

## **October 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority Advisory Board**

***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 via Zoom Video Communications.***

Present: Alice Butler, Oak Bluffs; Mark Snider, Edgartown; Elaine Miller, Tisbury; Lenny Jason, Chilmark; Susanna Sturgis, West Tisbury; June Manning, Aquinnah; Anne Sylvester\*, Community Disabled Rider Rep, Edgartown; Angela Gompert - VTA, Lauren Thomas- VTA, Andrew Grant-VTA, David Zeilinger-TCI.

Guests: Kelly McCarron

9:36 am -Ms. Butler called the meeting to order.

**Public Comments:** Kelly McCarron, who has been selected by the Town of Edgartown as the Rider Representative introduced herself. Ms. McCarron stated that has a frequent rider she has heard concerns from the public about the upcoming winter schedule. The Town of Edgartown has not given formal notice of her appointment and therefore joined the meeting as a public participant.

**Minutes:** Ms. Miller made a motion to accept the minutes from August 27, 2020. Ms. Sturgis 2<sup>nd</sup>. m/s/c

### **Financial Update:**

- A) Draft Financials through 9/30/2020: Ms. Gompert presented draft financials for the first three months of FY2021. Ms. Gompert noted that both revenues and expenses were down due to reduced service which is attributable to decreased ridership and a reduced schedule associated with COVID-19. Mr. Snider inquired about the impact of the CARES funding and what should happen if this funding is not renewed. Ms. Gompert state that as of 6/30/2020 the VTA had a used approximately \$650,000 of their CARES funding to close the gap in revenue loss.
- B) Budget Projection – Remainder of FY2021: Ms. Gompert shared the year-to-date actuals as of 9/30/2020 and projected numbers for fiscal year end of 6/30/2021. It is projected the VTA will come in under budget for 6/30/2021. Ms. Gompert also noted that the Federal Assistance number would usually be about \$970K range, but do to CARES funding, that number is elevated.
- C) Discussion- Potential Fare Increase: Ms. Gompert resumed discussion of the possibility of keeping the in-season fare of \$2.00 per town through the off-season to generate more revenue. Discussion followed concerning the relevancy of the additional \$0.75 per town to passengers. Mr. Snider brought up the possibility of additional resident discounted fare options and inquired what measures are in place to help those who may not be able to afford an annual pass. Ms. Gompert said that the VTA can't offer free passes, but that there are service programs on the Island who help with this. Ms. Thomas stated that the VTA has worked with MVCS, Island Intervention, Dukes County Housing Authority and other community organizations to directly

\*indicates arriving late or leaving early

invoice for passes to these outfits so that they may obtain passes for their clients through grants.

**Old/New Business:**

- A) Operations Update: Mr. Zeilinger of Transit Connection, Inc. reported a successful season operations wise, and that most seasonal staff had departed for the year. He stated that staff scheduling was more difficult than normal due to the constantly changing effects of COVID-19, and that each day was different. Mr. Zeilinger said he was happy with the in-season and is looking forward to the off-season and to begin planning for the 2021 in-season. Mr. Zeilinger also commented that based on his time in buses, he does not believe the \$0.75 fare increase seems to be irrelevant to most passengers.
- B) Microtransit Pilot Program: Ms. Gompert and Mr. Grant presented a draft of the Winter Service Plan and the Demand Response Concept overview. The intent of this microtransit program is to provide demand responsive service in the less dense areas of the Island that are not close to a fixed bus route. Microtransit would be provided in two areas: Aquinnah/Chilmark/West Tisbury (Routes 2,3, 4 5 & 6) with potential transfer to fixed route bus service at the West Tisbury Town Hall or the WT Business District and Edgartown/Oak Bluffs (Routes 7, 8 & 9), with potential transfer to fixed route bus service at the Skate Park or Church St in Edgartown. The anticipated fare for this microtransit service would be \$5.00 per person/per town, and be independent of fixed route bus fares. Ms. Sylvester inquired what types of vehicles would be used in this application, and Ms. Gompert responded microtransit trips would be serviced by mini-buses, similar to the *Lift* vans. Ms. Sylvester inquired if we had enough vehicles and Ms. Gompert answered that vehicles would not be a problem, and that the VTA had procured two additional mini-buses from the Greater Lynn Senior Center. Ms. Gompert stated that she hoped the off season ridership would be strong enough, especially in the up island corridor as to not have to switch the service to Microtransit. She stated ridership would continue to be monitored and we would be ready to go with Microtransit in both areas or just one, again depending on current ridership trends

**Ridership through 9/30/2020:** Ms. Gompert stated that ridership was better than expected for September, but still down overall by 72.5% for the year. Ms. Gompert reiterated the importance of regaining ridership during and post pandemic, which could possibly include a safety campaign to show riders what the VTA is doing to keep its passengers and drivers safe. A video would be made showing how the buses are sanitized and what other protocols are in place for passenger and driver safety.

**Items not reasonably anticipated to be discussed:** Ms. Sturgis stated she would like to discuss the email she had sent to the Board last month regarding learning more about transportation policy at the state level and other related consumer driven topics, including what the role of the Board is. Ms. Butler responded that she did not believe that to be the role of the Advisory Board. Ms. Gompert suggested  
\*indicates arriving late or leaving early

that all Board members make themselves familiar with MGL 161B which defines the roles and responsibility of the Advisory Board. Ms. Gompert also mentioned that consumer driven topics are handled by the VTA's Consumer Advisory Group, which has been on hiatus during COVID-19.

Ms. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:22am. Ms. Sturgis 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Sylvester was unresponsive during roll call vote to adjourn. m/s/c

.

-----  
Date

-----  
Signed

\*indicates arriving late or leaving early