

MINUTES

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

March 4, 2009

8:30 a.m.

Conference Room at FREDericksburg Regional Transit

- Members in Attendance:** Lawrence A. Davies, City of Fredericksburg
Fulton deLamorton, Stafford County
Debe Fults, disAbility Resource Center
Jack Green, King George County
Richard Pearce, University of Mary Washington
Diana Utz, George Washington Regional Commission
Rodney White, Spotsylvania County
- Others Present :** Kathleen M. Beck, Director of Public Transit/FRED
Marilyn Graves, Administrative Assistant/FRED
Kelly Hannon, Reporter for The Free Lance-Star
Wendy Kimball, Assistant Director of Public Transit/FRED
Arnold Levine, Manager of Policy, Planning and Compliance
Ken Pollock, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Dr. Roy Weinstock, Citizen
- Members Absent :** Jan Erkert, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce
Deneal Helms, The Free Lance-Star
Edd Houck, Mary Washington Hospital
John Moen, WFLS
Lloyd Robinson, Alternate/George Washington Regional Commission
Fred Sisk, Citizen Representative
Sara Woolfenden, Alternate, Stafford County

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Davies at 8:40 a.m. on March 4, 2009, in the conference room at the FREDericksburg Regional Transit facility (a/k/a The Lawrence A. Davies Transit Center), 1400 Jefferson Davis Highway, Fredericksburg, VA.

The minutes for the meeting of January 7, 2009, were presented for approval and a motion was made by Ms. Utz and seconded by Mr. deLamorton that the minutes be approved as written; the motion was passed unanimously.

Ms. Beck introduced Ken Pollock from the office of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation; he is FRED's rural grant manager. Mr. Levine introduced Rick Pearce as the

new PTAB representative from the University of Mary Washington. Each person at the conference table introduced themselves.

Report by Director of Public Transit:

- Mr. Levine then proceeded with a discussion on the “Options Paper/FRED Fare Levels and Structure” that was distributed to PTAB in December of 2008 for their review; the same having been discussed at the PTAB meeting on January 6, 2009. A recommendation is needed from PTAB at this meeting as to which option they wish to be presented to City Council for their approval. The floor was opened for discussion.

Mr. Levine let the Board know that Ms. Beck and some of her staff visited the counties of Stafford and Spotsylvania last month to discuss budget issues and the issue of raising fares. Both counties choose Option #2 – increase the fare for each boarding of regular services to \$0.50 and increasing the fare for VRE feeder services to \$1.25. Spotsylvania County felt there should be a cost ratio adjustment and Fredericksburg had no recommendation on any of the options except that they do wish for the fares to be increased. The counties of Caroline and King George had no feedback on the fare options.

Mr. Levine talked about the current on-board survey; 80% or more riders indicated they would continue to ride FRED even at \$0.50 per boarding. Mr. Pearce asked if any other agency had implemented an increase like this and if so, what the results were. Mr. Pollock replied that he did not have that information but other systems are also discussing fare increases.

Assuming PTAB will accept Option #2 of the Fare Options paper, Mr. Levine distributed a proposed Forward that would be sent to City Council along with the paper formerly sent to members of the PTAB. If City Council approves the increase in fares, the change would go into effect on July 1, 2009. As well as the raise to \$0.50 for each boarding, regular monthly passes would increase from \$15 to \$25; yearly passes would go from \$150 to \$200, and VRE monthly pass would go from \$30 to \$40.

Ms. Beck reminded PTAB that the State has cut their amount of funding for operating money this year and will again next year.

Mr. Levine stated that ridership has increased 8% for January and February in 2009 compared to ridership for those months in 2008.

Mr. deLamorton made a motion, seconded by Mr. White, to recommend Option #2 to City Council.

Questions were then asked:

Ms. Fults asked about low income discount fares. Mr. Levine replied that social services agencies should be encouraged to purchase tickets and make them available to their clients as they see fit. FRED will not directly address this issue.

Mr. White asked if the recovery ratio as stated in item 5. of the Forward could be higher than the stated 12% (instead of “not less than 12%”). Mr. Levine explained how he reached 12% but the annual increase would be debated as to how much. He feels this will keep FRED focused, particularly since the region will go over 200,000 in population with the 2010 census and FRED’s ability to use federal funds for operations will go away.

Mr. Pearce asked if having a high recovery rate was of benefit for grants, with the answer being no.

A vote was called for on the motion. Said motion that the Public Transit Advisory Board recommend Option #2 to the Fredericksburg City Council was passed unanimously.

With reference to the survey of riders, Ms. Fults asked if the question of household income could include “less than \$10,000 annually. Ms. Beck asked that the question of whether the rider purchases a monthly or yearly pass could be added.

- Mr. Levine reported to the PTAB that two of FRED’s practices were chosen by the Federal Transit Administration as “Best Practices”:
 - VRE feeder service with use of those buses to improve headway in the City of Fredericksburg and in the County of Spotsylvania;
 - FRED’s Partnerships with the Star Radio Group and The Free Lance-Star for marketing to increase ridership.

Committee Reports:

- (1) **Mission, Goals and Objectives** – the report was sent to the PTAB members before this meeting. It seems that FRED is very much on target. This document will be reviewed at the end of the transit year.
- (2) **Partnership/Marketing** – “Take FRED Instead” has an advertisement in The Free Lance-Star each Monday. Ms. Kimball thanked everyone involved. The City Manager has asked FRED to submit this for a Virginia Municipal League award. Plans for on-board advertising are progressing. The committee is in the process of deciding the logistics and pricing for this. Partners of FRED will advertise for free. Wegman’s has approached FRED with the offer to shrink wrap all the buses. The buses will not be wrapped but Wegman’s will be contacted by the Partnership/Marketing Committee. This committee is working with the train station to have a space to put up FRED information. The current surveying of riders will soon go into the rural areas.
- (3) **Services to the Underserved** – this region was awarded a New Freedom grant and has hired a Regional Mobility Coordinator who will be introduced at the next PTAB meeting.
- (4) **Operations and Oversight** – Mr. White thanked FRED staff for discussing rural routes with two of the Spotsylvania County supervisors before their last Board of Supervisors’ meeting. Ms. Beck announced that a Request for Proposal is now out for eight replacement buses; two for King George, two for Caroline. Four buses will be through CMAQ funds and four buses will be with 5309 funds; 100%

of the local match will be picked up by the state. Some of the FRED buses are over the 300,000 miles useful life.

- (5) **Safety and Security** – Mr. Levine reported that security cameras helped law enforcement to locate a recent runaway.

Other Business:

June 3rd is the deadline for localities to submit any changes they wish to their service.

The new directory was previously sent to PTAB members.

Announcements:

FRED's rodeo will be held March 28th at the Jim Carpenter parking lot at the Bowman Center.


The Community Transportation Association of Virginia (CTAV) will hold its annual rodeo competition in Fredericksburg on April 17-18 at James Monroe High School. This is the first time FRED has hosted this event; Glenn Jenkins is chairman of the CTAV Rodeo Committee. There will be a reception at FRED on Friday evening from 6:00 – 8:00 and all the members of PTAB are invited to attend.

The Virginia Transit Association (VTA) will hold its annual meeting in Fredericksburg in June.

The next PTAB meeting will be held on May 6, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved by the Public Transit Advisory Board:


Marilyn M. Graves

7-1-09
Date