

ITEM #21: CORRESPONDENCE OF INTEREST

**RESPONSE LETTER FROM HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT PRESIDENT & CEO TO
PORTSMOUTH CITIZEN**

Attached is a response letter, dated June 6, 2016, from Mr. William E. Harrell, President & CEO, HRT to Ms. Donna Sayegh, Portsmouth citizen, regarding her concerns pertaining to Hampton Roads Transit.

Attachment 21

William E. Harrell

From: William E. Harrell
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2016 2:10 PM
To: Donna
Subject: Re: Response to May 2, 2016 Letter

Thank you and have a blessed day!

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 8, 2016, at 1:02 PM, Donna <bethlehem2008@aol.com> wrote:

Thank you so much, Mr. Harrell,
for the information.

As soon as I process everything,
I will contact you if needed.

Have a good day.

Donna Sayegh
757-638-3759

-----Original Message-----

From: William E. Harrell <wharrell@hrtransit.org>
To: 'bethlehem2008@aol.com' <bethlehem2008@aol.com>
Sent: Tue, Jun 7, 2016 5:03 pm
Subject: Response to May 2, 2016 Letter

Ms. Sayegh,

Thank you for your comprehensive letter. Please see the below responses:

1. Attached are pages 1 & 2 of the Bylaws of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). Hampton Roads Transit along with the Williamsburg Area Transit Authority are simply members of the TPO Board representing transit as a part of the larger transportation system.
2. HRT participates in committee meetings of the TPO.
3. This question was answered as part of number 1.
4. Hampton Roads Transit's operating financial statements are not related to the TPO.
5. It is important to note that Hampton Roads Transit is a service provider. Member cities actually determine the level of transit service provided. We obviously provide data to assist in this process. HRT's website has list of routes by city and brochures of routes are available at transfer centers and on buses. Many public facilities such as libraries also have route information. We welcome any ideas you may have to improve communications.

6. The projected local costs for the City of Portsmouth for FY2016/17 that will be effective July 1, 2016 is \$2,873,874.00. Route information and ridership are available and I would suggest a meeting with planning staff to review this information, should you so desire.
7. HRT's financial statements and reports are published monthly on our website and our reviewed at each Board meeting. Additionally, all member cities attend Board meetings and reports are shared with city staff. These documents are also available for the public and public comments are part of every monthly Board agenda. These reports are also published on HRT's website. With member cities contributing approximately 40% of the operating budget, at the end of the fiscal year we reconcile balances after reviewing completed financial statements. In some cases, refunds are made to the cities. In other cases, final payments are requested from the member cities. The specific refunds you referenced are the result of service hours that Portsmouth had previously paid which should have been billed to other cities.
8. I'm unaware of circumstances regarding your prior meeting with Mr. Hodges. If there are specific questions or issues that you would like clarification, then we will schedule meetings with appropriate staff members.
9. The multi-modal studies relate to high capacity transit analyses to determine feasibility and alignment (light rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, etc.).
10. HRT's role regarding light rail to Virginia Beach is to prepare the 30% design plans and convey said documents to the City of Virginia Beach for consideration. HRT will also purchase light rail vehicles and operate the system, should the City Council decide to build an extension of The Tide. The City will decide whether to proceed with this project.

Respectfully,

William E. Harrell

HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT LEGAL NOTICE: The information contained in this communication (including any attachments) may be confidential and legally privileged information intended solely for the use of the intended recipient. This email may not serve as a contractual agreement unless explicit written agreement for this purpose has been made. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified

that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication or any of its contents is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please re-send this communication to the sender indicating that it was received in error and delete the original message and any copy of it from your computer system. You may also contact the sender immediately by calling Hampton Roads Transit at 757.222.6000.

APPROVED: May 20, 2009
AMENDED: November 17, 2010

Bylaws of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization

ARTICLE I

Preamble

1.01 The Bylaws of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) shall serve to guide the proper functioning of the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process by the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Hampton Roads, Virginia. These bylaws provide general procedures and policies for the TPO Board for fulfilling the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Agreement for the Hampton Roads area; 23 CFR 450.300 *et seq.* and other applicable provisions of federal law; the State's Designation Letter of July 1, 1991; and Virginia Code § 33.1-23.03:01 (or, if recodified or otherwise relocated, the successor provisions).

ARTICLE II

Definitions

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) – The geographical area determined by agreement between the MPO for the area and the Governor and in which the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process is carried out.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – The policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process. The Hampton Roads TPO is the MPO for the Hampton Roads MPA.

Metropolitan Planning Agreement – A written agreement among the MPO, State, and public transportation operators serving the MPA that identifies the mutual responsibilities of those entities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process.

Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming Process – The federally-mandated continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning and programming process that results in plans and programs that consider all surface transportation modes and supports metropolitan community goals.

Planning District Commission (PDC) – A political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia chartered under the Regional Cooperation Act by the local governments of each planning district. The purpose of PDCs is to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing regional problems of greater than local significance.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) – An urbanized area with a population over 200,000, as defined by the Bureau of the Census and designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, or any additional area where TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO and designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

Urbanized Area (UZA) – A geographical area with a population of 50,000 or more, as designated by the Bureau of the Census.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – A statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the metropolitan planning area. A UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, and specifies who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, and the source(s) of funds.

ARTICLE III

Membership

3.01 General. The Metropolitan Planning Area consists of the Cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg, as well as, the Counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, and York. Voting Membership in the TPO Board is as follows:

City of Chesapeake	City of Virginia Beach
Gloucester County	City of Williamsburg
City of Hampton	York County
Isle of Wight County	Williamsburg Area Transit Authority
James City County	Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads
City of Newport News	Virginia Department of Transportation
City of Norfolk	Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
City of Poquoson	Virginia Port Authority
City of Portsmouth	
City of Suffolk	
4 General Assembly representatives (Two Senators, Two Delegates)	

Non-Voting Members:

Virginia Department of Aviation
Federal Transit Administration
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Aviation Administration
Chief Administrative Officers for all Member Localities
Chair of the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee
Chair of the Freight Transportation Advisory Committee

The Dove of Peace Ministry
"Bringing Peacemaking Skills to the People"



Donna B. Sayegh
Masters Degree in Restorative Practices and Youth Counseling
International Institute for Restorative Practices
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

May 2, 2016

William E. Harrell
President & CEO
Hampton Roads Transit
3400 Victoria Boulevard
Hampton, Virginia 23661

Dear Mr. Harrell:

I am writing you this letter to let you know that I have a number of concerns regarding the Hampton Roads Transit organization:

I. Where does HRT's Organizational structure connect with the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization?

Attachment: HRTPO Organizational Chart.

II. How does HRT communicate with HRTPO's committees, reports, etc.?

Attachment: Presentation April 28, 2016 HRT Meeting.

III. What is HRT's purpose in relationship to HRTPO?

Attachment: Report of MPO Organizational Chart

IV. How does HRT's operating financial statement affect the HRTPO's financial statement?

Attachment: HRT meeting Financial Statement

V. How do we change the bus service regarding bus stops?

- 1) Bus Stops: There was a complaint addressed at one of our City Council Public hearings that a bus stop had been eliminated in the Peach Tree Neighborhood. When I had a conversations with some citizens, other stops were addressed, such as Port Norfolk, downtown High Street and Wal-Mart in Chesapeake. Were the Peach Tree Civic League forewarned that the Bus Stop was going to be eliminated? What was the reason for the Bus Stop to be eliminated?

How can communication be improved to let people know about Bus Stops in the City, such as: Ticket purchases and Bus Routes.

Where are the ticket purchases available? Where are the Bus Routes brochures? Do buses have their stops mapped on the bus? Brochures were dropped off at the Baby Talk Café in Churchland Portsmouth, but no conversation was done with the Owner to orient her to the Bus or its stops.

There are bus transfer stations all over the city. There is no Post outside the transfer stations to educate people walking by, where these buses are going or how to get back to where their starting point.

Attachment: a) Questions and answers from the meeting with the Director of Planning, Mr. Baldwin on April 22, 2016. b) Title VI Program.

VI. How can we get an Operating financial statement for Portsmouth?

I learned when talking with the Director of Planning, Bob Baldwin, that there are extra charges for crossing the boundary lines from Portsmouth to Suffolk, Chesapeake, and Norfolk. This leads me to the second issue:

What is the cost of the bus service for Portsmouth? What is the monthly ridership of each of the bus routes? What are the bus stops on each route? How many people get on the bus at each stop and how many people get off at each bus stop?

Attachment: Low income census blocks for Portsmouth.

VII. What is the method HRT has to report the operating financial statement to the citizens of Portsmouth?

Why was a refund of \$231,000 given and why was there a Settlement of \$60,000 expanded to \$300,000?

Attachment: FOIA information from the city.

VIII. Why did Mr. Hodges refuse to meet with me when I asked for another meeting?

Attachment: Copy of e-mail to Ron Hodges

IX. How come there is a multimodal passenger/transit studies listed for Portsmouth? Where was this need presented, by whom and when?

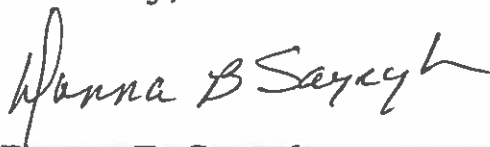
Attachment: Draft Multimodal passenger/transit studies report.

X. What was the HRT's role in the light rail of Virginia Beach study?

Attachment: a) Stop light rail in its tracks.
b) John Martin's presentation

Please set up an appointment for me to obtain the answers to my questions. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Donna B. Sayegh

CC: Ron Hodges, Portsmouth City Council, Director of Planning Department

Attachment as noted above