

WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Wednesday, February 4, 2015
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Place: Lower Level Meeting Room, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Headquarters (Jackson Graham Building), 600 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC

Present: *Members*
Barbara Hermanson, Chair, VA, City of Alexandria
Bob Fogel, Vice-Chair, MD, Montgomery County
Daniel Turk, Vice-Chair, District of Columbia
Frederick Walker, Vice-Chair, VA, Fairfax County
Stephanie Beechem, District of Columbia
Jeremiah Bush, VA, Fairfax County
Benjamin Chou, At-Large
Deborah Christian, MD, Prince George's County
Pablo Destefanis, District of Columbia
Avani Gala, VA, Arlington County
Debra MacKenzie, At-Large
Ryan Nalty, District of Columbia
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee, Chair
Lorraine Silva, VA, Arlington County
Deborah Titus, VA, Fairfax County
Wil White, MD, Prince George's County
Mary Ann Zimmerman, MD, Montgomery County

Other Individuals

Jennifer Green-Ellison, Board Secretary, WMATA
James N. Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator, WMATA

Absent: *Members*
Thaddeus Johnson, District of Columbia
Caroline Kim, District of Columbia
Katherine Kortum, MD, Montgomery County
Karen Lynch, Maryland, MD, Prince George's County

Presider: Barbara Hermanson, Chair, VA, City of Alexandria

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Hermanson called the February 2015 meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) to order at 6:32 p.m.

Ms. Hermanson announced that Riders' Advisory Council members were unable to comment publically regarding the January 12, 2015 Metrorail incident at L'Enfant Plaza. This was due to federal laws surrounding the National Transportation Safety Board investigation.

II. Public Comment Period:

Ms. Hermanson recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak.

Ms. Dia Martin, spoke regarding an alleged incident involving public safety and cleanliness at the Gallery Place Metrorail station on January 16, 2015.

As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Ms. Hermanson closed the public comment period.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was approved.

IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Ms. Gala, to approve the January 7, 2015 minutes of the Riders' Advisory Council, as amended.

Ayes: Ms. Beechem, Mr. Bush, Mr. Chou, Ms. Christian, Mr. Destefanis, Mr. Fogel, Ms. Gala, Ms. Hermanson, Mr. Nalty, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Silva, Ms. Titus, Mr. Turk, Mr. Walker, Mr. White and Ms. Zimmerman

Nays: None

Abstentions: Ms. MacKenzie

The motion was approved.

V. Committee Reports

- Chair's Report to WMATA Board of Directors (January 2015) – Ms. Hermanson

Ms. Hermanson stated that the Chair's Report for the month of January 2015 was included in the agenda package for review.

- Chair's Report from January 22nd WMATA Committee Meetings – Ms. Hermanson

Ms. Hermanson informed the Council of public meetings that were held: Safety and Security Committee, Board of Directors and the Finance and Administration Committee. With regard to the Safety and Security Committee meeting, Ms. Hermanson stated that the Hon. Christopher A. Hart, Acting Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board was present to address the committee regarding the

January 12th Metrorail Incident at L'Enfant Plaza. She then outlined Mr. Hart's comments during the meeting. Ms. Hermanson informed RAC members that the preliminary incident report was available for review. Ms. Hermanson stated that Mr. Robert Troup, Deputy General Manager for Operations was present to review ten safety actions to address deficiencies. With regard to the Board of Directors monthly meeting, Ms. Hermanson said that it was reiterated by Mr. Tom Downs, Board Chairman, that it was his expectation that the RAC be involved in the formation and revision of safety procedures related to the January 12th Metrorail incident. She then announced that Mr. Mort Downey was elected Chairman of the Board. She said that he would be present to address the RAC at the next meeting scheduled for March 4th. She also announced the resignation of Board member and 2nd Vice Chair Mr. Alvin J. Nichols (MD).

Ms. Hermanson briefly discussed the Finance and Administration Committee meeting. She said that the reports and other pertinent materials from the staff presentation had been forwarded to the RAC Budget and Finance Committee for review. Ms. Hermanson stated that the staff presentation consisted of exploring various options to balance the FY2016 budget. It was reiterated that no recommendations had been made or adopted. She announced that the Finance and Administration Committee would meet again on February 12, 2015 to finalize the docket to present to the Board of Directors, a requirement to hold public hearings. With regard to customer service and fare increases, Ms. Hermanson noted that Ms. Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Customer Service, Communications and Marketing, stated that surveys showed that customers "would be willing to pay more than to see services cut."

With regard to the customer surveys discussed by Ms. Bowersox, Mr. White questioned the constituency that was queried. He indicated that as a Metro customer, that he has never encountered or been made aware of any surveys.

Mr. Bush inquired if the Finance and Administration Committee meetings were open to the public and if a date and time were available. Ms. Jennifer Green-Ellison, Board Secretary, replied stating that public comments would be received during the regularly scheduled Finance and Administration Committee on February 12th at 1:00 p.m. She added that the meeting materials would be available online beginning February 9th. Ms. Hermanson informed RAC members that audio from the meeting would be available via the WMATA website. Ms. Green-Ellison stated that an electronic link to provide public comments online would also be available on beginning February 12, 2015.

VI. RAC Standing Committees Recap & Regroup

Ms. Hermanson called for the election of committee officers for the 2015 calendar year.

Budget and Finance Committee:

Ms. Hermanson opened the floor for nominations for the position of Committee chairperson.

Mr. Bush nominated himself for the position of Committee chairperson. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Ms. Hermanson asked for any further nominations for the position of chairperson. Seeing none, she closed the floor for nominations.

Unanimously, Mr. Bush was elected as the Budget and Finance Committee chairperson for 2015.

Program, Projects and Planning Committee:

Ms. Hermanson opened the floor for nominations for the position of Committee chairperson.

Ms. Zimmerman nominated Mr. Turk for the position of Committee chairperson. This motion was seconded by Mr. Nalty.

Ms. Hermanson asked for any further nominations for the position of chairperson. Seeing none, she closed the floor for nominations.

Unanimously, Mr. Turk was elected as the Program, Projects and Planning Committee chairperson for 2015.

The RAC engaged in a discussion to confirm committee membership. Ms. Zimmerman gave a brief summary of the Program, Projects and Planning Committee and prospective work products.

Mr. Bush provided an overview of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting held on January 27th. He discussed two of the priorities that the Committee would tentatively focus on: the WMATA FY2016 budget process and the fare simplification proposals. Ms. Bush reviewed an outline of the Committee's recommendations regarding the various budget reduction options that were presented to the WMATA Finance and Administration Committee.

Ms. Titus commented that Mr. Bush presented various ideas that were outside the scope and may assist WMATA with the budget reductions in question.

Ms. Hermanson inquired if the recommendations were formed using additional information outside of the staff report provided at the January 12th Finance and Administration Committee meeting. Mr. Bush stated that the Committee formed the initial recommendations using the information available, but would reevaluate the budget findings after recommendations and proposals were made by the Board of Directors.

Mr. Walker commented on the suitability of the budget reduction options in question.

Commenting on behalf of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), Mr. Sheehan commented that they were also opposed to raising Metrobus and Metrorail fares due to the potential to double fares for MetroAccess. He stated that the AAC suggested that in the event of a Metrorail and Metrobus increase that a surcharge be added for MetroAccess that would be dismissed when funding was available. In the alternative, Mr. Sheehan stated that a surcharge be

applied to Metrorail and Metrobus fares and MetroAccess fares remain at the current rate. He also discussed the effect that rerouting and eliminating Metrobus routes would have on MetroAccess fares and operational costs.

Mr. Destefanis commented on his frequent concern about Metrobus service and route changes. He suggested various methods for WMATA to raise funds such as public-private partnerships, concessions, et cetera.

With regard to the staff presentation to the Finance and Administration Committee, Ms. Hermanson discussed the consideration given to increased fares would on overall ridership. Given Mr. Walker's comments, Ms. Hermanson suggest that RAC create a priority list of the budget reduction options in question. Mr. Turk concurred, adding that RAC members should be mindful that all the options did not provide the same level of "savings."

Mr. Fogel commented that lower gasoline prices and costs associated with the January 12th incident at L'Enfant Plaza should also be taken into consideration when discussing budget reduction options.

Ms. Hermanson announced that the RAC standing committees would convene during the RAC regular monthly meeting until 8:15 p.m.

Mr. Bush provided a proposal for ranking the budget reduction options in order of most favorable to least favorable):

1. Obtaining increased funds from jurisdictions.
2. Allocating funds differently (pension, capital, et cetera).
3. Reducing power budget due to lower fuel cost predictions.
4. Reducing administrative costs (may include staff reductions).
5. Increasing Metrobus/Metrorail/MetroAccess/parking fees.
6. Eliminating late night service.
7. Increasing rail headways.
8. Eliminating Metrobus service where and when least used.

Mr. Bush shared additional budget reduction options that were generated by Budget and Finance Committee members (in no particular order):

1. Transfer additional bus lines to regional carriers.
2. Outsourcing of functions.
3. Lobby to increase pre-tax contributions for Smart Benefits.
4. Increase incentives for tourists to ride Metrobus and Metrorail.

Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Turk, to approve the Budget and Finance Committee recommendations pertaining to the ranked and unranked budget reduction options.

The motion was approved.

Mr. Turk asked that the Budget and Finance Committee remain cognizant of their comments and provisions with regard to the rankings.

Mr. Sheehan reiterated the stance of the AAC that Metrobus and Metrorail fare changes were instituted as surcharges and not fare increases.

The Council discussed the feasibility of various budget reductions options.

Mr. Nalty called for a point of order. He commented on the purpose of the motion on the floor and noted that Council members would have the opportunity to comment on future development of the work product before it was forwarded to the Board of Directors.

VII. Announcements

Ms. Hermanson announced that the National Transportation Safety Board Hearings would be held June 23-24, 2015. Information related to time and location would be provided at a later date.

VIII. Adjournment

Without objection, Ms. Hermanson adjourned the regular session meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James N. Jackson
Riders' Advisory Council Coordinator