



MINUTES

RTA Joint Partners Coordination and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium

August 22, 2017

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

The Chairperson (Clive Graham) called the meeting to order at 1:07pm.

Review/Approval of July 25, 2017 Joint Partners and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium Meeting Minutes (Clive Graham)

The July 25, 2017 Joint Partners and Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium meeting minutes were approved.

July 2017 Financial Report (Suzanne Brown, Director of Finance)

Suzanne Brown reviewed the financial report for July noted as the first month of the new fiscal year. Cash fare recovery for July compared to the new budget was down by \$23,000. The fixed route recovery comparison was presented for 2017 (\$82,699) compared to 2016 (\$93,084). The amount of transfer tickets redeemed for July were 10,204.

Three new advertisers were added in July however, the numbers fell below in comparison to 2016.

The finance team manages benefits and is responsible for a component of each new hire and termination. In July there were three new hires and three terminations. In reviewing the calendar year to date there were 59 new hires and 56 terminations. The number of terminations represents an extremely costly amount for benefits, drug testing, and the hiring process. The finance team touches each of these new hires and terminations.

The maintenance department was over budget with salary due to the transition of a staff member to family leave, in addition to vacation leave and holiday work. Other expenses that contributed to being over budget \$5,947.00 for July; outside services for alignments, bodywork and major repairs to the vehicles and thirty one towing invoices.

The cost associated with advertising for the Baltimore Sun campaign was \$16,000. Route Match for July was higher than anticipated at \$90,403.

Discussion ensued regarding the report. Ron Dillon asked with the cash fare down 21 percent, is rider ship also down 21 percent? Ron Skotz replied that there is a correlation. Ron Skotz provided further explanation for the Route Match monthly cost. The July amount represents the monthly cost in addition to a one time cost for the implementation. The monthly invoices for Route Match should be approximately \$20,000. Fifteen additional tablets will be delivered in August for the completion of providing updated computers for the entire fleet and dispatch.

Mike Dwyer inquired as to the speculation for the continued drop in ridership. Andrew Johnson responded that with the amount of missed trips multiplied by passengers per hour, the numbers equate to approximately 4,000 passengers which reduces fare recovery. The anticipated delivery of new buses will provide a reduction to the overall missed trips. Andrew further commented that in July there were three free service days due to the heat that affected RTA, MTA and WMATA. Ron Skotz shared that the cost to fare recovery was a reduction in collected fares of over \$10,000 for three code red days.

The question was raised concerning a more aggressive advertising approach to increase revenue. Sue Poole replied that we have a contract with Direct Media to secure advertising both inside and outside of the buses. Since RTA's location is between both MTA and WMATA, Direct Media is able to pull a lot of contracts into our revenue stream. She is hopeful that with the delivery of more vehicles, we will see an increase for FY 18.

Statistical Snapshot Report (Andrew Johnson, Acting GM, RTA)

The information previously distributed on Friday contained incorrect formulas. The corrected report will be edited and distributed by the end of the week.

Andrew Johnson shared that with Route Shout 2.0, information will be available for individual rider boarding locations. The app will begin October 15th and promotional efforts are beginning.

Action Item: Edited July Statistical Snapshot Report to be provided by August 25th.

GM Report/Staff Updates (Andrew Johnson, Acting GM, RTA)

July operator recruitment resulted in six new operators completing the training course. Three operators and one supervisor that had previously terminated their employment returned to RTA. Effective July 1st a new sign on bonus was distributed to all new Operations Facility employees over a period of fifteen months. All eligible Operations Facility employees hired on or after July 1st that remain employed for the full fifteen months will be eligible to receive a \$1,000 sign on bonus. A \$100 bonus will be distributed after the completion of the 90 day probation period. Subsequent bonuses of \$300 each will be distributed after the completion of employment for six months, one year and 15 months. The overall savings of six to seven new hires will offset the cost of the \$1,000 bonus per eligible new hire Operations Facility employee. The cost incurred to provide training to each new operator and assign a route is approximately \$3,200 - \$3,600 per operator hired.

September recruiting efforts have resulted in seven fixed route and one paratransit operator scheduled to attend the training classes.

Discussion ensued as to the feedback shared from returning staff to RTA. Andrew Johnson commented that the supervisor assumed that at the new job they would be provided with a higher salary however this required additional time away from home in addition to personal road expenses incurred. One of the operators didn't feel comfortable with the new routes assigned in Baltimore. The returning staff shared the reasons for their return to RTA in the new operator training class. Andrew said that the biggest complaint from the current operators are the passenger complaints directed at the drivers regarding the timeliness and the condition of the bus fleet.

The addition of the three electric buses to the fleet continues to get positive feedback. Efforts are currently being performed to resolve the charging station affecting the circuit breakers at the Mall in Columbia.

Route Match is currently utilized with the RouteShout 2.0 program. Sue Poole originally planned to promote the program with the launch of the new proposed route changes, however to avoid any negative rider experiences, the program will begin October 15th once the new routes are running as projected.

For the first time in RTA history every staff member received a performance review. The implemented evaluation performance review will continue annually.

Maintenance department has set a goal for maintaining the fleet in service. Effective October 1st RTA will go from 32 peak to 37 peak buses. In an effort to minimize road calls further enhanced repairs will be performed. When replacing a part the technician will evaluate any additional parts which directly connect that may also require replacement. Although this will increase the cost for the repair it will further enhance the process of the repair and eliminate an additional repair.. The strategy is to inspect each vehicle repair and evaluate the necessity for additional maintenance repairs.

Open discussion continued on the urgency of receiving the twelve new small buses; four dedicated for Anne Arundel County. It was noted that the application of decaling the buses was causing the delay in delivery of the buses. The buses have been produced and a decision will be made regarding a possible "as is" delivery in particular for the Route 504. Ron Skotz shared that the latest delivery was scheduled for four weeks ago. Sue Poole commented that the decals were approved six weeks ago. This is custom decaling beyond the specifications outlined in the contract. The cost is \$2,600 - \$2,700 per decal package. Ron will contact the company this afternoon to notify them of the urgency for delivery of the buses.

Ramond Robinson inquired on the latest date that the October 1st proposed route changes effective date can be modified. Ron Skotz replied by September 1st.

It was noted that the four buses for Anne Arundel County are pre-titled to Anne Arundel County. The additional eight buses will be titled to Howard County.

Kathleen Donodeo asked if the drivers have been briefed regarding the changes and enhancements that will go into effect on October 1st. Andrew Johnson replied that basic information has been shared on the Route 503 to Route 504 in addition to the changes effecting the Route 407 and Route 405. Nothing

definitive has been shared regarding Route 501/Silver. The operators have seen the route layouts and are aware of the proposed changes and enhancements.

Earl Armiger inquired if the 500 promotional bags distributed at the Howard County Fair and the press conference at the Mall in Columbia were all distributed. Sue Poole commented that an order was placed for 2,300 bags. 500 bags were filled with the current 401/Green schedule, a free one way ride token, hand sanitizer, tissues and a compass/light/whistle combo keychain. The main purpose for the outreach was to drive the public to the interactive website promoting the electric buses.

During the month of July the RTA provided assistance for the Laurel fireworks display and also the Howard County fireworks display. The cost was covered in a budget line item.

Action Item: Efforts are currently being performed to resolve the charging station affecting the circuit breakers at Columbia Mall. RouteShout 2.0 program to be implemented by October 15th. Decision to be made regarding “as is” delivery of the new buses. Eight new buses, pending delivery date, to be titled to Howard County. Supervisors to provide briefing to the Operators regarding the changes and enhancements that will go into effect on October 1st.

FY18 Budget, Allocations, Memorandum of Understanding, Future governance (Clive Graham)

Anne Arundel County and Prince George’s Counties signed two different MOUs. Clive said there should be one signed single agreement of the MOU representing the jurisdictions. Anthony Foster requested the correct MOU for signature of approval be provided and expressed concern with the repeat of the process for approval.

The seating of the Commission will occur with their first official meeting on September 26th at the Joint Partners Meeting.

The goal set for the approval of the remaining months of the FY18 budget is the September Joint Meeting. Anthony Foster has a call next week with RTA to discuss the budget. RTA needs to review the budget which Clive provided on August 10 regarding service provided on a revised budget. Clive noted that the budget is predicated on the 501/Silver terminating the route at Arundel Mills. To continue the Route to BWI Airport will change the budget.

Clive reviewed the bylaws from last year regarding the responsibilities of the Commission and has made changes. The edited draft will be distributed for the September Joint Meeting to adopt the bylaws and elect a chairperson. Anthony Foster inquired about the Commission’s responsibility number 1.1. Did performance mean operational or management? Clive answered the responsibility is for operations. The Commissioners had made a commitment to attend the monthly meetings. The Commissioner chair would oversee the monthly meetings.

Action Item: Anne Arundel County and Prince George’s County need to sign one single agreement of the MOU representing the jurisdictions. The goal set for the approval of the remaining months of the FY18 budget is the September Joint Meeting. RTA to review the budget which Clive provided regarding service provided on a revised budget.

Services Changes Public Hearing July 25, Decision, implementation (Clive Graham)

The July 25th public hearing provided an opportunity for input and feedback from the public. All of the changes and enhancements are straight forward with the exception of the Route 501/Silver.

Clive opened discussion on the changes to the Route 501/Silver by displaying the route map and providing an explanation on the current route and where the proposed service would terminate. The riders have expressed concern with the transfer to MTA Bus 75 to continue to BWI Airport.

The question has been raised for RTA to review the time tables for the Route 501/Silver to ascertain the continuation of the one seat ride with a frequency reduction to maintain a one hour headway to Arundel Mills. Another option is to provide the current Route 501/Silver at a lower frequency as a one and a half hour trip.

Ramond Robinson suggested that the 502/B Laurel Towne Center to Arundel Mills remove the Walmart loop and Business Park and continue to BWI Airport. Discussion ensued with Andrew Johnson explaining that to maintain Route 501/Silver will require a 1 ½ hour trip. The same ride with a reduced frequency and the 502/B to eliminate the Business Park and Walmart were timed yesterday and today. Due to a reduction in traffic with individuals either on vacation or observing the eclipse the route was 51 to 54 minutes to BWI. Traffic was minimal, suggesting a frequency of one hour and fifteen minutes. This will offset people waiting at Laurel Towne Center and shorten the current time from Laurel Towne Center to BWI. However, finding frequency and connection time is difficult. It was noted that MTA has a 40 minute headway. Ramond Robinson commented that the headways and service are better with connections provided by MTA services but you cannot alleviate the one seat ride dilemma. MTA does not accept RTA transfers for the connection to BWI, causing the rider to experience a change in the cost structure. Andrew reminded that after the Labor Day weekend the timeframe will increase by fifteen to twenty minutes.

Clive Graham suggested that the decision be postponed for a month to provide accurate data. However, he cautioned that every month that a decision is not made regarding the 501/Silver Route is at a cost of \$200,000 divided by nine (\$33,000). Kathleen Donodeo agreed to wait and time the route after Labor Day to perform the 501/Silver ride checks to make a decision based on accurate data. To change one route will alter the run pick causing a driver to lose a route. Andrew commented that he cannot perform the run pick until a decision has been finalized regarding the route.

Clive Graham recommended to defer the decision on the 501/Silver and move the effective change date to January 2018. The estimated cost to run the 501/Silver for nine months is approximately \$200,000.

Kathleen Donodeo wants to make this work as the best compromise. She explained her concern with providing the trip in an hour with an hour and fifteen minute headway. If incorrect the hour equates to a two hour trip from Columbia Mall.

Nathan Grace inquired as to how long the trip is from Arundel Mills to BWI Airport. Andrew Johnson answered with variation times depending on the time of day approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Clive Graham commented that the concern is the rider paying the additional fare, with the MTA headways joined up. Ron Dillon shared that for riders traveling from Montgomery County to the Airport requires

an additional \$5.00 to travel from Arundel Mills to BWI Airport. Ron Dillon commented that there are currently three service providers traveling to BWI Airport.

Clive Graham suggested that due to the budget issue for Anne Arundel County, Howard County will provide a decision to either keep the one seat ride to BWI Airport or keep the one hour service to Arundel Mills. Clive offered to hold off on the final decision for a month to perform a time test for a review and decision for the change effective in January 2018. Clive proposed to split the cost between Anne Arundel County and Howard County for the month for the Route 501/Silver for a testing and review period. Clive, Ramond and Kathleen to continue discussions with a decision no later than Friday.

Action Item: Clive Graham recommended to defer the decision to terminate the service to BWI Airport on the Route 501/Silver and move the effective route change date to January 2018. Clive, Ramond and Kathleen to continue discussions with a decision no later than Friday.

Transit Development Plan Update (Clive Graham)

Last night was the first of four scheduled TDP public meetings with thirteen people in attendance. Clive shared the visuals from last night's presentation.

Next Meeting

9/26 1:00 pm – Joint Partners Coordination meeting. Due to the TAM event in Ocean City, Ron Skotz, Sue Poole and Ramond Robinson will not be in attendance at the September Joint meeting.

Adjournment: 2:52pm

Attendees:

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| Ron Dillon | Anne Arundel County |
| Ramond Robinson | Anne Arundel County |
| Mike Dwyer | City of Laurel |
| Nathan Grace | City of Laurel |
| Clive Graham | Howard County Office of Transportation |
| Kathleen Donodeo | Howard County Office of Transportation |
| Allison Calkins | Howard County Office of Transportation |
| Jai Saunders | Howard County Office of Transportation |
| Earl Armiger | Howard County |
| Anthony Foster | Prince George's County Office of Transportation |
| Andrew Johnson | Acting General Manager, RTA |
| Ron Skotz | CAO, RTA |
| Susan Poole | Director of Communications and Marketing, RTA |
| Suzanne Brown | Director of Finance, RTA |
| Victor Jimenez | Call Center Manager, RTA |
| Stephanie Dittman | Office Manager, RTA |

