



# ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION FEE COMMITTEE

Tuesday November 29, 2016,

1:00pm - 2:30pm

VU 567

**Members:** *Present: Wayne Roque (AS VP for Student Life), Bryce Hammer (AS VP for Governmental Affairs), Isaac Bartick (AS Alternative Transportation Coordinator), Carol Berry (Transportation Program Manager), Darin Rasmussen (Director of Public Safety), Henry Haro (AS Student Representative), Greg McBride (Assistant Director for VU Facilities), and Kay McMurren (Program Support Supervisor).*  
*Absent: Jacob Keith (Student at Large)*

**Advisor:**

**Secretary:** *Cora Cole (AS Board Assistant for Representation Committees)*

**Guests:**

***Wayne Roque called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.***

**I. Introductions**

**II. Information Item**

**a. Update on Late Night Shuttle service-** New bus, revised routes, ridership numbers: Kay started off by explaining that we currently use two 20 passenger older busses during the week with the transit busses used for the weekend, as those times have higher numbers. The route in happy valley that got approved a couple years ago shrunk the ridership and so they have been tweaking that route and trying to get out some advertisement about it. Carol added that they added new rider count sheets which is giving drivers better data. Isaac asked how the new information clarifies the problem with the happy valley route and Kay said that it is really too soon to tell and the comparison is hard because the new sheets are studying the new route and the old sheets dealt with the old route. Carol asked if in previous years the data collection had been by quarter and Kay said that in the annual report those numbers are available on the second to last page. Even if you count generously for the last part of the quarter, the ridership for this quarter is going to be much lower than previous years. Additionally, the new student housing on Lakeway has probably effected the numbers because they have their own shuttle. Wayne asked if the lower ridership trend will continue into winter quarter, they believe that it is likely but it is hard to predict. In February of 2015 was when they initially changed routes and they did so again this fall, which makes it hard to know why ridership is low or how long it will take for it to come back up. Isaac asked how many students live off campus and how many live on campus, and in turn how well the Happy Valley route is utilized by students. Carol said that the survey that happened last year had counted how often people used but not when they got off and next time they invest in that survey they might measure that.

**b. Using the Western ID number as a bus pass:** Kay said that beginning in 2017 the Transportation Office will be diving into a project to use the Western ID as a bus pass, which means they wouldn't be encoding bus passes separately, just linking to the student account. Students would not have to come into the office to get that encoded, and the timeline depends on both WTA and the Programmers on campus. The fee committee has offered approval before but since the project never got off the ground they have never formalized the approval. Greg asked for the advantages and disadvantages of the plan and Carol promised to bring that to a meeting next quarter. Henry asked for clarification, and Carol said that the swiping ability would depend only on their registration status.

### III. Discussion Items

**a - Spring 2017 vote on ATF language, marketing, and timeline:** Wayne asked for the update on language and marketing. Carol said that the fee needs to be renewed for the next ten years during voting by students in spring 2017. Bryce answered that the process is currently changing but that we ought to have it submitted by middle of February so that the Board can approve it and then put it on the ballot during the elections. Greg mentioned an option that we could extend the fee for one year while the WTA negotiations go on and then run another, longer, extension once we know what the university will be paying. The referendum could also extend the fee for longer than a year as the reserves can support the cost if the payment to WTA goes up much more than it currently is. Greg voiced a concern about over-referendum-ing things as well as the potentiality that we could spend down the reserves too much. Kay asked how much fees could go up, if ten percent or five percent had much of a difference, Bryce explained that the bylaws might have details, but they use five percent generally. Having ten percent would allow a little more wiggle room if WTA payments go up but she doesn't want to trespass on student finance. Greg said that going up ten percent one time, and framing it that way in the resolution, would be feasible but if it sounds like it is going up that much every year it would be unreasonable. Five percent is the normal amount of wiggle room that fees are given. Carol said that the last renegotiation had gone up eight percent in the first two years and then had leveled off. She then asked who's responsible for the fee normally because she hasn't done this recently and Greg explained that this is the responsibility of the committee and that Wayne and Bryce are responsible to bring it to the board. There isn't any fee increase now, but they might need to increase it in the upcoming years and the board would have to manage that based on the language of the resolution. WTA negotiated five years ago based on an estimation for a 1.3% student registration increase and when that did not happen they had to renegotiate costs, which was mildly expensive to the school. The fee for students has not had to increase for ten years because of that good fortune there is enough in reserves that regardless of what happens, we will be able to pay for next year's costs. Wayne asked how much they thought it was likely to go up and how that and reserves engage with fee increases. Kay responded that if the reserve goes down then they have to increase the fee later to fill reserves again, Greg's strategy in the VU is to go for a heavy increase every couple years rather than a small increase every year. Darren said that parking's theory is to do a small increase

every year so that nobody takes a big hit. Carol said that the first fee resolution had a very specific wording about the shuttle because it was a new opportunity on campus. She also mentioned that the committee might need to look into that in regard to on-demand rides. Greg said that making fees to fill reserves should not be a one-time tax but a slow rolling process and there may be some advantage to writing the fee because it would add pressure to Western's side of the fee negotiation. The staff at Western don't know that there can be an on-call ride service on campus. Kay added that the 5% increase would be \$1.31. It would be possible to have the wording of the resolution include the areas served by the shuttle. Isaac said that including the shuttle in the resolution should wait until we have more results regarding the new routes and ridership. Wayne proposed that in that case we come to a conclusion about how much the increase would be in the next couple meetings. Bryce said she endorses the temporary one year vote this year and then have another one after the WTA negotiation. There have been campus wide surveys on the ballot in the past and it showed last year that students are okay with a 10-15% fee increase. Isaac said that those results could be skewed because only students who care about transportation responded. Greg said that we could probably count on steady enrollment in the near future so it would be safe to count on a steady amount of student fee money coming in. Carol agreed that WTA won't raise fees too much just because they want students to keep approving the fee, which would negatively impact their ridership if they didn't approve. The fares for WTA haven't increased in a long while, so if we wanted to include an exception in the resolution for fare increase for WTA that is a possibility. Greg added that we can always kill a fee through another resolution. Kay said that we need to change the language, regardless of fee actions, because it references "Indian Street" which is no longer a street. Isaac added that a shorter extension allows us to look at using Uber or other alternative transportation methods in the future. January 20<sup>th</sup> needs to be the date for the ballot language getting approved, Wayne asked for another meeting before the end of the quarter.

**b - Develop and approve policy for refund of transportation fee (for opt-ins):** Students who don't have to pay the fee but choose to opt in and then need to opt out again later don't have any formal language for that. Bryce said that campus housing and dining does a similar thing and we could look at their reasoning to figure it out. The range is normally between 1-3 % weeks after they opt in. The committee agreed that we should have a policy and that it should be consistent with the similar policies on campus for clarity. The committee will investigate Housing and Dining's Policy and then Bring that to the next meeting. The only record of the fee opt-out deadline will be within the minutes and on the text of the policy. The rec center has one week and the campus dining's information is not on their site so we will need to look at that before the next meeting.

**The deadline will tentatively be a week after opting in to the fee.**

**c- Identify and Confirm the New Financial Director:** Brian Sullivan used to fill that role but he doesn't necessarily have to continue filling that role. They could transfer that to Raquel Wilson or Brian Burton as well, Bryce asked for clarification about who those people are and the committee clarified that the Student Transportation Program was initially operated through Business and

Financial Affairs and there, Vice President Richard Van Den Hul and Association Vice President Brian Sullivan have been housed together since 2006, which creates some confusion about who the financial manager is. Isaac explained that reporting in office of sustainability goes through Brian Burton currently so having him be the Director would make sense. Greg recommended that having a discussion about this as a consent item and then a change within the charge and charter makes sense. The Director could also send a proxy at any point during the quarter. Carol said that the official agreement of the shift would be a consent item in the committee. The shift itself really just involves talking to the person and then an e-sign form. Carol has been asked for a list of responsibilities for the transportation on campus and transportation is unique because it is one of the services on campus that cannot not be provided, which in turn makes it harder to fit in the fee and accountability tracts. For the next meeting Brian Sullivan would be the person who should be present.

***Wayne Roque adjourned the meeting at 2:35 Pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November***