

## Advisory Board

Minutes of the Meeting of April 13, 2016. The meeting took place in the Community Room of the Nantucket Police Station, 4 Fairgrounds Road, Nantucket, MA 02554. Members of the Board present were: Jim Kelly, Robert DeCosta, Matt Fee, Rick Atherton, Dawn Hill Holdgate and Karenlynn Williams. Chairman Kelly opened the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Presentation and Discussion of Year Round Bus Service Study. Paula Leary, NRTA Administrator stated that over the past several months, the NRTA working with its consultants AECOM have been conducting a year round bus service study to determine the feasibility of service, analyzing the data and findings and presenting recommendations based on public comment and input. Ms. Leary also thanks Mike Burns and Rachel Hobart for their time and commitment to the project as advisory committee members. Ms. Leary introduced Jill Cahoon and Krystal Oldread from AECOM to make the presentation. Ms. Cahoon presented an overview of the study that included an operational analysis of the NRTA's current seasonal system, public outreach and a market analysis to determine the feasibility of year round bus service, findings, alternatives development. The NRTA's current system has an average daily ridership of 2,902 in the summer season, 1,228 in the early shoulder season and 846 in the late shoulder season. Ms. Cahoon provided information on the NRTA's route diagnostics highlighting that the NRTA is the top rural transit performer in Massachusetts for passengers per mile, has the second highest farebox recovery in the state, is in the top half of performers statewide for passenger per mile, cost per passenger, farebox recovery and subsidy per passenger, NRTA performs better than the national average in these categories, is one of the most efficient transit providers in Massachusetts and provides a lot of service within a constrained budget, and is a rural system that performed like an urban system. Public outreach efforts included public workshops, stakeholder meeting, pop up tables and online and paper surveys. Approximately 10% of the islands year round population completed surveys. Findings from the survey results respondents included: island residents live mostly in Mid Island area, year round residents had the highest response, seasonal residents are in Madaket and visitors want to go to Madaket, in the off season 32% of respondents did not have a private car to get around, 79% of respondents ride the Wave in the summer, 50% of those living in Mid-Island, Miacomet and Old South Road areas ride 3 or more times a week, 68% of Wave riders take at least one trip per week, 96% of respondents that ride the Wave in the summer would also ride in the off-season, 22.9% would ride the Wave 5 or times per week, Mid Island and Miacomet are the most popular routes, 7 am to after 7 pm are when the respondents want to ride the bus, 47% of current non-riders, primarily Mid Island and Tom Nevers residents said they would take the bus if it operated year round and current non-riders want the bus to go to the ferry terminals, airport and the Mid Island area. Market Analysis was prepared to examine the islands existing market conditions including demographic, socioeconomic and employment conditions that helped identify areas of the island with populations that support transit services. Transit scores were calculated to





measure how successful a fixed route transit system could be. The preferred alternative included operating an additional 217 days, weekday service hours from 7 am to 9 pm, weekend service hours from 8 am to 7 pm and a four route system – Mid Island Loop, Miacomet Loop, New Old South/Nobadeer Farm Road with 7 daily trips to service Sconset and Madaket service thru Columbus Day weekend to be consistent with other routes current ending date. The vehicle requirement is 3 with 6-7 drivers per day and a projected daily ridership of 610 and an additional cost of \$848,000 not including farebox recovery. Possible service enhancements and cost savings options were also presented including operating from the end of April through early December. The key findings is that year round bus service is favorable and allows people to build their lives around because it is a dependable option every day all year, operating the Mid Island and Miacomet Loops as separate services out-performs combining them into a single route, and the new Old South Road/Nobadeer Farm Road routing performs similarly regardless of a turnaround, so the turn-around is favorable. Several funding options in addition to an anticipated 20% farebox recovery rate included: increase in the local assessment, town meeting approved funding, paid parking, hospitality or other local tax and partnerships. Ms. Holdgate asked if the 610 riders per day was broken down by month. It had not been. Mr. Fee asked if the ridership was based on the survey. Ms. Cahoon responded that it had not come the surveys but from Census data and block groups. Mr. DeCosta stated to take service to Sconset off the table he doesn't feel it's needed, to avoid off season service on York and Dover Streets and 60 minute service is enough. Rick Atherton asked the difference in the farebox recovery rate between summer and winter. Ms. Cahoon responded that it's due to fewer riders. Chairman Kelly commented that \$858,000 is a big number and town meeting addressed housing and asked how you measure the mitigating cost and what the benefit of this to the community is. Ms. Cahoon responded economic development. Mr. DeCosta commented that Old South Road and Nobadeer Farm Road is desperately needed service and the Mid Island and Miacomet Loops cover the core area and make it easier and more cost effective to bring people into town and that he encourages it and it is well overdue. Mr. Fee stated that finding funding sources is a big concern. Mr. DeCosta suggested that they think about "out of the box" funding sources. Town Manager Libby Gibson said that funding must be identified before the Board wishes to move forward with year-round bus service noting there are many other priorities in the Town and the bus service will only benefit 5% of the population and that Strategic Planning is being planned in the next of months. Chairman Kelly said it would be worth having another model. Ms. Leary said that the contract with AECOM has ended and will need to figure out how the next steps can be done. Chairman Kelly then allowed public comment. Linda Simmons from the Unitarian Church thanked the Board for taking this one, it is important and stated that not all can be measured in economic terms, others got to meetings at schools, doctor appointments, groceries and other needs. Polly Miller clarified that Nobadeer Farm Road was still being considered. Mr. Schneider of Dover Street commented that he is anti-volume on his street, \$848,000 is a lot of taxpayer money, he is not impressed with the 10% survey results that means 90% didn't care and isn't sure the numbers prove it as positive and why doesn't the bus go to Cisco. Tucker Holland commented that

this is similar to what was experienced in Vermont and the frequency of the service is important and will make or break the success of the service and determine when the workforce needs the service. Next steps include recommending the service for discussion at the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission transportation meeting on May 2, 2016 to develop a funding strategy. Mr. Kelly summarized the next steps from what he was hearing from Board discussion as enhancing service in the Mid Island area, 60 minute time frame and not using York and Dover Streets.

There being no other business before the Authority Mr. Kelly moved adjournment at 6:38 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Fee. So voted and adjourned.

Approved: September 21, 2016