
NIAGARA FRONTIER TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Monthly Board Meeting

February 25, 2021

Transcript of Video Recording
of Proceedings held at NIAGARA FRONTIER TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY, 181 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York,
stenographically transcribed by VALERIE A. ROSATI, Notary
Public.

1 MEMBERS IN THE BOARDROOM:

2 Sister Denise Roche (Chair)
3 Commissioner Michael Hughes
4 Commissioner Adam Perry
5 Kimberley Minkel (Executive Director)
6 David State (General Counsel)
7 John Cox (Chief Financial Officer)
8 William Vanecek (Director, Aviation)
9 Tom George (Director, Public Transit)
10 Darren Kempner (Manager, Government Affairs)
11 Helen Tederous (Director, Public Affairs)
12 Lara Seniw (Assistant to Executive Director)
13 Robert Jones (Manager, Service Planning)

14 MEMBERS ON THE PHONE:

15 Commissioner LaVonne Ansari
16 Commissioner Joan Aul
17 Commissioner Anthony Baynes
18 Commissioner Rev. Mark Blue
19 Commissioner Margo Downey
20 Commissioner Jennifer Persico
21 Commissioner Philip Wilcox
22 Vicky-Marie Brunette (Deputy General Counsel)
23 Steven Duquette (Chief Information Officer)
24 Karen Novo (Director, Human Resources)
25 John Schaefer (Director, Engineering)
26 Lyle Death (Director, HSEQ)

27
28 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And we're ready to begin. Thank
29 you all for taking time to come. I appreciate
30 the fact that you are here with us. We have very
31 good attendance and that's so helpful to us.

32 It is an important meeting, as they all are,
33 so after calling to order, I'm going to ask for

1 approval of the minutes of the last meeting. You
2 have all received them previously, and I ask that
3 you look at them and that we have a motion to
4 accept them.

5 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: So moved.

6 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Second.

7 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Adam.

8 All in favor? And I think we need to have
9 you do a roll call.

10 MR. STATE: For the minutes, Sister, we can dispense,
11 unless -- it's been properly firsted and
12 seconded. Unless we hear an objection, we can
13 pass that as a unanimous consent motion.

14 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Great.

15 MR. STATE: Hearing no objection, it passes.

16 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Is there any objection to the
17 minutes?

18 Thank you. And now for the executive
19 director's report.

20 MS. MINKEL: Thank you, Sister.

21 A couple of things for the board. First, I
22 wanted to let the board know that staff is
23 working on finalizing the budget. That will

1 incorporate what was included in with the
2 executive budget from last month. This will come
3 to the board in March for their approval. Staff
4 is also working on a five-year capital and
5 operating plan. This will also come to the board
6 at the March meeting for approval.

7 The challenge this year for the five-year
8 capital and operating plan is determining the --
9 what I'm calling the COVID tale, when does it
10 end, when do things return back to normal. So
11 that's been a challenge in the five-year plan,
12 but we're going to try to do our best and bring
13 it to the board next month.

14 The board should also know -- and I know
15 John Cox will highlight this. But, all of staff
16 is really doing a tremendous job trying to
17 minimize our expenses during this difficult time.
18 For the past ten months, we've reduced our
19 operating expenses by over nineteen million
20 dollars. So staff continues to look at every
21 penny that we're spending.

22 The board should know we are still working
23 on scheduling the police exam. We had over

1 twelve hundred sign up for the exam. And in the
2 past we've done it at the convention center in
3 one large room, but because of the pandemic
4 that's been a challenge. So we are looking to
5 give it over several days in smaller groups at a
6 number of different hotel sites so that we can
7 accomplish this before the summer.

8 On the COVID front, we have our medical
9 department and processes in place to help deliver
10 the vaccine once it becomes available. We're
11 hoping and working with the county and with the
12 state and we hope that we may have some good news
13 soon.

14 On our recruiting effort, that's been
15 continuing. We had a great event yesterday in
16 that we sent one of our community buses to
17 Northland Training Facility. And it was a
18 wonderful opportunity to meet with over
19 seventy-five students, some who will be sitting
20 for our skills testing on Friday. Especially in
21 the trades area we have tremendous needs.

22 So, Commissioner Tucker, if you're on the
23 line, thank you for that. That's really

1 wonderful.

2 I also wanted to mention to the board that
3 we are working with Niagara Falls National
4 Heritage Area on mural concepts for our Portage
5 Road transportation center. They have submitted
6 six finalists to us for us to make a selection.
7 Now, currently Commissioner Hicks sits on our art
8 committee, but I wanted to offer the opportunity
9 to any board member who might be interested in
10 reviewing the six finalists and helping make the
11 selection. If you're interested --

12 I'm sorry, Dr. Hicks?

13 COMMISSIONER HICKS: No. I just wanted to say I'm on
14 the phone now, and I'm happy to continue to
15 participate in that activity.

16 MS. MINKEL: Okay. Great. Thank you, Dr. Hicks.

17 And if there's any other board members who
18 would like to participate and help select the
19 mural for our transportation center, you can
20 either let me know now or shoot me an e-mail and
21 we will include you.

22 Okay. And then, finally, I wanted to
23 recognize Officer David Zarbo. Many of you may

1 have seen him as you come into our MTC here.
2 David Zarbo has done an awful lot in the past for
3 the Matt Urban Center. This year was the tenth
4 annual coat drive, and Dave, along with customs
5 boarder and patrol, collected and donated over a
6 hundred coats to the Matt Urban Center for those
7 who are in need. So many of those folks we see
8 downstairs in our transportation center. And
9 Dave always does an outstanding job providing
10 those resources.

11 So that concludes my report unless there's
12 any questions.

13 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Just a question on something
14 like the Dave Zarbo thing. I know you've
15 mentioned it here at the board meeting. Does he
16 get something in writing to say thank you and,
17 you know, he was officially recognized at the
18 board? I mean, is there any type of letter that
19 goes in his file or goes to him at home?

20 MS. MINKEL: You know, no, but we should do that.

21 That's a great suggestion. Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: It would be nice just to get
23 something on letterhead and give it to him.

1 MS. MINKEL: Yes.

2 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: I think we should thank him on
3 behalf of the board and the agency for doing
4 that.

5 MS. MINKEL: Yes.

6 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: That is remarkable.

7 Any other questions of Kim on the report?

8 If not, we'll move ahead to the corporate
9 report, and I'm going to ask John Cox to bring us
10 up to date on what's happening financially.

11 MR. COX: Thank you, Sister.

12 Good afternoon, commissioners. I'll be
13 going over the month of January and January year
14 to date. And you'll find those on -- January on
15 page six and year to date on page eight in your
16 packet.

17 For the month of January, 2021, we had a
18 positive variance to budget of one point, one
19 point o six million dollars and a negative
20 variance on a year-to-date basis of one point two
21 million dollars. Total operating revenues and
22 assistance were above budget by two point four
23 million or twelve and a half percent, and below

1 budget by six point four million or three point
2 two percent on a year-to-date basis.

3 Our revenue shortfalls again were Metro
4 passenger fares. We saw a negative variance to
5 budget of January -- in January of one point nine
6 million, which is sixty-three percent below
7 budget and two point three million which is
8 sixty-nine percent below budget on a year-to-date
9 basis. And that's, again, due to the decreased
10 ridership we've seen and there were no public
11 school revenues in this month of January. But,
12 of course, with the schools reopening, we should
13 see some incremental increases in revenues from
14 the partial reopening that has happened with the
15 schools in Buffalo.

16 There was a reduction in STOA on a
17 year-to-date basis of twelve point one million
18 dollars.

19 The BNIA operating revenues for the month of
20 January were one point six million or
21 twenty-eight point three percent below budget;
22 and eighteen point five million or thirty-two
23 point six percent below budget on a year-to-date

1 basis.

2 NFIA operating revenues for the month of
3 January were one point -- I'm sorry. A hundred
4 and nine thousand or sixty-nine point seven
5 percent below budget in January; and on a
6 year-to-date basis, one point one million or
7 approximately fifty percent below budget.

8 These revenue shortfalls -- of course as
9 I've said throughout the course of this unique
10 and challenging year that we've faced is the
11 CARES Act funding from FTA and FAA. We used
12 approximately five point three million in
13 January; and on a year-to-date basis, fifty point
14 one million dollars.

15 Total operating -- as Kim had mentioned
16 about our total operating expenses earlier, total
17 operating expenses were below budget by three
18 point seven million or eighteen point eight
19 percent for January; and on a year-to-date basis,
20 nineteen point five million or ten point eight
21 percent.

22 And of course we have -- that's a reduction
23 in costs where we've done anything as far as

1 delaying purchases, vendor discounts and various
2 other cost controls. Of course the exception
3 being anything that's operationally critical or
4 safety sensitive. Those expenditures are still
5 occurring.

6 And just to put it in perspective, the CARES
7 Act assistance for both Metro and the two
8 airports, just how important it has been.
9 Without it, in the month of January, we would
10 have recognized a four point two million dollar
11 negative variance to budget and a six point two
12 million dollar deficit just in the month of
13 January. And on a year-to-date basis, it would
14 have been a fifty-one point -- fifty-one point
15 four million dollar negative variance and a
16 forty-five point three million dollar deficit on
17 a year-to-date basis.

18 And unless there are any questions, that
19 concludes the consolidated financials.

20 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: John, just a quick question on
21 the STOA, the twelve million dollar cut. Was
22 that a percentage the state applied to all
23 authorities? Was Rochester hit as equal from a

1 percentage standpoint? New York City? Do we
2 know that?

3 MR. COX: I don't --

4 MS. MINKEL: The upstate transit, yes. Different
5 percentages for downstate.

6 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you.

7 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Okay. You can carry us forward,
8 please.

9 MS. MINKEL: Is that it on the financials?

10 MR. COX: Yes, that concludes the financials.

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Okay. So now, Kim, would you
12 take us through the authorizations.

13 MS. MINKEL: Yes. There are three corporate
14 resolutions. They start on page fourteen. The
15 first, staff recommends that the board authorize
16 the renewal of Smartnet with FirstLight in the
17 total amount of a hundred and thirty-six thousand
18 two hundred and fifty-six dollars and four cents.
19 This is for network infrastructure for our
20 routers and switches throughout the system. The
21 new agreement will renew hardware and software
22 support for this equipment and we are procuring
23 this off of an OGS contract.

1 The next resolution on page fifteen is an
2 authorization for agreement with Crown Castle
3 Fiber. This is for a point-to-point network
4 connection between our Portage Road bus terminal
5 facility and our operation control center. The
6 cost of the connection will be at five hundred
7 dollars per month plus the federal and FCC taxes.
8 The total approximate will be just under nineteen
9 thousand three hundred dollars. This would be a
10 thirty-six-month agreement. This is to provide
11 larger bandwidth connection. Currently we're at
12 twenty megabytes. This will move it up to a
13 hundred. All of the costs associated with this
14 service are provided under contract by OGS.

15 And the third and final corporate resolution
16 is an authorization for a lease agreement with
17 Ciemmebi. This is at 485 Cayuga Road. They are
18 an Italian company that became aware of Western
19 New York through our railcar rebuild project.
20 They are looking to fabricate and assemble
21 electrical cabinets. They're looking to lease a
22 little over thirty-six hundred square feet of
23 light industrial space. The initial rent will be

1 eight dollars and six cents per square foot or a
2 little over twenty-nine thousand dollars for the
3 first year with a three-percent increase after
4 one year. This agreement will be for one year,
5 but they will have the option to renew for one
6 additional year at our discretion.

7 And those are the resolutions.

8 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Is there anyone who has
9 questions about any of these resolutions?

10 COMMISSIONER PERRY: (Indicating.)

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes. Go ahead.

12 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Are we sure that we are
13 correctly pronouncing the name of the company,
14 Ciemmebi?

15 MS. MINKEL: I am not certain at all. I did take one
16 semester of Italian --

17 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Ah, molto bene. Molto bene.

18 MS. MINKEL: -- but that was many, many years ago.

19 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: May I ask, then, that we have a
20 motion if you're comfortable with these
21 resolutions, to take all three of them together.

22 COMMISSIONER PERRY: So moved.

23 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Second.

1 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And a second?

2 Thank you, Mike.

3 COMMISSIONER HICKS: Second.

4 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.

5 Is there any discussion on the individual
6 motions?

7 Hearing none, all those who approve of
8 accepting these resolutions, please let me know
9 by saying aye.

10 MR. STATE: This has to be a roll call.

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Oh, you have to do it. Yes.
12 Forgive me.

13 MR. STATE: Roll call, commissioners. So motion
14 firsted by Commissioner Perry and seconded by
15 Commissioner Hughes. In favor of the motion,
16 Commissioner Ansari?

17 COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.

18 MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?

19 COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.

20 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?

21 COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Yes.

22 MR. STATE: Commissioner Blue?

23 Commissioner Hicks?

1 COMMISSIONER HICKS: Yes.

2 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?

3 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes.

4 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?

5 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes.

6 MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?

7 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Yes.

8 MR. STATE: Commissioner Tucker?

9 Sister Denise?

10 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes.

11 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?

12 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.

13 MR. STATE: Thank you. Item passes.

14 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you all. The item passed.

15 And thank you for reminding me, David.

16 Let's move on now to aviation, and I turn it
17 over to Commissioner Perry.

18 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Thank you, Sister.

19 So considering our abridged meeting format,
20 I'm going to ask Bill Vanecek to highlight the
21 necessary items if there are any on the AIP and
22 then the aviation business group items.

23 Are we going to do the discussion item now

1 or later?

2 MS. MINKEL: Later.

3 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Okay. And I just want to note
4 for myself on the AIP, if I may, Mr. Vanecek,
5 that the airport redesign enhancement project,
6 the schedule has a beneficial use of the final
7 phase, which is the baggage carousels, just a
8 little more than a year away. So we're very
9 close. And that the east expansion will be
10 complete during the middle of this year, so we're
11 really going to see it take shape right about the
12 time hopefully that people are starting to begin
13 traveling again. So that's just really
14 fantastic.

15 And, Bill, I'll just turn it over to you,
16 and thanks.

17 MR. VANECEK: All right. Well, thank you. And just
18 to follow up on that, actually, the west
19 expansion will be complete before the east
20 expansion.

21 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yeah.

22 MR. VANECEK: So that's targeted for the end of
23 April, 2021; and June, 2021 for the east

1 expansion.

2 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Amazing.

3 MR. VANECEK: We have, in fact, moved our office --
4 our administrative offices. We did that last
5 week. Still kind of going through the
6 settling-in process at the offices, but they
7 turned out to be just really, really well-done.
8 We're very, very happy with them.

9 So our new -- if you're looking to get to
10 our administrative offices from the concourse,
11 you can no longer do that because they're in the
12 midst of tearing down what's left of our
13 administrative offices to create the military
14 lounge and creating that whole break through the
15 wall for the exiting flow for passengers coming
16 out of the (inaudible). So if you need to, if
17 you need to get to us, the way you do it is you
18 go through literally the Southwest ticket
19 counters at this point. And you do -- there will
20 be a door that your SIDA badge will work on.
21 When you get to that door, it's just a -- you
22 present your badge, it will turn green, you go
23 through it. Directly to the right, you will see

1 our entrances to the offices. So if you need to
2 get to us, that's the way that you can come and
3 see us in the offices.

4 The subsurface wetlands is kind of getting
5 underway. The weather has put a little bit of a
6 damper on that schedule, but we expect that to
7 jump in as the weather changes for full flow.
8 The other projects I think are -- there's really
9 not too much to talk about.

10 So I'll talk just a little bit about some of
11 the activity levels. Our enplanement numbers for
12 January certainly were disappointing yet again.
13 They were down seventy-nine percent to budget.
14 Looking at enplanements, we had actually only
15 just under forty thousand versus what we did
16 during our budget year, which what we had
17 budgeted was a hundred and eighty-three thousand.
18 So we're still down. And, again, there's no end
19 in sight I think at this point to project when
20 we'll start to see more healthy numbers through
21 those lines.

22 So I did want to mention, though, that --
23 you know, Kim had mentioned it too -- that we're

1 being very expense conscious at the airport. Our
2 general business under operating expenses, we had
3 a five hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollar
4 positive variance. It means we weren't spending
5 as much as we had anticipated to. And that's the
6 mandate at our airports. Unless it's absolutely,
7 positively needed, we're not spending the money
8 to do it. So that's resonating through my entire
9 staff.

10 Other items of note. Again, you know, our
11 biggest revenue generator is our parking lots.
12 Of course they're still closed for the majority
13 of the lots. We did see a pretty good spike up
14 for about three days in January where we were
15 over three thousand enplanements a day, which was
16 great news. But that was just a blip and it went
17 right back down in February and it's been quite
18 slow out of the gates. So we're anticipating and
19 hoping, you know, that maybe the April time frame
20 we'll see the next bump up. Because it's
21 unlikely that the border will open from Canada in
22 March, so I'm not going to count on those spring
23 break people coming down. It could change, but

1 right now we don't think that's going to happen.

2 Not much to talk about in Niagara Falls.
3 Pretty status quo. They're running a relatively
4 small schedule, but they are operating thirty
5 flights out of the airport for the month of
6 February, so that's good. At least it's pretty
7 much daily service going out of the airport in
8 Niagara Falls.

9 Let's see. What else is interesting here?
10 Not really much to talk about at all really. No
11 significant changes from that. So the next thing
12 that we'll show will be, when we get to it later
13 on, is the discussion points that we have. We'll
14 talk about the -- excuse me. A world -- kind of
15 a global look at what's happening around the
16 world with respect to how all of the regions are
17 being successful or not successful. I can tell
18 you right now none of them are being successful.
19 But, when we get to that discussion point, we'll
20 go into greater depth on that. And that's what I
21 have for the report today.

22 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much.

23 Any questions of Bill? Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER PERRY: And, Sister -- and there are no
2 resolutions?

3 MS. MINKEL: There are four.

4 COMMISSIONER PERRY: There are four? Goodness. What
5 do you know. Surprise. Surprise.

6 MS. MINKEL: So we are spending money.

7 COMMISSIONER PERRY: My goodness. I thought Bill
8 just said --

9 MS. MINKEL: Yes. Yes. But we're trying to keep it
10 low.

11 The first resolution is on page nineteen.
12 Staff is recommending that the board award a
13 construction contract to Union Concrete. The
14 total bid amount is seven hundred and fourteen
15 thousand two hundred and forty-five dollars.
16 This work is two portions. One is air side,
17 which is to do general repair and maintenance of
18 pavement on our 5-23 runway. And the other is to
19 reconstruct the terminal aprons at gate twelve
20 and fifteen and repair the glycol trench drain by
21 those gates. On the land side, this contract
22 will address any worn pavement, sidewalks, uneven
23 storm drains, anything that can pose a slip, trip

1 or fall within our airport parking lots.

2 Union Concrete was the low bid. You will
3 notice they are significantly lower than the next
4 bid, Thomann and Bauer Construction. And they
5 were lower than our engineer's estimate. But,
6 one of the reasons why they are lower is they are
7 a sub to Pike who is doing the work at the
8 airport now, so the mobilization costs that you
9 would typically see, they did not have. And they
10 have been providing excellent work for us, so
11 we're comfortable on the bid.

12 They have requested and Empire State
13 Development has approved a partial waiver for the
14 MBE/WBE, and the NFTA is also approving a partial
15 waiver of the SDVOB requirements because there's
16 insufficient providers for these type of
17 construction services.

18 The next resolution on page twenty-one.
19 Staff is looking for an award to Camco General
20 Contracting for a lump sum amount of two million
21 two hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred
22 and eighty-six dollars and eighty-three cents.
23 Additionally, we're looking also to award the

1 design support and construction monitoring to CHA
2 Consulting for a total cost plus fixed fee not to
3 exceed a hundred and fifty-five thousand four
4 hundred and seventy-eight dollars.

5 And this is to convert a three-and-a-half-acre
6 parcel over off of Buell Road across from the
7 airport in Cheektowaga to an eighty-five parking
8 space that would serve as a park and ride, a cell
9 phone waiting area, a waiting area for the TNCs
10 and it would also have a Metro bus stop with
11 realtime passenger information. Additionally,
12 the parking lot two portion will provide an
13 access controlled two hundred and eighty-eight
14 parking space for employees at the airport. This
15 parcel was given to us by DOT and so that's much
16 appreciated. And this helps provide ultimately
17 additional parking for the airport when flight
18 does return.

19 In terms of MWBE goals, they are going to
20 exceed the goals. Their MBE participation will
21 be twenty-seven percent; WBE participation,
22 twenty-one percent; and their SDVOB participation
23 at twelve percent. CHA will also exceed the

1 MBE/WBE goals. Their participation will be four
2 and a half percent, eleven point four percent and
3 zero percent for SDVOB participation which was
4 the goal for them.

5 The next resolution on page twenty-five is
6 an agreement with Turf Tec. This is for
7 landscape irrigation system maintenance and
8 repair also at the Buffalo airport. The term of
9 the agreement will be for three years. It starts
10 in April with the option of two additional
11 one-year periods at our sole discretion. The
12 estimated cost for all five years of the
13 agreement is eighty-five thousand one hundred and
14 eleven dollars.

15 We did issue an RFP. We only received one
16 responsive proposal. We did review the proposal
17 and it does satisfy all the requirements and
18 provides the best overall value. The previous
19 provider has indicated that they've lost workers
20 and was not able to respond to this proposal.
21 Empire State Development has excluded this
22 procurement from MWBE requirements; however, the
23 supplier is a New York State certified WBE.

1 The fourth resolution on page twenty-eight
2 is an agreement with DeLacy Ford, and this is for
3 vehicle maintenance services for both airports.
4 The annual cost of vehicle maintenance is
5 estimated between two hundred to two hundred and
6 fifty thousand dollars. The contract period will
7 be a three-year term with the option of two
8 additional one-year terms at our discretion. So
9 our shuttle services are provided by Standard
10 Parking. However, the NFTA owns the shuttle vans
11 and three service vehicles, so this is to provide
12 the maintenance on those vehicles. And as you
13 can imagine, since most of the miles added are
14 just circulating around the parking lot, there's
15 a fair amount of wear and tear on those vehicles.

16 Empire State Development has excluded this
17 procurement from MWBE requirements because there
18 are no New York State certified providers for
19 this particular product; and, likewise, the same
20 for SDVOB requirements.

21 And those are the resolutions.

22 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER PERRY: And I would like to move them as

1 a batch if I may.

2 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Hi. This is Jen Persico. I
3 just have a question about the second aviation
4 resolution.

5 MS. MINKEL: Sure. The Camco General Contracting?

6 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Yeah. The parking lot
7 reconstruction.

8 MS. MINKEL: Yep.

9 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: So is that -- are those -- so
10 that's essentially creating two, two new parking
11 lots across the street from the current airport
12 campus?

13 MS. MINKEL: Yes. That's right. And so what that
14 will do is free up parking that we currently have
15 for all of those type of operations. So
16 employees currently park there; we have the cell
17 phone lot there; we have the park and ride there.
18 That will move all of this across the street and
19 free up those spaces for additional parking over
20 off of Genesee Street.

21 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: And is this, is this capital
22 project funding that the airport had in place
23 that was designated for this or is this coming

1 from -- I'm not familiar enough with the accounts
2 to know what the -- what those mean. Is this all
3 being -- like where is this money coming from?

4 MS. MINKEL: Yep. It's coming from two lines that we
5 identify under the funding. One being the
6 airport development fund, so that's a reserve
7 funding that we have. And the other is from a
8 grant fund, New York State AIR '99 program
9 funding. And in terms of timing, in order to get
10 the property, we were obligated to start
11 construction before the end of the summer.

12 MR. VANECEK: Yes.

13 MS. MINKEL: So in terms of timing, that's why it's
14 coming, because -- it's a good question. Given
15 our finances, could we delay it. Normally we
16 would, but we would be in jeopardy of losing the
17 property which is needed.

18 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Okay. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER AUL: Kim, it's Joan Aul. I have a
20 follow-up question to that too. Do you have --
21 with the employees, do you have any concerns with
22 the employees now having to go across the street,
23 across Genesee -- is it across Genesee? To

1 access parking. Any concerns from an employee
2 standpoint?

3 MR. VANECEK: We will be providing shuttle service
4 for the employees to get to the terminal. So it
5 will literally be getting out of your car,
6 getting into a shuttle and getting dropped at the
7 terminal, which is actually better than what they
8 had previous to this. They were in the far east
9 end of the long-term overflow lot and they had to
10 walk a pretty sizable distance to get to the
11 terminal, so this will actually give them a
12 better experience with respect to getting -- and
13 being more protected form the elements, if you
14 will, during the harsh months. And so it really
15 should be a no-brainer. We'll have enough
16 shuttle service so that they won't be waiting
17 long to get to and from the terminal.

18 COMMISSIONER AUL: Okay. Great. Thank you, Bill.

19 MS. MINKEL: Okay. Any other questions on the
20 resolutions?

21 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: If there are not, I would ask
22 that we take them as a group and let's consider
23 all four. And I'm going to ask for a motion and

1 then roll call vote.

2 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: I'll make a motion to approve

3 one through four.

4 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Second.

6 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Okay.

7 MR. STATE: And a roll call vote. Commissioner

8 Ansari?

9 COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.

10 MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?

11 COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.

12 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?

13 COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Yes.

14 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hicks?

15 COMMISSIONER HICKS: Yes.

16 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?

17 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes.

18 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?

19 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes.

20 MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?

21 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Yes.

22 MR. STATE: Sister Denise?

23 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes.

1 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?

2 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.

3 MR. STATE: Any other commissioners that have joined
4 us?

5 Item passes.

6 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much.

7 Now we turn to surface transportation and I
8 ask Commissioner Hughes to lead us through the
9 agenda information.

10 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you, Sister.

11 Similar to aviation, the surface
12 transportation committee did not meet today, but
13 I would ask Tom George to give us any type of
14 highlights that he wants to go through. And I do
15 think we're -- are we going to do the
16 presentation on the design guidelines after?

17 MR. GEORGE: I think that's after.

18 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay.

19 MR. GEORGE: Thank you and good afternoon. Just a
20 couple items I'd like to go through if I could
21 here.

22 Under corridor Development. We did present
23 to you last month the Bailey Avenue corridor.

1 Thank you for the input we've received. We are
2 now in the process where we're working with our
3 grants department and our legislative group
4 relative to putting together and ask for further
5 funding on that to do environmental clearance and
6 preliminary design to get us into position for
7 funding. So we'll be putting that, as far as our
8 formal ask, to our legislators moving forward.

9 On the battery electric bus deployment,
10 today marks kind of an interesting day for us.
11 We've been talking about it for a long time, and
12 I want to again thank the board for their
13 patience on this. Some of our other agencies in
14 the state moved forward with this more on a trial
15 run where they've brought buses in. We've taken
16 a much more deliberate approach to this than some
17 of them have. And I think what you're seeing
18 today is the culmination of that approach. We've
19 got some board actions we're asking you to
20 consider later in the day.

21 But I did want to take the opportunity to
22 specifically thank one of the employees that
23 works for Metro who is long-tenured, our bus

1 engineer with -- spent a lot of due diligence on
2 this, Jeff Sweet, really put a lot of effort into
3 this and created a specification and approach
4 that is really being looked at as the new model
5 for New York State moving forward. So I just
6 wanted to take the time to recognize him. He's
7 done tremendous work on our behalf, and without I
8 think his due diligence and his knowledge, we
9 wouldn't be where we are today. So taking that
10 opportunity and thank you for your consideration
11 on that moving forward.

12 On the Amherst-Buffalo light rail expansion
13 project, we're continuing to work with FTA on
14 moving forward with the NEPA process. We've had
15 a number of meetings with them. We're moving
16 forward in earnest with our consultant to do a
17 lot of the study relative to the BRT alternative
18 on that that needs to be documented in the NEPA
19 process in an EIS. So that work is ongoing now,
20 and we'll be moving forward in March with the FTA
21 and their third-party consultant will be brought
22 on to finalize the schedule for the NEPA process
23 and to establish our approach with that.

1 And then the last thing under the
2 initiatives, I just wanted to mention that
3 there's a new project on here this month. I've
4 placed Erie Canal Harbor station rehabilitation
5 on here. We haven't been tracking this
6 previously. You recently approved a board action
7 to bring a consultant to do design work on that.
8 As you may be aware, the City of Buffalo cars,
9 returning traffic to Main Street project will be
10 nearing completion as we enter the end of the
11 year.

12 There was no work completed on that station
13 as part of their project. So, essentially, they
14 were going to complete their project with all new
15 streetscape, roadways and everything and the
16 station was going to remain the same. So we
17 built this approach and project so that we will
18 be moving and bidding a project so that when the
19 transition of that station is done and the city
20 turns it over to us, we'll be able to directly
21 turn that over to a contractor to also
22 rehabilitate the station and have a clean, new
23 turnover all at once once we're done. So we have

1 to wait to gain control of the property -- or,
2 control of the site to allow our contractor to
3 come onboard. But the community won't see a
4 start and a stop. So we're going to continue
5 with the construction process right as we move
6 forward with that. And that's anticipated at the
7 end of 2021 to start our construction process.

8 If there's any questions on projects?
9 Otherwise, just a couple other things. On
10 ridership, we remain pretty steady at fifty
11 percent of our bus and under forty percent of our
12 rail. That remains steady. We have not seen
13 much movement on there. We are starting to see
14 again an uptick in paratransit ridership again
15 this month. So we were moving up through the
16 fall, October, November. We saw a second wave of
17 the pandemic coming in and we saw an erosion of
18 that. Now we're seeing that starting to rebound
19 again, so we are seeing the ridership increase
20 there.

21 And one other comment I just had on -- I
22 wanted to mention on-time performance. You'll
23 notice if you look at our performance, our

1 on-time performance has suffered ever since the
2 pandemic came into play. We've spent a lot of
3 energy and time with our management team looking
4 at on-time performance --

5 MS. MINKEL: Dr. Hicks, I just want to let you know
6 you may want to mute your line.

7 COMMISSIONER HICKS: Sorry.

8 MR. GEORGE: On-time performance. Interesting
9 dynamics that are occurring in the system. That
10 erosion has mostly resulted in a couple of
11 things. One is, as we're all aware, traffic is
12 way down in our community which allows us to
13 operate more quickly on our system. Also,
14 ridership is down which increases the -- or,
15 decreases the dwell time and again increases it.

16 So we're seeing our operators respond to
17 that. In some cases they'll be leaving late from
18 their origin in order to continue on and be on
19 time throughout the route. So we've been
20 hesitant to make a lot of changes to the system.
21 As I indicated earlier, there's so many
22 connections, so when we start modifying the
23 system, it really has an implication across the

1 board. So we've been hesitant to make a lot of
2 changes. We're monitoring it on a monthly basis,
3 and we'll continue to do so, but we are still
4 able to provide very good service out there with
5 this on-time performance challenge that we have.

6 And that's all I wanted to talk about with
7 metrics. And if I could just go through my
8 citizens advisory committee meeting. On
9 Thursday, January 28th, we had a citizens
10 advisory committee meeting. We're pleased to
11 introduce two new members for their first
12 meeting. Dan Barto joined us from Destination
13 Niagara USA as a new member, and Sherry Sherrill
14 as a rider-at-large. So we brought two new
15 members on.

16 At the meeting we did discuss our rail
17 safety triennial and our APTA rail safety award.
18 We presented them to the committee to give them
19 an idea on the results of some of our safety
20 initiatives.

21 We talked at length about the Bailey Avenue
22 corridor improvement study. We did receive some
23 comments about being cognizant of accessibility

1 concerns with BRT and which we generally
2 addressed those with underlying service. And
3 then we also talked again, just like we did here
4 with you, about why Bailey was chosen. We talked
5 about the Metro initiatives report. And then we
6 had some comments and questions about DL and W,
7 about future funding for an overhead walk between
8 the DL and W and the arena. We also talked about
9 battery electric bus implications while operating
10 in cold weather environments and some of the
11 considerations we've had for that. And we also
12 talked about our stop and shelter plan and the
13 expansion of that and why that was delayed. And
14 we indicated as well, just like we did to the
15 board here, that our procurement requirements
16 through COVID were a challenge and we had to
17 delay that, but we are moving forward in earnest
18 with that.

19 We talked about the CAC's work plan for
20 2021. We didn't do much on the 2020 due to the
21 pandemic. We identified and went through and
22 reviewed all of the items on the potential work
23 plan and identified priorities for 2021. And

1 those include bus shelter and bus stop
2 conditions, marketing and teaching people about
3 transit, working with employers, institutions and
4 Go Buffalo Niagara to increase ridership, and
5 basically coming out of COVID-19 as a transit
6 agency and things that we need to consider. Our
7 next meeting is scheduled for March 25th, and
8 that still needs to be confirmed. So a month
9 from today we'll be having our next meeting of
10 the citizens advisory committee.

11 Also on January 28 we had an accessibility
12 advisory committee meeting. We talked with them
13 about the changes on our route thirty-four bus
14 serving Niagara Falls Boulevard. We had done
15 some changes in there, and those changes came
16 from the suggestion of one of our operators. It
17 much simplified that route and we're very pleased
18 with how that came out. We're now on the same
19 path inbound and outbound. That wandered about
20 up there a little bit.

21 We talked about testing of the new fare box
22 system and phased implementation later in 2021.
23 And we also talked about -- to the PAL community

1 and the accessibility advisory committee about
2 the trials that we had in some of the pilots and
3 bringing them back onboard for that as we move
4 forward.

5 We reminded them they could provide us
6 feedback on the service line via phone, e-mail or
7 regular e-mail. And we talked about our missed
8 trip policy. Service suspensions were put on
9 hold in March of '20. So we have a policy if you
10 miss trips, a certain number, you get a letter.
11 You get notified again. After a certain amount
12 of times, you get your service suspended. We
13 suspended that policy in March of '20 due to due
14 to COVID. We have reinstated that policy
15 effective February of 2021. So this month that
16 policy has been reinstated. We've gone back to
17 our previous policy.

18 We also updated the committee on the riders
19 guide. We're modifying our riders guide. We're
20 using that and getting input from the committee,
21 so we're providing them with our draft of that so
22 we can get input on it.

23 And then we had some suggestions from the

1 advisory committee on stop announcement
2 compliance, and they wanted more detail on the
3 data that we have relative to that which we'll
4 provide. They asked us that we would look into
5 being able to provide bulk paratransit passes
6 much like we do today. You can buy a twenty-pack
7 or a ten-pack of paratransit passes today. They
8 would like us to be able to provide that to us
9 using our token transit apps so we're looking at
10 that and seeing what it would take to implement
11 that.

12 And then we talked about some challenges
13 they have with feedback when they provide
14 comments, and we're looking at ways to improve
15 our ability to provide them feedback relative to
16 their comments. Our next meeting of that group
17 is today at two p.m.

18 That is my report for today. If there's any
19 questions, I'd be glad to try to answer them.

20 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Any questions for Tom?

21 Hearing no questions, we'll go back to Kim
22 and there are seven items that are up for
23 approval.

1 MS. MINKEL: Great. Thank you.

2 The first one is on page thirty-three.
3 Staff is recommending that the board approve the
4 updated transportation agency safety plan.
5 This every year needs to come back for board
6 approval and my sign-off. The first time the
7 board approved it was last year, February, 2020.
8 This is part of our new safety management system
9 plan that complies with the new Federal Transit
10 rules that came out and required to have the plan
11 in place by July 20th of 2020. The only thing
12 that's -- nothing has changed in the plan, but
13 every year we have targets and performance
14 measures. So essentially the board is adopting
15 the new targets and performance measures, where
16 we look for continuous improvement. And
17 essentially where we have a goal of zero, those
18 remain at zero, but some of the other goals are
19 being reduced by five percent going forward.

20 The next resolution is on page thirty-six.
21 Staff is looking for an authorization to purchase
22 eight low-floor, fourteen-passenger paratransit
23 vehicles, and this would be from Gorman

1 Enterprises here in Elma, New York, at a unit
2 price of a hundred and forty-two thousand four
3 hundred and eighty-one dollars and eighty-four
4 cents. The board had approved a five-year
5 contract with Gorman Enterprises back in
6 September of 2019. This is an option on that
7 five-year contract for the eight vehicles. And
8 these vehicles will replace vehicles that we have
9 in service currently that have a vintage year of
10 2008 through 2010. Normally, the useful life on
11 vehicles like this are around five years, so this
12 is really a strong testament to the incredible
13 work that our maintenance team does out there.
14 And the board should know that the average
15 vehicle out there that we're replacing has three
16 hundred and seventy-five thousand miles, which is
17 just incredible.

18 The next resolution on page thirty-seven is
19 an agreement with New Flyer to purchase ten
20 battery electric buses. The buses, the support
21 system, the manuals, the spare components and
22 training. New Flyer is out of Saint Cloud,
23 Minnesota and Winnipeg, Manitoba. The cost for

1 the ten battery buses is ten million one hundred
2 and forty-one thousand one hundred and eighteen
3 dollars and ninety-nine cents. The agreement
4 would also include an option to purchase up to a
5 hundred and forty additional buses over a
6 five-year period.

7 This helps an effort that we've had in place
8 for a number of years. COVID pushed us to become
9 lean and clean, but we've always been green. So
10 this helps meet those objectives. Most
11 importantly, though, it also helps support
12 Governor Cuomo's objective to improve air quality
13 in New York State. In 2020 as part of the state
14 of the state address he had put out the request
15 for upstate transit agencies to electrify
16 twenty-five percent of their fleet by 2025 and a
17 hundred percent by 2035.

18 So these buses will be housed at our Cold
19 Spring garage when not in revenue service. And
20 they will be replacing vintage buses of 2000,
21 2001, 2002 and 2004 which have exceeded their
22 useful life of twelve years. Again, a really
23 strong testament to the incredible work that our

1 maintenance team does out there. The board
2 should know that thirty percent of our current
3 fleet is beyond its useful life.

4 The infrastructure that's needed is going to
5 be advanced -- in order the charge these buses is
6 going to be advanced with a partnership with
7 National Grid, which is another resolution. And
8 the substation charging will be done by New York
9 Power Authority, which is another resolution that
10 I will talk about in a minute.

11 We expect the battery electric buses to be
12 in operation by the spring of 2022. We did
13 receive three proposals. New Flyer was scored
14 the highest. The board should also know that
15 they are opening a facility in Jamestown, New
16 York where they are manufacturing bus components,
17 so they are doing some work here in New York
18 State as well.

19 If you take a look at page forty, you can
20 see a sample of their electric bus. Obviously
21 when we get our buses, they'll have our marking
22 on it and will look just as nice as this bus, but
23 so the board can see what the bus will look like.

1 At the bottom of page forty is the pantograph and
2 the charging setup, and that's how the setup will
3 be for our buses as well in terms of charging the
4 buses going forward.

5 The next resolution on page forty-one is an
6 agreement with National Grid for them to design,
7 construct and install the electrical service
8 that's going be required to charge these buses at
9 our Cold Spring facility. National Grid has
10 committed to provide the infrastructure and to
11 spend up to three million dollars of their own to
12 make ready for the infrastructure that we need in
13 order to charge at our Cold Spring facility. So
14 they're a wonderful partner in helping to support
15 the governor's goals.

16 The electrical service itself will be
17 connected to a new substation within the Cold
18 Spring garage that will be designed, constructed
19 and installed by New York Power Authority.

20 The next resolution on page forty-two is the
21 agreement with New York Power Authority for them
22 to do the design, construction and installation
23 of the substation. The cost to do that is not to

1 exceed eight million one hundred and sixty-seven
2 thousand eight hundred and three dollars and
3 sixty-four cents. The agreement will include an
4 option to purchase and install additional
5 charging equipment over a five-year period. So
6 initially, we're going to put in the charging for
7 the number of buses that we have, but as we add
8 to the fleet, we will be back to the board to
9 expand that charging capability.

10 Initially, the infrastructure that's being
11 put in by National Grid will be sized to charge
12 sixty buses but will be scalable to ultimately
13 charge over a hundred buses. The substation
14 that's being put in by New York Power Authority
15 will include nine chargers with overhead
16 equipment that consist of a pantograph and one
17 smaller plug-in charger for a maintenance bay, so
18 when a bus is being repaired, it can be plugged
19 in that way.

20 The staff has selected NYPA to manage this
21 project through their eMobility Program, and
22 they've done similar work at Tompkins in Ithaca
23 and in Rochester. Although, they have a plug-in

1 system there which is a little bit different than
2 what we're putting in using a pantograph/catenary
3 type of system.

4 Funding. New York State has established
5 grant funding in the amount of twenty million for
6 non-FTA transit agencies to use in procuring
7 battery electric buses and infrastructure for
8 which we're anticipating up to four million;
9 however, that's currently not in place. So NYPA
10 has the ability to -- we can secure a loan
11 through NYPA to advance the project so that we
12 don't have a timing issue in terms of receiving
13 the buses but not being able to charge them. And
14 so as part of that advance for the loan, it would
15 be at a percentage rate not to exceed two and a
16 half percent at a term of not greater than ten
17 years. And then the other funding is being
18 provided through Federal Transit with their Low
19 Emission No Emission grant program and VWA
20 settlement funds and NYSDOT funding.

21 The sixth resolution on page forty-four is
22 an agreement with Smith-Emery Laboratories. This
23 is for ultrasonic rail testing on our rail

1 system. This would be for a three-year agreement
2 with two additional one-year renewals. The
3 annual expenditure is four thousand nine hundred
4 and ninety-nine dollars. And what this rail
5 testing will do is look for faults and
6 imperfections within our rail system so that it
7 can identify failures ahead of time.

8 Empire State has excluded this procurement
9 from MWBE requirements because there are no New
10 York State certified providers of this service,
11 and similarly, we have for SDVOB goals. We did
12 go out for an RFP. We received two proposals,
13 and we scored Smith-Emery the highest based
14 primarily on cost.

15 And the final resolution today in surface,
16 on page forty-six, staff is looking for an annual
17 renewal of our maintenance agreement with our
18 Trapeze software in the amount of two hundred and
19 ninety-seven thousand twenty-two dollars. This
20 annual maintenance agreement is for three areas
21 within Metro. The first being our automated
22 transit information system that helps support our
23 customer care department, the Trapeze software

1 Xgate that helps support the paratransit
2 operation, and then our service planning
3 department utilizes the automated transit
4 information system Google export which helps with
5 the integration of our online trip planning tools
6 and our schedules.

7 So those are the resolutions.

8 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Unless there's any objection, I
9 would actually make a motion to move all seven as
10 a batch.

11 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Second.

12 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: All in favor? Dave?

13 MR. STATE: Roll call vote. Commissioner Ansari?

14 COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.

15 MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?

16 COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.

17 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?

18 COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Yes.

19 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hicks?

20 COMMISSIONER HICKS: Yes.

21 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?

22 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes.

23 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?

1 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes.

2 MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?

3 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Yes.

4 MR. STATE: Sister Denise?

5 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes.

6 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?

7 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.

8 MR. STATE: Item passes.

9 COMMISSIONER BLUE: Reverend Blue is on, and my vote
10 is yes too.

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Reverend Blue.

12 Now we're going to ask you, David, if you
13 have a general counsel report.

14 MR. STATE: Thank you, Sister.

15 I did submit a confidential general counsel
16 report regarding a case that's being handled very
17 capably by Vicky, the Abdelall case. We were at
18 the Appellate Division in Rochester last week,
19 and I wanted to just give the board a quick
20 summary of the case. And this case gives you
21 some indication maybe about the length of time it
22 takes to resolve a civil case.

23 The accident happened in 2015, a

1 bus/pedestrian accident in the Northtowns. The
2 case was tried in the fall of 2019, and they
3 bifurcated trial, meaning no damages assessed.
4 The jury's only function was to assess liability.
5 And then an appeal by us up to the Fourth
6 Department in Rochester which was argued last
7 week. So we will get a decision probably four to
8 six weeks. We will notify the board. And the
9 result of that decision will then drive the next
10 step in the case. We do have a scheduled trial
11 date in November of this year. And depending on
12 the outcome of the appeal, depending on COVID,
13 depending on all sorts of other things, we will
14 take it from there. But, we will advise the
15 board when we get the decision from the Appellate
16 Department.

17 Pending any questions, that is the general
18 counsel report for the month.

19 COMMISSIONER PERRY: (Indicating.)

20 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?

21 COMMISSIONER PERRY: There's some strange, foreign
22 language in here that I don't know. In this
23 paragraph, it says -- looks like *res ipsa loquitur*.

1 What language is that and what does it mean?

2 MR. STATE: I'm remembering that is Latin, of course,
3 for, as I recall my instructor saying, the trout
4 is in the milk. Something, something has
5 happened that's -- it's a way for a plaintiff to
6 shortcut through negligence. Normally you have
7 to show that somebody didn't meet a reasonable
8 standard, but some accidents plaintiffs will
9 argue are so outrageous, so crazy, that it
10 couldn't have happened unless the NFTA was
11 negligent. So we had an issue with how that was
12 charged and whether it should have been charged
13 at all. That was one of the grounds of the
14 appeal. And then there were other questions
15 about the verdict sheet and how the trial court
16 handled some of that. So, again, as soon as we
17 know, we will apprise the board.

18 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Thanks, Dave.

19 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Any other questions? Okay. And
20 now we're going to move forward to our report.

21 MS. MINKEL: Yes. Thank you, Sister.

22 So starting on page forty-eight of your
23 handout, we have a presentation. We have three

1 presenters this morning. The first being Darren
2 Kempner to provide updated information to the
3 board on federal COVID-19 response. Then that
4 will be followed by Tom George on our revised
5 service guidelines and then Bill Vanecek will
6 provide an update as it relates to aviation and
7 COVID response.

8 So, Darren, if you could talk a little bit.

9 MR. KEMPNER: Sure. I've got two slides for you this
10 morning, which I think is about my median for the
11 COVID time period here. The first to review the
12 contents of the American Rescue Plan that's
13 moving through Congress, and then the next steps
14 for that plan as well as other plans that are
15 going through D.C.

16 So the American Rescue Plan Act, there are
17 three main items in there for our focus. Transit
18 system funding, airport system funding, as well
19 as state and local funding. So the plan
20 currently contains the House package which is
21 expected to be voted on tomorrow by the House.
22 Thirty billion for transit systems, and of that
23 twenty-six billion for transit agencies like NFTA

1 through the standard federal apportionment
2 programs, which provides up to a hundred and
3 thirty-two percent of our operating costs from
4 2018. If you recall, the last plan provided I
5 believe about eighty percent of operating costs,
6 so they've just increased that cap and provided
7 funding for operations through this program.

8 Eight billion dollars for airports which
9 breaks down to about six billion through their
10 new grant program which is primarily focused on
11 debt service and operating support for airport
12 systems based on enplanements from 2019. There's
13 also money like there was through CARES 2.0 for
14 concessionaires, eight hundred million, and then
15 another portion which wasn't in CARES 2.0, but
16 was for 1.0, a hundred percent of federal share
17 for AIP grants for this fiscal year which we
18 would be benefit from through our AIP program.

19 The last piece, a hundred and ninety-five
20 billion for state, local and territorial
21 governments. Obviously that would benefit us as
22 the state benefits and other local governments
23 benefit through that program.

1 So timeline. As I mentioned, the House to
2 vote this week. Then the Senate to either take
3 that bill up as is or amend it. Likely the week
4 of March 8th for action. And the goal of all
5 this being done by March 14th when unemployment
6 benefits expire which are also included in the
7 bill. Kind of the next trigger point is really
8 this address -- joint address to Congress from
9 President Biden where he's expected to kind of
10 summarize actions to date and lay out an
11 infrastructure proposal. So the last item on
12 here is pretty quick after that, May 31st. But
13 all eyes are kind of looking to some sort of
14 infrastructure package, not just road, bridge,
15 transit, but more broadly. And the goal for that
16 would be May 31st, which is certainly aggressive,
17 but through a second budget reconciliation
18 process possible. So we'll be back to talk to
19 you about this in the future.

20 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: So it's looking good, though.

21 MR. KEMPNER: All signs are pointing to yes.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. MINDEL: Thank you, Darren.

1 Are there any questions on Darren's report?
2 If not, I'll have Bill provide an update on COVID
3 impact on the airport business.

4 MR. VANECEK: Yeah. Thank you, Kim. And to the
5 board, thank you for all of your support through
6 these trying times.

7 I wanted to -- you know, we talk a lot about
8 the local impact of what's happening in aviation,
9 but I thought it would be good for us to go
10 through a more global look at what's happening
11 around the world with respect to COVID's impact
12 on aviation travel. And the numbers are
13 staggering. You know, sixty-four percent decline
14 in traffic and almost a hundred and twelve
15 billion dollars in lost revenue through the end
16 of 2020.

17 So if you look at this graph over here on
18 the right, you can see that, you know, where it
19 started obviously was -- the beginning of the
20 year was off to a pretty good start and then the
21 bottom just, you know, fell out. Ninety-two
22 percent reduction in passengers in April alone.
23 That was just staggering. And trying to recover

1 from that is -- we're still in the midst of this.
2 So, you know, we had six billion passengers that
3 didn't fly that would have flown absent the
4 effects of COVID. That's a staggering number.

5 And, again, when you look over here at the
6 revenue, how it started, it wasn't too bad in the
7 early first quarter. These are quarterly
8 numbers. But then, you know, eighty-nine point
9 seven percent drop in revenues in the second
10 quarter for aviation related businesses is just,
11 again, staggering. It's hard to put into words.
12 And then a slight -- we're starting to see a
13 slight rebound up, but nowhere near where we need
14 to be.

15 And then if you look at what happened to
16 international (inaudible) year over year, you can
17 see that all of the regions -- and by the way,
18 this report was put together by ACI, which is
19 Airport Council International World. So they
20 were nice enough to give us this presentation.
21 But you can see the numbers are just staggering.
22 Africa, seventy-five percent; Asia Pacific,
23 almost ninety-six percent down; Europe is

1 eighty-eight; Latin America, seventy-four; Middle
2 East, eighty; and North America, eighty-one point
3 two percent.

4 And as you can see, we're not seeing much of
5 a recovery of this anywhere along the way. So
6 this is, you know, this is a big challenge for,
7 you know, for all of the airports. And that
8 number by the way -- so this number here is -- so
9 this shows select countries that are impacted by
10 this. United States has by far -- and this is
11 domestic passenger growth -- has by far the
12 largest domestic market than any other country
13 around the world. So as you can see where we
14 were up above in 2019, where we're at now, you
15 see that big drop and a very slow ascent up. You
16 know, maybe -- I think we're still down about
17 sixty-one percent or so. Obviously, China is
18 next. They don't have a lot of domestic travel.
19 They have a lot of international travel, but they
20 don't have a lot of domestic travel. So they
21 were able to kind of climb back -- of all the
22 regions, they've climbed back to where they're
23 almost on par with what they were the year

1 before.

2 You know, I'm not going to go through all of
3 these. But, one that's also interesting to me
4 here is the Russian Federation. They had the big
5 drop, they had a big spike up, and now they're
6 having a spike down. I don't know the reasons
7 for that, but my guess is they're probably being
8 impacted by COVID more dramatically now than they
9 were previously. So, you know, these numbers are
10 pretty similar in the shapes of the graphs and
11 what we're seeing.

12 So dealing with uncertainty. You know, when
13 is it going to come back. You know, this is,
14 this is kind of the high point. This was 2019,
15 year end 2019. We dropped, you know, obviously
16 way down from ninety-six point seven to
17 thirty-seven point three. These are percentages,
18 by the way, of traffic. And so it's slowly
19 starting to climb back up. So if we're looking,
20 and if this is somewhat accurate, which I believe
21 it's going to be, we're not looking to our
22 recovery -- again, this is a hundred percent --
23 probably, you know, out here in between 2023 and

1 2024 to get back to the numbers that we were at
2 in 2019. So that's not more growth in that.
3 That's just getting back to the 2019 numbers. So
4 it's had a dramatic impact on how we're dealing
5 with air travel, not only here in America, in the
6 U.S., but around the world.

7 And if you wouldn't mind, just stay here for
8 a minute, because I did dig up some other stats
9 that were germane to North America that I think
10 you will be interested in.

11 So to put it in perspective, just for
12 Buffalo alone, a little bit of a reminder, a sad
13 reminder, we were almost two point five million
14 enplanements back in 2019. We ended 2020 with
15 seven hundred and seventeen thousand
16 enplanements. Big, big drop. Right? And so
17 there were a number of factors that were
18 contributing to that. Obviously, you know,
19 twenty-eight million plus COVID cases, five
20 hundred thousand deaths in the United States.
21 That's obviously going to have an impact.

22 Border closures and travel bans. It's not
23 just the border being closed, but it's companies

1 that are saying, you're not flying. You're not
2 going to go visit -- you know, from New York City
3 to somebody in Missouri or California. Those
4 trips are going to be done differently. You're
5 going to do your business by Zoom meetings,
6 et cetera.

7 And then, of course, U.S. carriers just
8 cutting capacity. They cut up to ninety-five
9 percent of their capacity in 2020 versus 2019.
10 Huge number. But they did it because nobody was
11 flying. And that's the big issue.

12 With respect to the breakdown between large
13 hubs, medium hubs and small hubs. Large hubs
14 actually took the biggest hit percentage-wise.
15 They're down year over year by forty-two percent.
16 But, medium hubs, which is what Buffalo is, we're
17 down thirty-nine percent. And I would argue that
18 as part of that category, we're even lower. I
19 would bet we're the lowest because of the fact
20 that the Canadian border is shut. So that was
21 another big issue in the impact.

22 And then, in 2019, we talked about the
23 numbers that we had, but to put it in

1 perspective, in 2020 it was down sixty-four
2 percent for all of North America and Canada.
3 They're projecting in 2021 that we'll only be
4 forty-two percent down relative to 2019. And
5 then again still down in 2022. And they're
6 projecting being down about forty-eight million
7 passengers in that same time frame, and a
8 combined economic loss number of thirty-six --
9 almost forty billion dollars in lost revenue.
10 That's just in North America.

11 And what's really interesting is that when
12 you look at who suffers the most in this drop in
13 the United States, when you look at New York,
14 we're down fifty-five percent in seat capacity
15 changes. That's number one in the United States.
16 Obviously, you've got the big airports sitting
17 down in New York City, but also Buffalo as well.
18 But, again, fifty-five percent decrease just
19 in -- attributable to New York.

20 And then the two last stats here. When we
21 look at the change in scheduled flights and
22 seats, the average for 2020 is forty-eight --
23 about forty-nine percent change in flights down,

1 forty-seven percent down. Buffalo, when you look
2 at our seats going out, we're sixty-one percent
3 down. So, again, it just bears the fact that,
4 you know, we're being harmed more than other
5 states in the United States.

6 U.S. overall, down about forty-four percent
7 in flights and seats. Canada overall -- and this
8 is a staggering number -- they're down
9 seventy-five percent in flights and seventy-eight
10 percent in seats. They're going nowhere at this
11 point. Nobody is flying anywhere.

12 And then just lastly, the change in
13 schedule. In domestic international flights, if
14 you just look at medium hubs, sixty-four percent
15 down in international flights, forty-eight point
16 four percent down in domestic flights. So it's
17 having a staggering impact on air service
18 throughout the United States. The United States
19 arguably has been hit the hardest of all the
20 regions.

21 So any questions I can answer on that?

22 None? Thank you for your time.

23 MS. MINKEL: Do you want to highlight the fire truck?

1 MR. VANECEK: Oh, the fire truck. Yes. So this is
2 our newest addition to our firefighting unit out
3 here in Buffalo. The last ladder truck that we
4 had became life expired so we needed to get a new
5 one. And I did have a couple of -- if you can
6 bear with me one minute -- a couple of notes on
7 what this thing -- what this baby can do.

8 So this is -- it's a -- this truck here has
9 a one hundred foot ladder. And you might say,
10 well, why do we need a hundred foot ladder?
11 Well, it wasn't -- I think it was last year,
12 maybe about a year and a half ago, we had one of
13 our electricians get stuck in one of the, you
14 know, whatever you call those things -- bucket
15 lifts. And he was up there for a quite a while.
16 We called our ARFF unit to come and get him down
17 and it didn't have a ladder big enough to get him
18 out of the bucket. So we had to call in a
19 neighboring fire department that had a truck that
20 was big enough to get up there and extend the
21 ladder to get up to that, so that was a big part
22 of it.

23 So we now have that hundred foot ladder. We

1 now have three hundred gallons of water, two
2 hundred thousand -- two thousand gallon per
3 minute pump. That's powerful. That's going to
4 put out most of what you're going to need at our
5 airport out here. Let's see. What else? We're
6 going to be able to use it for our structure
7 calls. We'll also be able to remove passengers
8 from planes parked on the taxiway. Nobody ever
9 thinks about that. Right? If you're not up to
10 the jet bridge, you don't have stairs high
11 enough, how do you get them out? This will help
12 us accomplish that. And it will -- you know,
13 obviously it meets all the safety and
14 environmental standards. But, it's a beauty of a
15 truck. I think there's one more slide on this
16 that shows the full one here. And you can see
17 the ladder. It's up here and it's going to be
18 very useful.

19 So, Kim, if you ever get stuck and you need
20 to go out the window, we'll come down with the
21 fire truck --

22 MS. MINKEL: I'm not getting on that ladder.

23 MR. VANECEK: All right. Thank you very much.

1 MS. MINKEL: Thank you.

2 So, Tom, do you want to highlight the new
3 service design guidelines?

4 MR. GEORGE: Well, Bill, thanks for ending with the
5 fire truck. That segue was not going to be
6 smooth, so I thank you for that.

7 So in 2012 we came before the board and we
8 had adopted the service guidelines for Metro.
9 And service guidelines is a very useful tool that
10 we use internally to design our services to
11 determine how to allocate resources and really to
12 guide the way we provide service to our
13 community.

14 A lot has changed since 2012 and a lot has
15 changed with our public outreach and our
16 transparency with our organization and the
17 community, as has a lot changed with how we do
18 service and some of the products that we're
19 looking at now and in the future. You'll see
20 that we now have limited stop service, we've got
21 different express services, we talk about BRT
22 here, microtransit is a product that's rolled out
23 throughout the nation and different products.

1 So we are here today to discuss with you a
2 new approach for service guidelines. We're going
3 to update our document. And it's not going to be
4 the -- I'll call it the stodgy, old document that
5 we had in the past. It's going to be a community
6 of forward facing document that people in the
7 community can read and understand and that we can
8 use, again, to roll out new products and just
9 stay abreast of the different services that are
10 being provided in the country and around the
11 world.

12 With that, I want to turn it over to Rob
13 Jones, again, our manager of planning who is --
14 he and his staff have taken the lead on this and
15 have put together a really nice product. Our
16 intent is to bring you the service guidelines as
17 a complete document to review in a couple of
18 weeks with an ability to have a further
19 discussion at the next board meeting with an
20 intent to adopt. So Rob will present today and
21 will be able to answer any questions you have at
22 this point.

23 Rob?

1 MR. JONES: Thanks, Tom, for the introduction, and
2 good afternoon, commissioners. So you'll notice
3 on the image on the right-hand side, it says it's
4 from June, 2012 but adopted in the previous
5 month. So we kind of wanted to keep the same
6 thing going right now where we present it and
7 then give you an opportunity to review the
8 document as it's a very long, dense document, to
9 allow you to conceptualize kind of what you're
10 looking at, what's within the document that you
11 need to be cognizant of before you approve it.
12 So we'll be coming to the board next month, as
13 Tom mentioned, for approval.

14 So 2012 is the last adoption we had of our
15 service guidelines which doesn't seem like a very
16 exciting topic to talk about, but it's really the
17 backbone of how we deliver, design and evaluate
18 all of our services, so it's critically important
19 to, not only to the planning group, but to Metro
20 as a whole.

21 But the document we have today -- Tom
22 mentioned the term stodgy. I wouldn't go that
23 far, but I would say that it's definitely dense

1 and kind of rigid in its design. And it's
2 written for people in this room who understand
3 transit, who are in transit every day. It's not
4 really a public-facing document. There aren't a
5 lot of images in it. There are a couple tables.
6 But it would be hard to go through if you're a
7 member of the general public and said, well, how
8 does the NFTA evaluate services? How do they
9 design their services? So we definitely wanted
10 to flip that a little bit.

11 So a little bit of a brief overview of our
12 current guidelines. To the right side there in
13 the image, you'll see a picture of an example
14 page of our current guidelines. It's not really
15 a designed document. It's all kind of text
16 based. There's a lot of really great information
17 in it that we use as a department to address how
18 we provide service. So we have route design, the
19 span of service, service frequency. A lot of
20 things we talk about kind of on an ongoing basis
21 with the board of commissioners here, and also
22 the things that Tom reports on annually in our
23 annual plan coming from this document. But, it

1 hasn't been updated in a while, so we felt like
2 it was time to do that and really look at what
3 we're evaluating within there as well.

4 So on an annual basis and actually on a
5 monthly basis, we do evaluate our weekday riders,
6 our riders per revenue hour, certain metrics. We
7 want to take a new look at what we're evaluating
8 and how we're evaluating them as well.

9 So there's an example of the cover of the
10 new version, a little bit more stylized, a little
11 bit more approachable. We really wanted to, like
12 I said, update and replace the guidelines that we
13 have today. And it's written for a more global
14 consumption. So we're including a glossary of
15 terms. As everyone in this room knows, we use a
16 lot of acronyms in the transit and transportation
17 world, and not everyone knows those acronyms and
18 the terms we're using. We also have a frequently
19 asked questions section as part of that document.
20 So we address the things like, how come my bus
21 only comes every half hour? I was here earlier.
22 How come there's no bus near me? So we're trying
23 to provide that information at the get-go.

1 And another thing I wanted to mention in
2 this part is that we have a detailed staff center
3 evaluation process for transparency. We want the
4 public to know how we evaluate our services and
5 our routes and why we make changes, that we don't
6 do things in a vacuum, that we're really doing
7 the standard process that we go through to see
8 where those things lie.

9 And, lastly, and most importantly, we've
10 included some equity tools within there to start
11 looking at geographic equity of our services
12 within the region. That's kind of something new
13 that we do now on a tacit basis, but nothing that
14 we really put out there to the public. And we
15 thought it was important for the board and the
16 public to see that these are things that we do
17 internally that focus on equity.

18 So on the right-hand side is an example of
19 how we're doing some of these equity measures as
20 well. But really in the service design part of
21 the document, we're looking at the physical part
22 of service. So where does the bus go? Where do
23 I get on a stop? Does that stop have a shelter

1 or not? Why does it have a shelter or not?
2 Where are our transit centers? And those kind of
3 elements. So when you hear service design, think
4 of kind of the physical portions of our service
5 that you can point to, the tangible portion of
6 our service.

7 We're also creating a five-factor transit
8 need index. So we're not only looking at kind of
9 the origin parts of that which are the
10 traditional parts of a transit need index, where
11 are the individuals with low-income households,
12 where are the individuals from households that
13 don't have access to a vehicle, we're also
14 looking at the destination portion of that which
15 is really important in terms of where are the
16 jobs that these individuals are trying to get to?

17 So service delivery is kind of the other
18 part of the service design. Right? So the
19 service design is the physical part. Delivery is
20 kind of the quantitative part of well, how long
21 do those services operate in a day? Is it a
22 twenty-hour service day or is it a ten-hour
23 service day? How frequently does my bus come if

1 I'm in one of these groupings.

2 On-time performance, Tom kind of already hit
3 on earlier, but we should have different on-time
4 performance standards based on our different
5 types of services, whether they're core or
6 supportive, because they are designed
7 differently. And then productivity and service
8 capacity obviously are measures that we put back
9 to the board in terms of revenue hours, passenger
10 per revenue hours, loads of passengers on a
11 vehicle.

12 And as Tom mentioned, in the right-hand
13 image there, you'll see that there's going to be
14 bus rapid transit discussion as part of this
15 document and on-demand microtransit as part of
16 the document. You may be saying, well, we don't
17 have services like that. Well, we want to be
18 able to future-proof the document so that it's
19 not out of date in the future when we do go to
20 implement those. We want to have a guide to look
21 back on and say, well, why did NFTA create this
22 BRT service like this? Well, we created it like
23 this because we have standards that allow us

1 to -- tell us what frequency a bus rapid transit
2 service should be on.

3 So the evaluation process. We have two
4 slides on evaluation process. Right now we have
5 kind of a rigid look at our evaluation. So we
6 have specific target metrics that Tom presents
7 every year in our annual report. And those
8 target metrics say something like frequent
9 services will have twenty-four riders per revenue
10 hour. And that's great. That's a great target
11 metric. But, now, COVID happens and none of
12 those routes are going to have twenty-four
13 passengers per revenue hour so we didn't hit our
14 target on any of those.

15 What we're trying to do is create a
16 comparative analysis so these comparative
17 statistics look at, well, amongst this grouping
18 of routes, what is the average and what's above
19 and below that average. Are they all kind of
20 meeting around the average of that grouping?
21 Should some be moved up a group, should some be
22 dropped down a group. If they are not meeting
23 their goals, should we look at changing that

1 service to make them more productive. If they're
2 exceeding the goals, should we change that
3 category so we can provide more service in those
4 areas. So it's really a more dynamic way of
5 looking at how we evaluate our service, but isn't
6 as rigid as we had before.

7 And the second part of that evolution
8 process is all the different things we kind of
9 roll into there, all the different metrics.
10 They're all important to us. Fare box recovery
11 obviously is very important to us as an agency.
12 But looking at passenger load percentage, looking
13 at different segments of our service and what's
14 productive and what isn't.

15 The last point there is the transit need
16 index is going to be the real driving force
17 behind all of these. If we have service areas
18 where we see a high level of transit need, are we
19 providing adequate service to those.

20 The image at the bottom kind of discusses
21 our process. So at the beginning part, point
22 one, is either a customer, staff or community
23 feedback. So when it says staff, it doesn't just

1 mean myself or Kim or Tom or anyone in this room,
2 but it could also be coming from a driver. As
3 Tom mentioned, we recently had a change because a
4 driver recommendation. It could be coming from a
5 passenger. It could be a budgetary driven
6 decision.

7 And then we kind of move along to the right
8 through these eight steps that include
9 evaluation, public input, final approval by the
10 board, communication back to our riders and then
11 kind of speeding back to that system so that
12 we're always looking at the value of services
13 that we have out there and we're not stagnant so
14 we can respond to our community.

15 So next steps. I tried to go through that
16 pretty quickly. There aren't any, you know,
17 pictures of fire trucks or anything that exciting
18 here, but hopefully when you get the report,
19 you'll see the amount of work that we put into it
20 and Helen's group (inaudible) with a lot of the
21 design of the graphics and whatnot. I think it's
22 a really exciting kind of experience here since
23 it's been eight years since we provided that

1 document. As Tom had mentioned, a lot has
2 changed. So we're going to finalize that
3 document basically within the next week or so, do
4 any edits we need to to the graphics and
5 supporting information for those documents. I
6 mentioned we're going to bring it back to the
7 board in March for approval. Kind of expect it
8 in your inbox over the next couple of weeks once
9 it's finalized.

10 And then, lastly, we're going to utilize
11 these guidelines to direct our upcoming service
12 changes and plans. So 2021 is going to be a year
13 of potentially a lot of change, depending on
14 where our budget goes. This, as I said, is the
15 or the framework for making some of those
16 changes. We need to make changes that, you know,
17 go back to these categories and say, if we're
18 going to make these changes, here's kind of how
19 we provide that service and be defensible and
20 make logical sense for not only the board but for
21 our community.

22 So that's all I have in terms of the
23 presentation. When you get the document, don't

1 be scared. It is fifty pages. There are a lot
2 of graphics and fifteen of those are an appendix.

3 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: It will be good to get all of
4 that in fifty pages. That sounds like a lot of
5 information.

6 MR. JONES: I can make it longer if you'd like.

7 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Are there any questions?

8 That's a very good report. We look forward
9 to reading it.

10 MR. JONES: Thank you.

11 MS. MINKEL: So I will be e-mailing it to the board
12 late next week or early the following week as
13 soon as we get that finished. If you have
14 questions, feel free to reach out directly to me
15 or to Tom. Of course some of you I know that
16 you've expressed interest in our service, so some
17 of you I may end up calling directly to get your
18 feedback so that we can make certain that we
19 incorporate any comments that you have within the
20 document. As Rob indicated, this is an
21 improvement -- really a dramatic improvement upon
22 what we have. We're trying to be more responsive
23 to the community. What we had before was pretty

1 rigid and we've heard that. We've listened,
2 we've heard and now we're trying to respond to
3 meet those community needs. So what we're
4 bringing to the board in March will be much
5 improved upon what we have.

6 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: That's great. Great work. And
7 there is no need for executive --

8 COMMISSIONER AUL: Look forward to it, Kim.

9 MS. MINKEL: Great. And thank you, Joan.

10 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: There is no need for an
11 executive session today, so I would ask for a
12 motion to adjourn.

13 Anyone?

14 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: So moved.

15 COMMISSIONER AUL: Joan Aul. So moved -- second.

16 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you. And second.

17 MS. MINKEL: Great. Thank you all.

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STATE OF NEW YORK)
SS:
COUNTY OF NIAGARA)

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