



MINUTES

RTA Joint Partners Coordination and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium

April 25, 2017

Clive Graham, Howard County Office of Transportation, served as Chairperson of the meeting. Stephanie Dittman, RTA Office Manager served as the Secretary and recorded the meeting proceedings.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:07pm.

Review/Approval of March 28, 2017 Joint Partners and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium Meeting Minutes will be deferred to the May Meeting.

March Financial Report (Suzanne Brown)

Suzanne Brown reviewed the financial report with an explanation for March financials reflecting a higher expenditure than budgeted. For the year RTA was over budget by \$71,375. Contributing factors to the over budget amount include this month's decrease in fare recovery down \$30,000, with an YTD decrease in fare recovery of \$200,000. March sales for fixed route have rebounded with paratransit sales remaining strong. For the month of March, 10,200 transfers were disbursed, with a reminder that the transfers are non-revenue producing. Three out of five RTA departments went over their budgeted expenses for the month. Further explanation regarding March over budget figures included the snowstorm affecting overtime pay in addition to a missed day of fare recovery.

Insurance premiums for union employee's health care has increased from 65 enrollees in October 2016 to 79 enrollees in March 2017. RTA provides 80 percent of the insurance premium costs.

The cost for RTA Mobility rides assigned to taxi companies in March was \$25,000, compared to the budgeted amount of \$16,000.

Maintenance costs illustrate an increase due to a rise in essential parts, outside repairs and 31 tow invoices.

Statistical Snapshot Report (Mark Pritchard)

Missed trips increased due to the lack of available vehicles, in addition to road calls due to in-route vehicle failures. Workers Compensation claims increased with eight claims related to trips and falls unrelated to the weather. The injuries were not serious and did not require an extended period of absence.

Anthony Foster asked what efforts will be in place to avoid the extension of the trend for missed trips into May. Mark Pritchard explained that although the trends are not good, ridership is down regionally and nationally with other public transportation services. Unfortunately, decreased ridership at RTA is further aggravated by the vehicle equipment problems often discussed at these meetings. The seven heavy duty transit buses to arrive at the end of the year will help, but the long-standing underinvestment in vehicle capital will remain a challenge.

Ron Dillon inquired about ridership down 11 percent, but fare box recovery is down 30 percent. Are we not collecting the appropriate fare with four times as much ridership being down? Mark Pritchard said that the ridership data is somewhat unreliable since the RTA lacks an electronic fare collection system that has the ability to count passengers by the various fare types. Clive Graham added that the decline in fare box revenue is a serious concern and is one of the reasons for putting a better fare system in place as well as for establishing a Commission to advocate for improvements and upgrades.

GM Reports/Staff Updates (Mark Pritchard)

March operator recruitment resulted in seven new operators completing the training course and April recruiting efforts have resulted in nine new operators.

The arrival of three electric buses as part of an experimental technology, fully funded by by the federal Transit Administration through MTA, have brought challenges with the vehicles experiencing various issues related to battery powered modules/battery cell. The bus manufacturer, BYD has provided on-site engineering and maintenance staff to address the issues. Clive Graham commented that Howard County has to accept and sign off on the receipt of the three electric buses by the end of June or the grant will become void. Clive Graham provided updates addressing the immediate need for 20-25 buses with seven new buses scheduled to arrive in December, in addition to the three electric buses pending sign off release. Efforts require a financial commitment from the Partners for an additional ten buses to be ordered in August.

Transit Development Plan Update (Clive Graham)

The five year operations and improvement plan for the region (TDP) has reached the halfway point. The information obtained and presented in a technical report by consultant KFH, illustrates many components including the age of the rider, employment status, along with the household income and can be accessed on the Transit Development Plan website.

Anne Arundel County and Prince George's County held a workshop noting that the recommendations from the previous TDP are still valid to utilize to connect other areas as a region. Anthony Foster

expressed that this will provide the opportunity for Laurel routes to improve connectivity. Earl Armiger suggested that due to the ridership comprised of lower household incomes, efforts need to be made to link the routes to businesses as a priority.

Clive Graham advised that TDP recommended alternative routes and schedules will be available for public input and review at a series of public meetings likely to take place during the summer months.

FY 18 Budget, Allocations, Memorandum of Understanding (Clive Graham)

Clive Graham opened discussions indicating that as contract manager Howard County will have to have a signed MOU from all parties on July 1, 2017 in order to begin service in FY 2018.

Clive Graham presented his latest proposed MOU for FY 2018. The FY18 budget created concerns regarding the jurisdictional allocations and the associated cost per routes. Since the counties are unsure of their final available budgets, Clive had prepared an interim MOU for the first quarter only, from July 1st thru September 30th. By July 1st all Partners will have knowledge of their available budgets, which may require the necessity to cut service beginning in October to match their available funds. A minimum of two months lead time is essential to provide notification of public meetings and response to public comments for any cuts in service.

Exhibit A to the MOU shows the jurisdictional numbers, by parties and grants with a total RTA operating budget of \$16.2 million. He noted that this amount represents a lower budget than what the Partners previously recommended in January 2017, based on the final budget recommended by the Howard County Executive.

Clive asked Anne Arundel County, Prince George's and the City of Laurel to provide him written notice by Friday, April 28th, if any jurisdiction feels that they will not enter into the 1st quarter interim MOU, which will result in the process to discontinue service to their jurisdiction, beginning on July 1st.

If a jurisdiction signs the interim MOU and their budget comes back without the full approval for the allocated FY18 funding, the planning process will need to start to cut service to a level the jurisdiction is capable of funding.

Jai Saunders commented that Howard County can only authorize to invoice the 1st quarter allocation of funding without a signed MOU. This is because the first quarter can be funded by grant funds but the entire FY 2018 requires the funding commitments from the local government partners.

Shuttle Connecting Odenton/Savage MARC stations; Impacts on Route 203/M (Mark Pritchard)

Mark Pritchard shared that he has been working for some time with Ramond Robinson, Anne Arundel County and others including MTA, and employer's representatives from Ft. Meade, NSA, and from the offices on National Business Parkway. The project is part of the Baltimore Link to create a transit link between Odenton and Savage connecting lines and servicing Piney Orchard. Based on MTA procuring vehicles, the service could be available in September or October 2017. A portion of the 203/M serving

the Piney Orchard area is proposed to become part of the new Route 504. Any new service provided in the Route 504 service area will require a public hearing.

Ramond Robinson said that he came to Anne Arundel County in October 2016. Due to the parking issues at Odenton MARC station, thought was given to extend the route to provide serving Piney Orchard on the existing Route 203/M, rider utilizing the route each day. The off peak service provided on current Route 203/M service is extended in off peak hours south of Piney Orchard on Waugh Chapel Road as far as Crofton. There are few riders, and Anne Arundel County intends to use a vehicle from the Aging and Disability department between 10:00am – 3:00 pm Odenton MARC to Crofton. The service would operate on a flexible point- deviation basis which also would meet ADA paratransit requirements.

D’Andrea Walker pointed out that some changes may occur to RTA transportation services provided in Prince George’s County. Sue Poole commented that from a planning and communication perspective, as changes are made to existing routes consideration needs to be ascertained to the ramifications of RTA’s branding and the process and procedures that are necessary to communicate changes to the public. A series of events have to occur collectively for changes and should be limited to either quarterly or every six months or in conjunction with other changes.

Clive Graham noted that the signed MOU would allow the Commission to hold public hearings. In the absence of a signed MOU, the current policy for service changes require that public hearing be held before the Howard County Public Transportation Board regardless of what jurisdiction changes occur.

D’Andrea Walker advised that Prince George’s County has requested to MTA for Prince George’s County to receive the \$1.8 million Washington Area grant directly. Clive Graham stated there are four regional routes which require those funds for support. The uncertainty of the outcome from the request is a contributing factor to first quarter funding of FY 18 in the MOU.

Adjournment: 3:19pm.

Attendees’

Ron Dillon	Anne Arundel County
John Spencer	Anne Arundel County
Ramond Robinson	Anne Arundel County
Nathan Grace	City of Laurel
Clive Graham	Administrator, Howard County Office of Transportation
Allison Calkins	Howard County Office of Transportation
Jai Saunders	Finance, Howard County Office of Transportation
Earl Armiger	Howard County
Judith “J” Davis	Prince George’s County
Anthony Foster	Prince George’s County Office of Transportation
D’Andrea Walker	Prince George’s County Office of Transportation

Mark Pritchard
Ron Skotz
Susan Poole
Suzanne Brown
Stephanie Dittman

General Manager, RTA
CAO, RTA
Director of Communications and Marketing, RTA
Director of Finance, RTA
Office Manager, RTA