

December 10, 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, Disabled Community Rider Rep, Edgartown; Kelly McCarron, Rider Rep, Edgartown; Angela Gompert, VTA; Lauren Thomas, VTA; Andrew Grant, VTA.

Guests: Bruce Norling, CPA, PC

9:37 am -Ms. Butler called the meeting to order.

Public Comments: None

Minutes: Mr. Jason made a motion to accept the minutes from October 22, 2020. Ms. Sturgis 2nd. m/s/c

Ridership through 11/30/2020: Mr. Grant presented two graphs – one showing the 2019-2020 Year to Year Comparison showing the seven day rolling average for ridership; the second comparing the 2019-2020 Off-Season to the 2020-2021 Off-Season, based on a 7 day rolling average. Mr. Grant stated that ridership was down with the Off-Season, as expected, but was showing signs of trending towards recovery. Mr. Snider inquired what the 2018 numbers were, and whether this was a fair comparison, due to the reduction of service that happened in 2019.

Ms. Miller inquired if there was an increase in the amount of service that's being provided this winter as compared to last winter. Mr. Grant replied that there was more service this winter – that Routes 2 & 4 were running on a limited schedule and that the VTA had introduced the Microtransit Pilot Program. Mr. Grant stated that the Microtransit was meant to complement the fixed route service, not compete with it.

Mr. Snider commented that he was concerned that with the daily ridership being so low this time of the year, that it would not bring in the revenue needed to operate. Ms. Gompert replied that the VTA had received an additional \$103K in funding that would extend the CARES funding, with approximately \$700K of it left for 2023. Ms. Gompert explained that she forecasts for the upcoming year based on the year prior, as required by MassDOT, and the 5 year budgetary forecast is based on previous trends.

Ms. Sturgis inquired whether the VTA had reached out to the elderly community, especially those residing in the IEH housing communities to let them know about the Microtransit options for the winter. Mr. Grant replied that he had been in touch with those communities. Ms. Thomas added that two complimentary Microtransit town fares would be given with each purchase of a 2021 Annual Pass as an incentive to try it.

*indicates arriving late or leaving early

Audit & Finance Subcommittee Update:

- A) FY 2020 VTA Audit Presentation: Ms. Miller, chair of the VTA Audit & Finance Subcommittee, introduced Bruce Norling, CPA, PC, who had conducted the VTA's independent audit for FY 2020. Ms. Miller advised that the Audit & Finance Sub-Committee had accepted the Audited Financial Statements at their last meeting, and opened up the floor for those Advisory Board members with questions or concerns for Mr. Norling. Ms. Gompert and Ms. Thomas temporarily left the meeting while the presentation took place. Mr. Snider inquired to Mr. Norling where the CARES funding was reflected in the audit. Mr. Norling directed him to the page. Ms. Miller commented that the audited financial statements reflected an Administrative Expense of only 3% out of a \$6M budget. Mr. Norling replied that the VTA was very lean and that 3% is a very low administrative expense for an authority. Ms. Sturgis asked how TCI, the VTA's private operating company, fit into the budget and if he also audited them. Mr. Norling replied that he audits TCI's compliance with their contract held with the VTA. The audit presentation and questions concluded at 9:54am and Ms. Gompert and Ms. Thomas returned to the meeting.
- B) VTA Advisory Board By-Laws – Discussion: Ms. Sturgis stated that the Advisory Board By-Laws should be reviewed and revised, and a subcommittee should be formed to do so. Mr. Jason explained that the VTA Audit & Finance Subcommittee is the group that reviews and revises the By-Laws as needed and then presents them to the Advisory Board. Ms. Gompert stated that the avenue to make revisions to the By-Laws would be through the Audit & Finance Subcommittee. A meeting would need to be posted, and the Audit & Finance Subcommittee would then present the happenings at the next Advisory Board meet. Ms. Gompert reminded that small groups of Board Members meeting to discuss subjects independently without a posted meeting could be a violation of the Open Meeting Law, and should remain mindful of that. Ms. Miller suggested that Board members review the By-Laws and come up with recommendations to discuss for the next Audit & Finance Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Jason made a motion to take recommendations from Board Members for the By-Laws and present to the Audit & Finance Subcommittee. Ms. Manning 2nd. m/s/c

Financial Update:

- A) Draft Financials through October 2020: Ms. Gompert presented draft financials through 10/31/2020 - revenues are down 43.66% and expenses down 35.52%. Ms. Gompert stated that revenues are projected to rise in May/June and expenses to come in under budget for FY21, allowing for more service on the road for summer 2021, as compared to 2020. It is expected that summer of 2021 will be a challenger for staffing and managing passenger loads, but service will be closer to regular summer hours. Ms. Gompert said the VTA has also applied for a Federal grant that would help fund on-board UV-C light sanitation for the buses, as well as an E-Ticketing platform.

*indicates arriving late or leaving early

Old/New Business:

- A) Operations Update: Ms. Gompert stated that the Microtransit Pilot Program that began 11/30/2020 had been well received thus far, with several passengers a day using the service. Ms. Thomas spoke about 2021 Annual Passes, stating they had gone on sale 12/9/2020 at the VTA Office and the Edgartown Visitor's Center. Passes were in the process of being distributed to the Island COAs and Schools, which sell Annual Passes for a discounted rate. Pass prices remain the same as the previous year.
- B) VTA Fare Policy – Vote Required: Ms. Gompert distributed a draft of the VTA's Fare Policy. MassDOT is requiring that the VTA evaluate fares every 3 years. Ms. Gompert said that the next fare evaluation would take place in calendar year 2022, based on the last rate increase. Ms. Sturgis made a motion to accept the VTA Fare Policy, Ms. Miller 2nd. m/s/c

Mr. Jason made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:06am. Ms. Sturgis 2nd. m/s/c

Date

Signed