



DON WILLIS
DIRECTOR

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FREEMAN HARDISON, JR.
CHAIRMAN

***Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2020***

The Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority met in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 28, 2020, at the City of Goldsboro Anteroom, 214 N. Center Street, Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Members in attendance: Freeman Hardison, Jr. Chairman, Shycole Simpson-Carter, Vice Chairman, Bob Waller, Secretary/Treasurer (via phone), Gene Aycock (via phone), Berry Gray (via Phone), and Brent Heath (via phone).

Members absent: Ed Cromartie.

Others in attendance: Don Willis, Borden Parker, and LaShonda Oliver.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Shycole Simpson-Carter and seconded by Bob Waller, the Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority unanimously approved the minutes of the regular meeting of April 30, 2020.

Director's Report

Financial

The rural program is showing a loss of \$28,756.21 in April and a gain of \$54,081.40 fiscal year to date. GWTA earns rural revenue based on trips provided. Due to the Stay at Home Order, trip volume has been down significantly and budgeted revenues have not been realized. The urban program is showing a gain of \$2,729.81 in April and a loss of \$60.51 fiscal year to date. The urban funds will remain about balanced throughout most of the year due to the grant reimbursement process.

Wayne County staff recommended approval of local match for administration and capital. However, the Board of Commissioners decided to no longer cover the cost (\$35,000 estimated for next year) of DSS Medicaid trips requested when the customer no shows.

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After follow up discussions with Goldsboro management, the budget recommendation will be \$200,000 rather than the \$303,000 that is requested. GWTA is completing an application to FTA for CARES Act funds, and are working with Goldsboro and FTA to use stimulus funds that would assist with some of the local matching requirements for next fiscal year.

NCDOT cash flow challenges have worsened with lost revenue due to the pandemic. There has not been a committed funding amount for SMAP next year. For purposes of budgeting, it is assumed that the SMAP will be the same funding as prior years to support city bus services. If these funds are cut or reduced, then it would increase the local funds needed to maintain operations of the city bus services throughout the year. GWTA has submitted an application for CARES Act funds to NCDOT for county services, and there is an initial allocation of CARES funds for Wayne County of \$260,994 which will help us cover costs for the remainder of this fiscal year. NCDOT has not committed additional CARES funds yet for Wayne County for the coming fiscal year.

The FTA apportionment for fiscal year 2020-2021 was released. This will allow NCDOT to publish a "split letter" notifying FTA how these urban funds should be split among the urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000. This should be done in time for our regular 5307 grant application after the June public hearing.

Outreach and Activities

Director has participated in weekly calls with NCDOT to discuss impacts of COVID on our services. Director has participated in teleconference efforts regarding the statewide bus procurement RFP. Director participated in a follow up conference with EbenConcepts regarding health insurance options. Director participated in FTA conference call on May 18th to discuss our CARES Act application.

Training

Operators received refresher training on Customer Service on May 28, 2020.

Health Insurance Status

GWTA completed the pre-enrollment process for health insurance with Wayne County so that we would keep that option open. The Wayne County premium costs for GWTA have increased by \$15,000 in addition to the projected \$20,000 increase for administrative fees. It is estimated that staying with Wayne County for health insurance will add \$35,000 to the budget and also leave open the possibility of having to cover claims above the county's self-insurance threshold of \$10,000 in claims.

Additionally, GWTA employees have completed a health assessment survey for EbenConcepts based on a favorable initial health insurance quote compared to remaining with the county for insurance.

COVID-19 Impacts and Steps Taken

With the help from City and Shycole Simpson-Carter, GWTA has received M-95 rated masks. GWTA continues to engage with Federal Transit and NCHHS for recommended protocols. Willis stated that he is exploring the idea of installing safety rated plexiglass on the vehicles. In the transfer center, seats have been blocked off to encourage social distancing and a “Do Not Use” sign has been placed for the water fountains. In addition, GWTA staff is being screened daily and temperatures are checked when they arrive to work.

Budget Recommendations and Request for Billing Rate Adjustment

Willis informed the Board of the difficulties in attracting and maintaining drivers due to the pay rate. Willis made a recommendation to increase the pay rate for Operations by 50 cents. The increase will put the Operators pay more in line with other transit systems. In addition, Willis recommended an equivalent 4% increase for other office and administrative staff.

The rural budget for FY20-21 has increased due to the health insurance cost, the cost of no-shows to GWTA, and the projected loss of fare revenues. The trip volume is not expected to recover quickly due to the ongoing pandemic. At this time, the additional CARES funds that NCDOT will make available to assist next fiscal year is unknown. In order to cover the cost, Willis recommended that the fare rate be increased to \$15.00 per trip. The current billing model of \$13.50 per trip will not allow GWTA to recover costs appropriately. The recommendation of fare increase will have to be taken to the County Commissioners for final approval.

Upon motion of Shycole Simpson-Carter and seconded by Berry Gray, the Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority unanimously approved the FY20-21 budget recommendations and the request for billing rate adjustment of \$15.00 be recommended to the Wayne County Commissioners for approval.

Upon motion of Shycole Simpson-Carter and seconded by Brent Heath, the Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority unanimously approved the staff to go forth with planning and setting a special public hearing to approve the budget on June 19, 2020, allowing for public comment to be received 24 hours prior, at the June 18th Board meeting.

Veterans Half Bus Fare Pilot Program

GWTA began a six-month pilot program offering veterans half fare city bus rides in November 2019. Prior to the pandemic, the program had been well received with eligible veterans taking advantage of the reduced price for service. The processes in place appear to be working and fare box revenue was not negatively impacted prior to the pandemic. Willis recommended that the Veterans half fare pilot program be extended for an additional six months.

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Upon motion of Bob Waller and seconded by Brent Heath, the Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority unanimously approved to extend the Veterans half fare pilot program for an additional six months.

Other Business

Willis met with staff at the Wayne Pregnancy Center on Ash Street to discuss transportation opportunities. The center has reached out to GWTA regarding a bus stop near there center for their clients. The closest bus stop is at Berkeley Mall. There are some difficulties in having a bus route to that location; however, the route can be adjusted half way to the center. There will some additional time added to the route. Willis asked the Board to allow for an adjusted pilot route on the Blue line to determine the ridership and route time to and from the center.

Upon motion of Shycole Simpson-Carter and seconded by Gene Aycock, the Board of Directors of Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority unanimously approved to pilot the route adjustment on the Blue Line closer to the Wayne Pregnancy Center.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Submitted by: LaShonda Oliver