



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Jennifer B. DeBruhl

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FINAL MINUTES

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting

VDOT Central Office – HR Training Room
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Tuesday, June 20, 2023, 9:00 am

The CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee held a meeting on June 20, 2023. The location was VDOT HR Training Room, located at 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

CTB MEMBERS PRESENT

Jennifer DeBruhl (Chair), Thomas Lawson, E. Scott Kasprovicz, Mary Hynes, Frederick Stant, III, Mark Merrill, Dr. Raymond Smoot, Jr., and Wayne Coleman

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sheila Beard (VDRPT), Emily Stock (VDRPT), Henry Atkinson (Intern- SFAC), Robert Whitfield, Evan Price (VA Management Fellow), Johnathan Arnold (Intern - SFAC), Grant Sparks (VDRPT), Mike Todd (VDRPT), Deanna Oware (VDRPT), Zach Trogdon (VDRPT), Linda Balderson (VDRPT), Janet Mineva (VDRPT), Adam Hager (NVTC), Mary Olivia Rentner (VDRPT).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair DeBruhl called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE March 29, 2023 MINUTES

On a motion by Mary Hynes and seconded by E. Scott Kasprovicz, the March 29, 2023, CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee meeting minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one signed up for public comment.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Presented by Chair Jennifer DeBruhl

Chair DeBruhl provided everyone with a brief overview of what to expect in the board meeting with updates on the following:

Chair DeBruhl informed the subcommittee with a big-picture overview of where the agency is currently. She stated the agency is in a much better place now than a few months ago. The agency has gone through a tremendous amount of turnover. Roughly 75% of the agency has turned over in the last couple of years. Chair DeBruhl expressed excitement because the vacancy rate is now 17%, which is a significant decrease from nearly 30%. The target goal is to be 8%.

Chair DeBruhl stated she pulled back some positions about a year ago, that have been in reserve, in order to reach 8%.

She then introduced the committee to the new CFO, Deanna Oware who started with the agency on June 10. There will be additional new hires starting between June 25 and July 10.

Chair DeBruhl moved on with updates regarding Rail. The Rail team has recently won a couple of big awards. The awards included: Digital application at the Association for Mapping and Land Information Systems, a story map application at AASHTO, which is the state highway and transportation officials, and also the People's Choice award. A big event held a couple of weeks ago was the rail crossing elimination program. We put in a request for \$3.2 million to upgrade four rural crossings in the transforming rail in Virginia along the 95 corridors. Director DeBruhl stated the agency received the full amount requested. She also informed the committee that the rail maps will be printed this summer and distributed across the Commonwealth. She stated the rail team will work with VDOT to get them into rest areas and development centers, as well as work with the VPRA.

The Chair then led the subcommittee through an informal round-robin to explore current ridership levels, commonwealth funding, and how VRE fits into the larger regional transportation and congestion program. The Subcommittee proposed questions on the status of the Long Bridge project. Chair DeBruhl informed the subcommittee that they would receive an executive summary update at a later date.

I-395 Commuter Choice FY 2024 -2025 Program of Projects

Presented by Zach Trogdon, Chief of Transportation, DRPT, and Adam Hager, Sr. Program Analyst, NVTC

Chair DeBruhl introduced the I-395 Commuter Choice presentation by noting that the program uses revenue raised from users of the express lanes in Northern Virginia to fund transit and transportation improvements to move more people more efficiently through the corridors. Ms. DeBruhl noted that NVTC scores and prioritizes the program of projects and that the CTB reviews them for concurrence and inclusion in the Six-year Improvement Program. Mr. Trogdon introduced Adam Hager, Commuter Choice Senior Program Analyst, to present a summary of the recommended projects for FY 2024-2025.

Mr. Hager stated that the recommendation from NVTC staff includes the award of \$48 million to 13 eligible projects. Three of these projects are capital improvement projects and the remainder are service improvements. Mr. Hager noted that the selection process included a public comment period during which 646 comments were submitted, the highest number ever. The next steps in the process if the CTB approves the SYIP with the recommended projects will be for NVTC to project execution and implementation. The Board did not identify any concerns with the projects and expressed appreciation to Mr. Hager for the presentation.”

Best Practice Research – Rail Industrial Access Grant Program

Presented by Mike Todd, Rail Programs Director, DRPT

Michael Todd, Rail Programs Director, presented on the Rail Industrial Access (RIA) grant program. Including a discussion of national best practices research, major takeaways, and draft recommendations. Regarding research, desktop reviews and interviews were held with other states, railroads, Ports, and economic development authorities. Research topic areas included reasoning for committing resources to rail improvements, best practices for application, adoption and implementation of projects, and revenue structures. Some of the major takeaways included the need for transparency of program policies and procedures; an objective scoring process to compare diverse projects; ensuring projects further larger State goals; annually dedicated funding to improve program planning and consistency; and the rising costs of labor and materials that demand further investment.

Draft recommendations were looked on favorably by CTB members, and included:

- *Targeted marketing to promote the program*
- *A rail toolkit to drive growing Virginia businesses toward the RIA program*
- *Creating a more transparent screening criteria checklist*
- *Update the objective matching funds scoring criteria to prioritize private matching funds*
- *Increase the per-project maximum funding from \$450,000 to \$750,000.*

Members were specifically interested in the targeted marketing campaign and asked DRPT to present more details on the DRPT rail marketing plan to them at a later date.

Next Steps include the presentation of the updated guidance with recommendations to the Board in September Workshop meeting with Action taken in October.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair DeBruhl adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at <https://youtu.be/YUjMHzfGwuk>

Respectfully Submitted: Sheila Beard, Executive Assistant