



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

Phone: (540) 885-5174
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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
July 12, 2023, 2:30 p.m.**

Electronic Meeting via Zoom

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

[Click Here for Audio Recording of Meeting](#)

	Name	Organization
✓	Amanda Kaufman	City of Staunton
	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
	Leslie Tate	City of Waynesboro
✓	Krystal Moyers	Augusta Health
✓	Mike Kelley	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
	Greg Beam	Staunton Downtown Development
✓	Terry Rodgers, Chair	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Anastasia Triplett	Blue Ridge Community College
	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
✓	Paul Terry	Transit Service Rider
✓	Steve Wilson	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Steven Hennessee	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
	Ann Cundy	CSPDC
	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Paula Melester	CSPDC
✓	Alisande Tombarge, City of Waynesboro	
✓	Kyle Trissel, DRPT	
✓	Alidia Vane, Augusta County	
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:32 PM by Ms. Terry Rodgers, Chairperson. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, BTAC members may participate in meetings through electronic communication means. All attendees attended virtually.

Public Comment

Chairperson Rodgers opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.



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Approve Minutes

Chairperson Rodgers presented the minutes from the May 10, 2023, BTAC meeting for consideration.

Mr. Paul Terry moved, seconded by Ms. Alisande Tombarge, to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2023, meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Business

BRCC Shuttles Hours: Ms. Devon Thompson reminded BTAC members that the previously approved schedule changes to the Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) Shuttles went into effect on June 5, 2023. The schedule changes included shortened evening hours and shored up the first run times to reflect half hour and top of the hour pick up/drop off times seen for the rest of the days schedule. Prior to implementation of those changes, CSPDC staff conducted a comprehensive outreach campaign that encouraged public comment on the proposed changes – through an online survey, in person pop-up events in Staunton, Weyers Cave, and Harrisonburg, and mail/email comments. Responses from the public expressed understanding of decreased late evening hours, but there was concern about the chosen end times (5:30PM and 6:00PM) not being late enough for commuters to get home from work.

It was recommended to add an hour back into the revised schedule, which would extend the end times for the BRCC Shuttle routes from 5:30PM and 6:00PM, to 5:30PM and 7:00PM. Ms. Thompson noted that one bus would still conclude service at the Staunton Lewis Street Hub at 5:30PM, and another bus would make one additional trip from BRCC to Staunton and terminate at 7:00PM at BRCC, to ensure maximum connectivity between Harrisonburg and Staunton at the end of the work day.

A visual of the schedule changes was provided. Ms. Thompson explained the differences from the prior schedule layout. The new version reflected the BRCC Shuttle routes as one complete loop between Staunton and Harrisonburg, with BRCC at the center. Previous schedules portrayed the BRCC Shuttles as two separate routes, North and South, which was not representative of the single seat service was provided between the two end points. Ms. Thompson indicated that the new schedule format would be easier for riders to read and understand.

Ms. Thompson asked the BTAC for a consensus to implement the change on August 1, 2023, and noted the nominal cost for the additional service hour would be covered by contingency funds and no adjustment to the partner match for FY24 would be required. Utilization of the additional hour would be monitored over the course of the year.

Additionally, Ms. Thompson indicated that a general summary of the public outreach surveys would be made available to the BTAC following the meeting.

Ms. Thompson asked if there were any questions before consensus was provided. Chairperson Rodgers inquired as to when new brochures would be available. Ms. Thompson indicated that the CSPDC was currently procuring outside printing services for the new fiscal year and brochures would be printed and delivered upon completion. Hearing no additional questions or comments, a consensus was confirmed.



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BRITE Title VI Plan Update: Ms. Thompson thanked the BTAC for releasing the draft Title VI Plan for public comment at the May BTAC meeting, and reminded the BTAC that the plan described the measures taken to assure compliance with the rules and regulations associated with non-discrimination (based on race, color, and national origin, as well as other subsequent laws and Presidential Executive Orders), Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Ms. Thompson reported that the draft plan was released for public comment on May 26, 2023, and the CSPDC Board of Commissioners approved it at their meeting on June 20, 2023. After approval from the Board, the Plan was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 3 Civil Rights Office for review and concurrence.

Staunton Lewis Street Hub Rehabilitation Update: Ms. Paula Melester indicated that the Lewis Street Hub project was progressing – the CSPDC received the 60 percent design plans from the engineering consultants, Kimley-Horn, for review and approval. CSPDC staff and Kimley-Horn participated in a Value Engineering workshop hosted by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), of which the purpose was to identify potential areas to add value and/or find efficiencies in the project before it progressed to final plans. Ms. Melester noted that the next steps included plan review by the City of Staunton’s Historic Preservation Commission – the project required a Certificate of Appropriateness before final plans could be submitted to the city for permitting. CSPDC staff would present the project to the Historic Preservation Commission at the end of July and once the certificate was received consultants could begin developing final plans.

Ms. Melester confirmed that the city review process was the last step before the project could be advertised for bids. These two activities would determine the timeline for construction.

ITS – Mobile Data Collection System Update: Ms. Thompson confirmed that the CSPDC was moving forward with single-bid procurement. Unexpected delays in the procurement process necessitated a grant extension for project funding. Ms. Thompson was working with Mr. Steven Hennessee, DRPT, to finalize the extension. Ms. Thompson expected that the CSPDC would soon finalize the contract with the bidder and still anticipated a Fall implementation.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Melester reported that ridership continued to grow, and that Afton Express hit a new record for ridership with 93 passenger trips in a single day in June. CSPDC staff would start to include Afton Express performance data in the BRITE Buzz reports. Ms. Melester reminded the BTAC that the BRITE Buzzes would now be distributed every other month, in the months opposite BTAC meetings.

Ms. Melester provided an update on Afton Express marketing efforts. Afton Express sponsored Waynesboro Parks & Recreation’s Groovin’ on the Greenway event in June, which allowed CSPDC staff to market information about Afton Express route with attendees. Ms. Melester noted that word-of-mouth was the most effective method of advertising, and these community events were a valuable opportunity to engage with the community.



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Contractor Update: Mr. Steve Wilson reported on the following:

- **Ridership:** Ridership on BRITE routes continued to rise, though ridership was still not at pre-pandemic levels. Mr. Wilson indicated that there was an increase on the following routes – the Staunton Paratransit (BRITE Access) service (35 percent), Staunton North & West Loops (15 percent), Waynesboro Circulator (12 percent), and Afton Express (38 percent). The overall increase for the BRITE system, including Afton Express, was 10 percent.
- **Staffing:** Mr. Wilson noted that staffing had stabilized, and the operations staff were no longer driving routes as frequently as in prior months. Mr. Wilson stated that Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) was no longer actively recruiting drivers, but they would not turn away an ideal candidate should they come along.
- **250 Connector Bus:** Mr. Wilson briefed the BTAC about an incident on the 250 Connector in July. The bus experienced an electrical fire while in service – the driver handled the situation well and evacuated passengers safely. Mr. Wilson indicated that the fire department responded promptly and extinguished the fire. VRT staff arrived with a spare bus and got the route back on schedule with minimal delay – the entirety of the incident was resolved within one hour.
- **WWRC & Afton Express:** Mr. Wilson shared his appreciation to Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) for their support of the BRITE system and described their students as model passengers on Afton Express. In response to Mr. Wilson’s accolades, Ms. Thompson shared that CSPDC staff had been working with WWRC to help their students utilize Afton Express to access job training in Charlottesville. Mr. Kelley thanked BRITE for their partnership.

Other Business: Chairperson Rodgers asked if there was any other business to come before the committee.

- Ms. Thompson confirmed that Mr. Mike Norvell from Bay Transit was available to give a presentation on microtransit at a future BTAC meeting, and sought members’ preference for either a September or November meeting presentation. Hearing no comments, the presentation would be scheduled in September.

Adjournment

Chairperson Rodgers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 2:30 PM at the CSPDC office.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 2:57 PM.