



**Virginia Railway
Express**

Paul Smedberg
Chairman

Maureen Caddigan
Vice-Chairman

Katie Cristol
Secretary

Paul Milde
Treasurer

Sharon Bulova
John C. Cook
John D. Jenkins
Matt Kelly
Jennifer Mitchell
Suhas Naddoni
Martin Nohe
Pamela Sebesky
Gary Skinner
Bob Thomas

Alternates

Ruth Anderson
Hector Cendejas
Libby Garvey
Todd Horsley
Jeremy Latimer
Jeanine Lawson
Tim Lovain
Jeff McKay
Wendy Maurer
Paul Trampe
Billy Withers
Mark Wolfe

Doug Allen
Chief Executive Officer

1500 King Street, Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314-2730

MINUTES

**VRE Operations Board Meeting
PRTC Headquarters – Prince William County, Virginia
October 20, 2017**

Members Present	Jurisdiction
Sharon Bulova (NVTC)	Fairfax County
John C. Cook (NVTC)	Fairfax County
Katie Cristol (NVTC)	Arlington County
John D. Jenkins (PRTC)	Prince William County
Paul Milde (PRTC)	Stafford County
Jennifer Mitchell	DRPT
Martin Nohe (PRTC)	Prince William County
Pamela Sebesky (PRTC)	City of Manassas
Gary Skinner (PRTC)	Spotsylvania County
Paul Smedberg (NVTC)	City of Alexandria
Bob Thomas (PRTC)	Stafford County

Members Absent	Jurisdiction
Maureen Caddigan (PRTC)	Prince William County
Matt Kelly (PRTC)	City of Fredericksburg
Suhas Naddoni (PRTC)	City of Manassas Park

Alternates Present	Jurisdiction
Ruth Anderson (PRTC)	Prince William County
Libby Garvey (NVTC)	Arlington County
Jeanine Lawson (PRTC)	Prince William County
Billy Withers (PRTC)	City of Fredericksburg

Alternates Absent	Jurisdiction
Hector Cendejas (PRTC)	City of Manassas Park
Todd Horsley	DRPT
Jeremy Latimer	DRPT
Tim Lovain (NVTC)	City of Alexandria
Jeff McKay (NVTC)	Fairfax County
Wendy Maurer (PRTC)	Stafford County
Paul Trampe (PRTC)	Spotsylvania County
Mark Wolfe (PRTC)	City of Manassas

Staff and General Public	
Doug Allen – VRE	Mike Lake – Fairfax County DOT
Nydia Blake – Prince William County	Lezlie Lamb – VRE
Alex Buchanan – VRE	Bob Leibbrandt – Prince William County
Rich Dalton – VRE	Steve MacIsaac – VRE Legal Counsel
Greg Deibler – VRE	Rob Mandle – Crystal City BID
Andrew D’huyvetter – NVTC	Betsy Massie – PRTC
Paul Garnett – Keolis	Kate Mattice – NVTC
Rhonda Gilchrest – NVTC	Dave Salmon – Crystal City Civic Association
Chris Henry – VRE	Mark Schofield – VRE
Christine Hoeffner – VRE	Bob Schneider – PRTC
Pierre Holloman – City of Alexandria	Sonali Soneji – VRE
Todd Johnson – First Transit	Alex Sugatan – VRE
John Kerins – Keolis	Joe Swartz – VRE
Cindy King – VRE	Ciara Williams – DRPT

* Delineates arrival following the commencement of the Board meeting. Notation of exact arrival time is included in the body of the minutes.

Chairman Smedberg called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call was taken.

Approval of the Agenda – 3

Mr. Skinner moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to approve the Agenda. The vote in favor was cast by Board Members Anderson, Bulova, Cook, Cristol, Jenkins, Milde, Mitchell, Nohe, Sebesky, Skinner, Smedberg, Thomas and Withers.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 15, 2017 Operations Board Meeting – 4

Mr. Nohe moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to approve the Minutes. The vote in favor was cast by Board Members Bulova, Cristol, Jenkins, Milde, Mitchell, Nohe, Sebesky, Skinner, Smedberg, Thomas and Withers. Board Members Anderson and Cook abstained.

Chairman's Comments –5

Chairman Smedberg announced the Audit Committee will meet at 8:45 A.M. prior to the Operations Board meeting on November 17th to hear a detailed presentation of the FY 2017 Financial Audit. The auditors will also address the full Operations Board. Board Members Caddigan, Cristol, Cook, Milde, Skinner and Smedberg serve as the Audit Committee. He also announced the Capital Committee will meet immediately following the November Operations Board meeting. Board Members Cristol (chair), Cook, Jenkins, Milde and Skinner serve on the Capital Committee. Chairman Smedberg encouraged Board Members interested in serving on the Nominating Committee for 2018 nominations to contact him.

Chief Executive Officer's Report –6

Mr. Allen asked Ms. Mitchell to introduce a new DRPT employee. Ms. Mitchell introduced Michael McLaughlin, DRPT's new Chief of Rail Transportation, who will serve as DRPT's main point of contact for VRE.

Mr. Allen recapped VRE's recent safety activities as part of Rail Safety Week (September 25-28):

- Participated in a rail safety press conference organized by Mr. Cook at the Burke Centre Station.
- Initiated outreach to 20 private and 25 regional high school driving training programs providing VRE Grade Crossing Safety brochures and offering to provide Operation Lifesaver training modules for grade crossing safety.
- Distributed 2,500 Grade Crossing and Trespass Prevention brochures to Stafford County's "Partners for Safe Teen Driving" and to the Potomac High School for health and safety classes.
- Held social media contests featuring daily safety questions.
- Conducted crossing blitzes in Woodbridge and Manassas.

Mr. Allen gave a detailed briefing of VRE's annual disaster drill on October 7th. VRE teamed up with Fairfax Fire and Rescue to hold a full-scale simulated emergency exercise in Springfield on Norfolk Southern tracks. Other stakeholders who participated or observed included Fairfax County Police, Amtrak Emergency Management, Fairfax Office of Emergency Management, and Community Emergency Response Team.

Mr. Allen reported on-time performance for September was 89 percent system wide (87 percent on the Fredericksburg Line and 91 percent on the Manassas Line). Average daily ridership for September was 19,500. He also noted VRE hosted a system tour and Board Member orientation for Ms. Sebesky and one of her staff members.

Mr. Allen explained he is seeking the Operations Board consensus on a VRE letter of support for DRPT's INFRA grant submission for the Long Bridge project, as well as a letter of support and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the DC2RVA High Speed Rail project. The comments will be technical in nature as VRE staff has some questions concerning noise and vibration impacts, as well as design details around VRE's tracks. He explained VRE will be able to benefit from the Record of Decision for the DC2RVA project. The Board expressed no objections to VRE sending the letters.

Mr. Allen stated staff will present a list of projects for submission for NVTAF funding at the November Operations Board meeting. The list of projects includes final design for the Crystal City Station project, preliminary engineering and NEPA through final design of the L'Enfant Station and fourth track, final design for third track from Lorton through Woodbridge, and I-66 Outside the Beltway funding for the Manassas Park parking garage, Manassas platform extension, Broad Run expansion, third track and railcars. Mr. Nohe observed the VRE Broad Run project should compete well for NVTAF funds.

Mr. Skinner thanked DRPT for listening to citizens' concerns and submitting an alternative Fredericksburg alignment for the DC2RVA project. Ms. Mitchell stated the public comment period ends November 7th for the DC2RVA DEIS. DRPT will present its final recommendations to a special meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Rail Subcommittee on November 9th, with CTB action expected in December. It will then be submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration for final approval. Mr. Withers also thanked DRPT.

Mr. Allen stated staff is monitoring FRA System Safety Rule 270, which requires reporting on all safety features of a railroad. VRE is working with FRA to seek clarification of this rule, since VRE operates on host railroads and does not control all safety elements and does not have access to all this information. VRE staff is also monitoring potential changes to the commuter benefit legislation.

VRE Riders' and Public Comment – 7

Dave Salmon, of the Crystal City Civic Association and condominium owner in Crystal City, expressed concern over the loud rail horn noise associated with the Crystal City Station. Rob Mandle, Chief Operating Officer for the Crystal City Business Improvement District (BID), stated his organization concurs with VRE's recommendation of Site Option 2 for the future Crystal City Station. A large percentage of BID's stakeholder base of community property owners also concur with Option 2 and see the value add it provides in terms of

mobility. Crystal City has an incredible collection of transportation assets (pedestrian, bike and automotive access; VRE; Metro; and Reagan National Airport) and Site Option 2 provides an opportunity to unify all these pieces together. He stated Option 2 would also weave VRE into the “Main Street” of Crystal City and make it part of the urban walkable experience and celebrate its presence, instead of keeping it hidden in its current location. Mr. Mandle concluded by stating BID is looking forward to a continued partnership with Arlington County and VRE.

Mr. Skinner thanked Mr. Salmon for bringing the air horn issue to the Operations Board’s attention. He stated VRE will continue to work with CSX regarding the residents’ concerns. Chairman Smedberg observed the City of Alexandria has had similar concerns but understands there are operational requirements for train horns.

Consent Agenda – 8A

On a motion by Mr. Milde and a second by Mr. Skinner, the Board unanimously approved the following Consent Agenda Item:

- Resolution #8A-10-2017: Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Maintenance/Custodial and Seasonal Services for VRE Facilities
- Resolution #8B-10-2017: Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Insurance Brokerage Services
- Resolution #8C-10-2017: Authorization to Issue a Task Order for Handyman Services

The vote in favor was cast by Board Members Anderson, Bulova, Cook, Cristol, Jenkins, Milde, Mitchell, Nohe, Sebesky, Skinner, Smedberg, Thomas and Withers.

Authorization to Issue a Supplemental Task Order for General On-Call Services – 9A

Chairman Smedberg stated the Operations Board is asked to authorize the CEO to issue a Supplemental Task Order 44C under the Facilities Maintenance Contract to NV Enterprises for general on-call services in an amount of \$50,000, plus a five percent contingency of \$2,500, for a total of \$52,500. This will bring the total not to exceed amount for Task Order 44 (including Supplemental Task Orders 44A, 44B and 44C) to \$201,500. Resolution #9A-10-2017 would accomplish this.

Mr. Skinner moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to approve Resolution #9A-10-2017. The vote in favor was cast by Board Members Anderson, Bulova, Cook, Cristol, Jenkins, Milde, Mitchell, Nohe, Sebesky, Skinner, Smedberg, Thomas and Withers.

Approval of Preferred Site for Crystal City Station for Further Analysis and Design – 9B

Chairman Smedberg stated the Operations Board is asked to approve Option 2 as the preferred station location on which to proceed with more detailed design and evaluation including preliminary engineering and environmental investigations for the Crystal City Station Improvements. Resolution #9B-10-2017 would accomplish this.

Mr. Allen asked Ms. Soneji, project manager, to give an update on the project. Ms. Soneji reviewed the design objectives of the project, the two-step evaluation process, site assessment, and community outreach. She reviewed the process of how VRE reached its recommendation of Option 2 as the preferred platform location for further analysis and design. This location, compared to the other options, provides the highest level of connectivity with local jobs and regional transportation, a comparable level of community and environmental impacts, and moderate construction costs.

Ms. Cristol explained, in response to Mr. Salmon's comments, that CSX has an existing agreement with Crystal City residents to restrict noise outside of VRE operation hours. She stated the Arlington County Board and the VRE Operations Board take residents' concerns seriously.

Ms. Cristol reported following VRE's presentation to the Arlington County Board in September, the Board voted 4-1 to accept further investigation of Option 2 and expressed an interest in receiving continuing updates and opportunities to comment as the design and analysis progresses. The County Board wanted more analysis of two different options (Options 2 and 3), but acknowledged funding is not available to do multiple studies. In response to a question from Mr. Cook, Ms. Cristol stated the VRE Operations Board's approval of Option 2 is consistent with the Arlington County Board's position.

Chairman Smedberg suggested a wording change to the fourth whereas clause to clarify it is Option 2 to read "...major elements showed Option 2 is ...".

Ms. Bulova expressed her appreciation for the work of the Arlington County Board and the effort to listen and respond to its citizens' concerns. Ms. Cristol thanked VRE staff for their work and Arlington County residents for their involvement in the process.

Ms. Cristol moved, with a second by Mr. Nohe, to approve Resolution #9B-10-2017. The vote in favor was cast by Board Members Anderson, Bulova, Cook, Cristol, Jenkins, Milde, Mitchell, Nohe, Sebesky, Skinner, Smedberg, Thomas and Withers.

2017 Customer Service Survey Results –10A

Mr. Henry gave a detailed presentation on the results of the annual customer service survey. VRE conducted its annual customer survey onboard all northbound VRE and Amtrak cross-honor trains on the morning of May 3, 2017. The survey is designed to get feedback on every aspect of VRE's operation and system performance. Fifty-nine percent of the riders completed the survey.

Mr. Henry stated the survey shows VRE is trending above the five-year average in most categories. The rating in overall service quality reached an all-time high of 90 percent and train crews received their highest rating of 94 percent. The rating for on-time performance was low at 76 percent, which is a two percent drop from last year. Much of the decline in on-time performance is related to the ongoing infrastructure projects, especially on the CSX tracks, that will ultimately improve capacity and flexibility for the host railroads, but can cause disruption in the short-term. He explained VRE is continually working with CSX to mitigate delays, including getting trains through before construction times and looking at some schedule changes that could help.

In response to a question from Mr. Milde, Mr. Henry explained how VRE's lost and found system works.

Mr. Cook observed the "reliability of ticket vending machines" rating is 69 percent. Mr. Henry stated the current vending machines are 15 years old and have older technology. VRE is in the process of upgrading the machines with newer technology. He pointed out "ease of buying a ticket" is up by five percentage points. Mr. Cook suggested VRE do a user survey when the new machines are implemented.

Mr. Henry gave a few highlights of upcoming VRE initiatives to improve the customer experiences, including website enhancements, new station signage, issuing a RFI for better communication at the stations, and issuing a RFI for on-board Wi-Fi.

Ms. Bulova observed overall results of the survey are very good. She stated VRE saw an increase in ridership due to WMATA SafeTrack work and wondered if these new riders have reflected their satisfaction in riding VRE. Mr. Henry stated 44 percent of riders have ridden VRE three years or less. In response to a question from Mr. Skinner, Mr. Henry stated VRE did see ridership bumps during certain surges of SafeTrack. Ridership is still considerably up as VRE continues to grow its base.

Chairman Smedberg observed WMATA has seen increases in teleworking, which has impacted Metro ridership especially on Fridays. Mr. Henry stated VRE has seen some impacts as well. VRE ridership is the strongest ranging up to 21,000 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and dropping to the 15,000-16,000 range on Fridays. In response to another question from Chairman Smedberg, Mr. Henry stated 25-30 percent of riders use the Mobile Ticketing App. VRE is also seeing over 1,000 riders a month using SmartBenefits on the mobile app.

Proposed RIFF Loan Refinancing – 10B

Mr. Schofield stated in 2007 VRE entered into a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) agreement with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for the purchase of 60 Gallery railcars. The original amount was \$69 million over 25 years at an interest rate of 4.74 percent. The current outstanding principal is \$52.9 million. VRE's financial advisor PFM reviewed a range of options to refinance the loan at a lower interest rate. The preferred alternative is refunding through the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA). Mr. Schofield reviewed the advantages of a VRA refinancing, including savings of up to \$10 million over the life of the loan (\$656,000 per year).

Mr. Schofield stated VRA issues bonds at least twice a year, in the fall and spring. The next available issuance is spring of 2018 with an application deadline in early February 2018. According to the Master Agreement, the Commissions and the jurisdictions must approve issuance of debt related to VRE. Staff will come back at the November meeting seeking Operations Board approval, followed by NVTC and PRTC approval at their December meetings. VRE staff will work with the jurisdictions to have approvals in place by the end of January 2018.

Spending Authority Report –10C

Chairman Smedberg stated there are no expenditures to report for September 2017.

Closed Session – 11

Chairman Smedberg stated a Closed Session is not needed.

Operations Board Member Time – 12

Ms. Sebesky thanked VRE for hosting a system tour for her and her transportation planner. It was a great investment of her time and was enlightening to see all the detailed operations and challenges. She will encourage her fellow city council members to take the tour.

Adjournment

Ms. Caddigan moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to adjourn. Without objection, Chairman Smedberg adjourned the meeting at 10:35 A.M.

Approved this 17th day of November 2017.

Signature on File _____

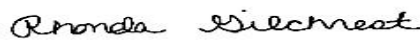
Paul C. Smedberg
Chairman

Signature on File _____

Katie Cristol
Secretary

CERTIFICATION

This certification hereby acknowledges the minutes for the October 20, 2017 Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Meeting have been recorded to the best of my ability.



Rhonda Gilchrest