



Commissioners David L. Jaeger, Jr., Alice McQuaid, Esq.
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Norwalk Transit District Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2020 at 2:00 PM – Norwalk Transit District

Attending

Norwalk Transit District Commissioners:

David Jaeger, call in
Alice McQuaid, call in

Norwalk Transit District Staff:

Kimberlee Morton, CEO
Lori Hammill, CLO
Rob Edwards, Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Matt Pentz, CFO
Lynette Brayboy, Director of Human Resources, call in
Matt Abbott, Data Analyst/Planner
Andrew Gallagher, Manager of Safety and Security
Dennis O'Connor, Marketing Representative, call in

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM via Microsoft Teams.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public who wished to address the Commissioners were asked to do so. There was no public representation in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FOR THE AUGUST 27, 2020 MEETING

Ms. Morton requested the following items for consideration under the Procurement Update.

- Bus Advertising Contract

Motion was made by Commissioner McQuaid to adopt the agenda with the addition of the noted items. Seconded by Commissioner Jaeger. Passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2020

The minutes of the June 25, 2020 Meeting of the Commissioners were unanimously approved as presented by Commissioners Jaeger and McQuaid.

FINANCE UPDATE

Preliminary June 2020

Mr. Pentz summarized the preliminary YTD June financials as presented, mentioning a change in overhead cost allocations during the month. The District historically absorbed many utility, legal, general building maintenance, IT, security, insurances, advertising and other miscellaneous overhead costs fully under the Norwalk Fixed Route Core Service bucket, without allocating any of these expenses to other service areas. Management contemplated this change for a while and felt it was a good time to implement the change. Under the new method, these overhead costs are allocated across services based on vehicle hours. NTD believes this switch is the most fair and accurate way to capture the true cost of providing all services.

For preliminary year-end results, Mr. Pentz mentioned the overall deficit from operations is \$840,409. He explained that much of the deficit relates to loss of fare revenue, PPE expenses and other unanticipated COVID related costs. Mr. Pentz said that he is working on providing a clean audit trail for the Districts initial CARES act relief drawdown, and that although it may take some more time, he remains optimistic that NTD will be able to re-coup the sustained losses and avoid an adverse impact to the existing debt for the fiscal year. The external auditors are scheduled to be on-site in late September, and the finance team is working towards the year-end process on a similar schedule to previous years.

2021 TOD and Cares Act Funding

Mr. Pentz mentioned the District received the FY 21 State Operating Agreement earlier in the week, and as expected funding will be flat to prior year. He noted there was an elimination of \$138k of UPASS subsidy, and that the District is working on finalizing a budget that aims to balance flat funding with escalating operating costs.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

Ms. Morton led the discussion on the following topics in Mr. Murray's absence.

- **Fare Collection**
Statewide resumption of fare collection is scheduled for October 5th. Barrier installation on all vehicles will be the determining factor for the actual start up date.
- **Barriers**
Barriers are installed on all door-to-door vehicles and the final delivery of 21 fixed-route vehicle barriers were delayed. The new delivery is scheduled for October 1st.
- **Masks**
Our current mask supply is plentiful. We anticipate additional federally supplied masks for distribution at two public "Mask Bash" distribution events in September and October.
- **PPE**

Hand sanitizer dispensers for vehicles have been installed and adequate sanitizer refills have been received. Fogger for germicidal cleaning is now part of the standard cleaning protocol. We have enough germicidal for 10 to 12 months. We continue to stock up on antibacterial hand wipes.

➤ **Employee Temperatures**

The State has not recommended the practice for employees or customers. Commissioner Jaeger shared the testing protocols in his company.

➤ **Contractors**

Contractors remain in on call status at the reduced rate previously negotiated. Door-to-door trips remain at approximately 30% of previous service levels.

➤ **New Bid Commencement and Driver Promotion**

Resulted in a grievance which is now at the third step.

HUMAN RESOURCES

HR Update:

- Resigned – Part-time Wheels Driver on August 20th
- Terminated – ADA Specialist July 7, 2020 and a Mechanic A on August 13th
- Hired– We hired 4 Part-time ADA Drivers and the class had started on July 13th
- Transition – On August 9th - Three ADA Drivers was transition to Wheels side and One Part-time Wheels Driver transition to Full-time All on August 9th
- One Part-time Cleaner was transition to Full-time on July 27th

COVID-19 Update – Travel Restrictions

Ms. Brayboy stated that the COVID cases have slowed down. We had a total of nine confirmed positives, and our last positive case was on April 30, 2020. We had a total of 25 employees that were out of work due to COVID-19, and all have returned to work except one. She added one employee that had been seriously ill due to COVID-19 continues to recover and is improving.

As of August 26, 2020, the total workforce out is 6%, of which 2% is due to COVID-19. The COVID % is relatively the same since August 1st, absenteeism was 5%, and 2% was related to COVID-19.

We are following the Governor's CT travel advisory requirements. Anyone who travels to one of the impacted states will be required to quarantine for 14 days and complete the CT travel form. Employees will need to use their benefit time.

Other Business

Working on these activities in the month of September - Open Enrollment, Flu Shot Clinic, Sexual Harassment Training for new hires.

MARKETING INITIATIVES

Mr. O'Connor provided the following updates.

Wheels2U Norwalk Restart

The first seven weekends of July and August are showing an average slightly under 60 rides. Promoting social distancing and W2U focusing on safe and reliable transportation.

Routematch – RM Pay and Branding

Promoting new paratransit payment service highlighting the ease and security for fare payment. The system eliminates the manual collection of tickets and customers will have their own personal account to deposit funds for use as payment for their trips. Customers, caregivers, agencies will be able to access the riders account. The tentative start is pending final software setup.

Wheels2U Westport

The public hearing was held July 23rd and the tentative start date was scheduled for August 24th but was moved to September 23rd. Website, posters, flyers and e-mail communications are prepared for distribution.

Bus Advertising Contract

The first two months of NTD's revenue share was \$8,850.50 for July and \$6,870.38 for August for a total of \$15,720.88. In September Vector Media has scheduled three super king ads for Dunkin Donuts along with additional COVID Public Health ads.

Commissioners were presented with a new bus wrap advertisement for Affinity Medical Marijuana Dispensary Facility which is consistent with our bus advertising guidelines.

Mask Distribution Events

One was held on September 15th and another is scheduled for October 5th

PLANNING UPDATE

Mr. Abbott provided an update on the following items.

Ridership Update

Overall ridership for all services is around -25% with our core wheels routes stabilized at around -20 to -25 percent. We predict that we will remain at this level until further developments occur within the COVID 19 pandemic. Our commuter shuttle ridership remains extremely low for all routes including Norwalk, Westport, and Greenwich with exception of the Norwalk Hospital Shuttle.

APC Certification

As mentioned at the last meeting we were nearing completion of our APC certification submittal. We now have successfully completed our APC Certification submissions and are waiting for accreditation by Avail.

Delayed COA Study

Once, we have the approval for our APCs we will be beginning the process for reevaluating the timing or a COA Study given COVID environment.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Mr. Gallagher, Manager of Safety and Security, discussed the 2nd Quarter Workers' Compensation & Accident Report numbers

Overview of new WC Provider

No WC claims were filed in the quarter. Effective July 1, 2020 the WC insurance provider transitioned from NJM (New Jersey Manufacturers) to the Workers' Compensation Trust.

Review of 2nd Quarter 2020 WC Claims and Vehicle Accidents

For the quarter there were ten collisions. Five were deemed preventable and five were non-preventable. Several insurance claims and settlements are underway. Discipline for preventable collisions were enforced. Commissioner Jaeger questioned whether ten collisions in a quarter was excessive? Mr. Gallagher explained based on number of service days, miles travelled and hours of service in the quarter that the count did not appear excessive. Only one out of the ten collisions resulted in an injury. Only one claim was for damage in excess of \$10K.

MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES REPORT

Mr. Edwards reported the following:

Brake Safe Tool

This tool allows us to immediately assess the functionality of brakes.

Staffing Level Assessment for Cleaning and Disinfecting Vehicles and Facilities

An assessment of the manpower needs based on the new cleaning protocols related to COVID.

PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Chief Logistics Officer, Ms. Hammill reported the following project updates.

Fuel Island and Bus Wash System Construction Project Updates

Interior work is scheduled on September 15th and start of site work on October 5th. Substantial completion of the work is expected mid-November, with bus wash installation anticipated through the month of December or pending installation of the equipment by Westmatic.

Award Recommendation to Refurbish (3) Rotary Lifts to Ray Jurgen in the amount of \$29,796.00.

This repair is needed to address safety concerns and maintain equipment in a state-of-good repair. This award is determined fair & reasonable by State of CT contract pricing however, this award is contingent upon System for Award Management (SAM) Registration by the vendor, which is an FTA requirement for all procurements over \$25,000. SAM is the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS. Vendor has been given an addition deadline to comply. On compliance contract award will be made. Motion to approve the recommendation contingent on the complaint SAMS certification was made by Commissioner McQuaid and seconded by Commissioner Jaeger. Motion carries 2-0.

Award Recommendation for ProAir Hepa-2 Filters for fleet inventory to Bus Parts Experts in the amount of \$68,998.85.

In an effort to combat the current pandemic APTA recommends - "Increase ventilation rates and install high-efficiency air filters on HVAC system" The PROAIR company has created a HEPA filtration system specifically designed for transit bus applications providing HEPA Filter, UVC Light and Photocatalyst. The Photocatalyst captures the UVC light from the lamp, concentrating it and acting more effectively to kill virus, bacteria and odors. In our search for competitive options it was determined there may be other more efficient solutions resulting in the decision to table this item pending additional research.

Award Recommendation for Avail ITS System Maintenance and Support Renewal in the amount of \$161,154.44.

Norwalk Transit District (NTD) issued an RFP for the purchase, installation and support of an Intelligent Transportation System on or about July 22, 2013 and made a significant investment into the Avail ITS System. Avail Technologies is the awarded manufacturer and distributor of the Avail ITS systems and internal components for the District. There is a definitive need for continuity of this service. Approval is requested in support of this project. Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Jaeger and seconded by Commissioner McQuaid. Motion passes unanimously.

Award Recommendation for On-Demand Transportation Solution Extension and Exercise Option Year 1 in the total amount of \$48,765.00.

This project is a continuation of our existing contract with VIA for MicroTransit technology. Five Westport vehicles at \$435/mo./vehicle (base year period pricing for 6-10 vehicles) x 3 mos. (balance of base period contract September 30, 2020-Dec. 31, 2020) = \$6,525.00. A total of eight Westport and NTD vehicles at \$440/mo./vehicle (Option Period 1 pricing for 6 to 10 vehicles) x 12 mos. (Option Period 1 – Year 2 contract- January 1, 2021-December 31, 2022) = \$42,240.00. Total maximum contract award of \$48,765 for both Westport and Norwalk MicroTransit services. Motion to approve the additional services for the remainder of the first contract year and the option to exercise the 1st option period in the amount not to exceed \$42,240.00 was moved by Commissioner Jaeger and seconded by Commissioner McQuaid. Motion carries 2-0.

CEO UPDATE

Ms. Morton provided the following updates.

APTA Award

NTD will be the recipient of the 1st place 2020 Grand American Public Transportation AdWheel Award. The winning entry was announced for the best marketing and communications to highlight transit needs/funding in our Wheels2U campaign to introduce an alternative on-demand transportation option and its app driven technology.

Routematch acquired by Uber Technologies

The provider of our door-to-door scheduling system, Routematch, was acquired by Uber Technologies. This brings together Uber's expertise in on-demand, global mobility technologies with Routematch's proven capabilities across paratransit, payment, fixed-route tools, and trip planning services. Both companies believe it will create new innovations that make it easier for agencies to provide the right transportation solutions to their riders, through an expanded suite of technologies. We are extremely excited to see what options will be offered that will look to integrating paratransit and microtransit services.

Open Employee Forums, State of the District

Five open forum sessions throughout the course of the day and evening were offered with limited participation.

Employee Survey

In October HR will conduct an employee satisfaction survey.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF LABOR NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE, WC CLAIM SETTLEMENT UPDATE AND PERSONNEL MATTERS

A motion was unanimously approved to recess the Public Meeting and move into Executive Session to discuss legal matters pertaining to labor negotiations, WC claim settlement and personnel matters at 3:05 PM. In executive session were employees, Morton, Hammill, Pentz, Brayboy and Gallagher.

A motion to move out of Executive Session was made at 3:20 PM and resume the Public Meeting was made by Commissioner McQuaid and seconded by Commissioner Jaeger. The motion passed unanimously.

The Public Meeting resumed at 3:20 PM.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPERLY BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS

Ms. Morton for the record noted Mr. Gallagher updated the Commissioners on an open WC claim currently in negotiations by the excess insurance carrier. The

District will assume some financial liability since this claim occurred 14 years ago during the time the District was self-insured. Mr. Gallagher left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Morton provided an update on the status of Union negotiations.

Ms. Morton summarized the following interim staffing changes and agency direction resulting from the long-term absence of the COO.

Reporting to the CEO :

- Transit Manager with a temporary stipend adjustment for assumption of some of the COO duties effective to the date of the COO's absence.
- Director of IT

Reporting to the CLO:

- Manager of Safety and Security continues to provide support across all departmental boundaries and his long-term role will be reviewed by Ms. Hammill and M. Pentz as part of our annual review process after union negotiations to be presented to the commissioners.

Reporting to the CFO:

- Marketing Representative
- Manager of Planning/Data Analyst currently reports to the CFO but will assume some of the COO and Marketing reporting duties as a result a salary adjustment was made consistent and within the current classification salary ranges established for this position.

Lastly Ms. Morton noted that we would proceed with the hiring process for temporary assistance in the area of operations focusing on project implementation and development. The day-to-day operations would continue to be led by the Transit Manager with the assistance of the CEO.

Mr. Pentz noted that the Marketing Representative has submitted a formal retirement with an effective date of November 30, 2020. The final details were reviewed with the Commissioners and will be committed to written agreement.

NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 AT 9:00 AM

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2020 at 9:00 AM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee A. Morton

Kimberlee A Morton, CEO

Norwalk Transit District