

MVRTD Executive Committee Minutes

April 7th, 2026

Commissioners, In-Person Attendance

Albert Wenta, Town of Proctor Representative

Commissioners, Virtual Attendance

Matthew Patry, Vermont State University – Castleton Representative

Devon Neary, Chair of Board, RRPC Executive Director

MVRTD Staff in Attendance

Jade McClallen, Executive Director

Patti Johnson, Finance Director

Tyler D' Ambrosio, Sr. Marketing Coordinator

Call to Order Call to order by Devon Neary at 9:08 AM

Motion to Approve Motion to approve April 7th Executive Committee Agenda by Albert, seconded by Matt. Motion passes with none opposed.

Motion to Approve Motion to approve March 3rd Executive Committee Minutes from Albert, Matt seconded. Motion passes with none opposed.

Open to the public None present.

Executive Director Report Jade shares that communications on the reimplementation of fares went out this week to social media, news organizations, and largely, the public. Communications were posted on all vehicles as well as at the Transit Center. She makes note that communication efforts are in a strong push right now and we will be analyzing feedback from the public.

Moreover, Jade shares that the district has been working with Walmart on potential new routes, route extensions, advertising, and sponsorships for the new Super Walmart at the Diamond Run Mall location with a planned opening date in September 2028. MVRTD has proffered different service bundles alongside a la carte service options to Walmart and is currently awaiting their decision. Devon asks if VTRANS has entered the discussion; Jade replies that they are aware of the talks happening but have not yet sat down at the table. Devon contends that VTRANS can provide input on various factors including congestion, safety, capacity, etc and suggests connecting Jade with Chris Clow, the VTRANS Transportation Engineer that handles the review of Act 250 permit requests. He furthers his point in suggesting that both MVRTD and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission separately write letters of justification to the commission about expanding service and requesting additional funding for the endeavor.

Tyler gives an overview of the new grants and funding opportunities that MVRTD is currently writing applications for. The first of which is the Vermont Early Childhood Fund which may be put towards

transportation of children up to 8 years of age. The second of which is a charitable giving program run by VELCO, the consortium of electric power companies in Vermont that aims to support local and regional services. The third and final funding opportunity that the district may be applying for is the Bouse Health Trust in which funding is used to support access to healthcare, community safety, and community connections.

Jade announces that HBSS implementation has been shifted to a May rollout so that it is in line with in-house training. Furthermore, she notes that the trip optimizer for scheduling rides in HBSS is supposed to be much better than RouteMatch's counterpart according to agencies that have already implemented the software. Therefore, it should lead to greater efficiencies in our scheduling department.

Jade mentions that the FY25 audit has been submitted to the clearinghouse and it is likely to trigger a high-risk status once again. The impacts of this are expected to be minimal however the district does greatly desire to turn around our status. Jade notes that we're looking forward to a much cleaner FY26 audit this year with all of Patti's diligent efforts.

Finally, she shares that with the deprecation of Fair Haven Weekend Service in early April, service reductions have been completed. The district will be keeping a close eye on trip numbers to determine the impact to our ridership.

Budget Review Patti starts off by saying that service reductions' projected fiscal benefit are being heavily impacted by fuel costs due to the conflict in the Middle East. The other big items on the budget are the 2% increase for COL and the 10% budgeted increase in healthcare costs.

Patti goes on to say that as Jade mentioned earlier, we're hoping that more donations from the community will help with the bottom line. Moreover, the grants that Tyler mentioned were not included in the budget projection as they were not solidified at the time of budget creation, so any money gained from those endeavors will have a positive effect on the bottom line. Going off of that, she points out the administrative reductions of less staff in finance and scheduling as well as the PTO buyback program will be ending after June 30th, 2026 and will be replaced by a rollover and carry-over of 80 hours per employee. She also notes that she expects the FTA mileage reimbursement rate to raise from the current rate of \$.72/mile. She goes on to give a detailed account of the exact expense of each position, summarizing that an employee with benefits at a base wage of \$26/hour rises to a rate of pay equal to \$49/hour when including benefits. She then explains that one of our biggest line items is Symquest at an annual cost of approximately \$100,000. With the recent news of another local organization being hit by a cyber attack while being protected by Symquest has given MVRTD staff to reconsider our contract with them. Furthermore, the district will be doing additional cybersecurity training for staff to prevent attacks like this happening in the first place.

Jade shares that to meet the requirement of 80% or higher of our fleet is in good condition, the district will need to purchase four new giligs at a cost of \$70,000 in local match per vehicle. However, after that there will be a four-year break period before any other vehicles are due to be replaced. She goes on to explain that during the development of a long-term strategic plan for the district it was found to be most fiscally conservative and prudent, to spread out the capital purchases of new vehicles over the next six years to negate the possibility of a major capital investment needed to replace multiple vehicles at once. Patti goes on to say that part of this plan is looking at least 10-15 years in the future and budgeting for that; therefore, Patti would like to start a capital reserve fund once we're in a more financially stable position so that we're less dependent on outside sources of income.

Albert questions why are we taking away capital carryover from budget instead of just keeping it in total budget. Jade explains that those expenses are not yet actualized. Jade adds that we did have to cut security for the Transit Center but that was cut from bottom line as once we dissolved the initial contract in January, the RCPD was still posting officers at the Transit Center as they still found it a valuable location for community oversight. Patti & Jade add that May & June will be lean months financially as we will be completely on our reserve funds. However once the new fiscal year begins in July we will be in much better shape.

Devon asks for clarity on projected revenue and losses. Patti replies that we won't be adding any money to the bank but we won't be adding any debt. If we do see additional funding, it will likely be put towards the capital reserve fund.

Jade asks Patti if this operating budget includes the resurrection of the services reduced in FY26. Patti replies that yes that was considered. Jade notes that the reduction from 4 city-fixed buses to 3 buses on city-fixed routes was a major hit and that the district would like to reintroduce half hourly service in December if possible. The other major hit was Fair Haven Weekend service that Jade would also like to reintroduce. However, Patti counters by suggesting that we should re-evaluate in 6 months and see where we are as the current political climate is heavily affecting our fuel costs.

Motion to Recommend Motion to recommend the budget as presented to the Board of Commissioners by Albert. Seconded by Matt. None opposed, budget will be brought to BOC meeting next week.

Other Business Matt notes that with his departure in June, he will be bringing Bailey Phillips, Residence Hall Director, VSU - Castleton to the next board meeting to be inducted as a potential replacement. However, he notes that he has previously committed to a presentation at CCTV that morning so he will not be able to attend next week's meeting. Devon extends the point in saying that Billy Gillam has been reassigned and is no longer on the board, so Alderman Kiana McClure is currently the frontrunner for his replacement. Furthermore, Chris Condon's replacement, Sam Budusky has already been approved by the Board. Jade points out that Tracy Upton is still without a replacement, and she and Devon agree that it would be beneficial to have someone with a healthcare background on the board. Devon wraps up his thoughts in suggesting that we approve all new commissioners next week and appoint members to be a part of the Executive Committee as needed.

Finally, Jade asks for the committee's input on a potential fare reimplemention business summit that could possibly be hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. She details that this summit would be an open forum on the benefits of supplying fares and employee passes like tax benefits, employee transportation efficiencies, as well as discuss the structure that's needed to fully support these businesses. The committee shares that they are collectively in support of this endeavor.

Adjourn Adjournment at 9:53AM by Devon Neary.