



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

PRESENT: Kendra Amaral (virtual), Scott Bogle (arrived at 8:35a), Fred Butler (virtual), Arthur Capello (virtual), Sean Clancy, Sönke Dornblut (virtual – arrived at 9:20a), Jillian Harris (arrived 8:37a), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz, Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro, Dave Sandmann, Cortney Sawyer, Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, David Tovey

ABSENT: Michael Mates, Joann Neumann, Nick Taylor

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Margot Doering

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hebert made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2024, meeting which was seconded by Mr. Lentz. There was no discussion. Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call:

Ms. Amaral	Abstain
Mr. Capello	Yes
Mr. Clancy	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Lentz	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 explained the numbers being presented were very preliminary as not all the numbers are in yet for the month.

She called out a small number of items where there were variations from the norm.

She also explained how we had made some adjustments in a few expense lines as the translation between the presentation of the budget and the financial reports needed adjustments. The bottom line was not affected.

The balance sheet reflected a high amount of receivables, which is a timing issue this time of year. Local funding unearned is similarly high, which is also simply a timing issue this time of year. Cash holdings are still relatively high but are being drawn down faster now vs. the same time last year.

Mr. Shanahan moved around the agenda to accommodate action item #1.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

Action Item #1: Acceptance of New At-Large Member to the COAST Board of Directors

Mr. Nichols noted a long ago set goal of the board, to seek a representative to fill our last open at-large seat with an individual involved in the local development field. After some inquiries with the McNabb Group, a local developer in Portsmouth, we have interested a member of their staff, Ms. Cortney Sawyer, to join our board.

Ms. Sawyer grew up locally in the area, lives in a COAST member community, and is a Project Manager for McNabb Properties Ltd.

Action Requested: *The COAST board of directors accepts Ms. Sawyer to the COAST board of directors.*

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to accept Ms Sawyer's appointment to the COAST board of directors and this was seconded by Ms. Paradis-Catanzaro.

There was a brief discussion around whether this was a new seat to the board. Mr. Nichols explained that this was a seat listed in our by-laws that needed to be filled.

Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Shanahan then asked members to introduce themselves, and indicate their affiliation, for Ms. Sawyer.

Mr. Shanahan then returned the meeting to the original agenda.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nichols shared old business items.

Farmington

Mr. Nichols has been asked to attend a Selectboard meeting to explain our FY25 financial request of the Town. He will also make another pitch for a Farmington representative appointment to the board of directors.

Pease Development Authority

Mr. Nichols will be attending a PDA board meeting to answer questions relative to our FY25 request. Staff is recommending approval of our request of the PDA.

Somersworth

Mr. Nichols attended a Finance Committee meeting on October 24 to discuss a supplemental amendment to the city budget for COAST. The Committee voted to recommend a supplemental amendment to the city budget to fully fund COAST's FY25 request. He will be attending a City Council meeting on December 9 for the final reading and vote for this request.

Fundraising Update

Learn & Engage Events

Our second "Learn & Engage" event in Rochester was a success on October 29. There was good discussion and conversation both before and after the event. With two of these types of forums now under our belts we feel we have proved our concept and will look to continue on this track to hold these in our other communities.

One-on-One Meetings

We are in the process of scheduling meetings with potential donors and connectors to seek donations and develop our network of potential donors.

Staffing Support

As we have begun actively engaging in the community, it has become clear that additional administrative support is needed to keep the back end of capital campaign tracking in a way to support our external activities. We are in the process of investigating either an intern or AmeriCorps VISTA member to fill a part-time Development Assistant role. We are also communicating with the NH Charitable Foundation about the potential of a capacity building award to fund this position. Ideally this position would transition to a full-time Development Manager role given sufficient success in our fundraising efforts.

Facility Update

After authorizing a new contract last month for final design, construction documents, and bidding services, we continue to wait on the current MEP contractor. We have been told they have agreed to do the work, and have scheduled it for mid-winter, however, they have yet to provide a final cost estimate. So, we do not yet have an executed contract with CMA to proceed.

commuteSMART Seacoast

The project has been included in STIP amendment #7, although the FHWA still seems to have questions about eligibility. Once approved as a part of amendment #7 we will be able to hire a new manager for the project using pre-award authority.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

Action Item #2: Minibus Purchase Approval

COAST's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan calls for the replacement of five (5) small minibuses for use in our demand response operations next year. These are traditional minibuses that have a capacity of eight ambulatory passengers and two passengers using mobility devices (wheelchairs).

These vehicles will be funded through a 5339(a) grant awarded to COAST by the NHDOT (85%), state capital match (7.5%), and COAST held funds (7.5%).

The vehicles being procured are the same vehicle style as the four (4) minibuses approved earlier this year by the board of directors. We are using the available State of New Hampshire contract. The price for each vehicle is \$129,373, for a total contract value of \$646,865.

Action Requested: *The COAST board of directors authorize the Executive Director to enter a contract with Coach & Equipment Bus Sales for five (5) new minibuses at a not to exceed price of \$646,865.*

Mr. Lentz made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter a contract with Coach & Equipment Bus Sales for five (5) new minibuses at a not to exceed price of \$646,865, which was seconded by Mr. Sandmann.

There was a question around when the vehicles would be delivered. Mr. Nichols indicated we expect these buses to be delivered in late summer 2025.

The vote was taken by Mr. Shanahan by roll call:

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

The Finance Committee met on November 18 to discuss the FY24 year-end and October financials, as well as the transition to the new Multiview software platform and our upcoming annual audit scheduled for early December.

Discussion Items

Discussion Item #1: FY2024 Annual Impact Report

Mr. Nichols presented the FY24 Impact Report for the organization, highlighting the organization's multiple successes over the past year and upcoming challenges.

Mr. Shanahan recommended selective presentations to City Councils to help inform them as they enter budget discussions.

Discussion Item #2: Sponsored or Fundraised 'Fare Free' Days

Mr. Nichols stepped out briefly. Mr. Shanahan introduced the discussion item.

As staff has been discussing Giving Tuesday (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving), and what we might want to do on this day of global giving, a concept has developed around raising funds to offset fares for a day or days of service (i.e., Saturdays in December).

We then also discussed this as a potentially great concept for corporate sponsors. Reasonable firms to approach could include the vendors we work with on an ongoing basis.

To give a sense of the amount of fundraising or level of sponsorship we are talking about, it would take approximately \$2,500 to cover lost passenger fares and associated advertising of a single fare free Saturday. A fare free weekday would likely be in the \$3,500 - \$4,000 range.

Ideally, this is another way for COAST to engage in philanthropic giving and further develop long-term donor relationships.

There were questions around the impacts to fixed route and demand response demand if we offered fare free days and whether we have the capacity to manage the potential increase in demand. Mr. Nichols identified that was an issue currently and these would potentially be selected days in 2025.

After some additional discussion around concerns of staffing, Mr. Shanahan encouraged the discussion continue at the next meeting. Mr. Nichols asked if he could explore with potential sponsors before the next meeting. The consensus was that would be fine.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

Ridership

Overall ridership in October totaled 38,367. This was up 12.7% from September, and up 25% over October 2023. Of note, this was the third highest ridership month, and only the fourth over 38,000, since October of 2019. Historically, October is typically one of our highest ridership months each year.

Fixed route ridership totaled 36,066, up 12.5% from September, and up by 27.1% over October 2023.

Demand response ridership totaled 2,301 for the month. This represented a 15.7% increase from September, and a 0.4% decrease over ridership in October 2023.

Mr. Scala asked whether COAST would be providing any services for the Willand Pond Emergency Shelter this winter. Mr. Nichols explained that we would be offering a morning shuttle.

Mr. Tovey shared that the Town of Exeter is interested in expanding the service area in town. Mr. Nichols indicated that COAST would be happy to meet to discuss such an expansion.

Mr. Dornblut chimed in on desires within Newmarket about reconfiguring how services are being delivered to better align with potential for added ridership in the Town per recent surveying.

Mr. Hebert inquired about operating cost estimates for the new facility. Mr. Nichols noted that we do not have those estimates yet but will be a part of final design.

VIII. Adjournment

The next Board Meeting will be on December 18, 2024. Mr. Shanahan adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 9:57 am.

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Joyce, Secretary