



MINUTES

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

July 21, 2023

14700 Potomac Mills Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192

Members Present

*Sarah Bagley (NVTC) ‡
*Andrea Bailey (PRTC)
*Meg Bohmke (PRTC)
*Monica Gary (PRTC)
*Lori Hayes (PRTC)
*Takis Karantonis (NVTC) ‡
*Matt Kelly (PRTC)
*Michael McLaughlin (VPRA)
*Alanna Mensing (PRTC)
*Ralph Smith (PRTC)
*Daniel G. Storck (NVTC)
*James Walkinshaw (NVTC)

Members Absent

Margaret Franklin (PRTC)
Jeanine Lawson (PRTC)

Alternates Present

Alternates Absent

Canek Aguirre (NVTC)
Victor Angry (PRTC)
Deborah Frazier (PRTC)
Libby Garvey (NVTC)
Jason Graham (PRTC)
Jeffrey C. McKay (NVTC)
Darryl Moore (PRTC)
Pam Sebesky (PRTC)
Emily Stock (DRPT)
Ann Wheeler (PRTC)
Pamela Yeung (PRTC)

Jurisdiction

City of Alexandria
Prince William County
Stafford County
Stafford County
Spotsylvania County
Arlington County
City of Fredericksburg
Commonwealth of Virginia
City of Manassas Park
City of Manassas
Fairfax County
Fairfax County

Prince William County
Prince William County

City of Alexandria
Prince William County
Spotsylvania County
Arlington County
City of Fredericksburg
Fairfax County
City of Manassas Park
City of Manassas
Commonwealth of Virginia
Prince William County
Stafford County

*Voting Member

**Arrived/departed following the commencement of the Operations Board Meeting. Notation of exact arrival/departure time is included in the body of the minutes.

‡ Participated remotely via Webex in accordance with the Electronic Participation Policy

Staff and General Public

Niomi Barton – VRE
Alexander Buchanan – VRE
Dwight Buracker – PBMares
Holly Cockrell - VRE
Rich Dalton – VRE
Mark DeGrush - VRE
Chet Dunston - VRE
John Duque – VRE
Paul Garnet - Keolis
Chris Henry – VRE
Alper Kutlug- VRE
Lezlie Lamb – VRE

Steve MacIsaac – VRE Chief Counsel
Auke Mahar-Peirsma – Cardinal Infrastructure
Kristin Nutter - VRE
Erica Patterson – VRE
Natalia Portillo – VRE
Dallas Richards - VRE
Bob Schneider – PRTC
Aimee Peron Siebert -
Mark Schofield – VRE
Joe Stainsby - PRTC
Joe Swartz – VRE

Chair Walkinshaw called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.; the roll call followed.

Chair Walkinshaw stated that Mr. Karantonis and Ms. Bagley requested approval to participate remotely. Mr. Karantonis will be participating from Arlington due to a medical reason; and Ms. Bagley will be participating from Alexandria due to just returning from overseas travel. Ms. Gary moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey, to approve Mr. Karantonis’ and Ms. Bagley’s requests to participate remotely. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bailey, Bohmke, Gary, Hayes, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Safety Moment – 3

CEO, Rich Dalton briefed attendees on safety procedures and assigned specific tasks to qualified staff members in case of an emergency.

Approval of the Agenda - 4

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Bohmke, to approve the agenda as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Approval of the Minutes of the June 16, 2023 and the May 19, 2023 VRE Operations Board Meetings – 5

Chair Walkinshaw explained the May 19, 2023 Minutes had not had sufficient affirmative votes to pass at the June meeting, due to the number of abstentions. He explained that abstention is not required of Members not present at the meeting the minutes in question record. Voting to approve does not suggest Members were present at the meeting; rather, that they approve the minutes based on fellow Board Members’ account of the meeting and a review of the minutes’ formatting.

Mr. Kelly moved, with a second by Ms. Gary, to approve the Minutes from June 16, 2023 and the Minutes from May 19, 2023. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Chair’s Comments – 6

Chair Walkinshaw welcomed participants and reminded Board members the Legislative Committee meeting would immediately follow the business meeting. He reiterated that all members are welcome to participate; and indicated the committee needed a new member to represent NVTC jurisdictions.

The Chair thanked members for their participation at the June planning workshop. He stated the System Plan 2050 team indicated it was valuable to understand the Board's priorities and interests for both the short- and long-term service opportunities. Chair Walkinshaw stated that the System Plan 2050 team would bring specific information about long-term service concept and steps to complete the System Plan update at either the September or October meeting.

Chair Walkinshaw also thanked members of the Executive Committee and Board members Bailey, Hayes, and McLaughlin for attending the open house event at the new Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade facility.

Chief Executive Officer's Report – 7

Mr. Dalton briefed the Operations Board on the following items of interest:

- Performance
- Service Disruption
- Ridership
- Lou Facility Open House
- Manassas Park Parking Garage Project
- 2023 Customer Service Survey Results

[Ms. Bailey stepped out of the room at 9:36 a.m.]

During discussion, Chair Walkinshaw recognized Mr. Karantonis, who indicated he volunteered to serve on the Legislative Committee.

Public Comment Time – 8

The Chair opened the floor for public comments. There were no speakers. There was one electronically submitted public comment which had been forwarded to Board Members in advance of the meeting.

[Ms. Bailey returned to the meeting at 9:42 a.m.]

Action Items – 9

Authorization to Execute a Sole Source Contract for Wabtec Cloud PTC Hosting and WabtecOne PTC Performance Analytics – 9A

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Gary, to authorize the CEO to execute a sole source contract with Wabtec for Cloud PTC hosting and WabtecOne PTC performance analytics.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Authorization to Execute a Contract for Security Camera Installation – 9B

Ms. Bohmke moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey, to authorize the CEO to execute a contract with Genesys Impact, LLC of Washington, DC, for security camera installation.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Smith, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Information Items – 10

FY 2025 Budget Key Issues – 10A

Staff led a discussion about key issues for the VRE FY 2025 budget as a first step in the annual budget process. Board members provided the following comments and guidance:

Chair Walkinshaw expressed his belief that VRE needs to consider expanding service to run Saturday service in FY 2025.

Mr. Kelly agreed with Chair Walkinshaw about pivoting service to operate some weekend service. He also asked that when staff presents the preliminary budget, he would like to see what revisions are made to slim down the various departmental budgets. He also requested a projection of gas tax revenues as well as a breakdown of commonwealth operating funding.

Ms. Hayes agreed that VRE needs to consider adding weekend service in this budget. She stated she would like to see data on the ridership impact of Fare Free Fridays. Ms. Hayes stated she supports a fare increase for FY 2025.

Ms. Bohmke expressed support for weekend service and is interested to see if reverse flow options can be included.

Mr. Karantonis expressed interest in launching weekend service and asked staff to do an analysis of potential ridership for Saturday versus Sunday service.

Mr. Storck expressed interest in understanding how the staff recommendation on weekend service will be made. He suggested reaching out to other commuter services that have gone through a similar process and may be able to provide a roadmap.

Ms. Gary expressed support for Saturday service, but also supports a fare increase in FY 2025 with a return to the alternating years of subsidy/fare increase.

Ms. Bagley stated she would like to see data on fare purchasing patterns and history and how that may inform VRE's fare structure in the future.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that corridor projects are going to dictate VRE's ability to run full weekend service; noting that the timeline for completion of the first two 4th track expansion projects is late FY 2026. Chair Walkinshaw indicated the ideal scenario is to start weekend service as soon as possible, even if it were just one round-trip, if only to help to gather data on viability and optimal fare structure in advance of starting full weekend service. Mr. McLaughlin cautioned, that from a transit planning standpoint, a successful weekend service would require operating more than one round trip to "capture the trip not taken."

Ms. Mensing said she supports a weekday fare increase; but also believes that jurisdictional subsidies should return to the normal formula used prior to the pandemic.

Ms. Bailey stated she supported exploring weekend service options.

Mr. Smith stated he agrees with the points made and said he thinks the discussion reflects the Board's recognition that ridership recovery is going to require adaptation.

Chair Walkinshaw concluded there was a consensus to explore beginning limited weekend service, as well as include a fare increase in the preliminary FY 2025 budget.

Spending Authority Report – 10B

In June, the following purchases greater than \$50,000 but less than \$200,000 were made:

- On June 14, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in the amount of \$107,136 to Hill International, Inc. under the Program Management Consulting Services contract to complete an evaluation of the cost and schedule estimating approaches and methodologies VRE currently utilizes to gauge efficiency, reliability, and predictability of project cost and project delivery time.
- On June 20, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 to Siddall Communications, Inc. to provide direct advertising and support for VRE marketing campaigns on an as-needed basis, including photography and videography services, media buying, development of social media campaigns, and graphic design services. This Task Order was issued by utilizing the cooperative purchasing provision of the existing contract between Siddall and DRPT for General Communications and Marketing Consultant Services.
- On June 29, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in the amount of \$198,000 to Keolis Rail Services Virginia, LLC under the Maintenance Services for Commuter Rail contract for the replacement of passenger railcar car body signage.
- On June 29, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in an amount not to exceed \$71,337 to Keolis Rail Services Virginia, LLC under the Maintenance Services for Commuter Rail contract to complete repairs on an as-needed basis to the facilities at Crossroads and Broad Run during Fiscal Year (FY) 24.
- On June 29, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in an amount not to exceed \$177,580 to Keolis Rail Services Virginia, LLC under the Maintenance Services for Commuter Rail contract to complete repairs on an as-needed basis to the track at the Crossroads and Broad Run Maintenance and Storage Facilities during FY 24.
- On June 29, 2023, VRE issued a Task Order in an amount not to exceed \$115,500 to Keolis Rail Services Virginia, LLC under the Maintenance Services for Commuter Rail contract to replace ties on an as-needed basis at the Crossroads and Broad Run Maintenance and Storage Facilities during FY 24.

Members Time – 11

Ms. Hayes stated she was very impressed with the LOU facility and has encouraged other members of the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors to schedule a tour of the facility.

Ms. Mensing thanked Chair Walkinshaw for coming out to the Manassas Park Groundbreaking event.

Ms. Bailey announced the CEO/CLO Evaluation Committee has a Zoom meeting scheduled for July 26th.

Ms. Bagley reiterated Ms. Hayes' comments about the LOU facility and congratulated staff on a successful open house event.

Mr. Karantonis thanked staff for their efforts to keep the public informed during the Amtrak tunnel derailment; and, thanked PRTC for their response in providing buses for VRE passengers.

Approved this 15th day of September 2023

James Walkinshaw
Chair

Ralph Smith
Secretary

CERTIFICATION

This certification hereby acknowledges the minutes for the July 21, 2023 Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Meeting have been recorded to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie M. Lamb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leslie" being more prominent.

Leslie M. Lamb