



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, May 22, 2024**

PRESENT: Scott Bogle, Fred Butler (virtual), Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro, Ben Fletcher (virtual), Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz (8:46am), Joann Neumann (virtual), David Sandmann, Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, David Tovey

ABSENT: Kendra Amaral, Sonke Dornblut, Denis Hebert, Michael Mates, Nick Taylor, Thomas Wright

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Margot Doering, Michael Williams, Jane Tingle

The meeting was started at 8:35am, without a quorum, by Mr. Shanahan. He noted we would call the meeting to order once a quorum was present. He asked Ms. Doering to present the financials in the interim.

VI. FINANCIALS

Ms. Doering presented April financials. Fare revenues were stronger, but advertising collections were again down, although more new contracts have been coming in. Other revenues remain ahead of budget due to vehicle sales.

Wages and fringes continue to track as they have. Utilities are much lower than projected YTD.

Balance sheet is strong and collections are in good shape.

Continue to kick off the accounting system transition with more calls. Project is advancing on schedule.

Mr. Bogle inquired about the sale of advertising space and whether we had available space. Mr. Nichols and Ms. Doering explained we had space availability on the buses and in the shelters.

There were no further questions for Ms. Doering.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

With a quorum now present, Mr. Shanahan called the meeting to order at 8:40am and introductions were undertaken.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Shanahan asked if a motion could be made to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted, and Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro seconded the motion. There was no discussion and Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call.

Mr. Bogle	Yes
Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro	Yes

Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Ms. Neumann	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Tovey	Abstain

The motion passed.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Nichols stated that one of employee COAST wished to recognize for their service last month was able to attend this month. He recognized Ms. Tingle as a CDL Operator that people love to run into and be around. Ms. Tingle has been driving 25 years in total and drives throughout the service area on behalf of COAST.

Mr. Lentz arrived to the meeting at 8:46am.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nichols gave updates on the old business items.

Municipal Funding Update

After attending an Exeter Selectboard meeting on April 29 and giving an update on the organization and Route 7 On Demand operations, the Selectboard voted to fully fund COAST's request through their Transportation Fund. Berwick, Portsmouth, and Rochester are all continuing to proceed through their budget approval processes.

Major Gifts Campaign

We continue to work with our consultants to identify potential stakeholders to meet with, introduce our plans to, and seek input from, as we look to put together a campaign steering committee.

Meetings with key advisors/stakeholders that may best be approached one on one are also currently being held. The conversations have been very productive and thought-provoking regarding strategy.

To prepare for some types of donations and the establishment of an endowment, we have had two interviews with our banking partners to potentially serve in this capacity.

Our consultants are updating the timeline and budget projections as our thinking and potential strategies have evolved.

FTA Grants

In May we were finally able to submit two grants to the FTA. These grants are for construction of our new facility (\$9.7M), as well as to add funding for ADA operations (\$322K) and planning activities (\$20K).

commuteSMART Seacoast TMA CMAQ Project

We are in the process of asking for a reconsideration by the FTA and FHWA on our projects eligibility for continued funding. The NHDOT has expressed a strong willingness to support our project and push for reconsideration by the Federal agencies.

The current 2024 B2B Commuter Challenge has been going on all during the month of May. The Challenge is going exceptionally well. Even with a steep decline in participation from Portsmouth Middle School (PMS) given the age restriction issue on the platform being used, the Challenge is on track to reach about 80% of last year's total trip count including PMS. If PMS is removed from the equation in both years, the Challenge is on track to almost double last year's trips. Last year there were 3,672 trips from teams other than PMS for the whole month. As of mid-month there were 3,384 trips in the Seacoast (excluding PMS) at the halfway point of the Challenge! If logging keeps up at the current rate the projected total is over 6,900 trips.

This has included big increases in participation at PNSY (1,316 trips so far), Lonza (460 so far) both in the XX-Large division, Global Seafood Alliance (148 so far in the Large division), and Placework (88 trips so far in the Small division). We also have several new teams at UNH thanks to a new board member's outreach, including the UNH Sustainability Institute.

Joint NHTA/SCC Annual Conference and Awards Luncheon

The annual meeting is fast approaching on June 7. This year's theme is 'Celebrating Our Successes' and we will be showing a world premiere of a new FTA video on the 20th anniversary of the federal interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), which will feature NH as one of the most successful states implementing coordination measures, including braiding of federal funds. We will also be holding a second morning plenary session on the upcoming statewide needs assessment, including legislative leaders sharing what they need to see from the study to support future additional funding requests for public and community transportation. The awards luncheon will feature Champion awards as well as awards for excellence in service. We have two awardees, one each from COAST and ACT, that we look forward to celebrating.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item #1: Acceptance of New Exeter Appointee, David Tovey

Mr. Nichols explained that on April 29 the Exeter Selectboard voted to appoint a new representative for COAST. The seat had been formerly held by Ms. Murphy. The new representative is Mr. David Tovey.

Mr. Tovey is currently the Assistant Director for the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department. He works closely with the Exeter Senior Council and produces a comprehensive Exeter Senior Resources Guide which features COAST and ACT.

Action Requested: *That the Board of Directors accept Mr. Tovey as Exeter's representative on the COAST board of directors.*

Ms. Joyce made the motion to accept Mr. Tovey to the board for Exeter, Mr. Bogle seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call.

Mr. Bogle	Yes
Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Ms. Neumann	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Tovey	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item #2: Frontrunner Minibus Purchase Approval

Mr. Williams described that COAST's capital plan calls for the purchase of one additional low floor non-CDL vehicle this year as an ongoing part of our transition towards running more fixed route service in non-CDL vehicles. The transition overall has reduced our reliance on CDL operators and reduced costs of vehicle operation on these routes through lower maintenance and better fuel efficiency.

This vehicle is being purchased as one of the option vehicles available to us from our FY22 procurement. The cost escalation is based on the increase in the cost of the chassis, the Producer Price Index, and the need to buy a more expensive American-made door to maintain Buy America compliance.

COAST is still waiting on a few documents from the dealer to verify each aspect of the quote. If these documents are in order, we will place a purchase order for one vehicle. We will not move forward if there are compliance concerns with the documents provided. We are also still waiting on the dealer to verify a target delivery date. The price is \$214,555.00.

Action Requested: *That the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director, pending documentation still needed and no compliance concerns, to enter into a contract with MODEL 1 for a Frontrunner Minibus at a not to exceed price of \$214,555.*

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to authorize the contract with MODEL 1, Mr. Lentz seconded the motion.

Mr. Bogle expressed concern over the total cost. Mr. Williams explained this is not a traditional small cutaway bus, but rather a low floor version.

There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call.

Mr. Bogle	Yes
Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Ms. Neumann	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes

Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Tovey	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item #1: Major Gifts Campaign

Mr. Nichols described a plan to pivot our campaign strategy.

He highlighted a strategy to pivot based on the following:

- we have a virtually nonexistent pre-existing prospect list of prior individuals, foundations, and corporate donors,
- have a large geographic area we serve,
- have a dedicated but inexperienced volunteer base of potential solicitors,
- there is a lack of public awareness of COAST's nonprofit status, impact, and philanthropic needs,
- awareness within the business and industry sector is good,
- there is a large potential but untapped base of support,
- potential large number of stories to tell potential stakeholders, and
- we are needing to be more efficient with our time.

The recommended pivot would –

1. Recruit a small team of volunteers to help organize and conduct a large event that educates, engages, and cultivates a large number of prospects at one time.
2. Solicit corporate sponsorship to help underwrite and attend the event.
3. Encourage corporate supporters to invite key individuals to attend the event.
4. Corporate support could include time restricted marketing opportunities with signage.
5. At the event, creatively showcase COAST's mission and impact and inspire attendees to potentially support the campaign.
6. Post event – follow-up cultivation and solicitations to attendees and other prospects.

A large event or events could flip the donor pyramid over, starting with a large group of prospects, all inspired and educated at once – allowing for strategic engagement and solicitation focused on higher potential donors.

Recommended Next Steps are:

1. The board approves the pivot.
2. Develop budget and timeline.
3. Contract with an event planner.
4. Recruit volunteer team.
5. Develop sponsorship packets & levels.
6. Solicit corporate support.
7. Build the event program.
8. Sell tables as well as sponsorships.

9. Conduct the event.
10. Follow-up solicitations.
11. Yearly event?

Ms. Neumann asked about the timeline and budget ballpark. Mr. Nichols explained we were likely talking about September at the earliest.

Ms. Joyce asked whether we are running into roadblocks because people are not understanding we are a nonprofit. She highlighted the success of the CAPSC event and it being in the morning vs. evening. Mr. Nichols explained meetings to date have proven out that people do not know we are a nonprofit. Ms. Joyce remarked that it is hard to get people to an event.

Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro added that a big event could draw a large crowd depending on the hook. Mr. Nichols wondered aloud what our big hook could be. Ms. Joyce suggested awards.

Ms. Neumann stressed concern about the toll on staff to successfully pull off an event or events such as what are being discussed. Mr. Nichols acknowledged that we will need volunteers.

There was also discussion around inviting a big name to the event, like Senator Shaheen or Congressman Pappas, that would get more people to attend.

The general consensus of the board was supportive, and a follow-up meeting of our internal steering committee would be set up for June to flesh the pivot out further.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

Ridership continues to be incredibly strong, at just over 30K for the month, and was up 33.6% from April 2023.

Other

Mr. Scala noted the roll out of the municipal bus pass program was very well received in Rochester.

Mr. Sandmann encouraged board members to listen to the recent Dover Download podcast that COAST was featured on. Mr. Sandmann also noted the special evening at the Greater Dover Chamber's Annual Gala where COAST received the Nonprofit of the Year Award.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The next Board Meeting will be on June 26, 2024. Mr. Shanahan adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 9:32 am.

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Joyce, Secretary