**NATA Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 19, 2019**

**7:30-9:00am**

**ACED Offices, 12200 Pecos Street, #100, Westminster, CO 80234**

**Welcome and introductions by Chair Chaz Tedesco.**

**NATA Members (who signed in)**

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| **Chaz Tedesco** | Adams County Comm. | **Julie Mullica** | Northglenn Council |
| **Steve O’Dorisio** | Adams County Comm. | **Brooke Svoboda** | Northglenn Staff |
| **Chris Chovan** | Adams County Staff | **Sara Dusenberry** | Northglenn Staff |
| **Kristin Sullivan** | Adams County Staff | **Carson Priest** | SCMN  |
| **Lynn Baca** | Brighton Council | **Catherine Sanders** | SCMN |
| **Greg Mills** | Brighton Mayor | **Joyce Downing** | SCMN |
| **Patrick Quinn** | Broomfield Mayor | **Karen Stuart** | SCMN |
| **Kevin Standbridge** | Broomfield Staff | **Tammy Herreid** | SCMN |
| **Nicole Frank** | Commerce City Council | **Jessica Sandgren** | Thornton Council |
| **Joe Wilson** | Commerce City Staff | **Julia Marvin** | Thornton Council |
| **Tim Williams** | Federal Heights Staff | **Kent Moorman** | Thornton Staff |
| **Kevin Ash** | Frederick Staff | **Anita Seitz** | Westminster Council |
| **Joan Peck** | Longmont Council | **Jon Voelz** | Westminster Council  |
| **Phil Greenwald** | Longmont Staff | **Debra Baskett** | Westminster Staff |

**SCMN Members (who signed in)**

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| **Gene Putman** | Putman Trans Solutions |

**Agency Partners (who signed in)**

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| **Sam Taylor** | Broomfield Chamber | **Troy Whitmore** | RTD Board |
| **Doug Rex** | DRCOG | **Vince Buzek** | RTD Board |
| **Randy Grauberger** | Front Range Rail | **Sherry Ellebracht** | RTD Staff |
| **Judy Lubow** | RTD Board |

 **Guests (who signed in)**

* **Approval of October 24, 2019 NATA Meeting Minutes**

***Approval of October 24, 2019 Meeting Minutes:*** *Motion to approve minutes made by Council Member Joyce Downing (for Smart Commute), seconded by Council Member Julie Mullica, and approved unanimously.*

* **Treasurer’s Report- Current balance is $33,238.83.**

**Karen: Mayor Daniel Dick has moved from Federal Heights. We will be voting for a new Treasurer today. (Karen read Treasurer’s report)**

***Approval of Treasurer’s Report:*** *Motion to approve report made by Council Member Joyce Downing, seconded by Mayor Pro tem Jessica Sandgren, and approved unanimously.*

* **Action Item: Approval of Proposed 2020 budget**

**Karen Stuart:** *(Presented Proposed 2020 budget, explained that the City of Westminster holds all NATA account funds on behalf of the Treasurer. Explained the history of why Smart Commute is the administrator for NATA [so that smaller communities are not hesitant to take on Executive Leadership roles in NATA –Until 4 years ago, whoever served as the NATA Chair provided jurisdictional administrative staff for meetings]. Smart Commute contracts this role. Explained that, in this upcoming year, the proposed NATA budget includes a January Retreat for the group, and funds to create a refreshed “leave behind” document, including design and printing.)*

***Approval of Proposed 2020 budget:*** *Motion to approve budget made by Mayor Pro tem Anita Seitz, seconded by Council Member Joyce Downing, and approved unanimously.*

* **Action Item: Election of Officers for 2020: nominations from the floor**

**(No nominations from the floor). SPC offered the slate:**

***Approval of Council Member Julie Mullica as Chair, Mayor Pro tem Jessica Sandgren as Vice Chair, and Council Member Joan Peck as Treasurer****. Motion to approve by Council Member Lynn Baca, seconded by Council Member Joyce Downing, and approved unanimously.*

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** I won’t be with NATA after this meeting – I will be assuming duties on the E-470 Board, which has meetings at the same time. Adams County will need to elect a new representative for NATA. I’ve greatly enjoyed being a part of this role and thank you for this year!

* **Action Item: Adoption of 2020 NATA Meeting Calendar and SPC Meeting Calendar**

*(Amended Feb. 24 for Feb. 27 – typo in the presented slate of meetings)*

***Approval of Adoption of (amended) 2020 NATA Meeting Calendar and SPC Meeting Calendar:*** *Motion to approve calendar made by Council Member Joyce Downing (for Smart Commute), seconded by Council Member Julie Mullica, and approved unanimously.*

* **Discussion: NATA Orientation/Retreat, January 25, 2020**

**Council Member Julie Mullica:** The purpose of the retreat is to set the stage for 2020. We are getting a few new members that we would like to orient to NATA, as well as all the different agencies that are involved in transportation in our metro. We would also like to introduce new members to the transportation lingo with the many acronyms that are used. We want to explain what NATA is (history of founding, and purpose today). We are seeing a new generation of elected leaders that will benefit from learning institutional knowledge about this organization.

**Karen Stuart:** We have reservations for 25 – we can adjust that number and will need to know by January 15 who will attend. Staff is welcome as well, we hope to see strong participation, particularly with newly appointed NATA members.

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** Do they reach out to you at Smart Commute to RSVP?

**Karen Stuart:** Yes, and it will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn on the corner of I-25 with 144th. We received a good price in partnership with the Hilton.

* **Smart Commute update on FlexRide Workforce Transit service started in November, and request for support for project to be considered for DRCOG Metro Vision award**

**Karen Stuart:** *(Explained the project history, which has been reviewed at NATA before – a collaboration between Smart Commute, Thornton, Westminster, and all the local business stakeholders who have significant workforce. Historically, Smart Commute has been working on this since St. Anthony North Health Campus moved to this location, around 5 years ago. RTD did not have the funds to provide service to this quadrant. When DRCOG changed their funding mechanisms, ADCOG Forum allowed Smart Commute to apply for a grant, which scored well. It was $1.6M in federal funds, with $400,000 local match [combined from Thornton, Westminster, RTD and Smart Commute].)*

This is a demonstration project, with funding for four years. The difference between this service and “regular” FlexRide is the transition to scheduled service to gathering points stops for a portion of the day. The FlexRide connects to Wagon Road, where many other RTD routes stop, and brings service to the I-25 and 144th quadrant. Service hours were designed to match the workforce hours, as well as the hours that bus service comes to Wagon Road. This service accommodates shift work for all the major employers.

There were 39 riders the first day. Our staff and Project Manager have been doing significant outreach. We’ve had transit fairs, we’ve put up banners at the “gathering point” locations (note: locations can’t be called “stops” because they aren’t ADA accessible – this could change in the next year, as we collect data on the ridership).

The operations contract is with VIA Mobility, (using 14 passenger vehicles) which isn’t affected by the RTD drivers’ shortage issues.

RTD’s match funds came through a challenge grant that requires us to promote RTD pass products. RTD doesn’t have to put any staff on that effort, we are providing the staff. It is an extraordinary collaboration that serves workforce needs. There is upward job mobility in these jobs as well.

We would like to have support from NATA for applying for a DRCOG Metro Vision Award, because of the great collaboration in this project.

**Mayor Pro tem Jessica Sandgren:** I want to share stories from the service that I’ve heard. Spanish speaking populations are using this service, and the Project Manager at Smart Commute has done rides with them to help them at 4 a.m. in the morning. I saw a video from someone who is riding from low income senior housing to get to Amazon. It has been incredible to have the Smart Commute Project Manager riding with them to help them on the journey for the first time. This is great support for them, and it is great that we are the ones doing this. This is a part of “Reimagine” that we are implementing. The janitors, the hospital workers, so many people are grateful for this service. This is huge, and we should all be proud of this. We need to be proud and tell people about this, we want it to be used, or else we will lose it. Thank you, Smart Commute, for the amazing work on this project.

**Director Judy Lubow:** This is an impressive project. This is a great way for RTD to work with municipalities in partnerships in pilot projects. Have we seen ridership numbers?

**Karen Stuart:** In the first 30 days we have seen 1,300 riders. Most riders are early in the morning and late at night. We are seeing 1.5 riders an hour averaged over the whole day currently. Most riders are coming to Amazon. We have shaved off 30 minutes for people who took a bike or walked from Wagon Road before. We are getting numbers monthly. We are impressed with the people willing to try it. We did give out free tickets, which Smart Commute funded outside the grant, to encourage people to try it.

**Director Judy Lubow:** This is very impressive, and I think other cities should see this!

**Karen Stuart:** Anecdotally, the Aurora members of ADCOG were impressed, and want to replicate this service to the other Amazon locations. They might be able to take program components from this and try something in their area. We are pleased that Thornton and Westminster have worked so well together on this. Thank you for the praise, we will keep everyone updated.

**Council Member Julie Mullica:** Can you talk about the business partnership?

**Karen Stuart:** The businesses will be funding $5,000 each toward this project every year. We don’t charge these businesses for doing the training we do. We’re asking them to join as members of Smart Commute. We’ve dedicated their annual membership to this program. We are also expecting them to invest in the RTD Passes (through EcoPass, Wage Works, Neighborhood Pass, or FlexPass). Early on, these businesses understood that they need to help us with this project. We are planning to really reconnect with them after the Christmas busy season. We see EcoPass and FlexPass as recruitment and retention tools for these businesses. In year three, we’ll be able to evaluate how we will continue funding when the grant goes away.

**Debra Baskett**: Staff was very excited by this. When we looked at the map of service, this area is in a “gap” of service in Westminster, so we are excited to see this service, including service to residential areas. We are excited to see this connect to Wagon Road, which has high frequency routes from Westminster.

**Mayor Pro tem Anita Seitz:** I am concerned about the fares, the high fares for this, so I’m glad to hear that businesses will be encouraged to offer pass programs. The initial cost was $2M – what is the ongoing operational cost?

**Karen Stuart:** The $2M figure covers all costs for the four years of the program, including start-up capital costs and ongoing operational costs for that time period. It includes marketing cost, an almost-full time Program Manager at Smart Commute**.**

**Mayor Pro tem Anita Seitz:** Can you elaborate on the goal for ridership?

**Karen Stuart:** Three riders per hour on average is needed to align with RTD’s service threshold. We aren’t sure how long it will take us to reach that number. We hope to have robust ridership by year three and hope to see the ability to plan in year four for funding and program adjustment. Regarding what Debra said: if you are familiar with this quadrant, there is a significant amount of multifamily housing. As soon as we get this up and running with employers, we will be working on the residential side. We are going to work on neighborhood passes, which are a bit more complicated. We will work with HOAs in those areas..

**Mayor Pro te Jessica m Sandgren:** The drivers for FlexRide are very familiar with the people who use FlexRide in this area. They know many of these riders. On a side note, I’ve heard from seniors that aren’t familiar with the mid-day on-demand part of this service. I think we will need more education with our senior population.

**Kent Moorman:** The other thing about this FlexRide is that it’s flexible – we can make changes as needed. We can change locations of pick-ups, and more. We don’t have to make changes on RTD’s schedule.

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:**  Thank you so much for using Via. Via is represented United Steel Workers, thank you on their behalf!

**Karen Stuart:** (Request a Letter of Support from NATA for the Metro Vision Award. [Unanimously approved, determined that no formal motion was required.])

* **RTD Directors Comments**

**Director Vince Buzek:** I have good news: I, along with Directors Whitmore and Lubow, worked with Representative Kyle Mullica to put together and pass a promotional fare pilot program on the N Line that will ensure that the last two stops on the N Line are in a “Local” fare zone, not a “Regional” fare zone. It’s a 6-month pilot, and we’re already working on ways to continue it. We hope this is an example of collaboration between the Board, our Elected Officials, and our State Representatives. I thank Directors Lubow and Whitmore for their support.

Now, the not so good news: we are voting tonight on a service reduction plan, to deal with the operator shortage. The *only* proposal to the RTD Board is to reduce service to match the driver shortage. I do not approve this plan, first because it doesn’t address the problem, and second because the parameters of this *temporary* service cut are not defined. We expect the service cuts to be implemented in the May run board.

We are also in the process of replacing our GM Dave Genova, who is leaving the agency in January. The Board has been working on the process to hire an interim GM first, and a final replacement after a national search. We aren’t just looking internally; we are looking externally for *both* positions. We hope this sends a strong message about the Board’s intentions.

Regarding N Line completion to Highway 7 – we have been working on this, along with the County Commissioners, and are re-visiting and looking at possibilities. As a Board, we have also had discussions about the B Line and NW Rail.

**Director Troy Whitmore:** A few supplemented points: my district is east of here. We are seeing very few reductions proposed in my district, and the same is true for District J, Director Buzek’s district. Overall, I think that staff put together a good proposal for service cuts.

Regarding the GM search: We have a split board on this, going to an external hire for the interim. Iit’s more difficult to turn around an open search in a quick manner. Dave Genova is working until Jan 20. We are pushing the Executive Committee and the board on this. In addition to meeting every Tuesday, we are meeting every Thursday as well.

Regarding the N Line Pilot: I think Vince and Judy are the people who are responsible for this fare pilot. We had very interesting discussions. You have some good leaders in the north, and I’m proud to be associated with them.

**Director Judy Lubow:** We’re working very hard on finding an interim and final GM at RTD. We’re receiving the applications on Christmas Eve. We need to get someone in before Dave leaves.

There was a very good meeting with our State Legislators – we were told to “shape up or ship out” – our governing structure would be changed if we don’t address our problems! I think it would be useful for folks in the north metro who want to see change to get together to talk about the changes they want. I think this would be very helpful. I would suggest that folks get together to talk about what we would like to see different, that this could be presented to the RTD Board, and the Board could present this to the legislature.

**Director Vince Buzek:** I think it’s important to mention that, the N Line pilot is a pilot, and it might be used elsewhere in the district. I want to point out that it wasn’t just north the north area Directors voting to pass this, we had supportive Directors, ten in all, across the district. I second what Director Lubow said – keep the pressure on.

**Council Member Julie Mullica:** What is RTD doing to address the problem with staffing?

**Director Troy Whitmore:** One factor is important: we have union structure in the CBA that plays a strong role. We’ve been meeting with the head of the union to see what could help with the situation. I think there is a good relationship with represented employees. Beyond hiring new employees, the problem is related to retaining employees as well. We expect to be graduating 20 new hires for operators as well.

**Director Judy Lubow:** When we were presented with the two choices – cut service or accept unreliability – neither was a good option. The Board was asking about the third option, spending money on retention (even things like bathrooms on the route). It is a work in progress. In January, we hope to be talking with employees about what they would like to see change.

**Director Vince Buzek:** The problem as told to the public is that operators are pushing back against mandatory overtime, but we’re hearing a different story – that isn’t the only problem. There are some cultural issues with how operators are treated, like a simple bathroom break. When supervisors are telling operators to “go, go, go,” it’s a cultural problem. Our pushback from staff is that “we don’t want to renegotiate a union contact.” Well, maybe we do.

**Director Troy Whitmore:** There are some culture issues we are concerned about.

**Debra Baskett:** I want to respond to Director Lubow’s proposal about working with legislators. Recently, I took the time to read the legislation that created RTD, to better understand the history. The statute that created RTD shows the history of the agency. One thing I saw in the statute is the mandate for privatization. Privatization is one way to deal with the union issues, allowing partnerships with entities like Via, to fill the need.

**Director Vince Buzek:** We recently had discussion with our legislators and asked them to help us – and the response from legislators was that a plan for help needs to start with RTD.

**Director Judy Lubow:** This is an opening. To think of creative ways, that could be legislative, for a positive interaction with RTD.

**Council Member Lynn Baca:** A comment: I appreciate the Directors being here at NATA and being present in the community. There is reassurance to constituents that they are represented. I am pleased you are looking to address work environment, for instance. The other layer is the political and legislative arm. We will be sending a stern letter, that will be discussed next. We are sending a letter that states our position. We support RTD going forward working out problems and working with legislature.

**Mayor Pro tem Anita Seitz:** I was at the US36 Mayors and Commissioners meeting recently – one thing I heard recommended was that, sometimes, it’s worth it, in improving culture, to hire a consultant that specializes in this area. Maybe starting from a data-driven, best practices, to make defendable changes. I thought this was a great idea and wanted to share it.

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** I want to say, when RTD came up with the resolution about the pilot program, it was due to collaboration with the board. We haven’t seen this on the board before. It took a lot of work to mend fences and get them on board. I want to say, “thank you.”

I also want to speak to Unions. RTD often blames the union for their problems. Unions are entities to protect the workers, to make sure that people have a good way to provide for their family. Union people tend to like the overtime. But, when you are hassled by supervisors, when benefits are threatened, etc. they will find a new place to work. RTD needs to realize that it isn’t “how much money can I save on workers,” it’s “how much money can I invest in our workers to keep them happy and on the job.”

* **Action Item: Approval of NATA Position Statement letter to RTD**

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** This letter isn’t an end-all, say-all – it’s a position, a “flag in the ground.” We want it clear that these conversations need to happen. We have worked on this letter a lot – thank you to our staff, like Kristin, for the work that has been done. There have been many iterations of this letter. We have tried to encapsulate all the views from NATA jurisdictions, to find balance. This letter has been distributed in printed copies to all our representatives at the table, and electronically.

**Mayor Pro tem Jessica Sandgren:** I think this is very good. It is to the point.

**Council Member Joyce Downing:** I agree, this is very good.

**Council Member Joan Peck:**  Thank you all for this letter. I have questions going forward – do we want to approve before comments, or take comments?

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** We would like this letter approved and sent out, and we can discuss this at the retreat in January, determining our next steps and strategic plan moving forward. I think that Julie has a good sense of what she’d like to do. I very much appreciate Julie and Kyle’s work to move us to this point. Right now, I think we need to just get this letter out. They know where to come – there is an email address at the bottom. We can consolidate all questions we will receive from this letter. Our new slate of officers will be able to address.

**Director Troy Whitmore:** I’d like you to send it, so I can see it. As an example, for the N Line fare pilot, Vince and I got letters from Thornton and Northglenn months ago. That correspondence got everything moving. This letter will get things moving.

**Council Member Joan Peck:** Karen had a concern with the workload getting this out.

**Kristin Sullivan:** Adams County will be mailing the physical letters out probably Monday.

**Commissioner Chaz Tedesco:** I’ve been told it’s simple to do for us. Adams County will get the physical letters out, and NATA will send the electronic letters out.

***Approval to send NATA Position Statement letter to RTD, as well as to all north area legislators, RTD staff and leadership, and all elected officials in the north area, and emails to the press as well****. Motion to approve by Mayor Pro tem Jessica Sandgren, seconded by Council Member Joyce Downing, and approved unanimously.*

**Meeting adjourned at 8:52 am.**