



November 20, 2014

To: Human Resources Committee
Fox Cities Transit Commission
Finance Committee

From: Deborah Wetter, General Manager
Sal La Puma, Assistant General Manager

Subject: Approval for Table of Organization Change Replacing the Vacant Operations Supervisor Position with Two Full-time Road Supervisor Positions and Eliminating One Part-Time Bus Operator Position.

In October, the Valley Transit Operations Supervisor position became vacant. As has been our practice over the last several years, we evaluate vacancies when they arise in order to best meet our needs in the ever-changing environment we operate in. We have evaluated the role of this position and have found that two entry-level Road Supervisor positions would fill the needs of Valley Transit more effectively than one Operations Supervisor. We are requesting to replace the vacant Operations Supervisor position with two Road Supervisor positions. The positions would be funded by the vacant Operations Supervisor dollars and one part-time driver position which will be eliminated as it is now vacant.

Valley Transit has needed additional day-to-day operations oversight for a number of years. The operations staff consistently is required to work more than 40 hours a week to provide coverage during all the hours of operation. We have supplemented the coverage with Communication Technicians (Comm Techs) at the Transit Center during the evening hours and on Saturday. The Comm Techs are doing a good job of providing customer service, but they are union positions and can't make the management decisions that often need to be made nor can they respond to accidents, investigate and resolve customer complaints, do ride checks on bus drivers or handle detour decisions and signing.

In addition, the increased ridership coupled with a less experienced bus driver population resulting from the large number of retirements in the last few years, mean that more customer and operations situations present themselves daily that need supervisor oversight and involvement. As is reflected in the chart below, the number of hours of coverage needed exceeds the number of hours available from the three existing employees plus one more operations person. The need is for five full time employees to adequately cover the existing work that needs to be done. Under our current staffing levels, employees who are tasked with

other duties are being called away from their assignments to deal with day-to-day fixed route operations issues.

Hours of operation	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>
Weekday 4:30 am - 10:30 pm (18 hours per day)	4,680	90
Saturday 6:30 am - 10:00 pm	832	16
Total hours (6 days per week)	5,512	106
Additional hours needed for training, events and emergencies	276	5.3
Less hours for holidays closed (6)	<u>(106)</u>	<u>(2)</u>
Annual/weekly hours of operation	5,682	109
Current staff hours available for coverage	<u>(1,910)</u>	<u>(37)</u>
Remaining hours to cover	3,771	73
	Hours budgeted for day to day street operations	
Current Employees (based on 2,080 hours)	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>
Assistant General Manager (33%)	686	13
Maintenance/Operations Supervisor (50%)	1,040	20
Paratransit/Operations Supervisor (40%)	<u>832</u>	<u>16</u>
	2,558	49
Less Vacation and Holiday hours	<u>(648)</u>	<u>(12)</u>
Hours of coverage by available staff	1,910	37
One operations supervisor available hours	2,080	40
Less vacation and holiday	<u>(176)</u>	<u>(3)</u>
Available hours of coverage by one operations supervisor	1,904	37
Number of supervisors needed (Remaining hours/Ops super availability)	1.98	1.98

Increased supervisory presence at the Transit Center, on the buses and out in our service area would be another benefit of an additional supervisory position. Having a supervisor present at the Transit Center allows customers and bus drivers to get their questions and concerns dealt with quickly so that bus schedules are not disrupted. With the increased ridership by the Appleton Area School District over the last few years, there are more young people at the Transit Center in the afternoon and early evening which can lead to horseplay and annoyance to other customers. Having a supervisor on site during these hours will minimize the disruptions and lead to quick resolution of any problems.

When the population of the Fox Cities went over 200,000, Valley Transit became classified as a "large" transit system. Additional record-keeping, reporting and audits are required to be performed by staff. Managers must spend more time monitoring services, documenting

performance and continuing to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. The last audit that was done by the Wisconsin DOT included the recommendation that Valley Transit needed a position to more closely monitor the performance of the \$3.5 million paratransit operation that Valley Transit oversees. The position should be focusing on paratransit 60% of her time, but with the increasing fixed route oversight needs, she is spending more time with fixed route operations to the detriment of the paratransit operation. Sixty percent of the local share for this position is budgeted in paratransit and is paid by the paratransit funding partners. When the employee does not spend the allocated time working on paratransit duties and is, instead, working on fixed route operations, the local share for this position is shifted to the municipalities.

The addition of two operations positions to replace one Operations Supervisor position will allow the three existing managers/supervisors the time to focus on maintenance, planning and scheduling changes needed, oversight of the operation to improve efficiency and effectiveness, improved documentation of policies and procedures, increased involvement of employees in improving day-to-day operations including better on-time performance, enhanced safety culture, decreased accidents/incidents and improved customer service.

Based on a quick evaluation by the compensation consultant, we anticipate that the Road Supervisor position would be a Grade I with an hourly rate of approximately \$25.00/hour which is roughly 10% above the hourly rate of the Valley Transit bus operator position (\$22.50). The position will be exempt with no overtime.

The primary office for the Road Supervisors will be the Transit Center which will give more staff presence at the Transit Center throughout the day, evening and on Saturday. The position will also be responsible for handling sign/detour and shelter issues during their shifts. As the Fox Cities have grown, there are an increased number of detours, street closures and re-routing needed for events, street improvement projects, winter weather that makes operation on some streets very difficult and changing transit customer needs and usage. Having the position at the Transit Center will also facilitate faster response to vehicle breakdowns. Additional management personnel on the buses and at the Transit Center will also help Valley Transit to meet its Federal requirement to spend a minimum of 1% of Federal Grant dollars received on security enhancements.

The Operations Supervisor position is budgeted at \$93,338 (including benefits) and the budget for a full-time Road Supervisor with benefits is approximately \$74,750. Without increasing the 2015 budget, we will not be able to fund two full-time Road Supervisors immediately. We would like to fill one Road Supervisor position now and fill the other part way through 2015 using the salary dollars from a vacant part-time Bus Operator position that will be eliminated from the Table of Organization added to the remaining Operations Supervisor budget. We will be able to fund the second Road Supervisor position from May through December 2015 within the proposed 2015 budget.

We don't expect the part-time bus operator position to be needed in 2015. Because of the number of retirements of bus operators in the last four years, the amount of vacation time we need to cover each year is less and means we can operate with only two part-time bus operator

positions instead of three. As the drivers gain longevity or if we add fixed route services, we will need additional bus operator positions and would request them at that time.

Funding requirements for the Road Supervisor positions and the budget for both the existing Operations Supervisor position and a part-time bus operator is attached. The additional budget that will be needed to fund two full-time road supervisor positions is approximately \$30,000. At least 56.4% of that will be covered by state and federal transit operating funds, leaving \$13,000 to be funded by other revenue in 2016 and beyond.

Recommendation: Approve changing the Valley Transit Table of Organization to replace the vacant Operations Supervisor Position with two full-time Road Supervisor Positions and eliminate one part-time Bus Operator position.