

November 17, 2020

*Ms. Gompert stated in accordance with Governor Baker's emergency modification of the Open Meeting Law this meeting will be held virtually. Remote participation only.*

Present: Lenny Jason, Elaine Miller, Angela Gompert (VTA), Lauren Thomas (VTA)

Guest: Bruce Norling, CPA, PC presented FY20 Audit 2:18-2:39 PM

2:15 PM Ms. Miller called the meeting to order

Ms. Gompert & Ms. Thomas temporarily left the meeting while Mr. Norling, Ms. Miller, and Mr. Jason discussed the VTA's FY 20 audited financial statements report prepared by Mr. Norling.

**Audit Report discussion:**

Ms. Miller stated that ridership only contributes 12% of funding, and that the Advisory Board and riders are unaware of the amount of funding contributed by the government. She believes that awareness of this should be increased. Mr. Norling confirmed the 12% ridership funding. Ms. Miller noted the administrative costs are only 3% of the total budget. Mr. Norling confirmed this was a low percentage, and mostly attributed to personnel. He stated VTA management "ran a very tight ship" and this percentage was lower compared to similar sized RTAs. Ms. Miller asked Mr. Norling for confirmation that Ms. Gompert may not necessarily be receiving appropriate support response from the Board based on her low administrative costs. Mr. Norling confirmed.

Mr. Norling stated transportation revenue of 12% made sense compared to FY18 & FY19 at 22-23%, due to COVID-19. He stated that government funding is imperative. Ms. Miller stated this information should be used/presented to inform the public and the Board, and emphasized that 3% administrative cost is low for a \$6 million budget.

Mr. Norling confirmed that the increase in capital assets of \$19 million reflected new busses; customer receipts were down \$500,000; and \$74,000 rent was a comfortable amount. He said the electrification upgrades to the fleet were impressive. Ms. Miller suggested this statement be put in the paper to counter community pushback on the electric busses.

Mr. Norling stated the audit tested fare revenue, grants, operating expenses, and found no exceptions—everything was "right by the book" and it was a "terrific job financially." He stated the administration group was small for a big operation, and a nice team that does a really good job. He said the audit went really well. Ms. Miller stated the report seemed to also confirm that the grants received were timely and well-used and asked Mr. Norling to affirm she had read the report accurately. Mr. Norling confirmed. Ms. Miller and Mr. Jason both stated they were comfortable with the auditor's report.

Ms. Gompert and Ms. Thomas returned to the meeting at 2:40 P.M.

Ms. Miller asked Mr. Norling if CARES was making a big difference, and he said the federal government "stepped up to the plate" and if not it would've been really difficult. Ms. Miller said the Board discusses

increasing ridership and providing transportation to people in isolated areas, but the challenge is monetary cost and who pays. Mr. Norling confirmed it's a challenge. Ms. Miller stated even before COVID-19, the Board went to the towns for assistance regarding the vehicle operators' strike in June of 2019 and towns didn't seem to care, and that they disassociated from it and just wanted a solution, as only two towns voted to add to their VTA assessment to add services that were reduced due to the collective bargaining agreement that was approved in July 2019.

Mr. Norling & Ms. Thomas left the meeting at 2:45 pm

Mr. Jason moved to accept the auditor's report, Ms. Miller seconded. Vote carried. Mr. Jason moved to accept the minutes from the last audit meeting, 4/29/20, and this was tabled as Ms. Miller hadn't yet a chance to review them.

Ms. Gompert reported ridership for October was only down 50% , which is the highest recovery percentage since the pandemic began and the ridership gap the first couple weeks of November is even less, which she felt was a positive trend; July & August of calendar year 19/fiscal 20 were down from the strike's bad PR and slightly from Uber and Lyft, though the 5-10% drop from them between FY19-FY20 was delayed.

Ms. Gompert stated she applied for a grant to market the new slogan "VTA: Clean and Convenient bus." This campaign included e-ticketing, UV lights, and upgraded HVAC filtration on busses.

Ms. Gompert stated that with the help of. Andrew Grant, a revised off-season schedule was recommended as follows: Routes 2-6 to remain the same except to run 6 days and have Sundays introduce the Microtransit Pilot; Routes 7-9 & 10A remain the same Monday-Saturday; end Micro Transit and return to Fixed Route when ridership picks back up. Based on reviewing current ridership trends, Route 13 will run hourly Mon-Fri and every ½ hour Sat & Sun; Route 1 to run every ½ hour Mon-Fri and hourly Sat & Sun.

Ms. Miller stated the Board discussed plan for Microtransit at meeting: cost is more, but \$5.00 per town is reasonable. Ms. Gompert agreed and stated that up-island would be a hard sell due to transit equity issues; Woodside residents could still use a pass to use Route 1 to 13 to get to MVH. Ms. Gompert & Ms. Miller agreed there'd be a learning curve due to COVID-19. Ms. Gompert stated statewide RTAs are mostly <= 50%, and believes ridership increase is due to seasonal Uber and Lyft drivers and people trusting the use of masks; some RTAs are partnering with housing authorities to help provide Wi-Fi and food-pantry-like deliveries, and hopefully the VTA will build more of these types of partnerships.

Ms. Gompert stated she would resend financials and updated By-Laws to the whole Board and speak to the remaining members to answer any questions about the Microtransit Program before Thanksgiving. The By-Laws had been updated to reflect the two new voting members – Disabled Community Rider Rep. and Community Rider Rep., as well as the increase to 6 annual Board meetings.

December 10, 2020 was agreed as the date of the next Advisory Board meeting.

Mr. Jason asked about the definition of “executives/ officer” as stated in the By-Laws. Ms. Gompert stated it meant the 3 staff that are on salary: herself, Ms. Thomas, and Mr. Grant. Ms. Gompert recommended changing “executive officer” to “exempt,” thus signifying their exemption from overtime wages. Mr. Jason agreed and suggested securing Attorney Jack Collins to review job descriptions and personnel policies to avoid any possible future issues. Ms. Gompert stated the drug and alcohol policies for RTAs were constantly being changed. Ms. Gompert stated she wanted to give Ms. Thomas & Mr. Grant increases in salary upon their reviews as they had been earning the same since 2016, and COVID-19 had added more to their responsibilities. Ms. Gompert recommended they review job descriptions and personnel policies before December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, when they’d discuss these and By-Law updates. Item 6 was tabled.

Ms. Gompert restated she would send the financial and Microtransit updates to the full board and answer any related questions.

3:17 PM Mr. Jason made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup>. m/s/c

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Date

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Signed