

## Thomas Jefferson Regional Transit Partnership

May 28, 2020

4:00 p.m.

Water Street Center

### Committee – Voting Members

Diantha McKeel, *Albemarle Co - Chair*  
Lloyd Snook, *City of Charlottesville*  
Lucas Ames, *JAUNT Urban- Vice Chair*  
Randy Parker, *JAUNT Rural (Louisa)*  
Bea LaPisto-Kirtly, *Albemarle County*  
Nikuyah Walker, *City of Charlottesville*  
Neil Sherman, *DRPT (joined at 4:27)*  
Becca White, *UTS*

### Staff & Other

Chip Boyles, *TJPDC*  
Sara Pennington, *Rideshare/TJPDC*  
Jessica Hersh-Ballering, *TJPDC*  
Gretchen Thomas, *TJPDC*  
Lucinda Shannon, *TJPDC*  
Kevin McDermott, *Albemarle County*  
Andy Bowman, *Albemarle County*  
Stephen Johnson, *JAUNT*

### Non-Voting & Alternates

Karen Davis, *JAUNT (absent)*  
Brad Sheffield, *JAUNT*  
Garland Williams, *CAT*  
Juwhan Lee, *CAT*  
Trevor Henry, *Albemarle County*  
Kim McManus, *PVCC (absent)*  
Jim Foley, *ACPC*  
Alison DeTuncq, *CTB (absent)*  
Chris Rowland, *JAUNT*  
Sally LeBeau, *UVA Hospital (absent)*

### Call to Order

Diantha McKeel called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Ms. McKeel read the legal statement allowing the meeting to be held virtually/electronically due to circumstances beyond the RTP's control. She also described the guidelines by which the meeting would proceed.

Ms. Pennington called roll.

### Matters from the Public

Sean Tubbs from the Piedmont Environmental Council said he knows that transit has been hit hard by the lockdown due to Covid-19 (CV19) and that he wants to acknowledge the drivers who have continued to show up for the community. He said during the County's March 11 meeting, there was a major focus on transit funding. He is looking forward to hearing what the outcomes were on that discussion.

He continued by saying he wanted to “remind the partnership that the ultimate goal of this group is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. You are here to build a system that makes it easier, and hopefully, seamless for people to live their lives without getting in a car, should they choose. These past 11 weeks have given us a glimpse of the air quality improvements that can be made if vehicle miles travelled are reduced. The relationships between all the players at this virtual table must be focused on creating a regional system that serves the public good.”

He continued saying one uncompleted goal of the partnership so far is to take a deep dive into looking at a similar system. Blacksburg has been mentioned in the past, and even though we may not be able to go there anytime soon, he suggested that their system begin to be studied anyway. He also said there was talk of the second daily Amtrak train and he feels it will be important to be in conversation with them about that because we are going to become more connected.

Mr. Tubbs went on to say that even after 2-1/2 years into the partnership, there still seems to be a lot of friction, and that friction is an obstacle to the greater goal of the partnership.

Gracie Druzba spoke of her concern about the transit system’s cleanliness and concern for others on the bus without masks and not social distancing. She asked if the seats on the vehicles were in any way contaminated. She also wanted clarification about the garbage bags on the seats of the JAUNT busses.

#### **Minutes from February 27, 2020 minutes**

Mr. Parker made a motion to approve the minutes and Ms. LaPisto-Kirtly seconded.

#### **Transit Service Projections Immediate and Post-COVID-19**

Mr. Williams said there is going to be approximately a \$400K savings because CAT is supplementing with the CARES Act money. If it weren’t for the Act, CAT would probably be \$500K in the red at the end of the year. To date, CAT has spent \$1.1 million of the \$5.3 given in the CARES Act. As of last month, CAT was down to 29K riders, which is an 87% decrease, which is a standard around the country. He predicts a protracted, long J-curve recovery.

Mr. Willimas addressed Ms. Druzba’s concerns about cleanliness. He said that the vehicles are professionally cleaned every evening and on the weekends with hospital-grade disinfecting products. There is also a mid-day wipe down, especially the high-touch areas (rails, seats, back of the seats, and at the Downtown Transit Station). There are also upgrades to capital products, including a fogger to disinfect the vehicles, which allows for a deep clean of the vehicles including the cloth seats.

Mr. Sheffield shared a ridership graph tracking the ridership trend since the pandemic started. Ridership is trending back up because of the easing of the rules. Mr. Sheffield said he does not have an idea about when services will rebound completely. There is also modified services for the Crozet Connect and the 29 North Connect. The Nelson/Lovington Connect has not changed.

Mr. Sheffield said typically there is a capacity on the JAUNT bus for 18 passengers. Currently, there is capacity for only eight passengers to allow for social distancing. Unfortunately, JAUNT may have to deny service as demand increases because of the limitations on the fleet.

Mr. Sheffield said that CAT and JAUNT are both fare-free at the moment.

Mr. Williams said CAT is fare-free to limit interaction with passengers and drivers. They are also requiring passengers to enter and exit at the side/rear door. This policy may continue through Phase 2. That has yet to be determined.

Mr. Sheffield said the Governor announced that all public transportation passengers will be required to wear masks. He is concerned about limitations of civil liberties.

Mr. Williams said they are working on a joint PSA to communicate the new rules to the public.

Mr. Sherman said there are some systems who are distributing masks to passengers if they need one. Even with that effort, some passengers still will not wear one. This is not an issue for the police to enforce. He said he is hoping that “good manners prevail.”

Ms. White said UTS has altered its routes, suspending nearly all routes except for the ones that support the hospital commuter parkers. All of the routes are online. Regarding protocols, there is also back-door loading, there is a barrier in the aisle between the passengers and the driver, the cleaning procedures mirror CATs, as they are the industry standard. UTS has also published a CV19 riders’ guide and have been able to mandate masks without issue. There are also proactive loaders to ensure they do not surpass the loading limit. She noted that the capacity on the busses has been cut by nearly 60%.

Ms. White also mentioned that UVA will be announcing about the third summer semester and the Fall semester in the coming days and weeks.

Mr. Williams added that beginning June 1, there will be more service on routes 5 and 7 and will have an additional trolley available.

Mr. Foley said that the plan for school busses is not complete, but they are looking at having the capacity of the busses from 77 down to 12 passengers.

### **FY20 &21 Budget Updates including CARES Act Funding**

Mr. Williams reported that the \$5,143,582 will be split between CAT & JAUNT and it will cover FY20 and FY21, but the monies must be use on CV19-related operating, capital, planning expenses and lost revenue – retroactive to January 2020.

Mr. Sheffield said that the CARES Act money helps to offset the loss of public passenger fares and agency revenue. It also takes care of the loss of excess agency revenues used to help support public transit services, the increase in public share of expenses due to the decrease in coordination, and lastly, CV19 mitigation and prevention-related expenses.

Ms. Pennington said Rideshare funding is 80% from DRPT and 20% from localities. Rideshare has readjusted the last quarter of FY20 fund because there are events that will not occur now. DRPT has permitted the rolling over of FY20 funding into FY21. The program has shifted its focus to teleworking.

Mr. Boyles said he is concerned that when the General Assembly is back in session, they will be looking to reprioritize state funds. He thinks that health and safety and replacement of revenues will take priority over transportation.

### Appointment of Finance and Budget Committee

Mr. Boyles noted that in the past the Executive/Finance Committee established a technical committee to report to the them on a quarterly basis. There will be a report of a recommended list as to who will be on the technical committee at the next meeting.

### **CARES Act Rural 5311 Funding**

Mr. Boyles said the CTB divided the rural (5311) funding between JAUNT and CAT with 50% going to the rural transit providers across the Commonwealth, 15% earmarked for the Virginia Breeze system, and 35% can be used as discretionary money for future critical needs as determined by the Director of DRPT.

Mr. Sherman said there is a response being drafted from DRPT about what “critical needs” are and how agencies might be considered for that funding, and he said he would get it to the RTP soon.

### **TIP & STIP Review**

Mr. Boyles briefly explained the TIP and STIP (pages 27 – 38 in the RTP meeting packet) for the urban MPO area’s transit needs. He said he will review details in a future RTP working session.

Mr. Sheffield said it will be important to put a footnote in that report that the CARES Act money is not included. Mr. Sheffield said he would send information for Mr. Boyles to include in the report.

### **RTP Staff Updates**

Mr. Boyles reported that the Virginia Breeze running from Danville to DC has been awarded as a subsidiary of Megabus. They will be working to find appropriate stop/s in the Charlottesville area.

Mr. Boyles reported that the Afton Express will work with partners across the mountain to market it before the service is actually available. It would like to build a customer base before it starts.

He continued on to report that the Regional Transit Visioning Plan application and the Albemarle County Route Expansion Study grant application have been submitted and the local match portions have been approved.

Regarding the Amtrak Union Station Site Plan Grant application, Mr. Boyles reported that Ms. Hersh-Ballering was the lead on submitting for this FTA grant for approximately \$700K for small are/site planning. The organization hopes to hear back from the FTA by November.

### **Transit Service Providers Updates**

Mr. Williams said he would send the document with its ridership trends for the last six years and that CAT is adjusting the best they can given the current circumstances.

Mr. Sheffield reported that on July 1, JAUNT will assume the service of Greene County Transit. JAUNT is also applying for the Accelerating Innovation and Mobility grant with focuses on food security.

Mr. White had nothing further to add.

Mr. Foley reported that the school system is still figuring out school schedules, which is proving to be quite difficult. The 12-month staff may be back in June.

Lloyd Snook reported that the CAT Advisory Board needs to be repopulated.

Ms. Walker said that the bylaws for the CAT Advisory Board have been approved by the Council.

Mr. McKeel said she has people who are interested in being on that board.

Mr. Williams said that once the group is up and running, they can adopt the bylaws.

**Other Business**

Ms. McKeel noted that the next meeting would be on June 25 and the assumption is that it will be a virtual meeting.

Ms. McKeel adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.