



## Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office

### **GVRTC Minutes for May 8, 2020**

**Attendees:** Dana Brosig, Kathy Young, Tom Downey, Ken Haley, Greg Caton, Todd Hollenbeck, Dean Bressler, Valdon Lewis, TJ Burr, Andy Gingerich, Sarah Benedict-Attorney, Cheryl Gibboney, Julie George, Michael Bennett, Judi DeRusha all via phone

**Roll Call:** Scott McInnis, Chair – Mesa County, called the meeting to order. Phyllis Norris – City of Grand Junction, Lori Buck – City of Fruita, and Greg Mikolai – Town of Palisade are present.

**Call Meeting to Order: 9:10 a.m.**

**Changes to the Agenda:** None

**Director Reports:** None

#### **Approval of Minutes**

None

#### **Consent Item(s)**

The Consent Agenda is intended to allow the Committee to spend its time on more complex items. These items are generally perceived as non-controversial and can be approved by a single motion. The public or Committee Members may ask that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for individual consideration.

None

#### **Individual Consideration Item(s)**

Please limit public comment to a maximum of five (5) minutes per speaker (unless otherwise restricted by the Chair).

1. Response to Transdev Services, Inc. request regarding the Grand Valley Transit operations contract in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the CARES Act funding. – Dana Brosig, RTPPO

Transdev did send the GVRTC a letter requesting to continue to be pay for service if there are service cuts. The board is happy with the contract how it is written and does not want to amend the contract. Instruct GVRTC legal counsel, Tom Downey, to draft a letter stating such. The letter should include that the draft amendment presented at the GVRTC meeting on April 27, 2020 is rejected.

Motion directing legal counsel to draft a letter to Transdev regarding the contract. Greg Mikolai so moved. Phyllis Norris 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

2. Appointing Phyllis Norris as the lead for the GVRTC board regarding the Transdev Services, Inc. contract and discussion with the Regional Transportation Planning Office staff. – Dana Brosig, RTPPO

Scott McInnis asked for a motion to appoint Phyllis Norris as the lead. Greg Mikolai so moved and Lori Buck 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

3. Discussion of requiring GVT riders to wear face coverings while riding the bus. –Dana Brosig, RTPO  
At the last board meeting staff discussed ridership. Ridership was ranging from 1000-1200 trips a day. As things are opening back up and economic stimulus checks are going out, ridership is increasing resulting in 1200-1500 trips/day last week. This is going to make social distancing on the buses more difficult. With our fleet, we will continue to provide shadow buses as much as possible. Additionally, the CDC recommends people to wear masks in public when social distancing is not practical. Research of other transit agencies requiring masks within Colorado including RFTA, Pueblo, Avon, Eagle County, Durango. The City and County of Denver requires face coverings anytime someone leaves their house resulting in riders on RTD also need to wear face coverings. Definition of a shadow bus is a second bus that follows in order to limit 10 riders on any bus. Amtrak is now requiring all riders to wear masks and passengers must supply own mask. Are we supplying the masks? We have been supplying masks for riders to come to the transit centers and for drives to hand out. Have been in contact with homeless shelters to supply masks for those riding transit and communicating with homeless shelters about riders wearing masks. Will the responsibility of having a mask be on the rider? We are requiring drivers to wear masks. RFTA is also accepting a scarf or any type of face covering. It would be irresponsible for us to not post something that riders must wear a mask. Not sure what the enforcement will be. What happens if the riders don't or take it off once on the bus? Tom Downey stated there is no case law, but recommend something similar to what's now common practice for existing rules. What is the enforcement? Can tell public but what is they refuse? What if we run out masks? What if a municipality is requiring face coverings and a bus travels through it? RTD is requiring it as the City of Denver is requiring it. Our recommendation is requiring mask and develop a policy on if deny service without one. Everyone can come up with a face covering even if it's a shirt they are wearing pulled up over their face. What do if passenger boards with a mask and then takes it off? Want to avoid confrontation with a driver as well as affecting other passengers. Going to have issues with some taking it off once board the bus. Too much to pull bus over if remove face covering. Signage on the buses to make it clear masks are required and not take it off. Wearing face covers is showing respect for bus driver and others on the bus. How it is going to be enforced? Making a rule that is not enforceable and it's not a law in Mesa County. Are we setting our drivers up for confrontations? We don't want to put drivers and other passengers on the spot. Causing more issues if requiring it? Would the sheriff's department enforce it? We are putting our people on the line and have to defend something that is not defensible. What are RFTA and RTD doing regarding some of the questions from the Directors? We already have signage on the buses stating please wear a face covering. Enforcement from the other agencies doesn't specify on their website. Drivers have requested this requirement. Goal is to keep everyone as safe as possible. Need to have signage that drivers can deny service and contact supervisor if there is a confrontation. Tom Downey stated whenever we have a new legal situation where there is no direct legal guidance, we follow existing practices. What do you do if a passenger is eating or not wearing shirt? How is that handled? If someone is intoxicated, what is the policy? Valdon Lewis stated that in all those cases, we can refuse service. If on the bus and a passengers starting to drink, the driver will give a warning reminding them of the policy. Driver can warn again and then contact the supervisor. What is Transdev as a whole doing? Mixed response across the country. Some require, some don't. Greg Mikolai stated as long as we pass the policy language and why requiring it, this will help with enforcement. Valdon Lewis stated that many of the steps we have taken is to protect our drivers as they are a very valuable service. If the drivers catch the virus, could cause the service to shut down as don't have enough drivers to operate. Have we had a recommendation from the County Health department? Yes, they recommended face covering but didn't want to take the stance of requiring them for GVT. They also stated that it is ultimately GVT's decision how to implement recommendations.

We should take action on this today and what should the language should say. Legal counsel said GVRTC can give a broad direction and legal counsel can develop and be similar to other policies on the

bus. GVRTC would develop policy and Transdev would enforce. There are currently Rules for Riding on maps and internet. Could add face mask to the existing Rules for Riding.

Greg Mikolai moved to require masks of riders on GVT buses and direct staff to develop language on rules of riding. Phyllis Norris add this is during the COVID-19 pandemic so it doesn't go on forever. Dana Brosig added saying face covers covering mouth and nose.

Greg Mikolai moved that the GVRTC adopt a policy requiring face coverings that cover the nose and mouth on GVT buses that is incorporated in the rules for riding to expire once the COVID-19 pandemic no longer deemed dangerous to the public. Phyllis Norris 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.

Anyone from the public have any comments: Judi DeRusha, president of the local ATU stated to keep it simple, masks are required to ride our buses or face coverings. Suggest maybe not make it so specific to COVID-19 as there may be pandemics in the future.

Recognize may have pandemics in the future but need to make it specific to the moment in response to what is happening now. In a future pandemic the board would take action again appropriate to that situation. Need to get this information out to the public as much as possible. Implement in a few days to give riders time.

Vote was 4-0.

**Briefing Item(s)**

Briefing items are intended to allow the Committee to give Staff guidance in the day-to-day operations of the Regional Transportation Planning Office, or to hear general presentations from others.

None

**Unscheduled Business:**

The Unscheduled Business portion of the agenda provides the public to speak about issues that were not on the main agenda. Please limit public comment to a maximum of five (5) minutes per speaker (unless otherwise restricted by the Chair). Testimony relating to scheduled agenda items will not be allowed during Unscheduled Business.

None

**Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.:** Minutes submitted by Kathy Young.