

# MINUTES

## Concord Kannapolis Area Transit Commission

October 26, 2023, 8:30 am

Rider Transit Center

---

### MEMBERS:

Mayor Bill Dusch-City of Concord  
Dianne Berry- City of Kannapolis  
Darrell Jackson- City of Kannapolis  
Betty Stocks-City of Concord

### OTHERS:

Andy Christy- Rider Transit  
Phil Conrad- CRMPO  
Mayor Darrell Hinnant-City of Kannapolis  
Pam Hinson-City of Concord  
Craig Meeks-Rider Transit  
Wilmer Melton- City of Kannapolis  
Obdulio Oden-Transdev  
Paige Tamaro-City of Concord  
Jaime Tippet Poe- Rider Transit  
L.J. Weslowski- Rider Transit

---

### Call to Order, Quorum, and Approval of Minutes

Mayor Dusch called the meeting to order at 8:31 am, declared a quorum.

No individuals were present for public comment.

Mayor Dusch requested a motion to approve the minutes of the Concord Kannapolis Area Transit Commission meeting from 8/2/2023.

Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve; Ms. Stocks second. Minutes approved unanimously as presented.

### Rider Bus Stop Amenity Project Update

Mr. Christy provided an update.

Rider Transit awarded a contract to M.H. Graves out of Charlotte with a bid of \$397,991, which was below the engineer's estimate. City of concord Council approval at last meeting.

Mr. Graves has the contract at this time for review and hope to have this under contract very soon. This includes 19 locations, 6 shelters, and 13 seats, which will bring us to 46 stops or 17% of total stops. Upon conclusion of the project, approximately 30% of stops will be amenitized.

### Rider Transit Planning Projects Update

Mr. Weslowski provided an update. Consolidation study-moving forward with getting both options built out. Benesch is planning a kickoff with their staff next week and anticipate a

delivery and presentation in February. Customer Service Survey-kickoff for this week was delayed but are rescheduling.

### **CCX Service Expansion Options**

Mr. Weslowski provided an update and provided a handout.

As a request of the last Transit Commission meeting of adding a second bus to CCX instead of a shuttle to the Dream Center. \$427,748 is the cost of adding a bus with fuel to a bus route. Mayor Hinnant asked about the benefit to others in the corridor including Lily, Red Bull, and others. Lilly is anticipating a 12-hour shift and weekend shift which caused a need to add additional hours to each route. \$970,359 adding the bus and expanding all routes an additional hour (until 9:30pm) in the evening to serve Lilly. \$1,244,881 – new CCXX, evening hours until 9:30pm, and moving out all of service to 4:30am to provide better access for employment at places such as the International Business Park.

Mayor Dusch asked about the color coding of the sheet.

Mr. Weslowski stated that it is the overall cost.

Mayor Dusch asked if that was additive.

Mr. Weslowski stated that it is the all in cost.

Mr. Jackson asked if there are any projections on ridership totals.

Mr. Weslowski stated that he has no way of knowing that information at this time.

Mr. Jackson stated that the impact on the budget without knowing the need may not be necessary.

Mayor Dusch asked about getting a meeting with Lily to get an idea of need.

Mr. Weslowski stated that he has not had a meeting with Lily since they initially met with all City of Concord Department heads.

Ms. Berry asked if this impacts the Dream Center.

Mr. Weslowski stated that it would include the Dream Center.

Ms. Berry asked if the Dream Center is open on the weekends.

Mr. Weslowski stated that it is not, but it was the request of Mayor Hinnant last meeting to look at the additional options and cost.

Mr. Melton asked about the impact on the International Business Park

Mr. Weslowski stated that he is unsure, but could work on finding out interest.

### **Rider Transit Operations Staffing Challenges**

Mr. Weslowski provided an update. Since the August meeting, staffing has become a significant concern. Obdulio Oden, the General Manager, in the last 67 days, he has worked 64 of those days, and 62 of those days he has driven a portion of those days. If he is driving, other administrative tasks are not being completed. Our peers have experienced the same challenges and have made route reductions or hourly reductions due to low staffing. If we were unable to provide full service due to operators, we would interline routes where service would run every 2 hours, which would be a detriment to the system and cause our passengers to miss appointments or not get to work on time.

Mr. Oden stated that they are doing every effort that they can to provide daily service, which often means that all administrative staff are driving. Transdev is recruiting and interviewing a lot, but unfortunately most of the candidates do not pan out. There is a large challenge with pay because local fast-food restaurants are paying more than starting pay for operators.

Mayor Dusch states that this is a statement that he is hearing everywhere. He asked what the rate needs to be to be competitive.

Mr. Oden stated that starting is \$13.31/hour in training, \$16.67/hour upon beginning driving, and the top of the pay scale is \$18.92/hour. Transdev will be going into contract negotiations in January and will end June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

An equipment operator for the City of Concord is \$21.45/hour starting pay.

Mr. Melton asked what CATS pays their operators.

Mr. Weslowski stated that CATS pays Bus operators \$21.50-\$21.74/hour and Paratransit operators start at \$22.00/hour and CCTS pays over \$15.00 to start and a \$2500 sign on bonus.

Mr. Jackson asked what type of numbers are being discussed.

Mr. Weslowski stated that it will be a mid to high six figures and it will be a direct pass through to the employees, not an increase in profit to the company.

Mayor Dusch asked when the numbers would be available.

Mr. Weslowski stated that Transdev corporate plans to provide the cost by this Friday and then there would need to be a meeting with both City of Concord and City of Kannapolis staff to present the financials.

Mayor Dusch asked that he and Mayor Hinnant were included in that meeting.

Mr. Weslowski stated that during the pandemic PART and CARY moved operators to \$20/hour and they stabilized their staff.

Ms. Berry asked what year we are in in the contract.

Mr. Weslowski stated that we are in year 8 of the contract.

Ms. Berry asked what the benefits look like.

Mr. Weslowski stated that the benefits are not close to what the City of Concord or Kannapolis provides.

Ms. Berry asked if we have asked the drivers what the issues are.

Mr. Oden stated that the drivers definitely have concerns with pay and their benefits are changing due to the merger with first transit.

Ms. Berry asked if there is a complaint about dealing with the passengers or any other concerns.

Mr. Oden stated that he does not, it is always a concern of pay.

Mr. Weslowski stated that there is also a concern with burn out where operators and supervisors and working 7 days per week for multiple shifts if necessary.

Mr. Weslowski stated that we are now competing with Amazon and UPS which was not a concern before and there is a growing concern with operator assaults.

Ms. Berry asked about bringing the operators in house.

Mr. Weslowski stated that as long as they are in the union we are not able to bring them in house, but all other jobs could be brought in house including supervisors, dispatchers scheduling, safety, etc. and they operators and a GM will be only ones that would be brought in house. Maintenance would be tricky without a facility.

Ms. Berry stated that contract employees never feel the same as employees that work for the company.

Mayor Dusch asked if there is a better company versus adding more money.

Mr. Weslowski stated that there is not another company that would not cost significantly more. We anticipated that there would be a large labor cost increase when the contract is re-bid, but it has happened before that then.

Mayor Dusch thanked Mr. Oden for all he is doing for the service at this time.

## Reports/Other Business

- Microtransit Pilot Update-Began on September 18<sup>th</sup> but have had difficulty maintaining staff for this position. There are approximately six passengers per day riding. CCTS led the grant request for a 100% grant to study Microtransit in the entire county including Landis and China Grove, but there has not been new activity from NCDOT at this time. Mayor Dusch asked where a passenger would go. Mr. Weslowski stated that they would connect at either Georgia and Corban or to the purple route inbound or outbound.
- Cabarrus Reentry Update-  
Ms. Tippet Poe provided an update on the Reentry Pilot. Total spent \$4877.06 for 60.42 hours. Most of the hours in June, July and August. Only 0.75 in September. Mr. Weslowski asked to continue the pilot until the next Concord Kannapolis Transit Commission Meeting. Mayor Dusch and committee members agree to extend the pilot through the next Transit Commission Meeting with absorption of cost into Rider Transit budget.  
Re-Entry Transportation Simulation-24 individuals participated who started at the Cabarrus Health Alliance or Opportunity House transferred buses at the Rider Transit Center to go to one of six locations including Salvation Army Shelter, NC Works, Cabarrus County Court House, The Dream Center, Vocational Rehabilitation, or the Cabarrus Visitor's Bureau. Ms. Tippet Poe provided a brief recap of the event and feedback from the participants and provided details about recap meeting for the Transit Commission Members.  
Ms. Berry asked who initiated this activity.  
Mr. Weslowski stated that the Reentry Committee identified that transportation is a significant challenge for those who are leaving incarceration and reentering the community.
- Mr. Weslowski presented Two replacement hybrid buses have been ordered-still awaiting a preliminary delivery date between July and December of next year.
- Mr. Jackson asked about ridership totals compared to last year.  
Mr. Weslowski stated that we have had an increase in ridership compared to last year. Mayor Dusch asked about annual ridership.  
Mr. Weslowski stated that pre pandemic about 425-435,000 and post pandemic 350,000.
- Next Meeting – Thursday, 12/21/23, 8:30am Rider Transit Center

Mayor Dusch requested a motion to adjourn Mr. Jackson made a motion; Ms. Stocks second. Unanimous. With no additional discussion or items on agenda; meeting adjourned at 9:37 am.