

Windham Region Transit District
Public Hearing – Evening Session
Tuesday, February 24, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.
Windham Town Hall 2nd floor Conference Room
979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT
REGULAR MEETING MOTIONS and MINUTES

Voting Members Present: M. Hart (Mansfield)

Staff Present: Kurcinik, Noll

Public Present: Gonzales-Ibeas, David; MacNeil, Donald; Ngu, Allen; Jiang, Di; Wang, Xudong; Lacerda, Renato; Phadke, Gayatri; Medina, Rafeal; Grant, Henry; Yuste Alonso, Ruth Q; Mwiszerwa, Aimee; Dardani, Ross; McClure, Emily Ann; Moore, George; Crisostomo, Vialcary; Cool, Julian; Deavila, Orlando; Frederick, Paula; Barrasa, Sabastian; Dumaine, Danielle; Ferrero, Ivan; Bussey, Timothy; Roy, Aonab; Lampe, Josch; Dotzel, Krista; Ngini, Racauve; Galilea, Ordoitz; Grarighn, Matthew; Ragon, Kate; Khan, Koyel; Sisson, Talil; Lu, Jim; Wang, Xin; Erfanian, Amir; Dingo, Yifrem; Jerchi, Adam L.; Sun, Jiangnen; Xu, Tingyang; Singh, Predeep; Firka, Dirla; Cook, Julian

1. Open Hearing

WRTD Board Member M. Hart opened the Public Hearing at 7:00p.m.

2. Presentation

M. Hart read the public notice into the record. He advised the public of a turnover in management at WRTD and the subsequent discovery that WRTD was short on funds and would be unable to sustain current service levels through the end of the fiscal year. The plan to address the \$280,000 funding deficit includes service cuts. The Connecticut Department of Transportation has come forward to help fund most services, but there is no answer yet on the Route 195 Express service, which was taken over from UCONN five years ago with no clear funding source in place and is almost 100% UCONN-affiliated ridership. The deficit for this route is \$30,000. WRTD will hold another Public Hearing on this topic on campus.

3. Public Comments

Dirla Firka 134 Foster Drive

UCONN student, uses service 3x week for 2 years. Classes end at 8PM. No license here (she is from India). Even after getting a license, car is not affordable. Service is also a good link with transport from larger cities. Pays Willimantic taxes and wants to see her taxes used for a service she needs so much every day.

Henry Crane Windham Street, Willimantic

Mr. Crane doesn't want WRTD to cut a service with lots of ridership, especially the link home from Hartford's intercity bus. UCONN should be approached for helping fund this more than the towns, as Windham especially would be deeply impacted by providing additional funding.

Don MacNeil 24 Green Lane, North Windham

Mr. MacNeil wants to know where the responsibility is from UCONN to ensure these students have the transportation they need. He wants to know why UCONN would abandon this run that hits the students' access to education so hard.

[M. Hart noted that the University is aware of the issue and WRTD is requesting their financial support].

Ruth Yuste 13 Foster Drive, Willimantic

Ms. Yuste advocates for additional, later evening service, as she and others often sleep in their offices. She is eager to meet with UCONN officials and WRTD with the hope of working toward this goal. She wants more communication between WRTD, UCONN and the students. WRTD is cutting the wrong service.

Timothy Bussey 78 Walnut Street, Willimantic

Mr. Bussey wants town government, WRTD, UCONN and the students to have a dialogue on this service with is necessary for grad students.

Arna Roy, 78 Walnut Street

Ms. Roy states that, with very unreliable taxi service from one company available in the area, WRTD is the only way to get between Willimantic and UCONN. Evening classes at UCONN run until 8 and 9pm, so this 8pm bus is crucial.

Todd Sisson 34 Pine Woods Lane, Mansfield

Mr. Todd states that the Route 195 Express Bus is his way home from work at 8pm. It is very difficult for him to otherwise get a ride, and he has used bus for years.

Julian Cook 29 Kathleen Drive, Willimantic

Mr. Cook notes that ridership for this service is mostly grad students who are also instructors at UCONN. He notes that it was very short notice for the hearing and also notes that nobody from UCONN administration is present. The buses fill up each morning at Foster Drive and people get left behind when the buses are full. This bus is his only way home at night. The taxi is \$30, if you can get it.

Renato Lacerda 933 Main Street, Willimantic

Mr. Lacerda chose to live in Willimantic because there is public transportation. He needs public transportation to stay.

Vialcary Crisostomo 90 Windham Street, Willimantic

No Housing on campus or graduate students, so chose Willimantic. On Saturdays, the last bus would be 4pm. No evening bus at all. Needs more service, not less.

George Moore 105 South Street, Willimantic

Mr. Moore requests an increase in service between Willimantic and Storrs. He believes that UCONN should be contributing financially and that WRTD and the Connecticut Department of Transportation need to figure out a way to make that connection.

Emily Mclure 933 Main Street. Willimantic

Ms. Mclure notes that people chose to live in Willimantic for its bus lines and that earlier services to UCONN are not useful if you can get to campus but not home.

Aimee Mwizerwa 363 D Roanoke Ave, Willimantic

Ms. Mwizerwa understood the transportation fee to UCONN would cover their transportation needs. She inquires as to the possibility that this could be used to cover this service in the future.

Ivan Ferrero 142 Foster Drive, Mansfield

Approved April 28, 2015

Mr. Ferrero notes that people with cars rely on this bus during harsh winter conditions when they don't feel safe driving. He notes that buses around campus are often run empty; UCONN should fund WRTD instead.

Danielle Dumaine 708 Middle Turnpike

Ms. Dumaine believes that UCONN should meet this need and wonders why this service in particular is being focused on.

M. Hart reiterated the overview of the situation for folks who came late. He advised that, if the Connecticut Department of Transportation does not secure funding soon, WRTD will hold a public hearing up near UCONN.

Windham Town Councilman Flores invited everyone to Windham Town Council meeting in progress.

The public hearing will remain open for comments. This session ended at 8:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dagmar Noll, Staff.