

**WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Clark Campbell Transportation Conference Room  
100 W. Fifth Street, Winston-Salem, NC**

**MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016**



**PRESENT:**

**Board Members**

Robert Garcia, Chairman  
Keith King, Vice Chairman  
Regina Streed  
Dr. Jack Fleer  
Ruth Carter

**WSTA Staff**

Art Barnes, General Manager  
John Ashford, Assistant General Manger  
Robin Kirby  
Tina Carson-Wilkins  
Tikiha Alston  
Erica Lowery  
Teika Holloway

**OTHERS:**

Dewey Williard, City Transportation Finance  
Manager  
Kenneth Baker, City Transportation Project  
Planner  
Glenda Sears, Sr. Financial Analyst  
Stephen M. Hawryluk, City Budget  
and Evaluation Analyst

Clair Stone, Transportation Advocate

**ABSENT:**

Dr. Trae Cotton  
Toneq' McCullough

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**Meeting Opened: 4:01 pm**

The January 28, 2016 WSTA Board Meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Garcia.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Board members were allowed a moment to review the minutes from the October 29, 2015 board meeting for approval. Chairman Garcia urged the members to keep in mind any questions they may have asked when reviewing the minutes and to check to ensure their questions were answered completely.



Chairman Garcia reacquainted everyone with his request to find out what is the norm or national average for 'no shows.' Mr. Barnes informed that this request is still being researched. Chairman Garcia also inquired about the ADA training that WSTA was chosen to host. Mr. Barnes confirmed that WSTA will host the training classes and that Ms. Tikiha Alston is handling the preparations. Unfortunately, Ms. Alston was not able to attend the Board Meeting due to illness. The ADA training event will take place February 11 and 12. There are approximately 30-38 attendees from various transit systems participating.

**A motion was made to accept the minutes by Dr. Jack Fler and seconded by Vice Chairman Keith King. The Board approved the minutes by common consent.**

### **Resolution Approving a Contract with Blue Cross\Blue Shield**

WSTA has consistently and historically provided Health insurance for its Administrative Staff. Mr. Barnes explained that this standard resolution is retroactive being the contract had to be signed in early December due to a requirement of a contractual agreement.

Mr. Barnes shared that health insurance is up significantly this year because of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). One provision of the ACA is that anyone working a minimum of 30 hours is entitled to health insurance. All of WSTA's staff works a minimum of 30 hours; therefore, a lot more people are covered.

Chairman Garcia asked who makes up the administrative staff mentioned in the resolution. Mr. Barnes explained that the contractual agreement between Transdev and the Transport Workers Union (Local 248) requires the provision of health insurance for the mechanics and operators (members of Local 248). With that being said, Transdev and its predecessor management companies have historically provided health insurance for the administrative staff (the remainder of WSTA's employees). Mr. Garcia queried how many administrative employees WSTA employs. Mr. Barnes estimated that WSTA has about 30 administrative employees.

Dr. Fler asked if this was the first time the operators and mechanics had health insurance. Mr. Barnes responded by saying this is an annual occurrence; the contract is negotiated every year. Dr. Fler then asked the percentage of employees covered by the ACA that were not covered previously. Mr. Barnes said it is approximately 15-20 percent; WSTA's part-time employees constitute this percentage. Mr. Barnes will provide the Board with the exact numbers. Dr. Fler said that he is interested in getting the numbers because people are trying to figure out the impact of ACA. He also expressed his feelings about employees being provide health insurance by saying it is a good thing and in his opinion everyone should have health care even if it is more expensive for employers. Mr. Barnes informed that WSTA covers 90 percent of the cost for its employees to have health insurance benefits. Chairman Garcia asked if the plan included dental; Dr. Fler asked if it included vision. Mr. Barnes confirmed that both were a part of the benefit plan.

Chairman Garcia asked if there were any more questions regarding this resolution. There were no further questions and Chairman Garcia asked if there was a motion to adopt this resolution.

**A move was made by Dr. Fler to adopt this resolution and seconded by Ms. Regina Streed. The resolution authorizing the purchase of health insurance was passed unanimously.**

## **Public Comment:**

Ms. Clair Stone distributed handouts to the meeting attendees. One of the handouts consisted of minutes from the Community Advocates for Transportation Services (CATS) meetings. The second handout consisted of information regarding 'no show' complaints. Ms. Stone said since WSTA's onsite compliance review was conducted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Civil Rights, riders have been hoping for many problems to be corrected. Please refer to the handout for specifics.

Ms. Stone stated that the compliance review is a rigorous process and that WSTA was the first transit system to have one since August 2000. Ms. Stone also stated the compliance review was the result of a violation founded in 2013 that was not corrected.

Ms. Stone said CATS' primary issue is reservations being changed continuously. The same pickup window needs to be reported consistently by reservationists, dispatchers, drivers, manifests, and the automated system. CATS does not think Trans-Aid riders should be suspended for 'no shows' until WSTA corrects their procedures. In addition CATS would like for Mr. Barnes to provide more detailed information to the public regarding 'no shows.' Ms. Stone instructed the Board members to look at the second page of her handout to review the questions being asked to WSTA. She stated that the most important question is, "What is the total number of scheduled trips for December 2015?" Ms. Stone said the total number of scheduled trips over 'no shows' is what FTA uses to determine ratio data. If CATS does not know the total number of scheduled trips, the ratio cannot be determined. Therefore they are asking WSTA to report the number of scheduled trips that were counted as 'no shows' due to them being late cancelations. Please refer to Ms. Stone's handout for a detailed listing of questions proposed by CATS.

Chairman Garcia asked if there were any questions for Ms. Stone and proceeded to ask her if the comments listed on her handout were submitted at a meeting, via website, or to her personally. He also inquired about the origin of the questions proposed by CATS. Ms. Stone said that there are about 10 CATS members and the questions were asked by them.

Mrs. Ruth Carter asked if CATS have taken in consideration that Trans-Aid may be late due to school bus traffic when picking up clients for rides. Ms. Stone responded by saying that at every meeting they have people saying how grateful they are for Trans-Aid. She also stated that CATS is waiting to see if the procedures can be fixed; therefore, they have not put in any complaints for the last six months unless specifically asked to do so. However, Ms. Stone does not feel it is okay for riders to be told that a van will be there at 1-1:30 pm then have the driver arrive at 12:30 pm and say that they have the pickup written down as 12:30 p.m. Ms. Stone stated that all she hears is how grateful the clients are for paratransit; although, it sometimes take 2 hours for some of them to get home. Instead of complaining about this they tell her that is just the way it is with a shared ride.

Chairman Garcia asked if these concerns were formally submitted to WSTA with specifics such as name, date, time, and occurrence details so that it can be researched. Ms. Stone stated that each time she comes to the Board to present concerns she has emailed a formal complaint to WSTA prior to doing so. She also stated that this is her first time asking Mr. Barnes for data regarding CAT's concerns.

Dr. Fler asked Ms. Stone what data she is requesting from Mr. Barnes. She said she would like to receive the answers to her questions listed on the handout. The handout includes her emailed request to Mr. Barnes for this data.

Mr. Barnes shared he spoke with his staff about having someone attend the next CATS meeting. He asked Ms. Stone if the meetings were monthly or bi-monthly. She responded monthly. Mr. Barnes added that he himself may even join a staff member in attending a meeting. He also said that he will be discussing the FTA audit further when the final report is received.

Dr. Fler confirmed that a WSTA staff member and/or Mr. Barnes will be in attendance at the next CATS meeting. Dr. Fler also shared that he believes the concerns of CATS are important. Mr. Barnes agreed; but, also noted that the Board is knowledgeable of the capacity issues regarding Trans-Aid. WSTA is trying to address this issue as quickly as possible. There will be a training class starting up in about three weeks and six new Trans-Aid vans will be delivered in April. WSTA recently added a customer service representative (CSR) and Mr. Barnes's request to the City is for another CSR. In addition, he explained that the data recently received regrading wait times show a significant decrease due to the additional representative; the hope is that another CSR will be hired in the near future. WSTA is hard at work diligently seeking to resolve the issues with capacity.

Mr. Barnes reported that WSTA received the draft report from the auditors and again everything pretty much stems from capacity. WSTA will have to address this by expanding and possibly modifying the fares. Currently everyone who qualifies for Medicaid rides Trans-Aid for free. This decision was made by the Board several years ago and Trans-Aid has been affected by it. Revenue from Trans-Aid none exists. This decision needs to be revisited.

Although the draft report has been received from the FTA, WSTA has been advised to wait on the final report before acting. However, WSTA has begun modification of the procedure publications that will be distributed to the public. There are a number of things addressed in the draft report; one of which is shortening the interview process. Another is changing the 20/20 window to 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after.

Regarding the issue with the personal care attendants, the draft report states that paratransit riders may have both a personal care attendant and a companion ride with them. This was discussed in the Thursday morning staff meeting. A staff member informed that the rider will say they have a companion or personal care attendant riding with them; but, when the driver arrives there is not one.

Mr. Barnes reminded the Board of plans to purchase Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) for the vehicles. This will provide more accuracy with respect to WSTA's on time performance (commented on in the draft report). Funds have been identified to make this purchase and WSTA will proceed as planned. The issue with this is that it will need to be a sole-source procurement; which means, the same vender will be used to provide this equipment. There are a number of procedures WSTA has to go through with regards to purchasing from one vendor instead of having a competitive bid.

Mr. Barnes stated trips that are too long have to be adjusted. The percentage of trips that are over one hour is very low. In respect to polices, if the trips are over an hour WSTA is out of compliance. There were comments in the draft report about late drop-offs and subscription trips. Subscription trips (trips scheduled every day without calling in) cannot be over 50 percent and WSTA has been exceeding that ratio. If WSTA were to have these riders call in every day to schedule these routine

trips the calls would increase dramatically making the call volume worse. A decision was made to freeze the subscription trips with plans to expand the call center and have these individuals dedicated to making reservations. Mr. Barnes explained that everything stems from capacity, bottom line. However, he did acknowledge that there are some procedure issues that can easily be rectified.

Dr. Fler said that he is aware of the tremendous increase that has occurred in Trans-Aid ridership. The Board has discussed this at many meetings over the past several years. Dr. Fler also said that he is sensitive to the fact that this is a free service to those that have Medicaid. He then asked, what is the percentage of riders that utilize Trans-Aid free-of-charge? Mr. Barnes said that currently a poll is being conducted. The question came up from some of the minutes Ms. Stone provided. For this reason operators are asking riders if they are Medicaid approved. Mr. Barnes gave the analogy of someone being offered a free ticket to Paris. What would the person do? They would take it because it is free. The only thing the rider currently has to do is show a Medicaid card. The issue with this is there is no way of knowing if the card is expired. This information is confidential and cannot be obtained from the Department of Social Services (DSS). WSTA is faced with a couple of issues regarding this matter. One being revenue is lost providing this free-of-charge service. The second is in addition to lost revenue, WSTA may be encouraging unnecessary ridership. Under ADA rules WSTA can charge twice the Fixed Route fare for Trans-Aid; instead transportation is provided for free. Mr. Barnes stated that a decision has to be made whether WSTA will continue providing Trans-Aid services for free.

Dr. Fler asked if that decision was made by the Board. Mr. Barnes answered, yes. Dr. Fler then asked if it was a requirement. Mr. Barnes answered no; the decision was made because the Board was and remains sympathetic to the disabled community. Mr. Barnes feels that WSTA shows this in a number of ways that are not limited to its operations; but, is exhibited by community activities as well.

Dr. Fler asked Mr. Barnes if he was alluding to the possibility of activating a paratransit fare. Mr. Barnes replied that it depends on WSTA's ability to expand and increase capacity. If WSTA cannot make this increase quickly enough to keep up with what the demands are this would be a way to have an effect on demand. Mr. Barnes says that he is not advocating for a fare; he is simply saying that a decrease in demand would be the result of an increase in fare.

Dr. Fler asked Ms. Stone if her members were aware of the kinds of issues WSTA are dealing with. She said yes and that the issues are not just capacity based they are procedural as well. Dr. Fler asked her to elaborate. Ms. Stone stated that CATS met with members of WSTA's staff at the Transportation Center (TC) and observed that there were 25 floating reservations that had not been placed on a van. She said that this is not what is done in other cities. Ms. Stone stated that she asked if WSTA could go over and see what ADA staff members are doing in Greensboro because Trapeze is used there as well. She said that she was told no; WSTA had been to Greensboro and they are doing the same as WSTA. Ms. Stone then stated WSTA is not doing it the same because Greensboro's capacity is pretty much 20,000 a month and it is also going up. She asked that if a decision is made to charge a fare, could it be done in small increments. Mr. Barnes addressed Ms. Stone's comments by saying that when she mentions floating reservations he is guessing she's referring the unscheduled trips. He then said that Trapeze schedules based on the availability of man power and vehicles. Obviously WSTA has more demand than man power and vehicles. When a trip is scheduled it is based on time, the number of passengers and how fast the vehicle can travel. So there are a number of trips that cannot be placed on the schedule. These trips are set a side and the dispatcher has to deal with them every day by placing them on the schedule as they dispatch. Mr.

Barnes reiterated that Trapeze simply cannot schedule these trips because the computer will not take them; there are too many.

Dr. Flear asked Mr. Barnes if he knew of any other cities that provide free Trans-Aid transportation. Mr. Barnes replied no. Chairman Garcia asked if the passengers are not qualified under Medicaid is there a fee. Mr. Barnes confirmed this to be true. Dr. Flear asked Mr. Barnes if he was saying that other cities do not make trips available for free to Medicaid recipients. Mr. Barnes stated that he does not know of any other transit system that provides free paratransit trips. Ms. Stone stated that she could email the Board the workup the contractor gave for a recent peer review. She said the workup confirms that it is very rare for a transit authority to provide paratransit trips for free. Mrs. Ruth Cater asked Mrs. Stone if she (Mrs. Cater) understood correctly that transportation was being provided to the riders free of charge and they were complaining about the service. Mrs. Carter also stated that she is not saying that the riders do not need transportation but she was speaking from the heart for all parties involved. Mr. Barnes told Mrs. Carter that he understood her feelings and what she is asking; then he explained that FTA has procedures and rules that WSTA must adhere to as a condition to receiving federal funds. If the Federal Administration tells WSTA they must do something WSTA has to comply by do it as quickly as they possibly can. Dr. Flear stated that FTA is not saying that WSTA has to provide free transportation. Mr. Barnes confirmed that FTA does not require WSTA to provide free transportation. Dr. Flear said that it could be that providing free transportation is causing the problem. Mr. Barnes stated that this is what he has been trying to say all along. Dr. Flear referred to Mr. Barnes' analogy made earlier in the meeting and said that people may be taking a free ride just because they can. In addition, there is the problem of not knowing if they have a valid Medicaid card or not. Dr. Flear continued by saying if there were some way to tell the validity of the Medicaid cards and a way to tell if the trips are needed, it would probably allow WSTA to keep the transportation free but reduce the cost.

Mrs. Carter brought up the issue of the wear and tear on the Trans-Aid vehicles. Mr. Barnes shared the auditor's comments about this issue and said that the auditors recognized that WSTA's fleet is old and is getting worn out and this issue needs to be addressed. Mr. Barnes shared that there is a competitive process for state match for the purchase of buses and paratransit vehicles. WSTA was awarded state match for both. This means that WSTA will have some additional money that hopefully can be used to match for the purchase of future vehicles.

Dr. Flear asked if WSTA could find out from other municipal transportation systems whether or not they are charging for paratransit trips. Mr. Barnes reiterated that he has not heard of other transit systems that provide these trips for free; WSTA can charge up to twice what the Fixed Route fare is. Most transit systems' fare for paratransit is higher than their fares for Fixed Route. Mr. Barnes said the FTA made this decision because it cost a lot more to provide paratransit transportation. Dr. Flear asked if it would be too burdensome to find out what the rates are at other municipals in the state of North Carolina (NC). Mr. Barnes stated that it is not a problem to find out this information. Ms. Stone replied that she would email what she received from the Greensboro Transit Board. She said that it indicated quite a bit more; she then asked that WSTA not think of providing paratransit services for free as a charity. She would like for the information she provides to be used as a mirror and not as a tool to discourage people from riding paratransit. Dr. Flear asked if WSTA could find out if other transit systems in NC were experiencing the same very dramatic increase in paratransit ridership for patrons that are Medicaid certified. Mr. Barnes explained that not all systems handle Medicaid contracts. In fact the FTA's focus is to deal with people that are qualified under ADA. Mr. Barnes stated that the number of medical trips for Medicaid has gone down significantly because WSTA has

to meet the demand for ADA first. Dr. Fler feels it is important to study the question because it continues to come up. He said that he supports providing free trips; but, if it is causing WSTA to spend more money because people are riding just because it is free or because WSTA doesn't know if the trips are justified, WSTA needs to know the answer to those questions. Mr. Barnes stated that all trips are justified. Dr. Fler said justified but not free. Mr. Barnes said that neither the trip's purpose nor where the rider is going can be limited.

Chairman Garcia addressed Ms. Stone on behalf of the Board saying that the Board is concerned about the issues she brings to the table. In addition he acknowledged that Ms. Stone had some compliments as well. Chairman Garcia stated that WSTA and the Board's intent is never to cover up a concern or complaint that is being submitted by saying the good; but, certainly things need to weigh out. Chairman Garcia told Ms. Stone that Mr. Barnes' volunteering to have his staff and/or himself attend a CATS meeting will be very instrumental to her cause. He encouraged Ms. Stone to have the members of her organization submit their questions prior to this meeting opposed to making it off-the-cuff. By doing this Chairman Garcia feels the meeting will be worthwhile.

Chairman Garcia stated that he too would like to know the answer to how many people the issues proposed consists of. He said the question has been asked before and it is always a low number. He would like to see a roll call. Mr. Barnes stated that there are names given in the minutes provided by Ms. Stone. Chairman Garcia asked if she found the number of people to be consistent. Ms. Stone responded no.

### **Information Items:**

**New Finance Manager**-WSTA's long time Finance Manager, Mrs. Stephanie Poole, recently left the Authority. This vacancy was filled with the hiring of Mrs. Robin Kirby. Mrs. Kirby comes to WSTA from of the City of Winston-Salem where she was the Accounting Technician in the Recreation and Parks Department. Mrs. Kirby's two main tasks will be computing and submitting payroll in the absence of the payroll clerk; and, submitting federal and state grants. She has several other tasks that include supervising personnel in her department. Mrs. Poole is a key component in the acclimation process. She is still assisting WSTA in a consulting capacity. Mr. Barnes introduced her to the Board and all gave her a warm welcome.

**United Way NC Spirit Award**-WSTA was nominated for the United Way NC Spirit Award. Chairman Garcia will be attending the award ceremony in Pinehurst, NC to accept this prestigious award for outstanding fundraising efforts. Last year WSTA raised \$24,000 and this year \$33,000 was raised. Mr. Barnes commended Mrs. Tina Carson-Wilkins, Ms. Tikiha Alston, Mrs. Erica Lowry, Mr. Dairio Little, Mr. Kevin Scott, Ms. Drucella Jones, and Mr. Bobby Wilson for organizing the event.

**Route Changes Tasks and Timeline**-The new routes will go into effect January 2, 2017. Mr. Barnes shared with the Board that this year, by far, will be the busiest year WSTA has ever had. In addition to the new routes, there will be a Triennial Review this year (every 3 years the Federal Government comes in to observe about 24 areas) and once the final report from the ADA audit is received, changes will have to be made to comply with ADA's regulations.

A matrix of tasks was included in the meeting packet. Mr. Barnes stated that he hopes to have everything in place by October. This will allow time to correct anything that is not anticipated. Chairman Garcia expressed his concerns about the reconstruction of Business 40 that is slated to

happen in 2017. This may cause some issues with the implementation of the routes. Mr. Barnes agreed and said that it may come down to having to do it all over again or at the least make some major changes.

Some of the things listed on the matrix are identifying bus stops, purchase of shelters, and specifying the type of bus stop (shelter, bench, with or without bike rack, sign only, shelters with solar panels, shelters with real-time signs, etc.). Each stop will be classified and the monies that WSTA has designated for this project will be distributed as evenly as possible along the routes. WSTA is in the process of putting together a request for proposal that will be intense and extensive.

Chairman Garcia asked if the new routes had to be up and running by January 2017. Mr. Barnes replied they didn't have to be but the stops definitely have to be identified by then. Chairman Garcia acknowledged Mr. Barnes's response and added that from a cost effective standpoint this is good given the way the economy is now.

Mr. Barnes reminded everyone that WSTA had consultants that provided reports. One of the reports they provided contained configurations for the different bus stops and how it should be determined if the stop should have just a bus stop sign or a sign with other additives such as a shelter, bench, bike rack, etc. The consultants also provided a number of other things that will be instrumental in identifying what should go where. This process will hopefully be started next week. Once this is done, specific schedules for the routes will be developed. While doing so WSTA wants to ensure that route schedules are as convenient as they possibly can be for its patrons.

The old routes (the ones that resemble the new routes) will be analyzed and then a decision regarding schedules will be made. For example the current route 13 that runs down Peters Creek; the patrons are accustomed to a specific time schedule. Therefore for this route WSTA will attempt to ensure that the schedule for the new route is similar

All of the routes cannot arrive at the TC at the same time; there are not enough bays for that. Schedules will be set so that 10-12 buses will arrive in 30 minute intervals. Chairman Garcia inquired about the sub-stations that were discussed at a previous meeting. Mr. Barnes confirmed there will be substations for 3 or 4 direct routes that will not come to the TC.

Mr. Barnes mentioned that Trapeze is the name of the software being used and that a polygon needs to be drawn around the area that defines the ADA service area. One of the requirements of the FTA is that ADA services must be provided within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of our fixed route service. The NextBus real-time system must be updated with the new routes. Trapeze is developing a program for WSTA called Trip Planner. This program will allow people to go online and put in their origin and destination; in return the program gives details such as how much it cost, times, if a transfer is needed, etc. The interactive voice response system, the automatic passenger counting system, the voice annunciators (bus recordings), destination signs, and fare boxes all have to be reprogramed. The plan is to use the CSRs to provide the passengers with instructions regarding how to negotiate the new routes at the public meetings. There will be driver training and the drivers will have to do run picks once the schedules are completed. As part of the whole process, some bus stops will be removed.

The segment that has not been discussed is the marketing. The marketing plan has not been completed; however, the plan is to use different kinds of media such as radio, television, newspaper, and social media to distribute information.



## **Resolution to Formally Express gratitude to Mr. Art Barnes and WSTA staff**

(This is not on the agenda)

Dr. Fleer asked Chairman Garcia if he could have a few words. He was allowed to speak and he expressed his appreciation of WSTA and Mr. Barnes and his staff.

"The Board of WSTA commends Mr. Art Barnes and the WSTA staff for their diligence and devotion in preparing and presenting the WSTA bus route changes over recent years and for their assiduous implementation of these changes in the months ahead. We are grateful for the dedication and professionalism which they manifest and am [*sic*] confident the planned route changes will assist WSTA and the community in significant ways in the years ahead."

**With that being said, Dr. Fleer made a motion to formally express gratitude to Mr. Art Barnes and his staff. The motion was seconded by both Vice-chairman King and Ms. Regina Streed. This resolution was endorsed unanimously by the Board.**

Chairman Garcia urged the Board to familiarize themselves with WSTA's policies and procedures. He shared that he has been approached occasionally and asked to explain somethings about WSTA by people in the community. He feels that if he has been approached surly other Board members have as well.

Mrs. Ruth Carter complimented Mr. Barnes on the tremendous job he has done. She said that as long as she has been serving on the Board she has never seen Mr. Barnes change his attitude. She feels one's attitude at work makes a difference. She thanked Mr. Barnes and his staff for working with the Board. Mrs. Carter shared she has turned down 3 board invitations to remain on WSTA's Board of Directors and have enjoyed every moment of it.

Chairman Garcia proposed that the next time there is a WSTA employee event perhaps the Board can attend as a whole to express their gratitude. Mrs. Carson-Wilkins informed that WSTA's Employee Appreciation Day will be May 27, 2016 in the Training Room at the TC. An email will be sent to the Board containing this information.

Mr. Barnes responded to the Board's sentiments by thanking them. He stated that the Board has always been supportive of him and that he has worked at transit systems in the past where he dreaded attending board meetings. He appreciates the fact that WSTA's Board is so easy to work with and that they are very supportive. Mr. Barnes also stated that his staff makes him look good; he simply gives direction and they complete the tasks. He said that he is fortunate and grateful for the Board and his staff.

**Regional Advertising RFP-**Mrs. Carson-Wilkins informed that Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) gave some thought to generating revenue by advertising on their buses. Being that there is strength in numbers, they would like to setup a Request for Proposal (RFP); and with participation from other transit systems in the area; launch a bus advertising program. The program would allow advertisers to reach out to the company that they are going to select through the RFP and perhaps place advertising ads on all the transit systems simultaneously. PART faces some challenges with this program. They are not allowed to cover their logo in any way, shape, or form.

Therefore, they will only be able to place advertisements on their windows or some specific place designated on the inside of their buses. Mr. Barnes and Mrs. Carson-Wilkins attended a meeting where the language of the RFP was discussed. Each transit system provided information that is specific to their transit system. PART is recommending that local companies not be allowed to use this program. The only option this leaves for local companies is to advertise with the advertising program instead of a particular transit company. WSTA will not be withholding advertising services from local agencies because it is felt that local businesses should have the opportunity to come to WSTA and place advertisements on the buses without going through the proposed program. With that being said, WSTA has a pretty good advertising year and does not want to ruin what it. Mrs. Carson-Wilkins stated that she does not know who is planning to respond the RFP; but, WSTA is looking forward to being a part of the program.

Mr. Barnes added that this is an opportunity for WSTA to generate some revenue as well because of the space available for advertising.

**Trans-Aid**-this topic was previously discussed thoroughly under Public Comment.

**Operations Report**-Mr. Barnes stated that there is not anything unusual about the Operations Report. Ridership was down 8.8% for **Fixed Route** year-to-date. It is believed that this is due to the price of gas being down. In addition to ridership being down, accidents are as well. **Trans-Aid** ridership is up 13% year-to-date. Mr. Barnes reported that telephone wait times for reservation were down significantly. Two months ago the average wait time was 2 minutes and the maximum was 20 minutes. Now the average is 1 minute with a maximum of 10 minutes. There is not a lot to discuss with **Maintenance**. Please refer to the meeting packet for further details.

**Financial Report**-WSTA is in a really good position financially. Mr. Barnes stated that he foresees an estimate of a \$200,000 surplus after all the figures are adjusted. Mr. Barnes told the Board that he would provide specifics if requested.

**Marketing Report**-Mrs. Tina Carson Wilkins went over the November/December 2015 Marketing Report. This detailed report was included in the meeting packet.

There were 4 events for WSTA's Try Transit Program and 5 News Release/News Stories. There were 5 Coalition Building events and 1 Special event—WSTA's nomination for the United Way NC Spirit Award—mentioned previously. There are 2 Segment Marketing Items, Next Bus-*A Better Way to Ride the Bus* and Route changes coming in 2017. Next week there will be advertisements in *Que Pasa*, *Winston-Salem Chronicle*, *Winston-Salem Journal*, as well as, with social media outlets. WSTA is required to let passengers know that modifications were made to the new bus routes based on their comments, concerns, and suggestions.

In regards to the new bus routes advertising campaign, Chairman Garcia asked if the new routes booklets being printed for the public will be printed in Spanish as well. Mrs. Carson-Wilkins responded that the booklets do have Spanish in them and that WSTA is looking into printing entire booklets in Spanish. She shared that the information should be provided for the two most used languages other than English. Surprisingly, the second most spoken language in Winston-Salem is Chinese.

Chairman Garcia offered the assistance of the Hispanic League if needed. Mr. Barnes announced that there will be a series of public meeting starting mid-year to provide instructions guidance for WSTA passengers.

There was an event left off the Upcoming Events Topic. Mrs. Carson-Wilkins added that Mr. James Conner, Ms. Estelle Stephens and herself will be on a panel February 11, 2016 at the New Winston-Salem Museum to speak about Safe Bus and its transition to Winston-Salem Transit Authority. Mr. Hampton D. Haith's daughter will hopefully be in attendance as well. The panel will also discuss how transportation services affected the citizens of Winston-Salem.

**The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.**

Transcribed by: Teika Holloway

February 1, 2016