

**Windham Region Transit District**

**Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 24, 2015 - 2:00 p.m.**

**Windham Town Hall Auditorium**

**979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT**

**REGULAR MEETING MOTIONS and MINUTES**

Voting Members Present: T. Currier (Columbia), T. McNally, Secretary (Windham), T. Coonradt (Windham), A. Marcellino (Mansfield), Matt Hart (Mansfield), C. Abikoff, Ashford

Voting Members Excused: M. Roach, Chair (Coventry),

Guests Present: Dave Lee (First Transit)

Staff Present: Kurcinik, Noll

Public Present: William Little, Henry Crane, Jessica Lodwick, Becky Barton, Thomas Briggs, Kelly Beanaccini, SikeGraefritz, Francisco Concho, Allen Hyde, Ashley Trotter, Cera Fisher, Sara Ailshire, Jeremy Jelliffe, Lori Jeffers, Paula Frederick, Jane Gordon, Ruth Hartunian-Alumbaugh, RohitBatra, GaulvitAgcouval, SririamVijayan, Steven Manicastro, Denis Forasacco, Vincenzaladevaia, Kira Jardinella, Joseph Tumolo, William Little

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Hart called the meeting to order at 2:01p.m.

**2. Public Participation**

**a. Proposed Fixed Route Service Cuts Public Hearing**

M. Hart read the public notice into the record. He noted the current financial difficulties at WRTD and that funds will run out in February/March with a deficit of \$281,000. WRTD approached the Connecticut Department of Transportation our State oversight agency, and they have an agreement with WRTD to get supplemental funding with towns contributing a 17% local match to cover many of the routes. The one key route that they have not yet committed to funding is the Route 195 Express run. This run was taken on by WRTD several years ago without securing a funding source for it. ConnDOT is considering funding the \$29,000 for this. WRTD is also in discussions with UCONN.

Jeremy Jelliffe, 480 Main Street, Willimantic.

Mr. Jelliffe is a UCONN instructor advocating for the service. Many classes go until 8pm each night and this gives just enough time for students to catch the bus home.

Henry Crane, 66 Windham Street, Willimantic.

Mr. Henry complains about a driver not getting to stops on time.

Lori Jeffers, Willimantic.

Ms. Jeffers comments about food insecurity and how it is effected by route changes. She suggests that the Willimantic City Bus stop directly in front of Stop & Shop, and Big Y.

Thomas Briggs, 13 Foster Drive.

Mr. Briggs rides the Rt 195 Express Bus. He observes that it is full all the time and is much needed. He wants to see increased service, not reduced service; the students need a later bus, as he and others have to cut out of night classes early to catch the last bus home. He uses bus to get to work, class, and safely home. He believes this is excellent service, and asks that WRTD please not cut it.

William Little, Pleasant Street, Willimantic.

Mr. Little is looking for expanded service south of the Willimantic River. He relies on the bus when his car is not working and wants to see more service, not less.

Cera Fisher, Coventry.

Ms. Cera is a member of Graduate Employee Union. She brought WRTD to bargaining team and wants to be involved in finding funding.

Ruth Hartunium-Alumbaugh, Willimantic.

Ms. Hartunium-Alumbaugh works with international UCONN students on campus, usually graduate students. She often gives rides to folks who need to come home after 8:30 and recommends that WRTD add a 10pm run.

Jane Gordon, UCONN, Storrs

Ms. Gordon wants more information on why this run in particular is being cut.

[WRTD staff Kurcinik notes that UCONN ceased running the service due to budgetary issues. WRTD took it on without a funding source. Connecticut Department of Transportation is reluctant to fund it due to this.]

SilkeGraefritz, 16 Foster Drive, Willimantic

Ms. Graefritz speaks about Storrs center, which is growing and will create more demand.

Sara Ailshire, 260 Summit Street, Willimantic

Ms. Ailshire does not feel safe standing on the bus, as there is often standing room only. She would like routes added and larger buses.

SriramVijayan, 355 Ash Street, Willimantic.

Mr. Vijayan notes that research students work very late at night. He has slept in the lab at night because there was no way home. He asks that WRTD please not cut this service. The immediate effect of this bus being cut will be an exodus from Foster Drive apartments.

Francisco Concha, 480 Main St, Willimantic.

Mr. Concho complements the WRTD drivers. He works in science building and needs the bus service. He requests that WRTD coordinate the schedules more with the students.

Kelly Beanaccini, 133 Bolivia Street.

Ms. Beanaccini speaks to the vulnerable populations who are affected by this cut: staff, international students. Some folks who can't drive, can't afford cars, etc. and late night service is vital for these vulnerable groups.

M. Hart noted that WRTD will look to hold a public hearing on this at UCONN soon and that the public hearing will remain open for comments

**b. Items on Agenda**

None.

**3. Secretary's Report**

T. Coonradt makes a MOTION to approve the minutes from the 2/3/2015 meeting. T. McNally SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED unanimously.

T. Coonradt makes a MOTION to add the 2/4/2015 minutes to the agenda, T. McNally SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED unanimously.

**4. Correspondence**

Staff Kurcinik reported that Baroco Corporation asked WRTD to help with several of their clients in the event of an emergency need for evacuation. Communication between Mike Sanders, Connecticut Department of Transportation, and Neil Beets, Windham Town Manager, discussing snow removal from bus shelters: Mike Sanders told Neil Beets that the shelters were built by the State along with the Frog Bridge, but that the State does not maintain them and asked Windham Public Works to take care of three, the fourth being on private housing authority land with no documentation regarding it's origins. M. Hart will reach out to Neal Beets and is willing to offer support from Mansfield Public Works to clear those shelters out.

Consensus of the Board is to move item #8a, "Proposed Management Contract with First Transit", up in the agenda.

**5. New Business**

**a. Proposed Management Contract with First Transit**

M. Hart reported that he and M. Roach reviewed the proposal from First Transit for management services. The original proposal was \$15,000 per month. The second option is \$10,500 per month for a manager who live in an adjoining town. First Transit recommend an initial contract term of 6 months with an option for an additional term of 6 months. Connecticut Department of Transportation has said they would provide funding either in entirety or at the 83%/17% local match split. M. Roach would like to meet with the proposed manager. D. Lee, Area Vice President First Transit, presented Ellen Grant, an Operations Manager currently in Springfield, MA. Grant is interested in the opportunity to serve WRTD. The contract with WRTD would be for a manager only. The goal of First Transit will be to meet the Board's needs. T. Coonradt makes a MOTION to empower the Chair and Vice Chair to enter into a contract with First Transit subject to ConnDOT approval and funding. T. Currier SECONDED. MOTION APPROVED Unanimously.

**6. Old Business**

**a. Financial Update**

Our current balance is \$42,000. Payroll coming out tomorrow is at \$33,000. Invoices have been submitted to ConnDOT for \$150,000. An attempt to access WRTD's line of credit and credit line revealed that it had expired 2/1. The bank is extending WRTD's line of credit through April 1 while we get the line of credit back in place. M. Hart noted that we are waiting for official funding promise from ConnDOT to address this year's deficit and that, at the 2/4/2015 meeting, towns were positive about providing the required 17% match. T. McNally reported on Finance Meeting: will bring recommendations for fare increases, budget, schedule changes, hiring a financial officer, and the late audit to the next regular Board Meeting. McNally noted that our last audit extension with Connecticut Department of Transportation is up 3/31/2015. M.Hart will reach out to WRTD's auditor to find out why the audit is delayed.

**b. Service Report**

Kurcinik noted several service days were lost due to inclement weather, though we did take care of dialysis clients. WRTD had some issues with snow and frozen fuel lines, and alerted the public to suspensions on the WRTD web site, WFSB web site, and on WILLI.

**c. Facility Update**

The current expected finish date is 2/28/2015. A propane leak meant no one could be in the facility for a while, and that will delay moving in at least until mid-April. Comerford has secured a brand new phone system, computers, money counting system and drops safe, backup radio, and mounted fare boxes for all vehicles. Over \$100,000 of equipment has been approved.

**d. Disposal of Vehicles**

Permissions from the State to dispose of nine vehicles has been secured, and they must first be offered to other transit districts. WRTD will dispose of these through auction before the move if no one comes forward. M. Hart suggested that WRTD consider the reverse auction procedure.

**e. WRTD Board of Directors Vacancy: Treasurer**

This office is still open. The Board will work on changing the bylaws to change who can sign and authorize checks.

**f. \$.50 Transfers to Southeast Area Transit**

We are working on implementing this.

**g. Purchase of Capital Equipment**

Kurcinik and Comerford are working on this.

**h. Fare Discussion**

McNally reported that the finance committee is working on streamlining fares.

**7. Chairman's Report**

Vice Chair Hart announced that T. Coonradt is a father and welcomed C. Abikoff to the Board.

**8. Reports of Officers and Staff**

Kurcinik and T. McNally will attend the 7pm Windham Town Council meeting on 3/3/2010. M. Hart will contact WILLI about their request for a live interview with a WRTD representative.

9. Executive Session

- a. Discussion and possible action concerning attorney client privileged communication concerning personnel matter, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6)(E)

T. McNally made a MOTION to go into Executive Session at 3:20PM. T. Coonradt SECONDED. MOTION PASSED unanimously. Executive session ended at 3:35PM.

10. Next Meeting Tuesday, March 24, 2015

11. T. McNally adjourned the meeting at 3:36PM

Respectfully submitted by D. Noll for Secretary McNally.