



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
DRAFT Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 31, 2018**

Present: Donna Benton, Scott Bogle, Arthur Capello, Denis Hebert, Colin Lentz (Arr. 1:05 pm), Julian Long, Marty Pepin, Dave Sharples, Dave Sandmann, Dennis Shanahan and Maria Stowell

Absent: Steve Fournier, Juliet Walker, Thomas Wright and Shelley Winters

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

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Long made a motion to accept the September 26, 2018 minutes as presented and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. Ms. Benton, Mr. Bogle, Mr. Capello, Mr. Hebert, Mr. Long, Mr. Shanahan and Ms. Stowell voted yes. Mr. Pepin abstained.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Sandmann read a letter of resignation from Ms. Jennifer Decker who is leaving Granite State Independent Living, the organization she represented, so she will no longer serve on the Board.

Two staff reached 10 years with COAST this fall. Mr. Don Spencer, Operations Supervisor, has been with COAST since September of 2008 and Mr. Keith Dusinlleux, Dispatcher, has been with COAST since November 2008. Due to the change in the October meeting time, staff were not able to attend to be recognized, as both work morning shifts. Mr. Spencer and Mr. Dusinlleux will be recognized at the November meeting.

Mr. Capello praised efforts of staff at the Farmington Public Forum. Mr. Sandmann also noted that the Portsmouth and Dover morning meetings were very well run. Mr. Lentz noted the presence of a large business at the Rochester Forum and was pleased at their engagement in the process. Mr. Bogle noted the presence of a State Legislator Peter Somssich at the Community Campus Meeting.

IV. Financial Report

Farebox and Contract Revenue saw increases due to strong collections of contract revenue. Advertising Revenue may appear off, but it is due to year-end adjustments for sharing of revenues with communities who allow advertising on shelters. Next year we'll make those adjustments throughout the year. Interest and other income is up due to significant sales of scrap.

Wages were down due, in part, to a shorter month. Fringe Benefits include an end of year adjustment. Mr. Nichols noted that there was less unused PTO at the end of this year than we had at the end of last year. Materials and Supplies are lower than they have been, however,

they ended the year 2.7% over budget. Utilities captures expenses from both 42 and 6 and ended the year under budget. Insurance rates were better than projected (even with the growth of the fleet) and ended under budget. The Coordination budget was over by 1.2% and the TMA ended the year under budget by 10%.

Overall, COAST ended the year with a gross gain of \$46,000, which is better than we'd budgeted. We were under budget both in income and expenses. Our Unrestricted Net Assets ended the year at 13.4% having started the year at 15.5%. This is still far below our goal of 30.1%.

V. Old Business

Portsmouth Senior Transportation (1st month)

The first transition month with Portsmouth Senior Transportation has gone well. While there have been some bumps in the road as riders and our staff have worked through the operational changes, they have been minimal overall.

The part of COAST that has been most greatly impacted by the addition of Portsmouth Senior Transportation is TripLink (the Call Center). TripLink has seen an increase in call volumes and call durations due to the many new clients and the many services scheduling through TripLink. Staff is to be commended for their efforts to ensure everyone gets a response and receives a consistently positive customer response.

COA Update

In the past month, staff have been focused on the marketing, preparation and hosting of the six public forums held to date in this first round of public outreach. Except for Farmington and Dover's forum at Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (20+ attendees), the meetings have been lightly attended (averaging 7-10 attendees). That said, those who have attended have been very engaged and very appreciative of the process we have used to explain the tradeoffs we must consider and will ultimately use to guide our service planning.

We are also in the process of finalizing an online and in-bus survey that will complement the forums. We hope to release that survey by mid-November.

HealthTrust Renewal Rate Increases

COAST's health-related employee insurances continues to be provided through HealthTrust. Our employees and HR staff continue to find HealthTrust to be very responsive to our needs and there have been very limited, if any, issues with coverage when our employees have needed it.

The rate increases for the CY19 coverage period are below.

Health Insurance	+2.3%
Dental Insurance	+2.3%
Short-Term Disability	-6.6%
Long-Term Disability	0.0%
Life Insurance	0.0%

Property & Liability Insurance Renewal Rates

Once again this year, as has been the case for the past three years, Cross Insurance (our broker) marketed the auto-related components of our insurance business to a wide range of insurance carriers. Unfortunately, despite our very good experience, we have one large outstanding reserve that has resulted in only a single insurer willing to bid for our work.

Overall our property and liability insurance increase will be just under 10%.

VI. New Business

Action Items

Action Item #1: Acceptance of New Board Member Appointments

Exeter - At their October 1 meeting, the Exeter Selectboard voted to appoint Town Planner Dave Sharples as Exeter's representative to the COAST Board of Directors. Additionally, the Selectboard voted to appoint Town Administrator, Russell Dean, as Exeter's alternate member.

RPC – the Rockingham Planning Commission has informed us that their Executive Director Tim Roache will serve as the organization's alternate member

SRPC – the Strafford Regional Planning Commission has informed us that their Executive Director Jen Czysz will serve as the organization's alternate member.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors accept the appointments of Mr. Sharples, Mr. Dean, Mr. Roache and Ms. Czysz to represent their Town or organization on the COAST Board of Directors.*

Mr. Hebert made a motion to accept the appointments of Mr. Sharples, Mr. Dean, Mr. Roache and Ms. Czysz to the COAST Board of Directors. Mr. Pepin seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Action Item #2: Nominations for Secretary

At the end of the Annual meeting in September, Ms. Decker notified Mr. Sandmann and Mr. Nichols that she had accepted a new position and would have to step down from her seat on the COAST Board of Directors. Ms. Decker had just been re-elected

Dennis Shanahan has been recommended for nomination as Secretary for the upcoming fiscal year.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors accept the nomination of Dennis Shanahan as Secretary of the Board to be voted on at the December meeting.*

Mr. Capello made the motion to accept the nomination of Mr. Shanahan as Secretary and Mr. Bogle seconded. All voted in favor. Mr. Nichols noted that 30 days' notice to the Board is required and that the November Board meeting will occur in less than 30 days, so the vote will take place at the December Board meeting.

Action Item #3: Proposed Route 6 Service Adjustment

Due to where we now store the Route 6 vehicle and changes implemented with the recent retiming project, there is now a 5-hour gap between northbound runs to Farmington (between 11:46am and 4:48pm). We have heard from passengers that this gap is one of the single biggest issues with the current route. Ultimately, fixing this issue would positively impact ridership and be responsive to our customers where recent changes have resulted in unforeseen negative impacts.

Ideally, if the bus could be stored in Farmington once again, we would be able to operate a northbound run departing the Lilac Mall sometime between 1:15 and 1:30pm, without having to incur the costs of deadheading back to Rochester to park the bus between shifts. This would reduce the gap between afternoon northbound runs to just over 3 hours, and with very few additional costs.

Alternatively, we could add an early afternoon northbound run (departing the Lilac Mall sometime between 1:15 and 1:30pm), to reduce the afternoon northbound service gap to just over 3 hours but would incur the additional costs associated with this service extension and deadheading the bus back to its storage spot in Rochester. Under this scenario, we would incur roughly 165 to 230 additional pay hours per year. We estimate that the direct costs associated with this number of additional pay hours and miles of operation would range between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

Action Required: That the Board of Directors consider whether to support a proposed Route 6 service adjustment and reduce the early afternoon northbound service gap from approximately 5 hours to just over 3 hours.

Mr. Pepin made a motion to support the proposed Route 6 service adjustment and reduce the early afternoon northbound service gap to just over 3 hours. Mr. Shanahan seconded the motion. The following discussion occurred prior to a vote.

Mr. Capello and Mr. Nichols were able to discuss placement of the Route 6 bus back in Farmington overnight and on weekends just prior to the meeting. This would allow for significant cost savings. If the bus were relocated in Farmington it would cost us virtually nothing to make this change. If we are not able to keep the bus in Farmington it would be an increase of \$5-\$7K in the current fiscal year.

Mr. Long inquired about how COAST would make up any additional cost incurred. Mr. Nichols noted it could impact everyone's municipal ask.

Mr. Pepin praised Farmington for its turnout at the Public Forum and for participating in the process.

Mr. Lentz asked about the possibility of storing more of our buses along the routes. Mr. Nichols stated we wouldn't do this on a much broader basis than we do today. He noted that we need to have eyes on the buses; when they're on the yard we can respond to any concerns. In addition, we do all of our fueling and cleaning at COAST. He noted that the Farmington vehicle is swapped out once a week and is fueled up there, but doesn't get the regular cleaning and detailing it would get if stored at COAST's operations and maintenance facility.

Regarding the motion made by Mr. Pepin and seconded by Mr. Shanahan, all voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Capello who abstained.

Committee Reports

Neither the Executive Committee nor Board Development Committee met in the past month.

Discussion Items

Discussion Item #1: Introduction to Service Guidelines for the COA Planning Framework

Mr. Williams made a presentation reviewing the tradeoffs being explored at the COA Public Forums. Mr. Williams handed out the handouts that were provided to all Forum attendees. He reported that we are gathering information from public forums and, soon, a survey. We will compile all data and bring the results to the COA Steering Committee and the Board of Directors in late January or early February to come up with a framework of how to plan how to go forward. The data and proposed framework will inform all future planning. Mr. Williams stressed that we will need the COA Steering Committee and Board of Directors' guidance put into place on how to weight different tradeoffs.

Mr. Williams reviewed the five trade-offs we've been presenting at the Public Forums to have the Board begin to be thinking about these. He noted that there are advantages and disadvantages of each option for both customers and operations.

- Geographic Coverage versus Service Frequency
- Days, Hours and Focus of Service
- Indirect v. Direct Route
- Amenities v. Loss of Service
- Fixed Route v. Advance Reservations

Mr. Capello noted that there's great variety in our service area and that some areas will be more conducive to one kind of service than others.

Mr. Bogle praised COAST's efforts in putting out Tradeoffs and praised how the information was presented. He wondered how realistic the times are that we've proposed for Advance Reservations; could we make reservations with only a 2-hour notice? Mr. Williams noted that Demand Response works when passengers per hour is low. There are routes where it wouldn't make any sense to make the change to advance reservations. However, there are areas where this could increase our efficiency greatly. Asking the question allows us to get an honest sense of what people think is actually reasonable. If we find that what they think is reasonable is unrealistic to us, then we'll know what we need to know. Mr. Williams reported that we will evaluate what's technically feasible and provide honest responses.

Mr. Shanahan asked if we have been successful in managing expectations. Mr. Nichols noted people were very thoughtful and reflective in considering the tradeoffs. He also noted that there was a large variation in responses from riders and non-riders.

Discussion Item #2: Open Board Seat for a Social Service Agency in COAST's Service Area

With the departure of Ms. Decker from the Board, we now have an open seat for a social service agency in COAST's service area. While that seat could continue to be filled by a representative from GSIL, it could also be filled by any number of individuals representing other social service agencies in the service area.

Mr. Sandmann asked for Board member input. He noted that we have reached out to both Exeter's Chamber of Commerce and Housing Authority with no response from either. Board members were asked what agencies we should approach. Mr. Long suggested CAP because of their range of services. Mr. Capello suggested Friends of Farmington and Mr. Pepin suggested Somersworth Housing Authority.

Mr. Sandmann asked Board members to think about it call the office or email him with any suggestions. Mr. Shanahan noted it's important to keep representation spread throughout the service area so as to not stack the deck for one County or the other.

NEW BOARD HANDBOOK

Mr. Sandmann handed out the new Board Handbooks and reviewed what's in it.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

Annual Audit

The on-site portion of COAST's annual audit has been scheduled for the week of December 3rd.

NHDOT Budget & Inclusion of \$200k in Funds to Support Rural Public Transit Operations

This year the NHDOT budget that is being passed on to the Governor for consideration has \$200,000 included in it for support of rural public transit operations. This would be the first time in several years that state funded operations support would be a possibility and we are very appreciative for the support of the NHDOT including these funds in their budget. Staff expect to work collaboratively with the NHTA and NHDOT to keep these funds in the budget and renew state financial support for ongoing public transit operations.

Ridership

Available monthly ridership figures are presented in the following chart.

Pease

Mr. Hebert noted that there has been a big increase in traffic going toward Pease in the mornings. He stated that if there is an opportunity for COAST to help impact a reduction in traffic, we should be part of the solution. Mr. Nichols noted that no one has approached COAST to provide bus service and we do not have the capacity to take that on without a financial partner.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Lentz made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Capello. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.