



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, October 23, 2024**

PRESENT: Scott Bogle, Arthur Capello, Sean Clancy, Ben Fletcher (virtual), Jillian Harris (virtual), Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz, Joann Neumann (virtual), Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro (arr. 8:37), Dave Sandmann, Michael Scala (virtual), Dennis Shanahan, David Tovey

ABSENT: Kendra Amaral, Fred Butler, Sönke Dornblut, Denis Hebert, Michael Mates, Nick Taylor

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Michael Williams, Margot Doering

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:37am with a quorum present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2024, meeting which was seconded by Mr. Bogle. There was no discussion. Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Nichols reported that there was no public comment.

IV. FINANCIALS

Ms. Doering reported that September financials were ready earlier than typical. There was a fair bit of interest income from maturing CDs. Insurance was lower due to last-minute adjustments. Advertising revenue was lower than anticipated for the year. Interest income and sale of vehicles provided extra other income. Other revenue lines were about what was expected.

Ms. Doering reported that fringe expenses were lower than anticipated due to less staff time off. Maintenance also came in under budget in part due to fewer contracted services than anticipated. Utility expenses for heat were lower than anticipated. Expenses for the capital

campaign were in miscellaneous but were taken into account for next year. Other expenses were close to budget.

Ms. Doering noted the unrestricted reserves on the balance sheet are strong but will start coming down as COAST uses the reserves to balance the budget. CARES, ARPA, and CMAQ funding have been exhausted and COAST is relying on 5307 funding at a 50-50 or 80-20 match rate.

Mr. Sandmann asked if COAST anticipates additional advertising revenue to come in, or if there are fewer advertising contracts. Ms. Doering noted there is still an advertising pipeline, but it is not as strong as it was last year. Mr. Nichols noted there is \$51,000 of outstanding invoices that haven't yet been paid.

Ms. Doering shared that COAST is live in the new accounting software, Multiview. At this time, both the new and old system are still being used while the transition takes place. Mr. Nichols and Mr. Williams are also receiving training for their tasks in the new software.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nichols shared old business items.

Apple Harvest Festival

COAST had a fantastic Apple Harvest Festival. COAST's booth and shuttle bus were very busy all day long. After the event it was suggested two buses would have better served the shuttle route.

Newington

COAST was invited to present the budget request to the selectboard on October 15. At that meeting Mr. Nichols outlined ridership and service goals for the town and presented the basis for COAST's request. Newington is the only community whose request went down in FY25, for just over a 12% decrease. This is a result of the municipal funding formula and is in part caused by temporary service suspensions in the town over the past few years. Last year Newington underfunded COAST's request. It is not yet known how they will fund COAST this year.

Somersworth

Mr. Nichols will be presenting at a Somersworth Finance Committee meeting on October 24th to discuss a supplemental amendment to the City budget. Materials have been provided in advance.

Fundraising Update

Learn and Engage Events

The second "Learn & Engage" event is scheduled in Rochester on October 29th hosted by Laura Ring from the Rochester Chamber and Deputy Mayor Hamann at the Granite Steak Bar & Grille. Just under thirty people are expected to attend. The planned third event in Portsmouth will likely be moved to mid-January.

Unobligated Pandemic Aid

COAST requested unobligated ARPA funds from the State by allocated for the new facility. It was discussed by the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee on October 18. Mr. Nichols listened to the online presentation and does not believe COAST was put forward for the approved package.

Dover ArtStops

In collaboration with the Dover Arts Commission, local artists have their work displayed in four bus shelters in Dover. Mr. Shanahan and Mr. Nichols participated in a photo opportunity as part of this effort on October 22. The artwork is at shelters on Whittier St., Central Ave., and Chestnut St. COAST is interested in similar collaborations in Somersworth, Rochester, and Portsmouth.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

Action Item #1: Acceptance of New Portsmouth Appointees to the COAST Board of Directors

Mr. Clancy and Ms. Harris have been appointed by the City of Portsmouth to succeed Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Stith as the City's representatives to COAST's board. Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Stith have served on COAST's board since 2021. Mr. Nichols noted that COAST has appreciated Mr. Fletcher's participation on the board.

Mr. Fletcher shared it has been a pleasure to be part of the COAST process for the past few years. He shared that Mr. Clancy and Ms. Harris will be excellent members of the COAST board, and he looks forward to watching from a distance as COAST continues to develop.

Mr. Shanahan thanked Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Stith for their input on behalf of the board and staff.

Action Requested: *The COAST board of directors accepts the appointments of Mr. Clancy and Ms. Harris.*

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to accept Mr. Clancy and Ms. Harris' appointment to the COAST board of directors and this was seconded by Mr. Lentz. There was no further discussion.

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

The board unanimously voted in favor of Mr. Clancy and Ms. Harris' appointment to the board.

Action Item #2: Safety Plan Update

Ms. Williams shared that the Safety Plan is updated annually as required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Board approval is the final step in a process that includes staff and Joint

Loss Management Committee review. This plan update includes new FTA requirements. The changes include:

- The CDC was added to the list of federal agencies from which COAST must consider safety regulations (new federal requirement).
- Several new safety performance measures were added, with targets set for each (new federal requirement).
- A new section outlining the known hazards currently being monitored based on the Safety Management System outlined in the plan was added (new federal requirement).
- A new anonymous safety reporting tool was rolled out by COAST this summer, and this tool has been incorporated into the Safety Reporting section.
- Assault related convictions were added to the Employment Standards' list of items that would prohibit employment at COAST, after it was found the language in the Standards didn't adequately cover this area.
- The Vehicle Cleaner list of trainings was supplemented to include other trainings provided.

Action Requested: *The COAST board of directors adopts the updated Safety Plan.*

Mr. Capello made a motion to adopt the Safety Plan which was seconded by Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro. The vote was taken by roll call:

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

The updated Safety Plan was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Nichols commented on the plan, page 22, showing there were seventeen non-physical and/or physical assaults on transit workers in fiscal year 24. He noted this is a large and growing number. Most are verbal assaults and COAST has limited ability to mitigate these assaults.

Mr. Capello asked what constitutes a verbal assault. Mr. Williams answered that while the FTA has language attempting to define this, it is a grey area that can be interpreted differently by different people. Mr. Williams noted that most of what COAST sees is verbal insults and profanity directed at operators. He also noted the absence of audio recording on buses—restricted by NH law—makes investigation of events challenging.

Mr. Lentz asked if the absence of audio recording makes prosecution difficult. Mr. Williams noted COAST does not attempt to prosecute verbal offenses, though COAST does enforce bans on offending individuals.

Mr. Capello asked if COAST operators are given de-escalation training and training on how to enforce bans. Mr. Williams confirmed de-escalation training is part of onboarding for new employees and is coached in specific circumstances. Operators also have discretion to not enforce a ban if doing so may cause a safety concern in the moment. He also noted that COAST works with police to enforce trespass notices, particularly when a threat of physical violence is involved.

Mr. Capello asked if COAST has a panic button that can silently call for help. Mr. Williams answered that there is no silent alarm that communicates outside the vehicle, but there is a button that changes the external signs to request a call to police. Mr. Capello asked if COAST has investigated getting a better silent alarm button. Mr. Williams stated that while COAST has looked at it in the past, it is something that can be reevaluated.

Mr. Nichols noted fixed route buses do have protective barriers. Mr. Williams noted that dispatch can livestream video from buses in real time. Mr. Capello noted that unless dispatch knows, that is not useful. Mr. Williams responded that COAST anticipates a transition of radio system in the upcoming year, and that may enable new features like those being discussed.

Mr. Bogle asked if an open channel on the radio gets around the ban on audio recording. Mr. Shanahan noted the live audio may not be recorded. Mr. Williams noted further research is needed on this feature.

There was no further discussion on this item.

Action Item #3: Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan Update

COAST annually updates the Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan to keep it current. The following updates are being made:

- Updated Facility Condition Assessments based on our 2024 facility review. This is required every four years.
- Updated Performance Measures & Targets to show FY 2024 performance and FY 2025 targets.
- Updated 5 Year Capital Spending Plan
- Added language identifying the Accountable Executive, along with a sign-off page for the Accountable Executive to approve the plan and targets (FTA requirement). Rad is the Accountable Executive, and was already identified as such in the Safety Plan.
- Added Barycenter software in the Decision Support Tools section
- Added torque wrenches to equipment and specified calibration requirements and documentation
- Removed fuel tank inspection forms and referenced the new fuel tank inspection forms documented in the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan
- Updated language throughout regarding current fleet status and needs

Action Requested: *That the board of directors adopts the updated Transit Asset Management and Maintenance Plan.*

Ms. Joyce made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Sandmann.

Mr. Shanahan noted the Barycenter software is being added to the plan. Mr. Williams explained this software tracks on-road maintenance issues and is therefore a helpful decision support tool

regarding vehicle reliability. Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro asked what Barycenter is. Mr. Williams noted it is an incident management software dispatch uses to track and report on daily incidents and communicate internally about those incidents. Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro asked what kind of incidents are tracked in the software. Mr. Williams noted it could include collisions, assaults, detours, breakdowns, and others. Mr. Nichols noted the text notification feature is beneficial to him. Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro asked if this could be leased to other systems. Mr. Nichols said the possibility has been discussed.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

The updated Transit Asset Management & Maintenance Plan was adopted unanimously.

Action Item #4: 2024-2025 FTA Section 5310 RCC Program Grant Amendment #1

Mr. Nichols shared that the 5310 RCC Program Grant Amendment for \$54,900 is ready for approval. The funding will be used for ACT's region and as part of a collaboration for a volunteer driver program operating in Deerfield. COAST will be overseeing that expanded service.

Action Requested: *The COAST Board of Directors adopts the attached Corporate Resolution to enable the Executive Director to execute a grant agreement amendment for said funds with the NHDOT.*

Mr. Bogle made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Sandmann.

No further discussion on this item.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

The corporate resolution was approved unanimously.

Action Item #5: Facility Final Design, Construction Contract Documents, and Bid Services Contract with CMA Engineers

Mr. Williams shared that COAST is almost ready to authorize CMA Engineers to proceed with final design, construction and contract documents, and bid services for the new facility. The cost estimate and scope for those items was given to the board for review. Mr. Williams shared that the subcontractor for the Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) engineering work is trying to back out of the project. The architect is pressuring them to stay because moving that work to a new firm would be more costly for COAST. Any new MEP engineers would need to relook or redraw the work already completed by the initial MEP firm.

COAST expressed concern with CMA Engineers about the quality of work completed by the new MEP firm if they did complete the work, given their reluctance. CMA does not believe that would be a concern.

CMA Engineers does not believe the project timeline is in jeopardy while this question is being resolved. On the contrary, CMA Engineers has encouraged COAST to start construction earlier because they anticipate an earlier date will be less costly. However, fundraising is COAST's limiting factor.

COAST is presenting the cost estimate based on the existing MEP engineers remaining with the project. Approval now gives COAST the flexibility to move forward when this question is resolved. However, if the MEP engineers do not continue with the project a new cost estimate may need to be brought to the board.

Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro asked if there were contingencies included in these amounts. Mr. Williams answered that there were contingencies, but Mr. Nichols corrected that there are not contingencies in design, only in the construction. Mr. Shanahan gave a recap that this is relevant to construction of a consolidated facility for COAST for administration and operations on our current site.

Mr. Williams clarified this scope does not include project management during the construction phase. That was separated out because it is contingent on decisions made during final design.

Mr. Capello asked how much the increase would be if they need to switch MEP engineers. Mr. Williams stated he wasn't sure and CMA Engineers was hesitant to estimate. Mr. Nichols stated COAST has other options if these MEP engineers back out.

Action Requested: *The COAST Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract to finalize design, produce construction documents, and provide bid services with CMA Engineers for \$351,300.*

Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Lentz.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

The motion was approved unanimously.

Discussion Items

Discussion Item #1: Clerk of the Works Job Description

Mr. Williams presented a draft job description for a Clerk of the Works position to assist COAST staff with overseeing the construction of the new facility. This position would solely represent COAST, not the architect or the construction firm. Mr. Williams shared that this position could be an employee of COAST, or it could be a contractor. CMA Engineers have reviewed this document to identify overlap in roles. At this point this is presented for board feedback.

Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro asked how this position would differ from a project manager, and whether the salary would be included. Mr. Williams responded that a contractor would be competitively bid, and an employee hire would have a salary range determined. Regarding the differences between what CMA Engineers would do, and COAST would do, and between these types of positions, Mr. Williams noted that has not always been clear. However, the Clerk of the Works position represents COAST to prevent conflicts of interest. He noted CMA would ensure the building was built as designed, the General Contractor would schedule quality inspections, but COAST wants a party present who is looking out for COAST and not primarily the architect or the GC. Mr. Williams also noted the Clerk of the Works will help with FTA required tasks, such as certified payroll and Buy America requirements.

Mr. Shanahan asked if COAST needed to cover the position with project funds instead of operating funds. Mr. Nichols responded that this is an eligible cost for project funds.

Mr. Sandmann shared that his experience in building large buildings has led him to prefer the Clerk of the Works to be a contract position. He shared it is important to have eyes and ears on the project every day, and the Clerk of the Works fulfills this role. He said the presented job description is thorough and complete.

Mr. Capello agreed with Mr. Sandmann based on his experience. He also said a part time employee was acceptable during the design phase, but the position should be full time during construction. The Clerk should be on site anytime the contractor is there.

There was no further discussion.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee meetings to report on.

VI. Community Updates/Information Items

Ridership

Strong ridership has continued in September: over 22% more than the previous year. Mr. Nichols noted COAST ended the year with a 28% ridership gain compared to the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Nichols shared that operator staffing has been tight lately, primarily due to medical absences.

VIII. Adjournment

The next Board Meeting will be on November 20, 2024. Mr. Shanahan adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 9:37 am.

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Joyce, Secretary