



WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES
THURSDAY; SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

PRESENT:

WSTA Board Members

Keith King, Chairperson
Jeanette Lawson-Jackson, Vice-Chairperson
Willie Clark, Jr.
Sarah Morath
Dr. David Wren

WSTA/RATP DEV, USA Staff

Bruce Adams, General Manager
Levine HEDGEPEETH, Assist. General Manager
of Safety
Brandie Peterson, Director of Marketing and
Communication
Lisa Sides,
Tikiha Alston,
Teika Holloway, Administrative Assistant

City Staff

Jeff Fansler, Director of DOT
Kelly Garvin, Assist. Director of DOT
Tia Ramsey,
Sherry

Other Attendees

Melvin Brown,
Erica Palmiter,

Meeting Opened: 4:08 pm

Chairperson Keith King called the August 2024 Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA) Board Meeting to order.

Safety Message: (Chairperson King): School is back in session; school buses will be sharing the road. Please be mindful of school bus stop arms and children that are getting on and off the school buses.

Welcome and Introduction of New WSTA Board Member:

Not in attendance

Public Comment (limited to two minutes per speaker):

None



Action Items:

Approval of the May 30, 2024, WSTA Board Meeting Minutes:

Board Member Latonya Wright moved to approve May 30, 2024, WSTA Board Meeting Minutes. Board Member Dr. David Wrenn Jr. seconded her move.

Following a vote by the members, the Board approved the May 30, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes.

Resolution Authorizing Contract with Forsyth County DSS for the Provision of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) for Medicaid Clients of Forsyth County:

Dr. David Wren, WSTA Board member, moved to approve a Resolution Authorizing a Contract with Forsyth County DSS for the Provision of NEMT for Medicaid Clients of Forsyth County.

Following a vote by the members, the Board approved the Resolution Authorizing a contract with Forsyth County DSS for the provision of NEMT for Medicaid clients of Forsyth County.

After the approval of the May 30th meeting minutes and before the approval of the NEMT resolution, Chair King stated he knows a portion of the people around the table however, there are several that he does not know. He then asked everyone to please go around the table and introduce themselves and share their positions. **Mr. Bruce Adams** said that he would start and introduced himself as a General Manager for RATP DEV. The remainder of the of the table followed suit by giving their names and titles:

Mr. Jeff Fansler, Director of DOT, shared his job is to support Kelly (Garvin) and her job is to support WSTA!

Mrs. Kelly Garvin, Assistant Director of DOT & WSTA Oversight

Mr. Robert Smith, VP of Business Development, RATP Dev, USA

Ms. Karyn Bess, Regional Human Resources Director, RATP Dev, USA

Mr. Steve Sheerer, VP of Operations of the Southeast Region, RATP Dev, USA

Mr. Mike Rosson, Assistant General Manager of Operations, RATP Dev, USA

Mr. Levine Hedgepeth, Assistant General Manager of Safety and Training, RATP Dev, USA

Mr. Reggie Arrington, Assistant General Manager of Maintenance, RATP Dev, USA

Mr. Brandie Peterson, Director of Community Engagement & Marketing, RATP Dev, USA

Chair King also gave space for the members of the WSTA Board introduced themselves to the RATP Dev, USA management team.

Informational Items:

- a) Low or no Emission Grant (Mr. Jeff Fansler)-Mr. Jeff Fansler stated a few months back, the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$1.10 billion in competitive grants under the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Low or No Emission Grant Program (Low-No Program)



and approximately \$390 million in competitive grants under the FY 2024 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program (Buses and Bus Facilities Program), subject to availability of appropriated funding.

Mr. Fansler stated it is no secret to our team assembled here WSTA has an aging fleet. Some vehicles are exceeding their useful life. Winston-Salem DOT pursued this funding opportunity. Mr. Fansler said he is happy to announce Winston-Salem DOT (his office), received a 4.4-million-dollar reward that has a matching contribution the city will front. With this funding Winston-Salem DOT will procure, five (5), new, electric hybrid, 35 ft. Fixed Route buses. To further address the aging fleet issue, the City included a million dollars in the Capital Plan, for the next five year, that DOT staff plan to leverage to get other federal opportunities for matching funds. Mr. Fansler said he also happy to announce funding for eight (8) additional buses with funding provided by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that DOT will be procure within the next 2 years that is separate from the five buses DOT procure with the “Low, No” award.

- b) RATP Dev USA Introduction and Transition Report PowerPoint® (Corporate Staff, RATP Dev, USA)-Mr. Robert started by saying RATP Dev, USA is incredibly pleased to be a new partner and want to share a little about who they are to officially kick-off relationship with the Board.
- c) GMV Syncromatics (Daid Iwai, Project Manager, GMV, LLC)-Unfortunately, Mr. David Iwai was not able to make the meeting due to illness. Mrs. Garvin gave a brief overview of what his presentation was about. She stated that a couple of years ago, WSTA had an Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) system called Nextbus on buses that allowed passengers to track the location of bus they were waiting on with their cellular telephone. This technology is coming back with the help of GMV. Technicians are currently installing the new system and monitors on the buses. As the technicians complete the installation, the bus tracking process come live, and passengers can see routes, times, and locations in real time on the WSTA website. GMV is also installing Wi-Fi on the buses; this is a new feature that WSTA has never had before. Mrs. Garvin said there is more in the tech world that DOT is looking to do with GMV as a partner or some other entity—go to a cashless model where trips can be planned, and fares can be paid on an app. Passengers would use the app to plan not only local trips but trips that include regional travel as well. We are looking into technology that will not only assist with the reporting of accurate data required by the FTA, but also for providing our passengers better service and making make our service more attractive to our community.

Mr. Bruce Adams added, he thinks that technology is a big part of providing successful transportation and he is glad that the city has taken this initiative to add these components to enhance our buses. Waiting at a bus stop for 30-minutes wondering when your bus is coming has gotten old. The technology takes the guess work out of bus arrivals. The AVL system informs the passengers of where the bus stops are located, what time to be on the stops and the available capacity on the bus. It will be a one stop shop. WSTA will provide education and training materials for passengers.

Mr. Fansler said it has been a while since the Board meeting entertained conversations about new buses and modern technology. It took a tremendous amount of effort to bring this to fruition. Mr. Fansler amend RATP DEV’s innovation and Mrs. Garvin’s leadership in managing this process.



Speaking on the City's behalf and the City's leadership, Mr. Fansler stated we have not gone through this process in its history. The simple things like deciding to include WSTA's website on the City's external, public website's main homepage, has never happened in the history of the Transit Authority. Making it possible to click on the City's website to get bus information is a decision that should have made long ago, and this speaks to the change in methodology and refocusing on who we can be branding where we need to be. Mr. Fansler stated what we are seeing now are decision points that, he feels will project us in a more positive image.

Staff Reports:

- ***Operations-Michael Rosson, Assist. General Manager of Operations:***

Mr. Rossen gave some key points regarding the transition process as it relates to operations as follows:

- RATP Dev's IT and specialist completed the process of transitioning from the old network to the RATP Dev network without disrupting services.
- Dispatchers are now located in area for the purpose of efficiency. They now communicate on a better level and are now better able to cover each other when needed.
- The city asked that RATP Dev retain the main number for WSTA by having it ported over with the transition as customer benefit. This was challenging in the beginning; but RATP Dev met this challenge.
- In addition to porting the main number over, RATP Dev added a toll-free number as an additional customer benefit. If a person is out of town and need to conduct WSTA business, they can now do so without incurring any expenses.
- RATP Dev added an administration line, and the operators have access to the extension and direct lines creating open communication.
- RATP Dev is adding a Fixed Route data operations system called Optibus. Operations uses this system to schedule drivers and vehicles. The system operates in real time. The operations department can utilize the system to switch buses and or operators when needed. It also provides reporting so that we can keep watch on our key performance indicators (KPI). The software allows the capability of a seamless transition to payroll.

The operations department has completed the first phase on and is now in phase two.

- ***Marketing-Brandi Peterson, Director of Marketing and Communications:***

Ms. Peterson reported the following information for Marketing:

- Ms. Peterson said a lot of time was invested in the development of the new WSTA website. She will manage the site internally instead of management



outsourcing this service. Ms. Peterson managing the website internally adds the capability to make more efficient changes; she can make changes immediately. The website provides a free employee by way of artificial intelligence (AI) Ms. Peterson included an AI function that can answer a variety of basic questions.

- The call center customer service reps are getting a lot of training.
- The marketing report will be a little different from what it was in the past.

Ms. Peterson stated that her roll not only encompass marketing, but community engagement and customer service as well.

- Ms. Petersons stated she has implemented an employee recognition program where management gives tokens e.g., trinkets, and handwritten notes of appreciation to recognize when an employee has done something well. Recognition of achievement is an important part of employee retention.

- ***Safety-Levine Hedgepeth, Assistant General Manager of Safety:***

Mr. Hedgepeth stated safety's job is to assist both operations and maintenance. He reported the following information for Safety and Training:

- Focusing on operations rollouts in the am-Mr. Hedgepeth separated supervisors into two groups. We now have dispatchers and a road team. The road team is to be out the entire shift to assist operators with accidents and incidents as well as passenger needs. The schedulers schedule the road team to come in at 5 a.m. and 11 a.m. so that if there are buses on the road there is a road supervisor on duty.
- The safety department set a goal, and it is about 80% complete. The goal that was set is to get a road observation—FS1—on every operator—both Fixed Route and Trans-AID.
- Once the safety department completes road observations, wheelchair recertification for both Fixed Rute and Trans-AID will begin.
- Safety is focusing is pedestrian and bicycle awareness at the local and corporate level. We understand that there as lot of people that ride scouters, walk, and ride bicycles. The safety department encourages operators to be continuously refer to their training regarding the prevention of pedestrian accidents.
- Safety is working on accident prevention by forming a safety committee meeting with the union, front line operators and the management staff. The safety committee will meet monthly. In addition, safety is looking at implementing annual training. The safety trainer will gather the operators ingroups for eight hours for safety refreshers and to inform them of new safety endeavors.

- ***Maintenance-Reginald Arrington, Assistant General Manager of Maintenance:***

Mr. Arrington reported the following findings from his first month of observation as follows:



- Mr. Arrington found that two employees held positions as mechanics that were not mechanics. He moved the employees to lesser positions with the opportunity to get the necessary training to become certified mechanics.
- He noted the tenure of his staff. Approximately 70% of them has been at WSTA for over 30 years. Mr. Arrington had to produce a way to introduce them to modern technology without giving them too much too soon. He did this by having them create their own work orders. This technique was successful.
- Mr. Arrington said he is also focusing on his internal customers which are the operators. Maintenance thrives on them to keep them informed of what is going on the vehicles. Therefore, it is important that they have a good relationship. He said that it is imperative that the culture of bus operators and mechanics do not get along.
- ***Monthly Incident Report for the Transportation Center (TC): January 2024:***

This report was not available at the time of this meeting. Chairperson King request that a representative from North State be present at this meeting. Unfortunately, North State could not be present this month. Mr. Adams assured him that a representative would be in attendance next month.

The meeting adjourned: 4:51 p.m.
Transcribed by: Teika Holloway
September 2024