



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

November 10, 2020
Location: via: Zoom

Attendance:

New Jersey: Reggie Haynes, Ben Saracco, Steve Benigno, Marty King, Alan Becker, Bruce Schwartz, Judy Boldurian, Pamela Mack-Brooks, Dan Norfleet, Pamela Mack-Brooks, Tyrone Wesley

Pennsylvania: Daniel McArdle, Bob Melikian

Emeritus Member(s): Jeff Kessler, John Boyle, Al Huber, Tom Jordan

Potential Member(s): Joseph Russell

DRPA/PATCO: John Hanson, John Rink, Liz Klawunn, Barbara Wagner

Public Member(s): Daniel Pasquale, East Coast Greenway Alliance

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the October 14, 2020 Minutes. The Minutes were approved.

A motion was made to approve the October 21, 2020 Memo to the Commissioners presented to the Board on October 21, 2020.

CEO, John Hanson:

CEO Hanson reported that at the end of each year a series of Financial Resolutions are required, including Budgets. We also have Resolutions that are required in our Bond Indentures that are called the 509 Certification and 515 Certification. These Certifications relate to our net revenue requirements that specify our bond indentures. Currently, our outstanding bond indebtedness is at \$1.2 Billion – \$1.3 Billion. CEO Hanson reported that it is a big deal if we fail to meet our bond convenance. The 509 Certification looks at the revenue and projected revenue that came in in 2020 against expenditures and what is left over. What is left over is our net revenue, which is a calculation that is specified in our Bond Indentures as to whether or not we

meet it. CEO Hanson is happy to report that the DRPA does meet the net revenue requirement in the 509 Certification. Currently, we are still working on the Operating Budget which figures into the 515 Certification. The preliminary calculations indicate that we will be in a position to make our 515 Certification, as well.

CEO Hanson further reported that toll revenues are at 80% pre-COVID numbers, which is tilted towards a higher fare class with a higher average toll. PATCO is at 27% ridership pre-COVID numbers, but really resting around 25%.

We received \$41 Million from the Cares Act money that will be used for 2020 and 2021, therefore, we expect to be good for 2020 and 2021, unless something catastrophic happens.

CEO Hanson further reported that he is comfortable with finances at this time, but not ecstatic considering a loss of 20% bridge usage and 75% loss in PATCO ridership. People using the bridges and PATCO are mostly core workers who must go to work i.e.: truck drivers and essential workers. CEO Hanson believes that under the current COVID situation, revenue will not drop but remain stable. The DRPA is way under budget in spending to offset some of the revenue losses. We are hopeful for an effective vaccine, successful therapeutic treatment for COVID and remain guardedly optimistic for 2021.

Bob Melikian stated that the good work performed at the DRPA and PATCO is a reflection of its stewardship and team. John Hanson thanked the CAC Committee as part of the DRPA/PATCO team and appreciates the Committee's role in their stewardship mission that we are all carrying out together.

Q&A Session:

Q: Can the DRPA extend the renewal for Senior Citizen Discount on E-Z Pass to every two years in light of the Pandemic?

Alan Becker

A. CEO Hanson stated that the DRPA has made accommodations for some to extend their discount because of the Pandemic. However, considering the extremely generous discount at 50%, it is difficult to control because we have learned that parents who do not drive or cannot drive are allowing their children to use their E-Z Pass at a 50% discount. The DRPA requires that Senior Citizens who apply for the discount must provide, annually, a valid driver's license and valid car registration in their name proving they drive and own a car.

GM, John Rink:

John Rink reported the same information reported in his General Manager's Report to the Board outlining PATCO's On-Time Performance for the month of October. GM Rink was happy to report that PATCO reached its highest on-time performance at 98.98%, which was the highest since 2009 at 99.01%. PATCO's on-time performance for 2020 is at 98.13%, with

October being the third highest number of trips for the year averaging close to pre-COVID months of January and February 2020.

GM Rink further reported that ridership had a small drop below 25% in the last two weeks, which could have been due to Veteran's Day and two days of torrential rain. Recent data shows that PATCO is now back to 24-27% of normal pre-COVID ridership.

Q&A Session:

Q. On the DRPA/PATCO website, how do you do a one-time replenishment on a Share Card and how do you cancel your threshold? The language is very confusing.

Joe Russell

A. John Rink stated that you can do it in person at the Freedom Center or call and someone will assist over the phone. John Rink also stated that he will contact the Director of Fare Collections to look over the language that is on the website.

Q. How do you check tickets at the Stations?

Strasso Jovanski

A. John Rink reported that Strasso saw police checking tickets late at night at the Concourse in the City. Police are actively patrolling the stations to make sure people in the area are riders and not loitering. Police are always making sure the stations are safe and secure for the riders.

Q. Is New Jersey Transit working on the tracks?

Alan Becker

A. John Rink reported that New Jersey Transit is replacing the railroad ties starting East at the Ashland Station, then moving west to the New Jersey Turnpike and RT 295 bridge.

Q. What is the status of the Franklin Square Project?

Bob Melikian

A. John Rink reported that the project is moving forward, the design is complete, and we are following the steps and processes for Grants received from the State of PA and Federal Grants. We are still on schedule to put it out for bid next year.

Jeff Kessler reported that he saw a survey put out by DVRPC regarding the bridge walkway requesting input on using the walkway for biking or walking on the Philly side. John Rink reported that the DRPA/PATCO worked with the DVRPC on that survey. John Rink encouraged the committee to add comments to the survey. The DVRPC is looking at all interconnections of transportation in the City.

Q. Do the cameras at the stations have to be relocated due to the solar panel placement?

Alan Becker

A. John Rink reported that the existing cameras do not have to be removed or relocated. We hired a camera consultant who is presently doing a camera assessment throughout the Authority looking at all locations at the DRPA and PATCO. The current cameras are not impacted by the solar panels.

CEO Hanson reported that the solar canopies make it harder to see the cameras so more cameras will be added where needed. The comprehensive camera study resulted from my meeting with employees (bridge operations, maintenance, public safety workers and others) every couple of years where issues related to cameras and repairs are discussed. Mr. Hanson further reported that these discussions were then discussed internally and it was decided that it was more of a Homeland Security/Public Safety issue. Consequently, we are having the entire approach re-evaluated regarding placements, whether or not we have enough cameras, who is looking at the cameras and what are they pointing at. It is an ongoing study that will influence what we do.

Q. Are the slopes at the Woodcrest Station for drainage purposes?
Jeff Kessler

A. John Rink reported that there have been issues with the ramp since the station was built. When people see the train coming into the station, they decide to run to the train when they slip and fall, especially when the floor is wet. The removal of the slope is a safety consideration.

Liz Klawunn/Engineering

Bridges:

Liz Klawunn reported on the following DRPA projects:

Ben Franklin Bridge: Continuing work on the north side of the bridge including the main cables; wrapping the cable for the dehumidification system; replacing the decorative lighting on the bridge, walkway, under deck lighting and up lighting. Ms. Klawunn will know better in January when this job will be completed. When that happens, work will then begin on the south side of the bridge. Additionally, platforms have been put up under the bridge to start the main steel repairs.

Stations:

Liz Klawunn reported on the following PATCO projects:

Elevator Project: Work at the Westmont Station will be done soon. Dr. Klawunn is in the process of finalizing opening dates and will advise John Rink soon.

Station Enhancements: Work continues at the Ferry Avenue and Woodcrest Station. The sloped floor at the Woodcrest Station is being removed, leveled off with a couple steps (approximately 2' wide) going down, then leveled off again with a couple more steps going

down, so you don't have to slow your pace while walking. The ABA accessible ramp will remain.

Station enhancements at the Lindenwold Station will begin early next year.

Solar Project: The Solar Projects are completing. The major equipment components are coming into set-up the system to get it up and running.

Q&A Session:

Q. Did you find any unexpected surprises while working on the bridge?

Bob Melikian

A. Dr. Klawuun reported there were no surprises found because of the recent Biennial Inspection. The work performed on the bridges often result from the Biennial Inspections.

John Hanson further reported that Liz Klawuun is the Engineer assigned to the Ben Franklin Bridge. She and the entire Engineering Department treat the bridges like they own them and are extremely pro-active in making sure our bridges are in top shape. Ms. Klawuun informed the committee that she also climbs the cables on Ben Franklin Bridge.

Q. The BFB is now 100 years old, is there a finite lifespan to the bridge?

Bob Melikian

A. The dehumidification system presently being installed on the bridge is to preserve the life of the main cable. We are constantly maintaining and repairing the bridge including deck replacement, suspension ropes, painting, steel repairs all to extend the useful life of the bridge.

John Hanson stated that the bridges are perpetual assets of the DRPA and are expected to last for a very long time.

Old Business: John Rink updated Joe Kessler that Mike Williams is having issues with the GTFS vendor and is working towards finding a new GTFS solution.

New Business: Daniel Pasquale, Minuteman Coordinator for East Coast Greenway Alliance, a non-profit organization, is overseeing a long-distance trail project similar to the Appalachian Trails which connects cities, towns, and communities along the east coast from Maine to Florida, approximately 3K miles long. Daniel Pasquale's territory is out of Philadelphia extending into South and Central New Jersey down to Washington, DC. In the Philadelphia/South Jersey area, Mr. Pasquale represents two routes that run along the Delaware River, specifically, the Delaware River Heritage Trail in New Jersey and the Delaware River Trail in Philadelphia that come together at the Ben Franklin Bridge South Walkway. Mr. Pasquale would like a recommendation from the CAC to the DRPA for a letter of support on DRPA Letterhead to place East Coast Greenway Alliance signage on the Ben Franklin Bridge as an official segment of the Alliance for long distance riders who ride their trails. A minor inspection would take place by the Alliance which would include an inspection to make sure the

walkway is wide enough for shared use for walking and biking and taking photographs of the walkway. The Alliance has prepared the language for the letter of support, it just has to be placed on DRPA Letterhead, which could also include maps and photographs of Ben Franklin Bridge, the most iconic bridge in the Country.

CEO Hanson stated that ultimately the request should be sent to his attention; therefore, he would like the Alliance to place their request in writing on their letterhead outlining exactly what is being asked of the DRPA and what is being expected from the DRPA, including any standards that have to be met or maintained. CEO Hanson will discuss the request with Bridge Operations, Engineering and Legal then a Resolution will have to be sent to the Board for approval.

Stepping Down: Dan McArdle announced to the committee that he would be stepping down as Chair to the CAC effective January 20, 2021 until the end of March, when he would like to continue as a committee member. Mr. McArdle announced that he is taking a position as a Combat Medic with the PA Army National Guard as his family has a deep history with the military. CEO Hanson thanked Mr. McArdle for his service with the CAC and his appreciation for all he has done for PATCO and the DRPA during his time with the CAC. CEO Hanson also thanked him for his future service in the military.

Reggie Haynes agreed to take the position of Chair to the CAC Committee. Mr. Haynes will select a member to fill the role as Vice Chair at the January 20, 2021 CAC meeting.

New Membership: Bob Melikien reintroduced Joe Russell to the committee. Mr. Russell agreed to be a part of the CAC as he enjoys the meetings, has a lot of ideas he would like to share with the committee as he has been a passionate rider of PATCO for years. A motion was moved to nominate Mr. Russell as a CAC member from New Jersey. The nomination of Joe Russell was affirmed by all members.

Dan McCardle advised Mr. Russell that his nomination would be moved to the next stage which includes filling out an Application and being interviewed by the Audit Committee.

Next CAC Meeting: Will be held via Zoom on January 13, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Board Meeting: Will be held virtually on January 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.