

**RALEIGH TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**MARCH 9, 2017**  
**MINUTES**

The Raleigh Transit Authority met on Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 3:30 p.m in the Council Chamber, Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 W. Hargett Street, with the following present:

Jane Thurman, presiding  
Yvonne Bailey  
Ray Magsanoc  
Sherita McCullers  
Debra Rezeli  
Tolulupe Omokaiye  
Billy Warden

Staff present: David Eatman, Marie Parker

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Thurman.

The following items were discussed with actions taken as shown:

**AGENDA – APPROVED AS PRESENTED**

Vice Chair Thurman reported there would be no changes to the agenda as presented.

Without objection, the agenda was approved.

**MINUTES – FEBRUARY 9, 2017 – APPROVED**

Members had received a copy of the February 9, 2017 minutes in their agenda packets. Ms. McCullers moved approval of the minutes. Her motion was seconded by Ms. Rezeli, unanimously passed. Vice Chair Thurman ruled the motion adopted.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **5310 PROGRAM UPDATE – RECEIVED**

Ann Steedly, Planning Communities, provided the presentation of this item noting the 5310 Program involves enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities and is an FTA Program. The Program Management Plan was approved in 2015. She reviewed Section 5310 Program roles and explained GoRaleigh is also an applicant to the program. Staff works closely with CAMPO during the process. The Call for Projects is live and is up until April 7 and is on line. Ms. Steedly reviewed outreach efforts including the workshop scheduled for March 16, 2017. Key dates were reviewed with Ms. Steedly pointing out they are still coordinating a subcommittee to work on the applications. Recommendations for approved applications will then be made to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and will then go to the CAMPO Executive Board on May 17, 2017.

Mr. Eatman explained this is a recurring program that started in 2015. He reviewed previous projects approved under this program.

The update was received as information.

### **GORALEIGH STATION RENOVATION UPDATE – RECEIVED**

Gil Johnson, Capital Consulting, provided a presentation with slides showing the status of the GoRaleigh Station Renovation project. Work on Phase 2 is occurring at this point. The new elevators are in service with Mr. Johnson noting the elevator is high quality and is larger in order to handle a hospital gurney which is a new regulation. Pictures were provided of the main pedestrian corridor lighting. Glass installation is occurring now which is very durable. We are moving into permanent signage areas now and looking at comprehensive signage and radio display monitors. Data cabling for displays have been put in and new restroom signage is up. Staff is looking at bicycle racks. The glass work of the bus lane area is completed at the south end and all canopies and wind screens on the east side have been installed. Other slides were shown of the ground level bus lanes, etc. American South has been taking advantage of the good weather and have poured the curb and gutter and sidewalk areas. The bus lane surface on the east bus lane near Hargett Street will be paved this week. They will be working on some areas on Blount Street but will schedule opening of Phase 2 in order to pull busses off Martin Street. Ribbon cutting will take place the week of April 22.

Mr. Eatman indicated there are 38 monitors available providing departure information and depending on the zone riders are in, will show the busses leaving from that zone and will be much like the airport. Mr. Warden questioned the plans for getting press coverage with Mr. Eatman explaining staff is working on that currently and will be worked on by Marketing and the Communications Department.

The update was received as information.

## **WAKE TRANSIT PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS – INFORMATION RECEIVED**

Members received in their agenda packets information relating to the Wake Transit Plan Public Engagement Meetings. Mr. Eatman reported the Raleigh transportation/Transit staff, in cooperation with GoTriangle have scheduled four public meetings in Raleigh to discuss the FY2018 Draft Wake Transit Work Plan developed by the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee of the Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC). There will be 4 additional meetings in Wake Forest, Cary, Zebulon and Fuquay-Varina. The plan is online and contains all elements of the plan. Mr. Eatman explained during administrative activities there was the need to get ready for implementation of the ½ cent sales tax beginning April 1. This item was included on this agenda in order to make members aware of the four meetings in Raleigh. He noted this is the first year of what is hoped will be many years of public review of the annual work plan.

Discussion followed regarding possible attendance at the meetings with Mr. Eatman stated the attendance depends of if the meetings are in conjunction with other activities at the community centers and may get traffic from people who may not have known about this. Staff is working with the regional partners to get the word out about the meetings. Mr. Warden asked what we want the audience to take away from the meetings other than having had the opportunity to provide input. Mr. Eatman explained the desire for the meetings to be informative but they are sometimes procedural requirements and these meetings meet both of those. These meetings meet the basic requirement of being sure the public is being informed of what is planned in FY18 and how the ½ cent sales tax funds will be used. These meetings are important but as we get into the Implementation Plan, staff will be working hard to get public input. Ms. McCullers asked if there will be information on these meetings inside the buses with Mr. Eatman responding placards will be ordered, there will be press releases and website information provided. Mr. Magsanoc suggested also using social media. Mr. Eatman indicated there is also waketransit.com that includes all this information. In response to a question from Ms. Thurman, Mr. Eatman noted there will be self-guided displays, videos and tables set up for citizens to have interaction with staff.

This item was received as information.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE – REPORT RECEIVED

The Finance and Policy Committee met on March 1, 2017 and made the following recommendations:

**CNG Feasibility:** Mr. Eatman indicated this relates to alternate fuel (compressed natural gas) and has been in the committee since last year.

Ms. Bailey provided the Committee report noting the committee received the final report on the Feasibility Study in March 2016 after which the committee reviewed it and the final supplemental report was issued in February 2017. The committee met with public utilities staff about getting the fuel at a low cost and discussed how we can get the gas delivered to us through methane production. The City applied for a grant for the infrastructure project and received the grant for over \$3 million with the infrastructure cost being over \$4 million. Ms. Bailey explained the first part of the final supplemental report details and updates financials and different assumptions including the money that will be saved. The committee further reviewed the different technologies shown in charts in Section 3. A lot of work was done by the Committee in studying this issue. Members received a document to assist with the decision and ultimately the Finance and Policy Committee recommends going with CNG purchase. There are a lot of logistics, etc. involved so a decision needs to be made so this fuel can be used in new buses. Out of a fleet of 100, we are looking at 75 for replacement. She explained what the committee liked was because we are doing 75 buses, we are not prohibited from trying electric.

Mr. Eatman reported the City Council over the last 2 years has gone through their strategic planning process and one main objective from the plan was objective 4.2 calling for examining and planning for alternative fuel technologies for the transit service. GoRaleigh has grown over 50% in the last decade. Ten years ago the fleet was 55-60 and now it is 100 vehicles and that will go to 150-175 vehicles in the next decade. Mr. Eatman stated even though this is an initiative from the Council, we have been thinking about CNG since planning began on the maintenance facility in 2009. All components meet CNG code in the maintenance facility There would be some retrofits but would not have to do a complete renovation to implement this technology. The key assumptions for conversion were reviewed. Clean air and emission reduction is exciting and may include financial savings. He noted we have the Wake Plan but we will be moving forward with the 75 busses. As new busses are purchased they will be equipped with CNG engines and that will happen quickly and will meet the 75% conversion to CNG in 5-7 years. When the 75% threshold is reached we will have data on the benefits and can determine the next step forward from that point. Mr. Eatman indicated we will look to doing an electric

demo in the future if funds or found or there are grant resources to do that. The fleet cannot be flipped as quickly with electric as with CNG. He noted there are routes that would be great candidates for electric technology. Discussion followed regarding savings as a result of the CNG change with Mr. Eatman stating the projected savings would be nearly \$1 million per year over the life of the project. Cost for upgrading the maintenance garage is approximately \$283,000. The major expense is the fueling station and if the MPO approves it next Wednesday, we will receive a \$3 million grant to go towards this cost. Staff plans to have other funds identified to close the \$3.5 million to \$3.7 million gap and will come to the authority next month with sources of those funds. Mr. Eatman noted there will be a reduction of 20 metric tons of carbon dioxide per bus. In response to questioning by Ms. Omokaiye, Mr. Eatman indicated the current cost for a bus is \$460,000 and is \$510,000 with a CNG engine. He explained if we go forward with this recommendation today, staff would hit the ground running and would get this included in the FY18 budget and the busses will be received in FY19. Once we are sure the infrastructure for CNG is in place, every bus after that point would be CNG and in FY 19 and FY20 that would be 40 vehicles and any bus related to transit. There seems to be some interest in making sure that the Wake Transit Plan does invest in clean fuel and low emission technology.

Mr. Ward asked what is the argument against this. Mr. Eatman indicated one argument is the price difference between CNG busses and regular diesel busses that that is overcome through operating savings and fuels. Also it is tempting for someone to say why would you invest in another fossil fuel when we have electric technology which is advancing quickly. Mr. Eatman stated he feels we are diversifying our fleet to make the best decision available in the time we are in and want to be sure we get every ounce of our investment back. He stated we do want to look at electric and would love to demo electric but it is not ready to turn key yet. Mr. Eatman explained the electric technology is not there yet and we are committing up to 25% of our fleet for some other advanced technology which is changing every month. He felt CNG is a great interim step with a very long term potential. He noted electric is new and they are learning every day and batteries are getting better every year but it will take time. Ms. Bailey explained Public Utilities is getting ready to become a supplier of CNG. Mr. Eatman explained Public Utilities is refining methane to CNG and at a grade that can be introduced into the gas network and would transfer fees to Public Utilities but the goal is to save below retail for CNG. If we can leverage something from Public Utilities by 2022, that is an additional reason to move forward and this is viable and has potential. The decision on CNG is stand alone. The ultimate goal would be to find some long term stable pricing and in the interim we will be working with market rate pricing. Mr. Eatman indicated there are lots of variables we will be working out as we progress. Most of the cost drivers for CNG are the engines themselves noting these engines are more expensive but it is a very simple engine and does not require after treatments as the diesel engines require.

Mr. Ward asked if this is a big leap or a conservative step forward with Mr. Eatman stating he would not call this conservative and felt this is a big step. The remaining 25% of the fleet is being reserved for emerging technologies which is a very bold step also. Mr. Eatman explained diesel will always be part of the fleet noting 11 new busses were purchased in 2016 which will be ready for replacement in 2028 and these will be in rotation. Mr. Magsanoc indicated his only concern is if costs for CNG go up.

In response to a question from Ms. Thurman, Mr. Eatman indicated the Public Utilities industry is going through a lot of changes across the nation and have some new digestion bio-solid reduction efforts that are somewhat new technologies.

Ms. Bailey moved approval of the committee's recommendation to commit 75 busses to be converted to CNG with new replacement vehicles to be CNG. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Warden, unanimously passed. Vice-Chair Thurman ruled the motion adopted.

### **FY18 Transit Budget:**

Members received in their agenda packets the proposed Transit FY18 Budget. Mr. Eatman reviewed the proposal in detail. Mr. Eatman indicated the committee reviewed the proposal noting the Council will be asked to adopted this in June. There is a very small percentage increase to \$21.625 million. Staff has been required in the City's overall budget to limit our initiatives but through the Wake Transit Plan transit has been able to move forward with several new initiatives in FY18. The transit budget is funded 80% by federal funds and 20% local funds. The TDM program is 50% CMAQ funds and 50% local funds

Following discussion, Ms. Bailey moved that the authority endorse the budget as proposed to go forward to the City Council. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Warden, unanimously passed. Vice-Chair Thurman ruled the motion adopted.

### **Ridership Study:**

Ms. Bailey indicated ridership is slowing down nationally. Mr. Eatman stated all are in the same boat. He stated he is interested in seeing how the Wake Transit Plan will affect ridership noting he felt it will improve the ridership numbers.

### **Wake Transit Plan:**

Members received in their agenda packets a spread sheet listing estimated numbers to implement service levels identified in the Wake County Transit Plan which was developed by the Wake County budget office. The list was not specific to GoRaleigh but all Wake County agencies and services. The more detailed and accurate list will be part of the Implementation Plan currently underway.

## **STAFF REPORTS – RECEIVED**

Members received in their agenda packets the following staff reports:

1. Statement of Income (January 2017)
2. Variance Analysis (January 2017)
3. Go PASS Ridership Summary (January 2017)
4. Go PASS Ridership by Agency (January 2017)
5. Accessible Raleigh Transportation Summary (January 2017)
6. Operating Statistics (January 2017)
7. Route Statistics (January 2017)
8. Ridership Percentage by Time Period (January 2017)
9. Evaluation by Route (January 2017)
10. Advertising Update (January 2018)
11. Monthly Talking Points (March 2017)

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS – RECEIVED**

Ms. Bailey indicated the authority took a big step today regarding the vote on CNG.

Ms. Thurman thanked the Finance Committee and staff for their hard work on the CNG conversion item.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Brenda Hunt