

Nantucket Regional Transit Authority

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OPEN SESSION
AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF THE
NRTA ADVISORY BOARD
SEPTEMBER 21, 2016
6:00 P.M.
COMMUNITY ROOM, NANTUCKET POLICE STATION
4 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

- I. Public Comment.
- II. Approval of Minutes for the March 23, 2016, April 13, 2016 and June 22, 2016 Meetings.
- III. Presentation and Discussion - Year Round Bus Service Study Phase II - Fare Policy Review and Development of Innovative Funding Options – Progress Report.
- IV. Other Business.



DRAFT

ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of March 23, 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: Robert DeCosta, Matt Fee, Rick Atherton, Tobias Glidden, and Dawn Hill Holdgate. Absent: Karenlynn Williams. Chairman DeCosta opened the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from the March 16, 2016 Meeting. The minutes of the March 16, 2016 meeting was approve by unanimous consent of the Board.

Report from the Compensation Committee. Mr. DeCosta reported that the Compensation Committee approved a 2% cost of living increase for the Administrator.

Approval of FY17 NRTA Administrator's Salary. Mr. Atherton moved approval of a 2% cost of living increase for the Administrator; seconded by Mr. Fee. So voted.

Report from the Finance and Audit Committee on FY17 Final Budget. Chairman DeCosta reported that the Finance and Audit committee accepted the FY17 budget. The Department of Labor denied the appeal on the prevailing wage for bus drivers. The budget reflects that increase under purchased transportation. Service adjustments, cost savings and line item reductions have been made. Mr. DeCosta also stated that the Ferry Connector is included at the highest level of service and that the amount of funding received will determine the final cost of operations.

Approval of FY17 Budget. Mr, Fee moved approval of the FY17 final budget as presented; seconded by Mr. Atherton. So voted.

Approval of 2016 Fixed Route Operations. Ms. Leary presented the level of service that the FY17 budget supports. With service beginning May 23rd and running through Columbus Day and that there will be an impact on ridership due to the service cuts related to the increase in prevailing wage. Ms. Leary recommend a \$2.00 one way fare for the Ferry Connector and that advertising rates are not changing. There was discussion on potential fare increases for next season. Mr. Fee asked what percentage of farebox revenue were generated from season passes and Ms. Leary responded about 30% and that the short term passes could also be looked at to increase. Mr. Fee moved approval of the 2016 level of service and \$2.00 one way fare on the Ferry Connector Route, seconded by Mr. Glidden. So voted.

Other Business. There was no other business before the Board.

Mr. Fee moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Atherton. So voted. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Approved: **DRAFT**

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 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 tax payer 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: DRAFT

Advisory Board

Minutes of the Meeting of June 22, 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 5:45 p.m.

Year Round Bus Service Study Final Presentation. Paula Leary, NRTA Administrator stated that additional funding to continue the Year Round Bus Service Study was secured. The final presentation will be based on comments and questions received from the Board at its April 13, 2016 meeting when the study results and service scenarios were presented and discussed. Ms. Leary introduced Jill Cahoon and Krystal Oldread from AECOM for the presentation. Ms. Cahoon gave a recap of the study results and preferred alternative. Ms. Cahoon then presented answers and follow up to Board questions and comments from the April meeting: Quantitative benefits from National Research state that every \$1 invested in public transportation generates approximately \$4 in economic returns, one commuter switching to transit can reduce a household's carbon emissions by 10% and a two-person household can save more than \$10,000 by downsizing to one car. The Qualitative Local Benefits include: access to jobs opportunities, reduced need for parking downtown, traffic alleviation, quality of life for seniors and the ability to age in place, access to medical appointments for seniors and the community as a whole, participation in early childhood education and social activities and access to after school jobs sports and activities. Transit Mode Share and Statistics include: transit ridership as a percentage to total trips .4% for rural areas and 2.9% in urban areas, transit vehicles as a percentage of vehicular travel is 2.6% on York and Dover Streets, NRTA is operated very efficiently based on local, state, and national comparisons to other transit operators and the average transit survey response rate is 1-3%, Nantucket had 10%. Ms. Cahoon then presented possible cost savings options that included: a savings of \$213,000 for weekday service only and \$106,000 for weekday and Saturday service and no Sunday service. To operate as a commuter service during weekday peak periods only present no real cost savings and is complicated to operate in a small community. Excluding the Madaket Route service extensions (operating through Columbus Day Weekend) has a savings of \$28,000. Operating Mid Island Loop and Miacomet Loop with 60-minute frequency instead of 30 minutes has a savings of \$217,000 and not providing year round bus service but extended the current season from Daffodil Festival to the end of Christmas Stroll has a savings of \$419,000. Krystal Oldread presented downtown routing that showed roads that were not useable, maybe useable and useable. Three options were presented for the Mid Island Loop and Miacomet Loop. The first option was using the existing routing that includes the use of York and Dover Streets this routing option because it remains the same as in the summer season will decrease confusion, not require stop changes, provides 30 minute service on both routes, no loss of service areas, four buses per hour on Dover Street and two buses per hour on York Street. The second option utilizes Main Street and there would be no vehicles on York and Dover Streets and new service along Pleasant Street, Milk Street and Milk Street

Extensions, frequency would increase from 30 minutes to 45 minutes, increased maintenance stops, no service to Stop & Shop, Miacomet Loop would run in the opposite direction from current service, different routing may be confusing, additional riders not likely with the different roads being serviced. The third option utilizes Orange Street and there would be no vehicles on Dover Street, new service along S. Prospect Street and Sparks Avenue and additional service to the hospital, frequency would increase from 30 minutes to 45 minutes due to increased mileage, 1-2 vehicles per hour on the western section of York Street, significant overlap in routing and coiled routing on Mid Island Loop, new stops would be required, and different routing may be confusing. Excluding service to Sconset from the preferred alternative does not result in cost savings. The new Old South Road/Nobadeer Farm Road service would operate at 60 minute frequency to maintain the service along the corridor. A Mid Island and Miacomet Loop combination eliminates service to the Stop & Shop, the schools and the hospital all of which were top destinations noted during the outreach meetings, service on Hooperfarm Road would be opposite of the summer routing and require new bus stops, does not service the park and ride lot and is a long loop that would discourage transit usage, this routing eliminates buses on York Street has a cost savings of \$271,000. Chairman Kelly took questions and comments from the Board. Mr. Atherton asked what was used for market analysis and how many seats were projected to be filled. Ms. Cahoon responded that census blocks were used for the market analysis and that overall ridership was projected by route not by vehicle. Mr. DeCosta comments that he would never support year round service if off season service operated on York and Dover Streets. Mr. Atherton asked how Sconset was excluded. Ms. Cahoon responded that Sconset as a destination was taken out and just Old South Road and Nobadeer Farm Road would be utilized. Ms. Williams stated that the report contained good information and lots of options. There was discussion by the board on preferred options. Mr. DeCosta liked option 3 but wants to find funding first, Ms. Holdgate liked options 3, year round service no weekends, provide a service that can be relied on and extend the service to see how it goes. Mr. Fee commented to have no extension of the Madaket Route and also stated that during the NP&EDC meeting the commission looked at the extended season with no weekend service based on costs and no funding for the service. Chairman Kelly stated it was worth testing year round week day service. Mr. Atherton suggested increasing fares to help pay for year round service would be a source of sustained revenue. Ms. Leary will look into options on fare increases and continue to pursue alternative funding options for the Boards consideration.

There being no other business before the Authority Mr. Kelly moved adjournment at 6:30 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Fee. So voted and adjourned.

Approved: DRAFT
Year-Round Fixed Route Transit Study – Phase 2
Fare Policy Review and Development of Innovative Funding Options

Topics for Discussion at September 21, 2016 Meeting

The following is a broad outline of topics for discussion regarding the second phase of the Year-Round Bus Study at the meeting on September 21st. The second phase of the study includes research on innovative approaches to funding, a fare/fare increase analysis, and a review of fare collection technology. While research and case studies are still underway, this is an opportune time to discuss various options and opportunities in the context of NRTA and Nantucket. Proposed topics for discussion include:

- Funding options for year-round bus service
 - Paid parking
 - Embarkation fee
 - Taxes
 - Fees
 - Fare increase
- Fare analysis
 - Current fares
 - Fare policy goals
 - Fare increase options
- Fare collection technology
- Next steps