



112 MacTanly Place  
Staunton, VA 24401

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## BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary January 8, 2025, 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
✓	Rodney Rhodes	City of Staunton
	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
	Leslie Tate	City of Waynesboro
✓	Alisande Tombarge	City of Waynesboro
✓	Krystal Moyers, Chair	Augusta Health
	Abby Calvert	Augusta Health
	Mike Kelley	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
✓	Darren Smith	Staunton Downtown Development
✓	Terry Rodgers	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
	Alexis Have	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
	Josiah Hojohn	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Melissa Walker	Blue Ridge Community College
	Tammy DuBose	Valley Community Services Board
	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
	Paul Terry	Transit Service Rider
	Kyle Trissel	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
	Ann Cundy	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Paula Melester	CSPDC
✓	Danielle Gannon	CSPDC
✓	Zach Beard, CSPDC	
✓	Garreth Bartholomew, CSPDC	
✓	Le’Roy Sweezy, Jr., VRT	
✓	Phil Thompson, VRT	
✓	Alex Wilmer, Town of Bridgewater	
✓	Brian Borne, Town of Dayton	
✓	Libby Clark, Town of Mt. Crawford	



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### **Call to Order**

The January 8, 2025, meeting of the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:32 PM by Ms. Krystal Moyers, 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 Moyers opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.

### **Approve Minutes**

Chairperson Moyers presented the minutes from the November 13, 2024, BTAC meeting for consideration.

***Ms. Terry Rodgers moved, seconded by Ms. Alisande Tombarge to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2024, meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.***

### **Business**

**Recognition of Outgoing Committee Member:** Ms. Devon Thompson honored outgoing BTAC member Ms. Rodgers for her combined 30 years of service to the BRITE and past CATS systems. Ms. Rodgers has made a lasting impact on the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region, contributing to the BRITE/CATS systems, and in her role at Shenandoah Valley Social Services. Ms. Rodgers was presented with a certificate and flowers for her nine years of service on the BTAC. Ms. Rodgers expressed her appreciation and shared that she was proud of what has been accomplished with the BRITE system.

**Future Outlook Continued:** Ms. Paula Melester reported on the financial outlook for BRITE. She highlighted the multiple factors that could lead to an increase in the cost of operating the BRITE system, as well as potential increases to partner contribution rates. Such factors contributing to these increases is inflation and the increased operating costs in the transit industry. Aside from inflation, the BRITE system will be starting a new service contract that will go into effect in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027. The hourly service cost in the new contract will almost certainly be more expensive than the current, pre-negotiated fixed rate that the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) has with Virginia Regional Transit (VRT). Due to this pre-fixed nature, the current rate does not accurately reflect the cost of operations. The new contract will go into effect July 1, 2026, and should accurately reflect the current cost of operating a transit service. A third factor that could lead to increasing costs is due to a potential funding shortfall of Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) 5311 Rural funds. Federal Rural transit funds are not keeping pace with increasing service costs or with the number of transit agencies applying for 5311 funds. Ms. Melester reported that CSPDC transit staff attended a DRPT 5311 & 5310 grant workshop and learned that without any funding changes, the current amount of money that is allocated to grant recipients will not be enough to cover the existing transit agencies' current funded rates. DRPT staff are working with a consultant to explore solutions to this issue. CSPDC transit staff are also exploring solutions and doing scenario planning for the possible deficit and the possibility that the local match requirements could increase from the current 20 percent, if this shortfall persists and DRPT finds no other options. Ms. Melester indicated this does not change anything at present, and none of these



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factors will affect FY 2026 costs or contribution rates. Ms. Melester assured the group that the CSPDC, as well as DRPT, are working as hard as they can to research and analyze all potential solutions should these factors coalesce into higher costs.

Ms. Melester also reported on the state of the procurement for the new service contract that will begin July 1, 2026. This procurement process is set to kick-off later this month, and the CSPDC will be working with and receiving technical assistance from consultant Kimely-Horn. Kimely-Horn will be assisting with the more technical aspects of the procurement process and will be drafting the Request for Proposals (RFP). The CSPDC aims to have a new contract in place by December 31, 2025. Additionally, there will be a steering committee to assist throughout this process and feedback will be requested at various BTAC meetings.

**Fiscal Year 2026 Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Grants:** Ms. Danielle Gannon reported that FY 2026 DRPT grants are open, and that the CSPDC will be making application to several, including grants for: Urban and Rural operating, Urban and Rural capital cost of contracting, a capital grant for bus shelters, a technical assistance grant for the procurement of the new service contract, the Commuter Assistance Program operating grant for RideShare, and a Commuter Assistance Program project assistance grant for transit marketing, specifically for Afton Express marketing. Applications are due February 1.

Ms. Thompson remarked that in terms of expansion of service, BRITE Access (paratransit) will be increasing its hours of operation, so that all three paratransit buses will operate nine hours of service per weekday.

**Microtransit Feasibility Study Update :** Ms. Thompson reported that last week, consultant Kimley-Horn presented their technical foundations briefing regarding opportunity zones for microtransit. This briefing was developed with information from previous plans, goals from the BTAC, as well as with data regarding information such as travel patterns, demographics, employment, and transit potential/transit need ratios. Ms. Thompson shared an image of the draft of opportunity zones presented by Kimely-Horn, and asked for input from the BTAC regarding these zones (Ms. Thompson outlined how to leave comments on the Remix platform). The next step in the process will be to prioritize these zones.

Ms. Melester indicated that implementing microtransit could mean using it to complement existing transit service, or to replace underperforming routes.

- **Draft List of Microtransit Opportunity Zones (in no particular order):**
  - Fishersville
  - Stuarts Draft
  - Greenville
  - North Waynesboro & Crimora
  - South Waynesboro
  - North Staunton
  - South Staunton



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**Afton Express Update:** Ms. Gannon reported that the annual Afton Express Rider Survey is live until January 17. The survey collects data to better understand rider needs and experiences, and helps shape future decisions regarding service. Once the survey closes, data will be compiled and turned into an annual report that will be released and shared in early 2025.

**Contractor Update:** Mr. Le’Roy Sweezy reported that operations were going well and discussed the following topics:

- Passenger numbers are increasing on the Staunton Access (paratransit service), the 250 Connector, and the Afton Express. Additionally, the Staunton Crossing and Augusta Health stops (Afton Express) are doing very well and drawing additional passengers.
- Driver recruitment continues and VRT seeks to hire more part-time drivers for both BRITE and Afton Express.
- Changes to the Staunton West/North Loop, the Staunton Downtown Trolley, and the addition of the Middlebrook Trace Apartments CALL stop have all been very well received.

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

- **VTA Transit and Rail Advocacy Day:** Ms. Gannon announced that CSPDC transit staff will be attending Transit and Rail Advocacy Day in Richmond on January 27, 2025.
- **New Attendees:** Ms. Melester welcomed Mr. Brian Borne, Ms. Libby Clark, and Mr. Alex Wilmer, representing the localities of Dayton, Mt. Crawford, and Bridgewater, respectively. Attending BTAC members made introductions.

### **Adjournment**

Chairperson Moyers indicated that the next BTAC meeting was scheduled for March 12, 2025, at 2:30 PM.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting concluded at 3:12 PM.