

**Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority Advisory Board**

Present: Mark Snider, Edgartown; Elaine Miller, Tisbury; Bob Wasserman, West Tisbury; Robert Mackay, Oak Bluffs; Kim Leaird, Disabled Rider Representative (West Tisbury); Angela Gompert, VTA; Lauren Thomas, VTA; \*Felicia Webb, VTA; Andrew Wilson, Public.

**In accordance with Governor Baker's emergency modification of the Open Meeting Law this meeting is being held virtually.**

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

**Public Comments:** None.

\*Ms. Webb arrived at 10:26am

**FY 22 Audit Presentation:** Ms. Gompert introduced Bruce Norling, CPA, PC, who had conducted the VTA's independent audit for FY 2022. Ms. Gompert reminded the Board that VTA management staff would not be present during the presentation; Ms. Gompert and Ms. Thomas left the meeting.

Mrs. Miller asked if the Board any comments before Mr. Norling began his presentation. Mr. Snider stated his concern of comparing 2022 to 2021 is not as relevant as comparing to 2019. Mr. Snider also pointed out his concern of reliance on grants. Mr. Wasserman agreed that comparing to 2019 is not as relevant, and it would be helpful to compare to both last year and 2019. Mr. Norling stated that he was not prepared to compare the FY22 audit to 2019 and would like to focus on the overall audit, and then drill into the details as questions arise. Mr. Norling went ahead to state there were no findings for FY 22 and everything is in order. Mr. Norling stated that he continues to be impressed with the VTA accounting team. Mr. Norling then explained the various tests and confirmations that are performed and stated he was pleased with the outcome.

Mr. Norling said that new for FY 22 he had sent a letter to the Board regarding areas of risk and material misstatement. The three areas are: valuation of capital assets, collectability of local assessments and the valuation of the parts inventory. Mr. Norling stated these issues were looked at closely during the audit and that no issues were found. Ms. Miller inquired whether a physical inventory is done – Mr. Norling responded that yes, physical inventory testing is conducted, as well as vehicle inventory. Mrs. Miller inquired how the depreciation or evaluation of the vehicles is depicted in the report and if there is a hard copy of that data available if needed – Mr. Norling responded that the valuation of vehicles is cost based, he looks at each vehicle individually and that the documentation is available. Mrs. Miller inquired about the Pension calculation – Mr. Norling responded that those calculations come from the OPEB Actuarial. Following up on Mr. Snider's previous questions, Mr. Norling stated that he is not concerned about the reliance on State and Federal grants. Mr. Snider commented that the audit report does not show farebox revenue percentage in relation to other transit authorities. Mr. Norling suggested that the Board discuss with the Administrator about having a paragraph put in the Management Discussion and Analysis of next year's audit which compares to 2019, and includes farebox recovery comparisons.

With no other questions on the audit, Ms. Gompert and Ms. Thomas returned to the meeting. Mr. Norling exited the meeting at 10:00 am.

Ms. Miller asked the Board for a motion to accept the FY22 audit. Mr. Wasserman made a motion to accept the audit of June 30, 2022. Mr. Mackay 2<sup>nd</sup>. [MSC]

### **Financials through December 31, 2022:**

Ms. Gompert presented draft financials through December 31, 2022. Total revenues are up 3.78% over the prior year, and overall expenses are up 16.47%. Ms. Gompert stated one of the big increases was in fuel due to a pre-buy agreement that ended and was no longer available, as well as an increase in the supplier's operation, expense and profit (OEP) number.

Mrs. Miller inquired why accounting expenses and outside services were up - Ms. Gompert responded that accounting expense was due to the timing of invoices and expects next month to even out; outside services was up due to assets not being capitalized and billed to MassDOT as the contract was awaiting changes.

Mr. Snider commented that his main concern is the longer term trend of farebox revenue going down and more reliance on grants. Ms. Gompert responded that farebox is still very strong, just not as strong as it used to be, and that in late November/ December 2022 the VTA participated in a State-wide fare free promotion. Ms. Gompert stated that the VTA has the highest percentage of revenue that supports operations than any other RTA in Massachusetts; since the VTA has had farebox revenue, only 50% of the Federal aid from the pandemic has been used. Ms. Gompert expects the other 50% to be exhausted in FY24. Because of this, the VTA's regular Federal appropriation has not been used. Ms. Gompert believes there will also be additional State assistance.

Ms. Gompert noted that the biggest issue currently is the labor shortage and outlined recruitment measures being taken. Mr. Snider commented that his observance from last summer was that because of the shortage of drivers VTA was unable to carry as many people; the driver shortage leads to less revenue to be collected. Mr. Snider said he believed recruitment efforts in Puerto Rico was a good choice, and inquired on the status of the house purchased in Vineyard Haven for employee housing. Ms. Gompert responded that the house is being rehabbed currently.

Additionally, Ms. Gompert outlined the new complexities of getting a CDL License in the state of Massachusetts.

Ms. Leaird inquired if the VTA had reached out to the High School to create a work study type program. Ms. Gompert responded that she has reached out and they are working to create a future program with both the High School and the Charter School.

### **Introduction – Felicia Webb, Director of Transit Operations:**

Ms. Gompert introduced Felicia Webb to the Advisory Board as the new Director of Transit Operations for the VTA. Ms. Webb has extensive experience in transit operations and will have direct oversight of daily transit operations at the VTA. Ms. Webb shared her background in transit with the Board and is excited to go through her first full in-season with the VTA.

### **Project Updates:**

West Tisbury – Construction of the inductive chargers at the Town Hall has begun. The temporary pads and conduit have been laid, the pad for the charging cabinet has been poured - the charging cabinet will be shipped in approximately 5 weeks. The shelter for the temporary switch gear has been constructed, once the permanent switch gear for Church Street arrives, the temporary switch gear that is currently there will be relocated to West Tisbury. There is still a wait for the transformer from Eversource for the West Tisbury site.

Lobster Alley – Mrs. Miller inquired about the status of Lobster Alley and if the property had transferred – Ms. Gompert responded that it had and it would be undergoing some rehab. Mrs. Miller brought the newest Board Members up to speed on the process behind the VTA acquiring this property from Island Housing Trust (IHT).

### **Minutes:**

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to accept the minutes from September 14, 2022. Mr. Wasserman made a motion to accept the minutes of September 14, 2022. Mr. Snider 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Leaird abstained. **[MSC]**

Mr. Mackay inquired what happened to the August 31, 2022 minutes that had been tabled at the last meeting. Ms. Gompert responded that those minutes were accidentally left off this agenda, and therefore could not be voted on. Ms. Thomas offered to send out the draft 8/31/22 minutes to the Board after this meeting so they could review them.

Mr. Snider inquired what the service plan is for the upcoming in-season. Ms. Gompert responded that she hoping to add additional service, including service until 10:00pm in the up-island region, maintaining 15 minute service on Route

13 until 9:00pm. Ms. Gompert stated that these additions will all depend on staffing. Mr. Snider suggested shifting more service to Route 13 since it is the most popular, and adding an electronic signs in Oak Buffs that says when the next bus to Edgartown, etc. will be arriving to help market VTA services. Ms. Gompert responded that there are certain pieces that can't be taken away surrounding equity and congestion mitigation, which requires a balancing act providing appropriate service between towns. Ms. Gompert voiced concern on the ability to carry more passengers during the in-season on Route 13 as it is already at capacity due to driver shortage.

Ms. Gompert shared with the Board that the VTA is in the process of replacing the vehicle technology in the buses, including the 22 year old fareboxes and Computer Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system. The Steamship will most likely let VTA put electronic signs, but they will not be allowed at Ocean Park, as it is a historic district. Mrs. Miller commented on marketing and how to make the schedules and system easier to follow for those who are not familiar – discussion continued.

Ms. Gompert announced the VTA is also looking into mini-bus style electric vehicles called "Jest" that could be used for less dense routes, Edgartown Park & Ride, as well as ADA service.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Leaird made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Snider 2<sup>nd</sup>. [MSC]

Ms. Miller declared the meeting closed at 11:10 AM.

\*Indicates joined late or left early

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Date

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Signed