

**MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2022
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
GRTC TRANSIT COMPANY**

Members Present: Tyrone E. Nelson, Chair, County of Henrico
Andreas Addison, Vice Chair, City of Richmond
Barbara K. Smith, Secretary/Treasurer, County of Chesterfield
Dave Anderson, County of Chesterfield
Todd Eure, County of Henrico
Jim Ingle, County of Chesterfield
Ellen Robertson, City of Richmond
Lincoln Saunders, City of Richmond
Daniel Schmitt, County of Henrico

Others Present: Bonnie Ashley, General Counsel
Sheryl Adams, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Adrienne Torres, Chief Development Officer
Dawn Bailey, Controller
Tim Barham, Chief of Transit Operations
Tony Byrd, Director of Maintenance
Anthony Carter, Director of Risk Management
Joe Dillard, Director of Equitable Innovation & Legislative Policy
Mike Frontiero, Director of Communications
Antionette Haynes, Procurement Services Administrator
Jean Lombos, ITS Project Implementation Manager
Cherika Ruffin, Program Manager, RideFinders
Sam Sink, Director of Planning & Schedules
Brandon Butler, Procurement Specialist
Monica Carter, Safety and Service Compliance Manager
Jamel Harper, Procurement Specialist
Maurice Carter, President – Local 1220, Amalgamated Transit Union
Dironna Clarke, City of Richmond
Faith Walker, RVA Rapid Transit
William Betehold, Citizen
Barry Green, RVA Rapid Transit
Ken Lantz, PlanRVA
Richard Hankins, RVA Rapid Transit
Jon Rigby, Virginia JPL
Tundun Oladipo, Citizen

I. Call to Order & Introductions

This meeting of the Board of Directors of the GRTC Transit System, Old Dominion Transit Management Company (ODTMC), and RideFinders was called to order on December 20, 2022, by the Chair, Tyrone Nelson, at 8:00AM. The meeting was held at GRTC Transit System, Operators Lounge, 301 East Belt Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia. Video and audio of the meeting will be streamed live online and recorded for later viewing at the following web address:
https://youtu.be/uhWFy_c-4KI.

II. Public Comments

The public notice, meeting agenda, and agenda attachments for this December 20, 2022, standing meeting of the Boards of GRTC, RideFinders, and Old Dominion Transit Management Company were posted at rideGRTC.com. Per the meeting notice, all written comments received via email by Mike Frontiero prior to 5:00PM on the day preceding a meeting were provided to all members of the Board the night before the meeting, are read during the Public Comment Period of the meeting by staff following the two-minute speaking limit and will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Cezar Carvalhaes

I live in the Woodland Heights neighborhood of Southside Richmond. I am in full support of a North-South BRT with frequent service, dedicated lanes, and sheltered stations. Transit is a pillar of an economically resilient & flourishing region, as each dollar spent on transit brings \$5 in economic benefits, and is necessary for us to build safe and thriving communities. Being so close to Semmes Avenue, I see on a daily basis the impacts that our focus on single cars has on people. It's a dangerous corridor, and only a convenient, predictable transit service can help mitigate our dependence on cars. Not only are there obvious benefits due to reduced emissions, but decreased gasoline consumption reduces our dependence on foreign oil. There is also an equity component: 90% of those on public assistance do not own a car. Many elderly folks and those with disabilities also cannot drive - a second BRT could double their accessible world.

Dan Miltenberger

I'm a second-year mechanical engineering student at VCU. Keeping the buses fare-free is really important to me because of the countless adventures I've gotten to go on throughout the city. I'm an out-of-state student, and when I explore the city I either walk, run, bike or ride the bus. Because of the free fares, I've gone from campus to Rocketts landing, Martin Luther King Jr Middle School for after-school mentorship programs, and to the VMFA for a first date, and we're still together! I did the classic "yawn and put your arm around her" on a bus bench waiting for our ride back: the one time I was glad the bus was running late. But of course, the benefits of Zero-Fare go beyond some young college student going on a date. It extends to people who need to get to work. It extends to people who need to run errands. It extends to families who want to go for a walk along the river. From personal experience, it extends to a student getting groceries for the week. From a monetary standpoint, I've gone to Carytown directly because of the quick and free transportation. I love the watermelon festival. Students don't mind spending the cash on board games or thrifted clothes in Cary, but they may balk at a fee there and a fee back. It's like buying something online but you change your mind once you see the shipping. Smart online retailers will make shipping free and I'll use that service much more - and GRTC is doing a great job following this example. I've had a lot of great memories in this city, and they all had a bus ride involved. From the moment I arrived at VCU, I got off the train from Philly with a backpack and a duffel and took the bus to Monroe Park. I'm glad I didn't have to drop my duffel and turn my backpack upside down looking for loose change. I firmly believe that we should match the grant and continue this wonderful experience of zero-fare in our city!

William Benton

I write in support of the extension of the GRTC's zero-fare status. I believe that it supports both city growth and citizen equity. Having no barrier to entry allows people to use our public transit system without worrying about cards, change, or the general financial stress of managing this sort of payment. It also makes the city more approachable and navigable for tourists and city workers who reside in the suburbs (ie easier to expand park-and-ride). I take the Pulse with my daughter from Church Hill to the Science Museum of Virginia, from my office at VCU back home to Church Hill, and to other points around the city as needed. I am very excited that there are plans for a north-south express bus service as well. In conversations with VCU Parking and Transportation Services, I have heard their active interest in directing students to take GRTC rather than duplicating service with a second network of buses (thus limiting RamRide and RamSafe). For students unfamiliar with city life,

being able to hop on a bus is an important part of college life. On the last field trip I planned, my students met me at the MCV complex via Pulse - it's actively woven into the life of the Monroe Park and MCV campuses. So, keeping GRTC zero-fare is important, the service that GRTC offers to a growing city is important, and I appreciate your work in keeping Richmond on the move.

Jim Somerville

I am pastor of Richmond's First Baptist Church and a big fan of public transportation. I moved here from Washington, DC, where I took the Metro to work every day. It was quick, clean, easy, and convenient. I was able to give up my car, and because of that I saved money that gave me resources on those few occasions when I needed to take a cab. My daughter has epilepsy and is unable to drive. She took the Metro everywhere in Washington, and when she moved with us to Richmond back in 2008 she was able to take GRTC to her job at the University of Richmond. Recently she was in the hospital for a full week of testing, and I was able to walk from the church to Broad Street each day at lunch, get on the PULSE, and ride to VCU Medical Center for free to see her. Please help us keep GRTC free. During the difficult days of the Pandemic, and in these months of recovery, having free, clean, efficient transportation has been a lifesaver.

Tony Haynes

I'm a huge supporter of zero fare for the GRTC! I work with many wonderful people who utilize public transportation and to know that they can continue to, without the financial fear of losing that right, would mean so much. This is obviously also a wonderful way to take more cars off our streets and allow for pedestrians to feel safe walking in our beautiful city. Please know that this is a popular opinion and that we should keep the GRTC zero fare going.

Sarah Rose

I believe the GRTC bus should remain free to all who want to use it. The GRTC provides essential transport to our citizens to schools, grocery stores, jobs, healthcare, and courthouses. People should continue to have access to these places free of charge. By charging for transportation, it would be cutting off essential, lifesaving resources to many of our at-risk population who need it the most. Many cannot afford the cost of transportation and rely on the zero fare offering of the GRTC to survive. If taken away, these people will be plunged into further poverty. Further, the GRTC buses reduce pollution by providing an alternative to individually-owned cars and trucks. Please keep the GRTC fare free.

Eric Mason

I am a resident of the museum district in Richmond. I am here today to advocate for zero fare. It is important to me to have public transportation as accessible as possible. Keeping the cost prohibitive factors out of the equation has proven to be helpful to the community, myself included, and increased ridership overall. I personally use the Pulse frequently to get around. Knowing that it is free, encourages me to use the public transportation system instead of ride- share/car-based transport. Please continue zero fare into the future.

Richard Barrett

It is really important to keep the free fares as it has helped so many low-income riders. They are able to get to work and not worry about bus fare. It has also helped many seniors get around the city. I noticed an increase in ridership because of the free fare. Please keep the free fares for now.

Courtney C. Rogers

I am a Ph.D. Candidate and Graduate Research Assistant in UVa's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Over the past three years, I have been studying how transportation affordability and availability affects access to maternal health services in the Greater Richmond Region. As you may know, the maternal mortality and morbidity rates among low-income women of color in this country are highly inequitable. In conducting qualitative research with birthing individuals across the city, I

have heard many stories about the financial tradeoffs individuals have had to make about their transportation options. When asked about zero fare, participants have told me that because of this policy, they have been able to access maternal health services more frequently without having to make decisions about whether they can pay for essential items for their children. This work is currently in preparation for publication, but I am happy to share the preliminary results if it is of interest. As you are weighing your decision, know that it is essential for the promotion of maternal health equity to continue zero-fare.

Ben Wong

I am a Richmond resident and reentry case manager at OAR of Richmond. We serve people recently released from incarceration and help connect them with local resources and services to achieve their goal of getting re-established in the community. The zero fare policy has been tremendously beneficial for OAR's hundreds of clients, allowing them to get back on their feet and start contributing to their families, workplaces, and neighborhoods more quickly. It also increases their ability to access crucial social services scattered across the city (e.g., healthcare, food pantries, employment assistance) that are essential for meeting their basic needs, and thus for gaining stability and avoiding homelessness. A majority of our clients are rebuilding their lives from scratch after incarceration and are tasked with seemingly endless challenges, such as finding safe and permanent housing and a living wage job with a criminal background, managing the ups and downs of mental illness and recovery from substance abuse, and repaying enormous amounts of court restitution. Not having to worry about transportation costs is a blessing. Reinstating bus fares would put a significant hurdle in front of the reentry population and make it less likely that they break out of the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and incarceration. I urge you to do everything in your power to maintain zero fare.

Robert Sullivan

I am a City of Richmond resident and urge the Board to approve funding to keep GRTC fare free in 2024. I'm a retiree with limited access to an auto, and I ride the bus several times each week. Boarding is much easier without having to fumble for a fare - I am convinced it helps buses stay on time and makes life much easier for drivers. It's also a matter of financial equity: many riders make less than the median income and are more likely to be carless. Further, public transit is a critical part of our response to climate change; we must improve infrastructure and provide incentives to take automobiles off the streets. Finally, Zero-Fare has been a huge success. Richmond has received national attention with our post-pandemic ridership, and other localities are following our lead.

Elle De La Cancela

I currently live in Church Hill. I'm an advocate with RVA Rapid Transit. When I am within city limits, I try my best to only utilize the bus or ride my bike. I go from the grocery store to the public library, from friends in Bryant Park to Blackwell. This freedom of mobility is enabled by the Pulse, which often acts as my transfer line. GRTC's remaining zero fare has made it possible to travel all across the city within my budget. If it was not free, I would be stuck on my bike in all sorts of weather to avoid the price of such frequent trips with so many transfers. But zero fare isn't just for me. Over half of GRTC riders make under \$25,000 a year and they deserve the same freedom of movement as Richmond's wealthiest. I urge the GRTC to continue to prioritize and protect those who are already vulnerable. Extend zero fare so I and others can continue to explore and live in the city we love.

Fronkie L'Heureux

I'm writing to make a public comment to keep bus fares free. I think movements like these are what all cities will need going forward to make transportation (and therefore jobs, voting, groceries, etc) accessible for all, and promote the use of public transportation to reduce carbon emissions. As a mother of 2 children I think about the future they could face after I'm gone, and I know that if we don't drastically reduce our carbon footprint right now, they may struggle in ways no generation has for centuries. Already we can see the dramatic consequences facing communities all around the world. We've all been under a lot of stress these past 2 years, and it just continues. This past year, I was

stricken with regular and debilitating migraines occurring every 2 weeks. The amount of revenue I lost in my business from my inability to work could buy a very nice car with cash in hand. I wanted to apply for disability, but the benefits from social security wouldn't cover my bills, and mine is not an industry that offers disability insurance. Riding the bus to work helped me trim the fat in my decreased budget and even helped alleviate some of the stress of driving and parking. I'm so grateful for the success of the Zero-Fare program and hope to see it continue.

Zach Outzen

I am a resident of Jackson Ward. I am writing to express my support for GRTC's zero-fare program and ask the GRTC Board to vote in favor of providing matching funds for the program. The GRTC has been a critical part of my life in Richmond. Like many other Americans, I have been personally impacted by traffic violence, with several of my family members and friends having been severely injured or killed in vehicular accidents. As a result, I have anxiety around driving, and try to avoid it as much as possible. In some regions of our country, that could be very isolating. But, in Richmond, because the GRTC is there and easily accessible, it is easy to still be able to see my friends, family, and explore the city. All told, the zero-fare program helps me - and others like me - save around \$60 each month. Every month, I put that extra money right back into our community by shopping at small businesses and dining at our local restaurants. Not only does the zero-fare program help me feel more connected with my community, it helps me support my community's economic development, as well. Beyond my experience with the GRTC, I believe that the program is important for economic justice and social equity. By providing free bus service to all passengers, the zero-fare program ensures that everyone has access to public transportation, regardless of their ability to pay. This is especially important for low-income individuals and communities of color, who are often disproportionately impacted by inadequate and unequal transportation systems. Car ownership and operation costs over \$10,000/year, a prohibitively high cost for a significant number of Richmond residents. Perhaps that is why so many low-income residents rely on GRTC - over half of GRTC riders make under \$25,000. Zero-fare removes a financial barrier for these residents to fully participate in our economy as workers and households, and we have a normative obligation not to reinstitute that financial barrier. Additionally, I believe that the zero-fare program will free up funding for GRTC. Collecting fares is expensive. Collecting and enforcing fares takes up 24% of revenue raised by fares. Eliminating these costs will allow the agency to redirect those funds towards other important priorities, such as improving service, increasing accessibility, and expanding the transit network. I urge the Greater Richmond Transit Company to continue supporting the zero-fare program, and to match the funding provided by the state. This program is an important step towards a more equitable and sustainable transportation system in Richmond, and I hope that the company will continue to prioritize it.

Barbara Branch

I am a city of Richmond resident. Prior to COVID, I used GRTC a lot more. Have not used it since due to age...will be 82 on Dec 23rd. Will be giving up driving when I feel that continuing will put me and others at risk and hope Zero Fare will be available.

Emily McCrary-Ruiz-Esparza

I'm a GRTC rider writing to express my support for extending Zero-Fare service. I use the bus to get to coffee shops, bookstores, the VMFA, the Library of Virginia, the grocery store — you name it! I've loved Zero-Fare for the obvious fact that it saves me money; I also love the Zero-Fare program because it's the right thing to do. People should not be limited by their ability to pay for transport. I lived in Manchester for three years and recently moved to the Museum District, and with each move, the location of GRTC stops was a factor in my decision. In fact, when my husband and I moved to Richmond in 2019, the excellent GRTC service sealed the deal on our becoming a single-car household, and whenever we can, we prefer to walk or to use the GRTC.

Ainsley Walker

I am a resident of the Fan who uses the bus to get to work downtown and I am writing in support of keeping GRTC fare free. I believe that the lost revenue to GRTC from not charging fares more than makes up for itself in the good that is provided to Richmond from a free service. This is true for both choice riders and riders that rely on GRTC service. As service levels have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, the zero-fare has kept me using the bus. Fare free boarding is much more efficient and allows the bus to proceed much faster. Please continue to keep this vital service free.

Ashley Bautista

I am a recent graduate from VCU. Before the bus became zero-fare, I had free fare with my student ID and the zero-fare was enacted two years after I started living in Richmond. I do think that having the bus zero-fare has benefited me greatly, especially at a time where I am entering the work force and need reliable transportation. With traffic, parking, and all the other maintenance that comes along with having a car, I have decided to not have a car in Richmond. The only way that I am able to do that is by having access to the bus. I think public transportation is a necessity when it comes to an urban city environment. It allows people to have access to transportation that is reliable, eco-friendly, and sustainable. I have been able to go to many more places than I thought I was able to because the bus had routes that took me into various places in the city. With climate change issues and emission of greenhouse gases, public transportation helps all of us decrease the amount of pollution that is going into the atmosphere. We can further encourage the use of public transportation by keeping it free. People are less likely to take the bus if they are charged a fee and would likely end up taking an Uber or car. Buses can hold about ten times more people than a car and if more people had the opportunity to take the bus for free, then we could lessen the impact we have on the environment. I believe that by continuing to make the zero-fare option available to Richmond residents, we are able to give back to the people that live here and foster an incredible community.

Tundun Oladipo (In-Person)

Good morning Mr. Chair and Members of the Board my name is Tundun Oladipo, I am a student at the University of Richmond School of Law and I'm here to speak on support of zero fare. I moved to Richmond in the summer of 2021 and right off the bat I arrived at the train station and I was able to take a bus all the way down to Willow Lawn and the zero fare has really made my experience here and my ability to settle into Richmond much easier than it normally would. I am a lifelong, in my short life, bus rider, I always take public transit in Richmond and the zero-fare quality by far has been one of the best. As a student who has no income it was very helpful when going to get groceries, going to get furniture to move into my apartment, and just get to school functions and then over the summer when I was working as an intern at the federal public defender it was helpful to get to work all the way downtown while living pretty much all the way at the end western and it also helped other students who came from other states to Richmond as well who were also at the internship to be able to get to work from their various accommodations so because of that and because of the benefits that this is given to other students like myself, I would humbly ask that you do continue the zero fare program. Thank you.

Barry Green (In-Person)

Good morning Mr. Chair and Members of the Board, my name is Barry Green I'm a constituent in the 9th district on the Southside and serve on the Board of RVA Rapid Transit. \$776 the cost of owning my vehicle each month covering everything from taxes, parking fees, gas, insurance, licenses, and car payment; that is \$9,312 each year. I'm very fortunate that I have had the opportunity to opt for life without a vehicle and bring up monthly costs and now being able to put that money into my community. Malcolm Blanchard's makes My Americanos and Aaron over at Second Auto and Church Hill know how to pick out a solid red, I'm no longer working to live in this City, I'm working to truly experience it. Well, what does this mean to you I make six figures a year and I use it to be on the bus on average 10-15 times a month. Our lead times are the only reason I don't use it more often but I'm here to put a face to it. I'm also a father of a 10-month-old baby girl whom I hope will see the benefits

of public transit and one day help negate the stigma typically associated with bus ridership, regardless of financial status extending free fare will show me that those efforts aren't overlooked. Thank you.

III. Approval of November 15, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Saunders motioned to approve the November 15, 2022 Board Meeting minutes, Mr. Ingle seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

- A. Server Hardware for Data Center
- B. Specialized Transportation Scheduling Software
- C. Copiers
- D. Major Change for January Booking
- E. Agency Safety Plan

Mr. Ingle motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Schmitt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

V. Information Items

- A. Updated List of Recent and Upcoming Procurements
- B. DRPT Compliance Review Report

VI. Staff Reports

Staff discussed the Reports provided in the Board Packet as follows with no significant changes from the prior month to report and no new significant issues pending:

- A. Safety Performance – Tony Carter
- B. Service Report and Operator Staffing – Tim Barham
- C. Vehicle/Facility Report and Maintenance Staffing – Tony Byrd
- D. Ridership Report – Sam Sink
- E. Rider Comments – Monica Carter
- F. Financial Report – Dawn Bailey

VII. Board Subcommittee Reports

A. Finance Subcommittee Report

Mr. Ingle reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on December 15, 2022. A zero-fare alternative study was presented to the Subcommittee. Following the presentation, the Finance Subcommittee went into a closed session. After the closed session, the Subcommittee came back with a recommendation to be made to the full Board. The Chair of the Finance Subcommittee, Mr. Ingle, moved that the GRTC Board of Directors authorize GRTC to continue the Zero Fare Program for FY24, with further consideration of a study the following year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Saunders, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Operations Subcommittee Report

Mr. Schmitt reported that the Operations Subcommittee met on December 15, 2022. Ellen Robertson (City) was elected to serve as Chair and Dave Anderson (Chesterfield) was elected as Vice Chair. The following items were reviewed/discussed during the meeting: Operations Report and items that were being tracked (training classes, graduation rates, turnover ratio), it was all good information for operations and personnel. The Maintenance Report and the numbers and the position vacancies, and the progress of the Maintenance Department, is stellar. The Agency Safety Plan which was approved earlier in this meeting on the Consent Agenda. The key performance indicators (KPIs) were reviewed, and the Subcommittee will be working on updating some of those KPIs, if necessary. Discussed the exit interviews, recruiting, retention, rewarding which will continue to be a discussion of personnel and operational needs and will provide those to the Finance Subcommittee to make decisions on what is affordable and what is not.

C. Development Subcommittee Report

Ms. Smith reported that the Development Subcommittee met on December 7. The following items were reviewed/discussed during the meeting: Title VI impact with the January booking and there were no burdens identified, update on the zero-fare study, talked about a multitude of studies and projects that are underway including the downtown transfer station which will open in April, North/South BRT Study which should be completed in early fall, zero emission vehicle study which is under the facilities master plan, the neighborhood transfer station study, dedicated lane study, and the Microtransit study which GRTC was successful in getting a DRPT grant for the first pilot and the money has already been set aside for that pilot and the pilot will be extended. Ms. Torres gave a brief update on the Microtransit study.

VIII. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report – Sheryl Adams

- Notice was received from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that they will begin conducting the Triennial Review virtually. Staff will be busy gathering information and it will all be due to FTA by February 3.

IX. Board Chair's Report
No Report.

X. Executive Session

A. Personnel Committee

Mr. Saunders moved that GRTC's Board of Directors hold a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for employment as Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Richmond Transit Company. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Saunders moved that this closed meeting was convened pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and that, according to Sections 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, it was conducted in conformity with Virginia law and that nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion. Mr. Nelson requested a Roll Call Vote which was unanimous.

Mr. Nelson stated that there will be a Personnel Subcommittee meeting tonight off-site at Fleming's Restaurant at 7:45PM. The meeting will be called to order and then immediately will go into closed session.

XI. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:37AM

APPROVED:



Tyrone E. Nelson, Chair
GRTC Board of Directors

January 17, 2023

Date