



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, March 27, 2019**

**Present:** Scott Bogle, Denis Hebert, Valerie Labrie, Colin Lentz, Marty Pepin, Dennis Shanahan, Maria Stowell and Juliet Walker

**Absent:** Arthur Capello, Blaine Cox, Steve Fournier, Dave Sandmann, Dave Sharples, Thomas Wright and Shelley Winters

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

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 AM.

**II. Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was held for Paul Bechard, a COAST Bus Operator who passed away the week of 3/14, as well as a long-time Clipper Connection rider who passed away on 3/22.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Pepin made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 27, 2019 Board Meeting as presented and Mr. Lentz seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**IV. Public Comment**

None

**V. Financial Report**

Mr. Nichols presented the report on the February 2019 financials. He noted that farebox and contract revenue are lower for February because it is a shorter month, and both remain below budget YTD. In addition, Advertising revenue continues to be much lower than anticipated. ATA Outdoor has informed us that it had its worst first quarter since the recession in 2009. The sale of two minibuses accounts for the increase in interest and other income.

Mr. Nichols reported that overtime expenses are lower, and we still have some open positions. COAST contract services expenses are high, though still under budget, due, in great part, to significant legal expenses. Materials and supplies remain well under budget. After the adjustments were made to the Coordination budget lines, that program is now running under budget. The Available Funds balance is now back over \$800,000 and at 14.1% is moving in the right direction. It remains well short of the Unrestricted Net Asset Ratio goal of 27.7%.

**VI. Old Business**

**Commercial Vehicle Operator Staffing**

We are nearly fully staffed and have several new Operators in training. We continue to see a need in Demand Response Operators.

### **Bookkeeping, Pass Sales, Fare Counting & Payroll**

Heather and Vanessa have taken over these roles for Deidra who had her baby, Parker. Deidra will be out until the end of May. She and Parker are doing well! The Board congratulates Deidra and her family on Parker's arrival.

### **Tri-City Service**

Talks continued around a Tri-City connector service for Rochester, Somersworth and Dover. It is likely to have an event-based focus initially. The Economic Development staff of these communities want to promote public transit and to expand it as needed to attract new businesses.

### **NH Transportation Council**

Mr. Nichols attended the first meeting of the Council on March 22. The focus is on how NH can encourage and support new technology in providing transportation services. Mr. Nichols has been asked to do a presentation on public transit at the 4/19 meeting.

### **Real-time Bus Information System**

Staff continue to work on implementation of a real-time bus information system that we have procured but have not been able to go live with as of yet.

## **VII. New Business**

### **Action Items**

#### **Action Item #1: ADA Scheduling Parameters**

With the help of our software provider, we did some analysis on the cost impacts and customer service impacts to changing the scheduled time adjustment window. The window is currently 30 minutes; the ADA allows for up to 60 minutes.

Data from this analysis (see attachment) will be presented at the meeting demonstrating that, generally speaking, the larger the scheduling window is the more cost savings is realized. The impacts of this to an average trip request is also available.

COAST staff is seeking a board recommended balance between cost savings and the customer service implications. Additionally, COAST staff is requesting board approval to apply these parameters to all demand response services at staff discretion.

**Action Required:** *That the COAST Board of Directors authorize expanding the current demand response scheduling window up to 45 minutes (maximum) for now, with the movements happening in small intervals at staff's discretion so as to minimize disruption.*

Mr. Williams presented data regarding the impacts of increasing the scheduling parameters on cost savings. He noted that any changes to scheduling parameters will still honor a requested pick-up or drop-off (in one direction) to ensure that no one would be late for an appointment.

There was discussion about the complaints that accompanied the last attempt to increase the schedule adjustment window. Mr. Williams noted that the complaints tend to be situation specific and often are around weather conditions impacting someone's drop-off or wait for a pick-up. Mr. Hebert asked about the frequency and number of complaints and noted that there

appear to be a lot of people who are very happy with the service. Mr. Williams confirmed that the results of our last rider survey indicated people are very happy with the service.

Board members felt it would be good to increase the adjustment window incrementally and Mr. Hebert suggested that some of the adjustments be weather-driven.

Mr. Bogle made a motion to authorize expanding the current demand response scheduling window up to 45 minutes (maximum) for now, with the movements happening in small intervals at staff's discretion so as to minimize disruption. Mr. Hebert seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

## **Action Item #2: Customer Code of Conduct Update**

It has come to our attention that while we do have restrictions listed for eating and drinking on the bus on our website, those same restrictions are not listed in our Customer Code of Conduct.

The language that appears on our website is –

*We ask that you refrain from eating on board the bus. If you have a beverage, it must have a spill-proof secure lid on it. This is important to help us keep buses clean and presentable. If you spill anything on the bus, please be courteous and notify the driver so it can be cleaned.*

The new language we propose including in the Customer Code of Conduct is –

### **Acts to Avoid or Limit**

- 1) *Eating is not permitted on board the bus, except for small contained snacks (such as a granola bar).*
- 2) *Drinking is permitted from secure containers. A secure container being one that, when closed, can be turned upside down and not result in a spill.*

*This is important to help us keep buses clean and presentable. If you spill anything on the bus, please be courteous and notify the driver so it can be cleaned.*

**Action Required:** *That the COAST Board of Directors authorize inclusion of the suggested clause in the Customer Code of Conduct and to be effective immediately.*

Mr. Shanahan asked what drivers do to enforce these rules. Mr. Williams noted that they are directed to reasonably enforce the rules once and to use their discretion in strongly enforcing the rules.

Mr. Pepin made a motion to authorize the inclusion of the suggested clause in the Customer Code of Conduct and to be effective immediately. Mr. Bogle seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

## **Committee Reports**

Members of the Executive Committee attended an emergency meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>, but there was not a quorum, so it was not an official meeting.

## **Discussion Items**

**Discussion Item #1: COA Progress**

Mr. Nichols and Mr. Williams presented an update to the progress of the COA to date. It is hoped that a meeting will be held the week of April 15<sup>th</sup> to provide the update to community stakeholders. Mr. Nichols also noted that he hopes to have a meeting with NHDOT prior to the stakeholder meeting to have more updated information to present.

### **VIII. Community Updates/Information Items**

#### Tufts Foundation Grant

We will be submitting a multi-year grant to the Tufts Foundation in support of ACT and TripLink at the end of March. After submitting a letter of interest earlier in the year, we were invited to submit a full proposal for consideration.

#### NTD Report

We submitted our FY18 NTD report at the end of February, after receiving a 30-day extension. It has already been returned to us for revisions, which are due on March 28.

#### Drug & Alcohol MIS Report

We submitted our CY19 DAMIS report in early March, prior to the March 15 deadline.

#### FY19 FTA Funding Levels

The recently signed Consolidated Appropriations Act included \$4.827B in funding for urbanized area formula grants (Section 5307). This represents level funding to what was approved in the FY19 authorized FAST Act appropriations and a \$100M increase over the FY2018 THUD appropriations enacted. Within the Portsmouth UZA this has resulted in a 1.6% increase in 5307 funds, while the Dover-Rochester UZA saw a 5.9% increase due to qualifying for \$261,911 of Small Transit Intensive Communities (STIC) funding.

#### Ridership & Financial Performance

Available monthly ridership figures were presented in the Board packet.

### **IX. Adjournment**

Mr. Hebert made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Lentz. The meeting was adjourned at 10:33am.