

MINUTES
ORANGE UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION BOARD
NOVEMBER 18, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alex Castro, Bingham Township Representative; Heidi Perry, At-Large Representative; Ed Vaughn, Cedar Grove Township Representative; Gary Saunders, At-Large Representative; David Laudicina, At-Large Representative; Amy Cole, At-Large Representative, Tom Magnuson, At-Large Representative; Brantley Wells, Hillsborough Township; Ted Triebel, Little River Township Representative; Representative; John Rubin, At-Large Representative; Erle Smith, Chapel Hill Township Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Charles, At-Large Representative; Art Menius, At Large Representative; Eno Township Representative - Vacant;

STAFF PRESENT: Craig Benedict, Planning Director; Abigaile Pittman, Transportation/Land Use Planner; Peter Murphy, OPT Transportation Administrator; Malcum Massenburg, OPT Transportation Asst. Administrator; Janet Sparks, Child Support Director; Lisa Berley, Aging Dept.; Meredith McMonigle, Health Dept.; Serena McPherson, Dept. of Social Services; Meredith Pucci, Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Guthrie

AGENDA ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

AGENDA ITEM 2: INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND ADDRESS FROM OUTGOING CHAIR

Board members and staff made introductions.

Paul Guthrie thanked the OUTBoard and staff and gave thoughts and advice to the members and staff on his opinion on transportation issues and what he thinks needs to be the focus going forward.

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR AUGUST 19, 2015

Minutes were approved with corrections by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONS OF THE AGENDA

Craig Benedict noted that in working with the City of Mebane to create a new Mattress Factory Road exit on I-85/I-40 between Buckhorn Rd. and Mebane Oaks Rd. preliminary traffics studies need to be done. The City of Mebane is undertaking a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that includes the Mattress Factory Road interchange. Funding sources for the plan include \$30,000 from the City of Mebane. The Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BG MPO) has endorsed the study.

AGENDA ITEM 5: TRANSIT SERVICES, ORANGE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (OPT) - This section of the agenda is addressed jointly by the OUTBoard and supplemental staff from other County departments (Aging; DSS; Housing, Human Rights and Community Development; Health; Child Support Enforcement; and the Library) to address transit services.

AGENDA ITEM 5A: ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT STUDY – OCTOBER 2015
Update on a recently released Orange Public Transit (OPT) assessment funded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Public Transit Division (PTD) and prepared by KFH Group, Inc.
OUTBoard/Transit Services Action: Receive information.

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55 Peter Murphy shared that the assessment study prepared by KFH group, the consultants hired by NCDOT to
56 review Orange County public transportation, is working on the study's final version and there are a few changes
57 still coming. He gave an overview of it to the Board.
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59 Heidi Perry asked Peter what Light Transit Vehicle meant.
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61 Peter Murphy responded that Light Transit Vehicle (LTV) is the mid-size bus. The seating can range from 14 to
62 24 passengers.
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64 Erle Smith asked about driver population.
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66 Peter Murphy replied that they recently added 7 drivers and now are up to 15 and will be hiring more which will
67 coincide with future additional service.
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69 Alex Castro asked about coverage for the dispatch function if the only employee in that position is out.
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71 Peter Murphy responded that they are a small operation and right now he and Malcolm are in the office along
72 with two other people and everyone does crossover functions. They may be looking at adding additional
73 personnel in the new budget year.
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75 Erle Smith asked what the utilization rate is for drivers and vehicles across the 12 hour time frame.
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77 Peter Murphy noted that using the software they can predict that and noted things will be tweaked to merge them
78 together. The drivers don't do just one thing all day. The bulk of the work right now is demand response. Taking
79 people to doctor appointments and this varies.
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81 Heidi Perry asked about the life expectancy for a bus.
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83 Peter Murphy responded that it is probably 4 to 5 years.
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85 Alex Castro asked if the replacement cycle is 4 years.
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87 Peter Murphy noted it is predicted based on mileage.
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89 Ted Triebel asked if it is cost effective.
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91 Peter Murphy noted that information will be part of the next quarterly meeting.
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93 Heidi Perry asked how they are getting the word out.
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95 Peter Murphy noted that so far it is done internally through the media department.
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97 Heidi Perry commented about whether advertising could be put in place with the hospital and court systems,
98 etc., giving people information about the availability of transportation between Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.
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100 Alex Castro commented that the Dept. of Aging is working on this too.
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102 Ted Triebel asked what the drivers are paid.
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104 Peter Murphy responded that most drivers earn between \$13 to \$17 an hour. The starting rate is better than
105 most in the area. The drivers of the larger buses like they have in Chapel Hill do get paid more.
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AGENDA ITEM 5B: OPT OPERATIONAL STATISTICS:

- i. Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) Grant
- ii. North Carolina Community Transportation Program (CTP) Grant
- iii. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) award from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Transportation Planning Branch.

OUTBoard/Transit Services Action: Receive and review information, provide comments.

Peter Murphy reviewed the ROAP grant.

Alex Castro asked if the funds will come through the MPO

Peter Murphy agreed but noted that planners will have to be at the table to represent OPT. If not we lose funding.

Abigaile Pittman commented that Bret Martin had put together the application for the CMAQ funding.

Peter Murphy reminded the members that we fall into the middle of two MPOs so representation is needed at both MPOs to make sure we are getting our funds.

AGENDA ITEM 5C: OPT EXPANSION SERVICES UPDATES:

- i. New buses for expansion services
- ii. New employees for expansion services
- iii. Start date for new expansion services/routes
- iv. Hillsborough park n' ride

OUTBoard/Transit Services Action: Receive and review information, provide comments.

Peter Murphy reviewed items.

Alex Castro commented that outreach needs to have greater effort for expansion services. A media campaign, possibly social media is needed.

John Rubin asked if the OUTBoard members will be getting quarterly reports on transit. He noted that it is a lot of information and while very helpful it would be more helpful if the report included the principle challenges being faced and the assistance needed from this Board, addressing what feedback or support is needed.

Heidi Perry asked if there was a requirement that the Board have a quarterly update.

Peter Murphy replied that there is a requirement that there be a quarterly meeting not necessarily a report or an update. He noted that they will be looking for more feedback as things progress, and NCDOT is going for a more performance evaluation model so one thing for next quarter will be to have goals and targets that are measured. Those will be easy to share with the OUTBoard.

AGENDA ITEM 5D: TRANSIT ADVISORY SERVICES (TAS) COMMENTS/QUESTIONS – Opportunity for TSB members to offer transit related comments and ask questions.

OUTBoard/Transit Services Action: Provide comments and questions, receive feedback.

Meredith McMonigle commented that the Health Department was interested in coming to the quarterly meetings because they work with families and hear a lot about transportation barriers. She would like to share that information with the group.

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Peter Murphy replied that this meeting venue is perfect for that. He noted that departments meet and discuss transportation but OPT is not present at those meetings and often does not get the feedback they need.

Meredith McMonigle noted that they are working with those that use and need the services, and working together to address some of these needs and barriers is important.

Peter Murphy agreed.

Abigaile Pittman suggested it would be a good subject for a follow-up special meeting.

REGULAR AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 6: STAFF UPDATES

OUTBOARD INPUT FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT
Discussion and completion of the activities and emerging issues lists for 2016, to be included in the BOCC Annual Planning Retreat Input Form.
OUTBoard Action: Review, comment and recommend the activities and emerging issues lists for 2106, to be included in the BOCC Annual Planning Retreat Input Form.

Abigaile Pittman reviewed the annual work plan and focus for next year.

Heidi Perry related that she was under the impression from the Commissioners that the Board could add things to the agenda that they want to study for the year and that it didn't have to come from the BOCC.

Abigaile Pittman asked if she was talking about bicycle safety.

Heidi Perry referred to the language that says if directed by the BOCC and elaborated that her understanding from them was that they can actually add topics the Board wants to address or study.

Abigaile Pittman responded that bicycle safety is addressed under the emerging issues section of the input report because staff has not yet received specific direction from the BOCC, but expects that will happen in 2016.

Heidi Perry asked about the BOCC's request for additional work on bicycle safety.

Abigaile Pittman continued, stating that the BOCC asked staff to return to them with a recommendation about creating a task force versus subcommittee, and what staff recommends the charge would be and how to proceed in operating, and what level of staff involvement is needed. This will be happening early next year, after the holiday break.

Alex Castro asked if that is not part of the last page that asks what are the concerns.

Abigaile Pittman responded that it is an item that hasn't become a fully developed staff project yet but they think it is moving in that direction.

Alex Castro asked about signage for bus stops.

Peter Murphy replied that they have been adding stops and on the signs they have added it includes the bus schedules, what routes it serves and if it is served by multiple routes. At present for the circulator routes they have signs up at 16 of the 23 stops. Some are missing poles and they have been ordered. He thinks they will all be up within a couple of weeks and then they will work on the new routes.

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It was agreed by all that the emerging issues list should include a recommendation to identify major route stops requiring bus stop amenities.

Alex Castro asked if copies of schedules would be available on the buses so people could have the various times and stops.

Peter Murphy replied that they should be able to get that from any of the bus drivers and also at all the senior centers.

Alex Castro commented that he wanted to add the light rail issue to the work plan so that if funding doesn't come in, alternative transportation improvements needs could be studied. He referred to the commuter rail in Wake County.

David Laudicina added that is the same thing just rapid transit as opposed to light rail transit.

Alex Castro replied that it already exists. The infrastructure is in place for commuter rail.

David Laudicina responded that if you do light rail you are going to have to put up tracks and if you do commuter rail you need to install a second track if you are going to do it right. The commuter rail is on NCRRT right-of-way. He added that the advantage to it is that if it gets to Durham, how soon will it get to Hillsborough, how soon will it get to Mebane and Efland and Greensboro. You could conceivably commute anywhere between High Point and Raleigh on a daily basis.

Heidi Perry noted you can take it from Cary and Raleigh on Amtrak. She asked if it should be added as number eight to reevaluate transit options particularly if light rail funding falls through and asked if that is the only time they should consider it.

Alex Castro replied that it would be a good one and could include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or commuter rail as an alternative.

David Laudicina added that it won't be easy because it would probably mean starting all the way back at the beginning and going through the whole federal thing. They are well along the way for the light rail and if you go back to the beginning you are starting all over again. He added that the plan was commuter rail at one time and that went away. He added that BRT requires infrastructure and that means you have to build the infrastructure between Chapel Hill and Durham. He noted that the people of Orange County voted for the sales tax on the premise it would be for the purpose of light rail.

Heidi Perry commented that since they don't know what will happen with the funding, if the cap is lifted and the study they did may have some problems with it too. She asked if it should be included or not.

Abigaile Pittman replied that if it is added as number 8 it be very generic.

Ted Triebel commented that his reading is the funding for light rail will up in the air for a year or two. He doesn't think it is realistic to think that funding in 2016 is going to go away.

Heidi Perry suggested that it not be added and if it falls through it can be added.

The consensus was not to add the item to the list.

Heidi Perry asked if there is always a public hearing every year for transit.

266 Peter Murphy replied that the BOCC will have a hearing but the hearing they did here last year was because of a
267 change. He informed the Board they have to because one of the grants requires it.
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269 Ted Triebel noted that he thought number three for shelters and benches was going to be brought before the
270 BOCC in 2015. He wondered what needs to be done to stress that this is something that needs to get done.
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272 Abigaile Pittman responded that it was a matter of prioritizing funding for the initialize starting on the bus routes.
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274 Ted Triebel noted that it needs to be done and put into the funding and the budget. He added that if it doesn't
275 get put in the budget it won't be funded.
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277 Heidi Perry suggested making a recommendation. She noted that they can go ahead and prioritize the ones they
278 think need it the most and present it as a report and if there is no funding then either it gets left until next year or
279 they fund it as they have money. She added that they could have the list ready so they don't have to wait until
280 there is funding and then go back and make the list.
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282 The consensus was to create a priority list.
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284 The board voted unanimously to approve the annual work plan with a word change in the emerging issues list to
285 include a recommendation to identify major route stops requiring bus stop amenities.
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287 **AGENDA ITEM 7: STAFF UPDATES (ABIGAILE PITTMAN)**
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- 289 A. Highlights of the NCDOT/Orange County luncheon meeting (October 19, 2015)
290 B. State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Development Process
291 C. Bicycle Safety Plan
292 D. Request for Qualifications & Proposals Conceptual Design – Train Station
293 Hillsborough, NC
294 E. Piedmont Triad Freight Study
295 **OUTBoard Action:** Receive information.
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297 *Abigaile Pittman amended the update due to time and gave a quick update on items.*
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299 **AGENDA ITEM 8: YEARLY ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**
300 **OUTBoard Action:** Elect Chair; elect Vice Chair
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302 Ted Triebel nominated Alex Castro
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304 Alex Castro declined and nominated Heidi Perry
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306 John Rubin seconded
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308 Heidi Perry was elected OUTBoard Chair by unanimous vote
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310 Heidi Perry asked for nominations for Vice Chair
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312 John Rubin nominated Alex Castro
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314 Ted Triebel seconded
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316 Alex Castro was elected Vice-Chair by unanimous vote
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318 **AGENDA ITEM 9: ADJOURNMENT**

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The meeting was adjourned by consensus.

Heidi Perry, Chair