



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, August 29, 2018**

Present: Scott Bogle (Arr. 8:34), Arthur Capello, Jennifer Decker, Colin Lentz, Julian Long, Marty Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Dennis Shanahan, Juliet Walker (Arr. 8:33), and Thomas Wright

Absent: Steve Fournier, Denis Hebert, Maria Stowell and Shelly Winters

Staff: Rad Nichols, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, Michael Williams

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM. Introductions of all present were made.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pepin made a motion to accept the July 25, 2018 minutes as presented and Mr. Shanahan seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols reported there was no public comment.

IV. Financial Report – June Financials

Mr. Long reported that we saw an increase in Farebox Revenue and an increase in Advertising Revenue collections in July. He noted that wages and fringe benefits are under budget for the year but were higher in July due to continued significant overtime costs because of vacations, staff on medical leaves, and new staff in training. Additionally, an engine was rebuilt in July which increased the Materials and Supplies line by nearly \$20,000. Mr. Bogle noted that there will be a Diesel Engine Retrofit presentation at the next RPC TAC meeting, but Mr. Williams shared that his experience is that the parameters required for such a retrofit are too tight for COAST. Mr. Long noted that year-to-date, COAST has gained just under \$36,000.

V. Old Business

Operator Shortage Update

Unfortunately, the last training class of five FT & PT operators has only resulted in two employees being retained. We also continue to have numerous unexpected or anticipated operators on various forms and lengths of FMLA leave. We are just beginning to see the peak of summer vacations begin to taper off.

We are in a hiring push for Demand Response operators as we ramp up for the launch of Portsmouth Senior Transportation and have unexpectedly lost a couple of staff in this part of the operation just recently for extended leaves of absence.

COAST champions and provides customer-focused public transportation with a commitment to excellence in safety and service.

Route 7 On-Demand Service

In July we operated just over 60% of the service we would have otherwise operated when the Route was operated as a fixed-route. While ridership was down, most likely due to the changes that occurred and riders still getting used to the new reservation-based requirements, overall productivity was very close to what it had been averaging previously. We expect that we will continue to see productivity improve as riders become more accustomed to the new service model and begin to use it more frequently again. We do not expect to have enough data to really assess the true impacts of the change in service until six months out from the implemented changes.

Systemwide Retiming

Nearly all routes have seen marked improvements in on-time performance through the summer, which is also the peak construction period. The routes most heavily impacted by construction and detours should continue to see marked improvements as construction and summertime traffic begin to wind down in the early fall. Passengers are getting used to the new schedules, although ridership was off in July, most likely due to all the changes implemented. Real-time bus information, available via mobile app, will soon be available and will be very helpful for riders.

Software Procurements

In early August, TripLink started using new demand response scheduling software. As with any software launch, there are any number of issues that rose to the surface during the transition, some of which are more significant than others. Staff continues to become more familiar with how to work with the new software and help our customers with changes that resulted from this transition. We continue to see significant improvements in overall scheduling efficiencies, resulting in cost savings for all our DR operations.

Staff has moved ahead with Remix, which the Board saw a Demo of at the July meeting, and staff have been receiving training and are using the software.

Staff is in final negotiations on a three-year contract for a new real-time bus information system. The final price has been negotiated. A service contract and terms are the remaining pieces of the procurement to put in place. The contract will add approximately \$28,000 in annual subscription, hosting, maintenance, support and communications charges to the operating budget. The benefit of the new functionality for our passengers will be tremendous. Mr. Nichols noted he hopes this will be online 8-10 weeks after the contract is signed.

VI. New Business

ACTION ITEMS:

Action Item #1: Draft Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has released new requirements for transit agencies regarding asset management. The regulations require all recipients and subrecipients of Federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 to prepare a Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP). As a recipient of these funds, COAST has developed this plan.

To maximize the effectiveness and clarity of our policy and plan documents, COAST has also included the content from our former Vehicle Maintenance Plan and Facility Maintenance Plan

into this plan to create a single plan encompassing all aspects of asset management at COAST. Therefore, this plan is designed to satisfy the FTA requirements for a Transit Asset Management Plan, a Fleet Management Plan, and all other relevant maintenance plans, checklists, and requirements.

As COAST gains more experience in working with this Plan and a more formal asset management approach, staff envision the Plan being more inclusive of equipment not currently meeting the dollar thresholds for inclusion. These will be voluntary inclusions that will assist staff go above and beyond FTA expectations and requirements.

The Board is being asked to adopt the philosophy of the plan for approaching transit asset management and maintenance at COAST that the Plan represents. That said, this document will require near constant editing as our assets change and other minor modifications are necessary. These changes are anticipated to be made by staff on an ongoing basis as "administrative adjustments". Any changes proposed for the overarching philosophies contained within the Plan, would be the basis for the Plan to be brought back to the Board for discussion and approval.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors adopt the drafted Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan and the envisioned strategy for keeping it up to date and relevant.*

Mr. Williams presented information about the new Plan noting that the current Vehicle Maintenance Plans and Facility Maintenance Plans have been merged and will be part of the new Transit Asset Management Plan. The Transit Asset Management Plan will include schedules and checklists and must be in place by October 1, 2018. Mr. Williams indicated that any change in the underlying philosophy would lead to the Plan being brought back to the Board for approval. Smaller changes, however, are expected so the document is always reflective of the current situation at COAST.

Mr. Shanahan asked if the bus shelter agreement had rolled over into the Plan and Mr. Williams reported it had. Mr. Bogle asked if the Plan is reflective of the facility condition or whether the facility meets the organization's needs. Mr. Nichols noted that the plan merely reflects the condition of the assets of the organization, not whether the asset is adequate for our needs.

Ms. Walker made a motion to adopt the underlying philosophy of the drafted Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan and the envisioned strategy for keeping it up to date and relevant and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Committee Reports

Ad Hoc Strategic Objectives Committee

The Committee met on August 8. Action items coming out of the meeting for the members to work on addressing included the following:

- Develop an elevator speech for members to help recruit new Board members
- Contact identified individuals to reach out about open Board seats members would like them to consider filling (Housing Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Business)
- Provide speaking points for members after each BOD meeting
- Add Human Transit discussion points to Board Meetings
- Reach out to NH Center for Nonprofits for fundraising/development guidance
- Identify members of NH Legislatures Transportation and Ways and Means Committees

- Prepare and encourage Board members to speak with their legislators on key topics and points

Mr. Sandmann noted that the Board needs to do a better job educating state legislators about the benefits of public transportation as well as the transportation needs of our residents. Mr. Wright offered to help with contacts in the Maine Legislature's Transportation Committee.

Mr. Sandmann noted that letters have been drafted to the Town of Exeter, the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Portsmouth Housing Authority requesting that a representative be appointed to the COAST Board.

Mr. Nichols noted that at the Annual Meeting, members will be presented with a copy of the book Human Transit by Jarrett Walker. At the October meeting, members will be presented with discussion points from the book Human Transit.

Executive Committee: Did not meet.

Board Development Committee: Did not meet.

Discussion Items

Discussion Item #1: Portsmouth Senior Transportation Launch

Mr. Williams presented an overview of the services being initiated on October 1 under our agreement with the City of Portsmouth. Staff have been working hard to prepare for the launch of the service that will provide rides through Demand Response Operators and Volunteer Drivers to Portsmouth residents 62+ years of age or individuals aged 18-61 with a disability. Medical trips will be provided for free and the hope is to have these rides provided by Volunteer Drivers. Trips will be provided for shopping, caregiving and other senior activities. Rides can be reserved up to 30 days out but there are requirements regarding how close to the ride requests can be made for each kind of trip.

Mr. Williams spoke about the public outreach efforts staff have made including 3 Senior Luncheons, presentations at the Portsmouth Housing Authority and the Portsmouth Public Library as well as training sessions for staff of various area agencies. Staff are working diligently to recruit volunteers to provide medical trips. If a Volunteer Driver is not available, the ride is guaranteed to be provided by a COAST Demand Response Operator.

All those registered with Wentworth Senior Living received a Welcome Packet and more than 40 people are already approved for COAST's service. We anticipate around 110 registered riders as a start and expect it to grow. COAST has purchased two new vehicles to ensure capacity for this service.

Members of the public will also be able to ride this service, however they will have to pay the full cost of their trip (\$6.50 per direct mile).

Discussion Item #2: FY19 Draft Operating Budget Presentation

Mr. Nichols presented the FY19 Operating Budget which represents an overall budget increase of 7.4% (\$439,038) due mostly to expended operations paid for by contracts. The FY19 Draft Operating Budget is based on FY18 actuals through June of 2018 with anticipated adjustments

then added. The increase in the budget is attributed mostly to the Operations portion of the budget (7.3% of the 7.4% overall budget increase).

The draft budget projects an overall expense growth rate of between 2.25 and 15% of FY18 actuals. The budget supports full staffing levels and expands the DR portion of our operations through the inclusion of Portsmouth Senior Transportation into the budget. The draft budget continues to increase reliance on outside service providers for some administrative and operational functions. Municipal credits for allowing bus shelter advertising are incorporated into the draft budget. The draft budget anticipates approximately 97% of requested municipal funds to be raised.

The draft budget projects a 15% rise in Property and Liability coverage costs based on very poor commercial vehicle experience nationwide and projects a lower growth rate in expenses associated with the ADA program than in years past, largely due to increased scheduling efficiencies by TripLink.

The draft budget incorporates the newly retimed schedules and contracted services and incorporates an overall 2.25% increase in pay rates. Fringe benefits are projected to increase by 10%.

Adjustments were made to Contract Services due to expanding use of outside service providers, for Material and Supplies due to the anticipated increase in fuel costs and expected repairs for our aging fleet/facility, and Insurance due to an anticipated notable rise in our property/liability coverage.

Mr. Nichols stated this is the first time in several years that COAST is presenting a balanced budget. Ms. Walker asked if capital needs were incorporated in this budget and Mr. Nichols noted that capital a capital plan should be presented at the September meeting.

Discussion Item #3: 2020 Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) Update
Staff gave an overview on the progress to date on the initiation of the COA.

An internal staff announcement was put out in early August to make sure our staff was aware of the project before the public.

Staff is preparing for public outreach meetings by working with NH Listens and securing spaces in each of the communities where these meetings can be held (and that are served by COAST buses at the appropriate time). Board members will be given all the dates for these meetings, as well as talking points.

Mr. Nichols has attended Somersworth, Rochester and Farmington Council meetings and will be presenting at Portsmouth in the coming week. All Chambers of Commerce have been contacted.

The Steering Committee has been formed and had their first meeting was held on 8/28. The Committee is made up of Mr. Long from Rochester, Mr. Bogle from Rockingham Planning Commission, Mr. Belmore from Somersworth, Ms. Benton from Dover and Ms. Walker from Portsmouth.

Staff is working on identifying stakeholders that should be included in this project. COAST will need Board members to help engage their networks in the process.

Very soon a landing page will appear on our website and a press release will be put out to our usual outlets. In addition, COAST will utilize our social media outlets to help educate and get the word out.

Staff is working on cleaning up the data they've collected and used in the past. Staff has moved ahead with the Remix software tool, which we will be incredibly helpful in the planning process. The cleaned-up data will be helpful in developing layers in Remix.

There will be many opportunities for people to engage in this process and participate in a meaningful way.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

York County Community Action Committee (YCCAC)

COAST has been asked to sign a non-binding letter of intent to participate in a potential new brokerage in York County for Medicaid non-emergency transportation services. COAST would only be expected to provide trips within the border communities of Berwick, S. Berwick, Eliot and Kittery and to/from NH. Mr. Nichols noted that, if it makes business sense for us to do so, we will consider participating in this brokerage.

TripLink

Another notable program within the region has begun serious discussions about their desire to rely upon TripLink for their call and reservation taking, as well as operator and vehicle scheduling. At that point TripLink would have eight separate transportation programs that they would be coordinating on behalf of four agencies in the region. It is very possible for that number to climb to ten programs and five agencies within the next six to twelve months. TripLink is considered a leading agency doing this work state-wide.

Ridership

Ridership data was presented with the Board packet. Mr. Nichols noted that the dip in July numbers is partly a natural (and annual) dip but that it may be due to the retiming of routes.

PNSY

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is continuing to hire, and we are seeing new riders signup as a result. COAST was mentioned in a recent newspaper article in relation to the parking crunch and we hope to be part of an upcoming study on parking.

Workforce Housing Charrette

Mr. Long reminded members that there will be a Workforce Housing Charrette on September 26 and September 28 at the Rochester Performance & Arts Center.

New Shelters in Dover

Mr. Williams noted that Dover has just installed new and replacement shelters.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Lentz made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Bogle. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.