer DeBruhl said state funding is generally more reliable than local funding for the transportation capital budget.
- Mary Hynes asked if an operating plan was required to be submitted with the application for major expansion projects. Jennifer DeBruhl said DRPT changed their guidance and implemented prioritization, which has more structure.

### 4. Rail Industrial Access Application-Phoenix Packaging Operations-Jeremy Latimer

Jeremy Latimer presented the Rail Industrial Access Application for Phoenix Packing Operations. The following comments were noted.

- Mary Hynes asked if it was the first time a company had "double-dipped." Jeremy Latimer replied "No."
- Ray Smoot asked if the railroad participated in funding spurs. Jeremy Latimer said a concept design must be approved by the railroad, however he was not aware of a regular program to fund spurs.

#### 5. Update on Rail in Virginia-Michael McLaughlin

Michael McLaughlin presented an updated on Rail in Virginia.

- Mary Hynes asked if Norfolk Southern had granted the permission to expand service VRE and Amtrak trains. Michael McLaughlin said permission had not been granted yet.
- Stephen Johnsen asked the width of the right of way in the acquisition agreement. Michael McLaughlin said the details would be settled in the agreement. It is anticipated to be granted enough clearance to build two dedicated passenger tracks from DC to Richmond. Jennifer Mitchell mentioned the acquisition would include the stations and platforms currently owned by CSX.
- Ray Smoot asked if there would be dedicated passenger tracks from Richmond in the next 10-15 years. Michael McLaughlin said the plan is a robust 10-year plan. It is the goal to continue to build out to have a dedicated track. There is a phase 3 and 4 plan to build dedicated track in Spotsylvania.
- Ray Smoot asked how the flow of passenger traffic would be controlled with CSX. Michael McLaughlin said an operation and maintenance agreement with CSX would outline the dispatching control. Jennifer Mitchell said DRPT and CSX developed a service plan for VRE, Amtrak and freight trains. It was a collaborative effort to develop a service plan that would consider scheduling and improve performance. The plan creates permanence for VRE's slots.
- Mary Hynes asked if the potential expansion aligned with VRE's strategic and long-term plans. Michael McLaughlin said VRE had a few long-range plans. As more track is built, more trains can will be added.
- Jennifer Mitchell mentioned that a third track will not be built in Ashland.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if there would be an agreement to determine the maximum length for freight trains. Michael McLaughlin said the topic was still under consideration.
- Ray Smoot asked for clarification regarding Amtrak with nearly hourly service from DC to Richmond. Michael McLaughlin said VRE and Amtrak negotiated
- Stephen Johnsen mentioned that London had late departure schedules to accommodate those who work late. Michael McLaughlin said the Agency would be working with Amtrak and VRE to coordinate schedules.

- Ray Smoot inquired about the Commonwealth's capital cost responsibility for adding more trains. Jennifer Mitchell said it could help fund more grants and work with VRE to identify any equipment that is needed. Amtrak is in procurement to re-fleet.
- Mary Hynes asked what was going on at Union Station. Jennifer Mitchell said the Agency is working on allowing dual mode engines for Amtrak. There are no plans to electrify the corridor. Mary Hynes asked when additional details would be provided. Jennifer Mitchell said the Agency is working with the regional partners
- Stephen Johnsen asked if there was any involvement on the freight side. Jennifer Mitchell said more details would be forth-coming with a recommendation to NVTC to consider bonding revenues.
- Ray Smoot asked if CSX received \$5000 per train from Alexandria to Richmond. Jeremy Latimer said "No."

#### 6. Public Comment

Peter Voorhees from AECOM asked what for the capacity between L'enfant and Union Station. Michael McLaughlin said it was a control point. There will be a two track dedicated passenger corridor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 am.