



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Wednesday, March 23, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Scott Bogle, Fred Butler (virtually), Arthur Capello, Adam Causey, Ben Fletcher (virtually), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz (virtually), Dave Sandmann (virtually), Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan

**ABSENT:** Sönke Dornblut, Martin Dumont Sr., Lauren Haley, Dave Sharples, Maria Stowell, Thomas Wright

**STAFF:** Rad Nichols, Michael Williams, Margot Doering (virtually)

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by Mr. Shanahan.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Shanahan asked if a motion could be made to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022 meeting. Mr. Hebert made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted, and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. There was no discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Cappello	Abstain

The motion passed.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Nichols noted that there was no public comment that he had for the Board. No members of the public were in attendance to speak.

**IV. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. Doering went over the year to date financials and balance sheet through February noting trends for the most part continued as they had previously. Fare revenues were up notably, which was good to see, as well as interest and other income as a result of the sale of a retired vehicle.

Variation in federal assistance levels, reflect how we had to make an adjustment in relation to how insurance is paid. Expenses remain down overall because of service suspensions.

On the balance sheet Ms. Doering noted lower than typical cash on hand. She noted that we had not processed our typical draw in February because of the adjustment in how insurance was expensed.

She also noted that our property and equipment figure will change significantly in March when we book the receipt of the four new Gillig buses.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **Staffing**

Mr. Williams gave a brief update on staffing, noting that we remain short by five (5) full time CDL operators, however two (2) are in training now. We are also lower than typical in our number of part time CDL operators. We would probably hire 4-5 part time CDL operators if we had the chance.

### **New Gillig Bus Build**

Mr. Nichols informed the Board that all four of the new 35' heavy-duty Gillig buses have been delivered and accepted. Prepping for the first one to go into service soon, with the remaining three cycling into the fleet as current vehicles are retired.

### **Marketing/Communications Framework**

Based on some of the initial work of the group focusing on this topic, we have launched a new campaign aimed at increasing ridership because of the high price of gas. High gas prices have always been a driver of increased ridership in the past. In bus and shelter installs should be going up in the next couple of weeks.

Based on conversations and interviews with staff, our consultant has created an initial draft of our marketing and communicating framework that outlines the target audiences for each of our four goals, the key messaging themes we want to reinforce to each, and then possible "catch" phrases and formats in which we could convey our messages. The next meeting to discuss the draft framework is March 24.

### **Free Transfer Program Pilot**

Mr. Nichols explained that in February, COAST had collected 1,378 transfer tickets across the system on 17,827 total fixed route trips (excluding the Warming Center Shuttle). This equates to 7.7% of trips on the fixed route system being "paid for" with a transfer ticket during the month. This was a lower percentage of overall trips that previously expected.

The average fare collected per rider went down in February. Staff continue to assess why that was the case given the lower overall percentage of riders using free transfer tickets.

### **Facility Funding Update**

Mr. Nichols presented some new visuals to help better illustrate our progress identifying potential sources of funds for our facility project. Once we have secured some funding, we will be able to generate charts to reflect that as well.

Mr. Nichols informed the board that our FTY FFY22 5339(b) grant was not successful.

Mr. Butler announced that NHDOT would be providing a partial award for COAST's SFY22 5339(a) grant. In the award letter there will be just over \$4M awarded to COAST for our new facility. The facility funds will be released in accordance with availability of demonstrated match being provided to the NHDOT. Mr. Nichols thanked Mr. Butler and the NHDOT for sharing that fantastic news.

There was some discussion around the availability of state capital match since our facility does not primarily serve passengers. A letter is being prepared on behalf of the NHTA to the NHDOT Commissioner for reconsideration of state capital match funds for projects like ours.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Action Items**

With our guest presenter not yet present the order of the action items was switched to facilitate a continuation of business.

#### **Action Item #2 Approval to submit Congressionally Directed Spending Requests**

Mr. Nichols related that staff are preparing requests for Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding for our new facility project through the offices of Senator Shaheen and Congressman Pappas.

Applications will likely be prepared for; Housing and Urban Development, Economic Development Initiatives funding (which we believe to be eligible to match FTA funds), and potentially for Transportation, Transit Infrastructure funding.

Total funding anticipated to applied for is \$2-2.5M in funds through the HUD EDI program. This could help to offset state capital match funding should that not come through.

Applications are due by April 15.

Mr. Shanahan made a motion that the Board of Directors express their support and authorize the Executive Director to submit applications for Congressionally Directed Spending to the offices of Senator Shaheen and Congressman Pappas in support of the construction of a new COAST administration, operations, and maintenance facility at 42 Sumner Drive in Dover, NH. Mr. Sandmann seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Capello	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes

With our guest speaker, Mr. Fortier, having joined the meeting virtually, the agenda moved next to action item #1.

### **Action Item #1: Advancing Facility Design**

Mr. Nichols gave a recap of the discussion from the previous month's meeting, and work initiated with CMA Engineers to continue advancing project design in order to continue to move our facility project forward, as well as improve our competitiveness for upcoming grants.

Mr. Nichols went over a proposal provided by CMA that can be logically broken into four components, or points to proceed to:

- |                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Site Investigations            | \$ 26,000  |
| 2. Finish Conceptual (30%) Design | \$ 204,000 |
| 3. Preliminary (60%) Design       | \$ 232,452 |
| 4. Permitting                     | \$ 37,548  |

Site Investigations would include further subsurface investigations for the building foundations and a site specific soil survey.

Conceptual Design (30% Design) would include a conceptual site plan that builds off of the previously prepared site layout, structural schematic design, building architectural, mechanical, electrical, & plumbing (MEP) design, construction phasing plan, conceptual level cost estimate, and planning board concept review.

Preliminary Design (60% Design) would include field visits, stormwater drainage analysis, preliminary site design plans and opinion of cost, preliminary structural design, and building architectural, mechanical, electrical, & plumbing (MEP design).

Permitting would include environmental permitting and planning board site plan approval. Additional permitting that may be required is not included (e.g., any zoning variances). Permit fees will be COAST's responsibility and are not included.

This anticipated work scope was identified in our RFQ for Design and Engineering Services (RFQ 17-03), the result of which CMA has performed tasks for COAST under a Master Agreement.

The proposed schedule of services would keep us on track for a potential start of construction during the 2023 construction season.

CMA's identified Project Manager, Samuel Fortier, gave a more detailed review of the proposal they had prepared for COAST.

Mr. Hebert inquired on the timing of the project kickoff. Mr. Fortier replied as soon as approved.

There was some discussion around whether to proceed with permitting without all our funding in place. The consensus was to move ahead to put ourselves in the most advantageous position possible.

Mr. Shanahan made a motion that the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to enter into an Agreement with CMA Engineers under our Master Agreement to proceed with design and/or permitting for our new administration, operations, and maintenance facility at 42 Sumner Drive in Dover, NH. Mr. Sandmann seconded the motion.

Mr. Hebert asked for details on the percentage of the cost of the project related to design. Mr. Nichols related that design cost incurred would be approximately \$690K-\$710K, assuming approval of the motion on the floor, compared to a \$14.7M total project cost estimate.

There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Capello	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes

Mr. Hebert inquired about the single curb cut we currently have vs. creating a second. Mr. Nichols noted the challenges there, and the potential opportunity to work with the neighboring property, depending on how that property is developed.

Mr. Hebert also highlighted the potential importance of creating a firebreak in the bus storage building, given the recent garage fire in the state that destroyed a school bus fleet.

### **Committee Reports**

**Executive Committee** – did not meet.

**Finance Committee** – met on March 21 @1:30pm (SRPC) and discussed the financials presented earlier this morning to the board.

**Nominating Committee** – did not meet.

**Board Development Committee** – met on March 16 to discuss filling open board seats, new/refresher orientation for members, and COAST's upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Policy Committee** – is looking to meet in early April to review our three to four Policies staff is currently considering amending.

**Legislative Committee** – will be meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup> @ 10am (GDCC) to discuss the progress of favorable legislation this session, the NHMA biennial legislative process, and any future legislation that we may want to pursue.

## **Discussion Items**

### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Mr. Nichols noted that COAST's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing service will be this fall. Like we did in 2017 for our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we would like to celebrate at our annual board meeting with special guests and speaker(s).

In the run-up to the annual meeting, we would also like to take advantage of the milestone to highlight our contributions to the region and celebrate our successes. Celebrating a milestone anniversary will also align well with our marketing and communications framework that we are preparing.

We are looking for board member input on events or other opportunities for COAST to leverage positive exposure and celebrate 40 years of service within the region.

Ms. Joyce highlighted the opportunities offered through the Chambers of Commerce, as well as by gathering proclamations.

Mr. Shanahan recommended going after enhanced media coverage.

Mr. Hebert suggested a 40 year perspective on how much the organization has grown and what we have achieved.

Mr. Bogle shared the idea of creating mobile displays for local libraries and town/city halls. Maybe also a story on NHPR and tying in with the environmental benefits of public transit.

Mr. Nichols added the possibility of adding the anniversary logo to the outsides of the buses.

Mr. Capello reminded the board members of their Hay Day in August.

Mr. Causey raised the opportunity to participate in Kittery's upcoming Block Party.

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

Ridership information was presented, and updates were given on operations during storms this winter season.

Mr. Capello noted that with the recent Town Meeting in Farmington, he would be submitting his resignation, with a 90-day notice, as the Town Administrator later in the day. He hoped that he might be able to continue on the board, but he likely would not be able to do that as Farmington's representative. Members and staff expressed their regret at his situation and thanked him for his many contributions as Farmington's representative and as Treasurer.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Hebert made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:37am.