

Resolution #25-0289
2025 Resolution Book, Page 116

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PROCUREMENT OF GILLIG 29' CLEAN DIESEL BUSES FOR THE WINSTON-SALEM TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA) currently operates a fleet of 45 hybrid-electric buses to provide fixed-route service across a network of 28 routes in Winston-Salem; and

WHEREAS, more than 50% of the fleet, 24 buses, have exceeded their useful life (12 years or 500,000 miles per the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)), resulting in increased maintenance needs and reduced reliability; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the City was awarded funding through the FTA's Low and No Emission Vehicle Grant Program, which awarded funds for the procurement of five new diesel-electric buses expected to be delivered by the end of 2026; and

WHEREAS, in addition to this grant, the City has secured \$7.6 million in funding through the Winston-Salem Area Transportation Planning Organization (WSATPO) Flexible Funding Program, with the required local match allocated in the City's capital plan; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation has been actively exploring strategies to maximize the impact of these funds and accelerate fleet replacement; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends utilizing available funding to purchase up to seven, 29-foot clean diesel buses to replace our aging fleet and 2 hybrid electric 35 ft buses; and

WHEREAS, while this procurement represents a temporary shift from the City's long-term sustainability goals, it is a necessary step given current operational demands and budget constraints; and

WHEREAS, the cost of procuring a single hybrid electric bus is estimated at \$1.2 million while the Gillig 29-foot clean diesel bus, fitted for the technology utilized at WSTA, is estimated at \$700,000, essentially increasing buying power by 40% if purchased; and

WHEREAS, the delivery projection for hybrid-electric buses is estimated between 12 to 16 months from the issuance of the purchase order while, clean diesel buses have an estimated timeline of 6 to 12 months; and

WHEREAS, WSTA's recent maintenance report highlights some significant concerns related to the reliability of the fixed route buses such as a 100% increase in road calls in fiscal year 2025 when compared with fiscal year 2024; and

WHEREAS, while clean diesel buses are not zero-emission, modern clean diesel technology offers substantial environmental improvements over previous generations; and

WHEREAS, a new clean-diesel bus is expected to travel between 5 and 5.5 miles per gallon of diesel fuel, which offers about 30% - 35% better fuel efficiency over the current fleet; and

WHEREAS, this approach represents a balanced, data-driven response to immediate service needs, while allowing the City to remain committed to long-term sustainability goals as new funding and technologies become available; and

WHEREAS, to demonstrate commitment to the City of Winston-Salem's sustainability goals, WSDOT applied to the FY25 Low and No Emissions grant program with the intent to

repeat our successful 2024 award from FTA and purchase five hybrid electric buses consistent once again with the City's clean initiatives; and

WHEREAS, approval of this resolution would authorize a one-time procurement of up to seven Gillig 29' Clean-Diesel Buses with the sole focus of leveraging available funds to their fullest potential; and

WHEREAS, the current fleet replacement schedule is far behind our replacement rate of 4 buses per year and as result staff recommends an intentional effort to maximize buying power to make our system more reliable by purchasing 7 clean diesel buses and 2 hybrid electric buses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and the City Council of the City of Winston-Salem hereby authorizes the procurement of seven Gillig 29' clean diesel buses for WSTA.