



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary  
January 10, 2024, 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
✓	Phil Thompson	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Kyle Trissel	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	
✓	Rodney Rhodes, City of Staunton	
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	

**Call to Order**

The January 10, 2024, meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:31 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 November 8, 2023, BTAC meeting for consideration.

***Ms. Leslie Tate moved, seconded by Ms. Krystal Moyers, to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2023, meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **Business**

FY 2025 Budget & Grant Applications: Ms. Devon Thompson announced that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget was being finalized. Ms. Thompson indicated that like other goods and services impacted by inflation, the cost of delivering transit service would be higher for operating and capital expenses for the upcoming fiscal year. Contract costs would be going up to reflect an increase in revenue hours – as planned from the Transit Development Plan (TDP) with the assumption add Saturday paratransit service and to keep the second midday paratransit bus that was in lieu of the FY 2024 paratransit Saturday service due to high paratransit demand during the week – and keep driver pay competitive for recruitment and retention. Additionally, there were some increased facility costs, as the building aged and original equipment needed to be repaired/replaced, and fuel costs. Percentage increases among the outlined factors ranged from 2-8 percent (facility costs were the highest at 12 percent to account for unexpected/expected repairs).

Ms. Thompson indicated that FY 2025 Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) grant applications were due February 1, 2024, and Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) staff would be submitting applications for: Urban and Rural Operating & Capital Cost of Contracting; Commuter Assistance Program Operating (Rideshare); and a Technical Assistance grant for a microtransit feasibility study. The microtransit scope of services would look at both supplementing underperforming fixed-route service or increasing mobility options in the service area.

Valley Community Services Board – Future Stop and Funding Partner: Ms. Thompson announced that CSPDC and Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) staff continued to evaluate options available to serve Valley Community Services Board (VCSB). Ms. Thompson reminded the Committee that VCSB reached out in fall 2023 with interest to reinstate their status as funding partner and reinstate a bus stop at their offices on Sanger Lane. As discussed in November 2023, this would need to be vetted through multiple meetings as the 250 Connector was the tightest route timewise in the system. Once grant applications were submitted, CSPDC would schedule meetings with VCSB and VRT to gather the information needed, such as projected and actual VCSB usage; peak usage times; availability of the gravel lot across the street; any underutilized stops that could be removed from the 250 Connector route; and to propose alternatives for consideration by this committee.

Staunton Lewis Street Hub Rehabilitation Update: Ms. Ann Cundy reported that some new milestones had been reached since November 2023. Ms. Cundy indicated that the City of Staunton approved the site plan for the Lewis Street Hub lot rehabilitation, and the Invitation for Bid for construction would be posted in the coming days. CSPDC staff continued to work with the City of Staunton, VRT, and the technical assistance consultant Kimley-Horn to identify the temporary hub location during the construction phase for the lot. Additionally, a communications plan



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would need to be developed, in coordination with the City of Staunton, to make sure passengers, property neighbors, nearby businesses, and the community at-large were aware of the temporary changes.

ITS – Mobile Data Collection System Update: Ms. Thompson reported that implementation for the Mobile Data Collection System (MDCS) – the backend software for data collection and real-time GPS for buses – continued. The Passio Technologies account had been built out on the backend, and the mobile data terminals had been installed on all buses. Passio would host onsite training with CSPDC and VRT staff, along with the technical assistance consultant Kimley-Horn, in January (scheduled for January 16-17, but postponed due to weather to January 30-31). Once trainings had been conducted, the system would be formally launched, with a transition period that would include a period of time of both electronic and paper data gathering to verify that the software was operating as intended.

Afton Express Update: Ms. Thompson indicated that Ms. Paula Melester put together a slide deck of preliminary information on the Afton Express Annual Rider Survey. Such information would be featured in the Afton Express Annual Report. Ms. Thompson reviewed the following information:

- **Annual Rider Survey:**
  - 67 responses were received between November 13-December 15
  - Questions focused on utilization, barriers to access, customer experience, and rider demographics
  - Data would be combined and should complement the performance metrics, all of which would be featured in the annual report
- **Utilization & Barriers to Access:**
  - About 84 percent of survey respondents rode regularly or occasionally; and about 16 percent were not riding
    - Of those that did not ride, 81 percent would like to, but faced barriers to access (such as the schedule not working for their schedule, not understanding the schedule or knowing how to ride, or not having a way to access the bus stops)
  - About 84 percent of riders used Afton Express to commute to and from work/school
  - Riders primarily traveled from the Valley to Charlottesville, with a small percentage that rode the reverse commute
  - The most common reason cited for riding Afton Express was to save money on gas, vehicle maintenance, and parking fees
- **Customer Experience:**
  - What we were doing right – friendly drivers and staff, with many thanks to VRT; reliability; relaxed environment
  - Where could we improve – better delivery of farecards for UVA-affiliated riders; expanded AM/PM times; additional stops and increased access

Contractor Update: Mr. Phil Thompson reported on the following:

- **Ridership:** Mr. Thompson indicated that there were 15,849 passenger trips on BRITE in December 2023, a 19 percent increase from December 2022.



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- **Staffing:** Mr. Thompson announced that VRT was actively seeking and hiring fully endorsed bus drivers. Mr. Thompson noted that VRT was not at a critical point, but was attempting to upstaff for vacations and illnesses.
- **Operations:** Mr. Thompson indicated that two new 20-passenger buses were introduced into the fleet, which made for five new buses in the fleet over the last calendar year.

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

- **Transit Equity Day – Monday, February 5, 2024:** Ms. Thompson proposed providing a fare-free operations day on the observed Transit Equity Day, Monday, February 5. Ms. Krystal Moyers noted the holiday last year, and suggested participating in some manner. Ms. Thompson asked if there were any other promotions/ideas from the BTAC for ways to celebrate the holiday. Ms. Amanda Kaufman inquired if information/social media posts could be shared with the BTAC so information could be shared on partners' various social platforms and information sharing outlets.

#### **Adjournment**

Chairperson Rodgers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 2:30 PM at the CSPDC office.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 2:49 PM.

# AFTON EXPRESS

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ANNUAL RIDER SURVEY SUMMARY

JANUARY 10, 2024



# Annual Rider Survey

- Available from November 13<sup>th</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup>  
Received 67 responses
- Prize drawing to boost response rate
- Asked questions about utilization, barriers to access, customer experience, and rider demographics
- Pair data from the survey with performance metrics for the Annual Report



# Utilization & Barriers to Access

**83.6%** Ride regularly or occasionally; **16.4%** do not ride

Of those who do not ride, **81%** would like to but face barriers to access.

Most riders (**84.1%**) use Afton Express to commute to and from work or school.

Riders primarily travel from the Valley to Charlottesville in the AM and return in the PM. A small number are traveling in reverse (~**15%**).

The most common reason for riding was to save money on gas, vehicle maintenance, and parking fees.

## Barriers to Access for those who want to ride:

**The schedule does not work for their schedule**

**Do not understand the schedule or know how to ride**

**Do not have a way to get to the bus stops**

**Other**





# Customer Experience

What we're doing right:

- Friendly drivers and staff
- Reliability
- Relaxing environment

Where we can improve:

- Better delivery of farecards for UVA-affiliated riders
- Expanded times in AM and PM
- Adding more stops/increasing access

