



MINUTES

Greater Waterbury Transit District Board Meeting
Virtual Video Conference Meeting - March 13, 2024 at 10:00 am

The meeting was called to order at 10 am by Chairman Betty Bajek. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and roll called.

Attending: Betty Bajek, Trish Bauer, Patricia Bruder, Desira Blanchard, Debbie Bournival, Richard Donovan, Jane Dunbar (DOT), Kevin Ellis, Meg Haffner (The Kennedy Collective), Karen Harvey, David Keller, Aleta Looker, Jan Mizeski, Richard Nakatsuka, Eytayo Olaleye, Joanna Rogalski, Stefanie Theroux.

Public Comment

Aleta Looker suggested that the agenda and instructions for public comment be posted in the buses so that the riders can see it and take the opportunity to provide feedback at a GWTD meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Debbie Bournival MOVED to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting; SECONDED by Aleta Looker. The motion carried, with Jan Mizeski abstaining.

GWTD Administrative Items

Financial Update: Joanna Rogalski reported that we are a little bit under because we still haven't received the municipal grant program funds. Once received, we'll be in much better shape. She is working with CTDOT to submit the forms for those towns that have sent them into NVCOG.

Ridership Update: Joanna reported the Dial-a-Ride is following closely and often exceeding FY23. We expect increased ridership with the warmer weather. For the non-ADA, FY24 is surpassing FY23. There is a need for this service, and she has received inquiries for the towns of Woodbury and Thomaston. As seen in the Ridership Update chart, GWTD is providing services that are in demand.

GWTD FY2025 Budget

Joanna reviewed the Draft Budget FY 2025 document, explaining that we are using the FY23 full year of ridership numbers and the increase in ridership to estimate the FY25 budget. We intend to do more public outreach and marketing. GWTD has three sources of income:

- the Municipal Grant Program funds from CTDOT which help provide the Dial-a-Ride Services
- Municipal Dues which cover GWTD insurance
- Non-ADA Match funds which are the payments we receive from the towns based on actual rides provided outside of the ADA area in the prior fiscal year. Those funds are passed along to NET, once collected.



The carryover from FY23 reflects the pandemic decrease in trips and reduced demand for services. In addition, we have been doing minimal public outreach over the last few years. Plans are in the works to increase public outreach.

In response to a question from Aleta Looker, Joanna explained that Naugatuck does not do the fare matching.

Jan Mizeski asked how much it would cost Naugatuck to match fares. Joanna explained it would cost about as much as Watertown or Wolcott. Jan asked her to email him and Dave Keller the numbers on what the match would look like for Naugatuck if they chose to do fare matching. He also asked her to send him a ridership report for Naugatuck.

Joann Cappelletti MOVED to accept the proposed GWTD FY2025 budget; SECONDED by Debbie Bournival. Motion carried unanimously.

Northeast Transportation Update

Maria was not present to give the report, but she has emailed the report to all of us.

NVCOG Items

Discussion of Valley Transit District Microtransit Pilot Program

Joanna explained that Valley Transit has been awarded a Microtransit Pilot Program grant. They will start their pilot on April 1st and it will run for two years. A 12-seat microbus will be used during the service times of 5:30 to 11 pm and won't overlap with Dial-a-Ride. There will be an app involved, or you can call in any time you need an on-demand ride. For details you can check out the VTD2go website.

Rich Donovan added that our goal is to get this exciting service 24/7 across the NVCOG region. In the next two years we're hoping for as much ridership as possible. We encourage everybody to try the service – it's \$2 a ride.

Open Discussion

Karen Harvey explained that the bus stop servicing Stop & Shop should be relocated or another stop should be added. She described a dangerous situation where riders are dropped off at the current bus stop, crossing the multiple lanes of Wolcott Street to do their shopping, and then must cross back over to get to the bus stop to go home.

David Keller discussed transit options in communities that may not have one. He spoke about RSVP programs (Retired Senior Volunteer Programs) to get service up and running on a shoestring and generate data to apply for funding. Woodbury Senior Center had contacted both David and Joanna looking for transit options.



Stefanie Theroux explained that Cheshire contracts with URcommunitycares.org to fill the gaps with volunteers. The contact person is Michelle Puzzo – she is looking for the funds to build this program statewide.

Statewide Bus Stop Enhancement Program

Kevin Ellis explained that the State will be sending out documents and a survey link in the next month or so asking what bus shelter locations need improvements. The State will cover the cost of design and construction. Rich Donovan added, it is not necessarily bus shelters alone, it is a total bus stop enhancement program. It could include updating or adding signage, adding or replacing seating – there are many amenities to choose from. Right now, it is only available for existing bus stop locations. Joanna noted that bus stops near senior centers will have a special look.

2025-2028 TIP/STIP

Rich Donovan reported, we must maintain a four-year spending plan known as the Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP. He is excited to announce that in the coming 2025-28 TIP we are programmed to spend more on transit than on highways. It is a big step forward for the region and the state. Please look at what is included in the TIP on the NVCOG website. Public comment is open and we would love to hear your feedback.

Karen Harvey noted that Waterbury's Mayor Paul Pernerewski rode a CT Transit bus in January to meet people and get a feel for how the bus rides.

Adjournment

JoAnn Cappelletti MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Jan Mizeski. Motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held June 12, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Bruder
Executive Administrative Clerk
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments