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Wednesday, January 25, 2023

12:00 p.m.

GoTriangle Board Room

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**Board members present** | Brenda Howerton [arr. 12:13 p.m., left 2:05], Sig Hutchinson, Vivian Jones, Elaine O'Neal, Michael Parker, Sally Greene [left 1:10 p.m.], Jennifer Robinson, Stelfanie Williams

**Board members attending remotely** | Valerie Jordan

**Board members absent** | Mary-Ann Baldwin [excused], Corey Branch, Michael Fox

Mayor O'Neal administered the oath of office to Sally Greene prior to the start of the meeting. Chair Hutchinson welcomed Greene to the Board as Orange County's representative.

Hutchinson officially called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

**I. Adoption of Agenda**

**Action:** On motion by Jones and second by O'Neal the agenda was adopted. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

**II. Public Comment**

No comments.

**III. Consent Agenda**

**Action:** A motion was made by Parker and seconded by Jones to approve the consent agenda. Upon vote by roll call, the motion was carried unanimously.

The following consent agenda items were approved:

- December 21, 2022 | Regular Session Minutes.
- Resolution 2023 0001 Resolution Granting Signature Authority on GoTriangle Financial Accounts.\*
- Wake Bus Plan Project Prioritization Policy.\*
- President/CEO authority to execute a contract for the purchase of four light transit vehicles from Interstate Transportation Sales & Service, Inc. for a maximum of \$476,200.

\*These documents are attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

**IV. Presentations**

**A. FY2022 Audit Report**

Jennifer Hayden, Director of Finance & Administrative Services, introduced Scott Duda, partner with Cherry Bekaert to present the audit report. The financial statements and presentation are attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. Duda reported that an unmodified opinion has been issued on the financial statements, the highest level of assurance an external auditor can give.

Howerton arrived.

Required communications:

- No corrected or uncorrected misstatements identified.
- No significant difficulties dealing with management in performing and completing the audit.
- No disagreements with management related to the financial statements.
- No consultations with management on difficult or contentious matters.
- Management representation letter dated November 11, 2022.
- No management consultations with other outside accountants.
- Normal professional discussions with management, no conditions to retention.
- No fraud, illegal acts or violations of laws and regulations noted.
- No events or conditions noted that indicate substantial doubt about GoTriangle's ability to continue.

Duda added that the financial statements have been approved by the LGC with no comment.

**B. DCHC MPO Annual Report**

Katharine Eggleston introduced Doug Plachcinski, executive director of the DCHC MPO. He presented the MPO's annual report. His presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

***FY2022 Highlights***

- Joint Comprehensive Transportation Plan [CTP] amendment #5 updates bicycle and pedestrian elements to include additional non-motorized and public transportation elements for consistency with NCDOT's Complete Streets policy. This joint plan with NCDOT guides transportation project development and future right-of-way reservations. There are no funding requirements.
- 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan [MTP] was adopted. It is a financially constrained, federal long-range plan. Projects in the Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] must be identified in the MTP.
- TIP updated. It is a ten-year funding document for bicycle, pedestrian, highway, rail and public transportation projects.
- US 70 Corridor Study in Orange County provides a framework for a safe, efficient and equitable transportation system that offers modal choices connecting different destinations and accessing development appropriately.
- US 70 Corridor Study in Durham County from the East End Connector to the Wake/Durham line. Project goals include reduced congestion and safe, efficient transit and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- DCHC MPO is a partner and financial contributor towards the Triangle Regional Model, works on the Congestion Management Process to reduce congestion on major corridors, provides feedback through the Mobility Report Card and the Rapid Policy Assessment Tool and uses data to understand traffic patterns.

***FY2023 Highlights***

- Facilitating the updates to the Orange and Durham County Transit Plan updates.
- Grant for enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities which passed funding through to Orange County Department on Aging, GoDurham and Chapel Hill Transit.
- Following a governance study, the DCHC MPO is transitioning to a partnership to relocate with TJCOG to improve regional transportation planning technology and coordination.

**V. General Business Agenda****A. Items Removed from Consent Agenda**

None.

**B. Orange County Transit Plan Update**

Katharine Eggleston reported that the Planning & Legislative Committee in December voted to recommend board approval of the Orange Transit Plan. It was expected at that time that the accompanying transit governance ILA would be considered at the same time; however, it is not finalized. It is anticipated that both items will come to the board for approval in February. Eggleston added that the Orange Transit Plan and ILA also should be presented in February.

**C. Operations & Finance Committee Report**

Committee Chair Michael Parker reported on two items, the purchase of paratransit vehicles approved on the consent agenda and a presentation on the reinstatement of fares. He stated the committee recommends that an equity analysis be conducted. He explained that this is a required step before fares could be reinstated. He said the committee took no position on the reinstatement of fares at this time.

**1. Considering Reinstatement of Fares for FY2024**

Katharine Eggleston explained that at the start of the pandemic GoTriangle and other transit operators in the region suspended fares for safety reasons. She said that many agencies around the country have gone back to fares but none of the Triangle area operators have. Eggleston added that the board voted last fall to direct staff to bring forward a budget for FY2024 that did not drawdown on reserves except in extenuating circumstances. In response staff has identified a return to fares as one way to increase revenues for FY2024. She introduced Steven Schlossberg and Austin Stanion to deliver the presentation, which is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

***Presentation summary***

- GoTriangle's lost revenue impact from fare suspension between FY2021-2023 was \$8-9 million.
- A return to fares could generate approximately \$16 million between FY2024-2030. Ridership is estimated in FY2024 at 25% below the level at the start of the pandemic, gradually increasing to pre-pandemic levels in FY2028.

- The implementation of fare capping, approved before the pandemic, will help riders, particularly frequent and low income riders.
- A fare equity analysis is required to return to fares and for the GoPass program.
- Staff is in communication with past and potential GoPass partners.
- Staff would need about three months to prepare to return to fares. The board would need to take action in April in order to return to fares in July.

Williams asked how ridership assumptions were made, if it is based on pre-pandemic patterns or that reinstating fares could decrease ridership. She asked how a fare is collected in an alternative vehicle that has been implemented recently. Schlossberg responded that ridership is about 30% below pre-pandemic levels with a growth assumption of 5% annually. Eggleston stated that staff is exploring fare collection equipment for all vehicles in fixed route service with the goal of a consistent rider experience regardless of vehicle or service type.

Williams then noted that a July start date could be ambitious with companies already forecasting and budgeting for the next few years and having gotten used to fare free service.

**Action:** A motion was made by Parker and seconded by Greene to instruct staff to begin the process to perform a fare equity analysis and public engagement to inform a future decision by the board on whether or not to reinstate fare collection for FY2024. Upon vote, the motion was carried 6 to 2 with Hutchinson, Jones, Parker, Greene, Robinson and Williams voting in the affirmative and Howerton and O'Neal voting in the negative.

Greene left.

**D. New Business**

None.

**VI. Other Business**

**A. President and CEO's Report**

A list of contracts approved by the president and CEO is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

Lattuca reported on the following items:

- A new format for reporting contracts is being developed to provide more information.
- Board Chair Hutchinson presented Clerk to the Board Michelle Dawson with a 20-year service award.
- Met with the chair of the Chatham Board of County Commissioners and staff to discuss transportation needs. Katharine Eggleston will be assisting them in developing the scope for a transit planning study.

- Attended the NC Transportation Summit and met with the FTA regional administrator and her staff about RUS Bus.
- Met with Wake County and CAMPO leadership to discuss changes to the transit governance ILA to allow GoTriangle to discontinue the sharing arrangement for the vehicle rental tax. Held a similar meeting with the Durham County manager. A suggestion was made to report quarterly to the Board of County Commissioners on transit plan funds.
- Met with Senator Blue to discuss increasing the vehicle registration tax from \$5 to \$7.
- Will be meeting with the new Board of County Commissioner chairs in Wake and Orange counties.
- Will be meeting with the Congressional delegation and their staffs about the commuter rail study.

### 1. Operations Update

The monthly report is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

- GoTriangle is moving to a new computer aided dispatch/automatic vehicle location system [CAD/AVL]. Ridership numbers are not being reported accurately.
- GoTriangle currently has 53 fulltime bus operators. Full service requires 70 operators, with a minimum of 60. The December training class had ten operators and a new class this week included another ten. The process takes at least eight weeks. Two paratransit operators are in training and two service attendants. A diesel mechanic and mechanic intern are still needed.
- The police were called for 57 incidents in 2022, up from 42 in 2021. Calls in the month of January are down from five last year to two this year.
- Staff continues to engage with Housing for New Hope.
- Over 200 applications have been received since the temporary suspension of routes CRX and DRX. Service has become more reliable since the suspension and there have been significantly fewer missed trips. Hirings have kept us on track to restore the routes in March. Two new vanpools have been created as a result of the temporary suspension, for a total of 17 vanpools.
- Paratransit has moved into the Plaza Building.

### 2. Capital Projects Status Report

Katharine Eggleston shared photos of the new paratransit office. She offered board members a tour following the meeting.

#### ***Bragtown***

Eggleston stated that following the tour of Bragtown last summer GoTriangle, the City of Durham, Durham county and NCDOT made a commitment to work together to make needed improvements: short-term seating and lighting, bus stop location optimization and long-term county-wide bus stop improvements.

Four locations were identified with sidewalks that would allow installation of seating. Those were completed in December. The city is replacing sidewalk in Bragtown and GoTriangle staff requested and was approved for ADA accessible bus waiting pads at five locations. Once complete, GoTriangle will install seating at these locations as well. Staff is working with solar light vendors to get the equipment approved by NCDOT to add solar lighting at these locations.

The bus stop location optimization study has kicked off.

### ***RUS Bus***

Eggleston introduced Paige Cureton for the RUS Bus project update. Her presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

### ***Presentation Summary***

- RUS bus is a planned transit oriented development project that blends public and private spaces to enhance connections and improve the quality of life. It will include two apartment towers and be a vibrant, active, multimodal hub, connecting people traveling locally, regionally and across the state.
- Demolition and building remediation are complete. Crews are grading the site and installing erosion and storm water control measures and preparing for future construction of the bus facility and private elements.
- Design is approaching the 60% milestone, to include updated cost and schedule estimates.
- The phase of construction will begin in the fall, with construction coming out of the ground.
- There have been zero safety incidents to date.

Howerton left.

### ***Greater Triangle Commuter Rail Project Public Comment Period***

Liz Raskopf's presentation is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. There have been over 4,500 survey participants to date, with good geographic spread. Staff is focused on seeking responses from households with annual incomes under \$50,000 and African American and Hispanic communities.

### **B. General Counsel's Report**

Byron Smith announced the promotion of Karen Porter to Deputy General Counsel. He also advised the board that two claims have been received, one from a passenger on the bus that was hit by the tractor trailer in November and another related to a personnel matter.

### **C. Chair's Report**

Chair Hutchinson reminded board members of the upcoming work session on February 1 and the dinner following the meeting.

**D. Board Member Reports**

**1. CAMPO Executive Board Representative**

Sig Hutchinson reported that Vivian Jones was elected the new chair of CAMPO. GoTriangle provide an update on commuter rail transit and a subcommittee was established to begin addressing issues on commuter rail.

**2. Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) Representative**

Sig Hutchinson reported that the online version of the RTA annual meeting highlighted the significance of commuter rail. The in-person meeting is next week.

**3. DCHC MPO Board Representative**

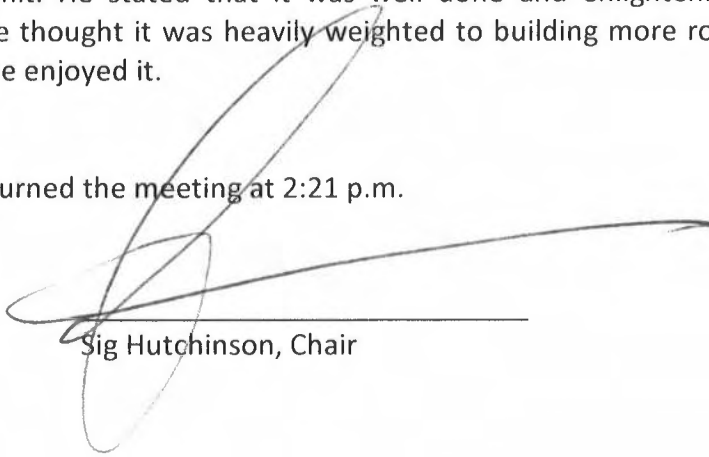
Michael Parker reported that the MPO is switching its Lead Planning Agency (LPA) from Durham to TJCOG. The physical move is planned for July.

**4. NC Transportation Summit Report**

Sig Hutchinson stated Brenda Howerton, Vivian Jones, Michael Parker and himself attended the summit. He stated that it was well done and enlightening. Parker commented that he thought it was heavily weighted to building more roads. Jones commented that she enjoyed it.

**VII. Adjournment**

**Action:** Chair Hutchinson adjourned the meeting at 2:21 p.m.



Sig Hutchinson, Chair

Attest:



Michelle C. Dawson, CMC  
Clerk to the Board