MINUTES

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

January 7, 2009
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room at FREDericksburg Regional Transit

Members in Attendance:	Lawrence A. Davies, City of Fredericksburg Dennis Carney, Caroline County Fulton deLamorton, Stafford County Jan Erkert, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce Debe Fults, disAbility Resource Center Jack Green, King George County Deneal Helms, The Free Lance-Star Fred Sisk, Citizen Representative Diana Utz, George Washington Regional Commission Dr. Roy Weinstock, University of Mary Washington Rodney White, Spotsylvania County
Others Present :	Kathleen M. Beck, Director of Public Transit/FRED Marilyn Graves, Administrative Assistant/FRED Wendy Kimball, Assistant Director of Public Transit/FRED Arnold Levine, Manager of Policy, Planning and Compliance
Members Absent :	Edd Houck, Mary Washington Hospital John Moen, WFLS Lloyd Robinson, Alternate, George Washington Regional Commission Sara Woolfenden, Alternate, Stafford County

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Davies at 8:35 a.m. on Wednesday, January 7, 2009, in the conference room at the FREDericksburg Regional Transit facility (a/k/a The Lawrence A. Davies Transit Center), 1400 Jefferson Davis Highway, Fredericksburg, VA.

The minutes for the meeting of November 5, 2008, were presented for approval. Mr. Sisk noted that the minutes were incorrectly dated at the top, even though the correct date was in the body of the minutes. With the date changed to November 5, 2008, a motion was made by Ms. Utz and seconded by Mr. Sisk to approve the minutes with that change; the motion was passed unanimously.

Report by Director of Public Transit:

- Ms. Beck introduced Deneal Helms from The Free Lance-Star, FRED's newest private Partner. She will be the newspaper's representative on PTAB.

- Mr. Levine then reviewed the "Options Paper, FRED Fare Levels and Structure" that was sent to each member of the PTAB in their advance meeting packet. This is a second draft prepared by Mr. Levine after the last PTAB meeting. No decisions are being asked for at this meeting; this document is for general discussion of the Board. He did express that he feels it is important for the Board to show its Partners that we are asking our riders to pay a marginal increase for the cost of service. Locally, FRED has the luxury of federal and state funds because of being under 200,000 population in the urban region as of the 2000 census; however, in all likelihood, that will not be the case after the 2010 census and FRED will not be eligible for federal operating funds. He suggested to the Board that they think of cost coverage ratio, which will guide FRED with setting a target to be met by a year designated by the Board; meaning fares will have to be increased each year until the target is met at the deadline year set. He feels it is an important policy question for the Board to decide what percentage we should ask our citizens to bear. The paper also states that some of our Partners have suggested that they want the right to set fares in their own jurisdiction; however, it is felt that should not happen unless the Board cannot come to a consensus as to what an across the board fare increase should be for the system. Mr. Levine went over the fare options as he had previously reviewed at the November 5, 2008, meeting (see pages 2 and 3 of document which is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes). He did state that for every dime that base fares were increased, coverage ratio goes up about one per cent (he outlined some of these scenarios on the board in the conference room). As of this week, all budgets had been submitted to our government Partners. There was immediate feedback from one of the Partners who stated that FRED needed to come up with more stringent forms of funding. From a policy prospective and from a numbers prospective, an increase of fares would be good for our Partners to see and to be able to show their taxpayers. Whatever is decided, it must go to City Council for review and approval; it must be advertised; and there has to be an opportunity for public comment. It would probably be the beginning of the next fiscal year before implementation of an increase of fares could begin.

  General discussion and questions then followed:
  Rev. Davies asked if until 2010, can federal assistance be factored in; he is concerned about a sharp fare increase. The reply from Ms. Beck was that even if the fare is increased, you have to have a special reduced fare for senior citizens and the disabled.

  Ms. Erkert's concern is that we will fall into a trap with the localities in that they will think if more of the expenses are being covered by the fare boxes, they will not have to pay more in their budgets. Mr. Levine said his concern is that after the 2010 census, we will hit a wall when we no longer receive 50% of our operating costs and we have done nothing to the fares to ease the burden on local communities. He feels it is preparing the localities for the day when those funds disappear.

  Mr. deLamorton feels that if the PTAB initiates any fare increase, before it is taken to City Council, the Memorandums of Understanding for each locality must be signed; that they must understand that the fare increase is part of the formalized agreement.

Rev. Davies asked how this would affect a relationship with PRTC. Ms. Beck said that GWRC/FAMPO is moving toward us not getting absorbed into PRTC; that we will become our own region. Ms. Utz said there is a move to separate us from Northern Virginia.

Mr. Levine said that on the point of funding, when the urban region population is above 200,000, we would be awarded funds based on a formula of population, density and passengers and passenger miles (size of community, density of community and amount of transit provided). In FY 2009, the Department of Rail and Public Transit has notified FRED that state formula assistance will be cut by 8 1/2% ($40,000 to $50,000) and that we can look for a 10/11% cut from FY 2009 for FY 2010.

Dr. Weinstock suggested we prepare a three year plan. He further stated that he feels the public needs to know this is an ongoing issue with regard to budget cuts, etc. The public then won't be surprised and upset when fares are increased in the future.

Ms. Erkert asked how this will fit into the Long Range Plan. Ms. Beck replied that the Plan means nothing if the localities don't pay the local match. Mr. Levine said that raising the fare is consistent with the Transit Development Plan and FAMPO's plan.

Rev. Davies made a suggestion that the counties be asked to help get new Partners for FRED.

At this point in the meeting, Dr. Weinstock was presented a plaque by PTAB for his outstanding service to this Board. Dr. Weinstock has retired from the University of Mary Washington.

Committee Reports:
(1) Mission, Goals and Objectives – Dr. Weinstock reminded that the six month accomplishment report is due. This report will be given at the March PTA meeting.
(2) Partnership/Marketing – Ms. Erkert reported that ten second spots are being run now on B101.5 and WFLS, as well as ads in The Free Lance-Star. "Faces of FRED" is getting ready to be run in The Free Lance-Star. The Marketing Committee is getting ready to set in-bus advertising fees. The current brochure that was recently printed was handed out to the Board members. A meeting has been held with the HCA Hospital. Rev. Davies asked about a partnership with the Stafford Hospital; Ms. Erkert said that they will have a separate Foundation Board.
(3) Services to the Underserved –Ms. Beck stated that a meeting is scheduled regarding the New Freedom grant (RAAA, United Way, RACSB and FRED coordination of transportation).
(4) Operations and Oversight – Mr. Levine stated that the 3,000,000 mark was hit in 2008. Ridership in 2008 was over 513,000 persons.
(5) Safety and Security – Mr. Sisk stated that there has been no committee meeting for a while. He did ask about the status of our accident rate. Ms. Kimball stated that she does not have a percentage figure; however she has been appointed as chairman of the Accident Review Committee for the City. He also asked if we were having any security problems in or out of the building and if the traffic issues had been properly addressed. General discussion followed.

Other Business:

Staff will investigate the possibility of Dr. Weinstock remaining on PTAB as a citizen representative of Spotsylvania County.

Ms. Graves announced that she will be forwarding the current directory to each PTAB member for their review to see if their contact information is correct and if they wish to stay on the committees they are now appointed to. She would like to have new directories for the March meeting.

Announcements:
The next PTAB meeting will be held on March 4, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.

Approved by the Public Transit Advisory Board:

Marilyn M. Graves 3-4-09
Date