



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
Minutes of the Board of Directors  
Wednesday, June 24, 2026**

**Present:** Fred Butler (virtual), Arthur Capello, Sean Clancy, Sönke Dornblut, Jessica Garlough, Jason Garnham, Jillian Harris (virtual), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce (virtual/8:43am arrival), Colin Lentz, Dave Sandmann, Dennis Shanahan, Kiersten Wright (8:35am arrival)

**Absent:** Michael Mates, Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro, Scott Bogle, and David Tovey

**Staff:** Rad Nichols, Margot Doering, Joanne Muckenhaupt, Michael Williams, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, Vanessa Polychronis

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Shanahan called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

**II. Approval of the minutes**

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the May Board of Directors meeting, seconded by Mr. Hebert. Chair Shanahan took a roll call vote.

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Arthur Capello   | Abstained |
| Sean Clancy      | Yes       |
| Sönke Dornblut   | Yes       |
| Jessica Garlough | Yes       |
| Jason Garnham    | Yes       |
| Denis Hebert     | Abstained |
| Margaret Joyce   | Abstained |
| Colin Lentz      | Yes       |
| Dave Sandmann    | Yes       |
| Dennis Shanahan  | Yes       |

The vote passed unanimously, with the three noted abstentions.

**II. Public Comment**

None

**III. Financial Report**

Ms. Doering provided a report on April's financials. She reported that revenues under non-Federal grants included those COAST had booked for the CDFA tax credits and other capital funds received. COAST also gained revenue on the sale of old cutaway vehicles. For expenses, materials and supplies dipped slightly. Federal assistance is down slightly as COAST adjusted the allocation of federal and local match for some expenses. The CommuteSMART program has restarted, so it will incur higher expenses going forward.

Mr. Hebert asked where the new vehicles show up in the financials. Ms. Doering reported that they show up in the insurance line item as additional expenses. Mr. Nichols noted that old vehicles cannot be removed from insurance until they have been sold and leave the property, which is an additional cost. Mr. Hebert asked if the retired vehicles have been sold. Mr. Williams stated that all retired vehicles have been sold and removed from insurance. Mr. Hebert asked who buys our retired vehicles. Mr. Williams explained the variety of buyers who have purchased retired COAST vehicles.

Mr. Nichols noted that the Non-Federal Grant line on the Income Statement now contains capital campaign donations. This is a change requested by COAST's auditors. The line appears to be behind budget if not accounting for the capital campaign funds, which is due to the timing of receiving some anticipated grants.

#### **IV. Old Business**

Mr. Nichols presented the old business items.

##### **Fare Increase**

No further public comments were received after the board voted last month to adopt a fare change, pending substantive further public comments being received by the end of the public input period on May 30. Announcements about the upcoming September fare change have been posted on COAST vehicles. We will distribute a press release soon. Staff are in the process of preparing updates to our publicly distributed printed and electronic materials (e.g., bus schedules, website, program details, etc. ) as we make this transition.

##### **Transit App Transition**

COAST is launching the Transit App for fixed route real-time information on June 25. Passio GO will continue to be available through the end of July. Staff are in the process of preparing marketing materials and updates to our publicly distributed materials (e.g., bus schedules) as we make this transition and change our fares.

##### **NHTA/SCC Annual Conference Update**

The 2026 NH Transit Association and State Coordinating Council Annual Conference was held at the Grappone Center in Concord on June 4. The theme of this Year's conference was 'Mission Critical-Mission Possible-Mission Go!'.

Among the morning highlights, we also featured some of the awardees who were recognized at the annual awards luncheon in our mid-June email (<https://mailchi.mp/coastbus/june2026doing>).

- Legislative Champion - Senator Jeanne Shaheen
- COAST Excellence in Transit Recipient, Dan LaMore (CDL Bus Operator)
- SCC/RCC Awardee - Debbie Perou (retired Rockingham County Meals on Wheels Executive Director)
- NHTA Champion - Rad Nichols (outgoing Chair & COAST Executive Director)

Another Seacoast company was also recognized during the awards ceremony. ATA Outdoor Media was recognized by Nashua Transit as their Excellence in Transit recipient. We have worked with ATA Outdoor to sell ads on our buses and in our bus shelters since 1992 and agree 100% with Nashua Transit that they deserve recognition for their excellent work.

### **Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce Morning Mixer (July 1 @ 8a)**

COAST is hosting a morning mixer at our main facility on July 1. Those who have the time and interest afterwards will be given an insider's tour of our current facility and information on our plans and capital campaign to replace it.

### **Website Redesign Kickoff**

We had our project kickoff meeting with DARCI Creative of Portsmouth on Tuesday, June 16. Much of the meeting was dedicated to learning more about some of our design preferences. We now have a plan, schedule, and primary points of contact established.

### **Development Update**

Ms. Muckenhoupt gave the development update.

### **\$1M Foundation Challenge Grant**

When I joined COAST, I set my sights firmly on this goal. We delivered strong, focused communications to the Foundation and NHCF, clearly defining who we are and what we stand for. NHCF's endorsement truly demonstrates how much they support COAST and believe in our work. Because of this challenge grant, we are poised to be more visible to other foundations and donors. Now the big work is ahead of us. We will use all means of communication to keep this momentum going, including press releases, media outlets such as WMUR, Seacoast Online, and NHPR, newsletters, social media, and email campaigns. We are also making appointments with folks on our targeted list. Any recommendations or introductions through your contacts are very welcome!

Mr. Clancy commented that the matching information COAST provides is important for messaging this opportunity, particularly for larger donors. Ms. Muckenhoupt agreed.

### **Father's Day 5K**

COAST made \$4,915.80 from the race.

Mr. Hebert asked if this money could be used to match against the challenge grant. Ms. Muckenhoupt stated that was an open question she would be asking.

Ms. Muckenhoupt shared that some technical issues made uploading times difficult for runners, but that the virtual event was an overall positive experience. COAST has decided not to pursue partnership with the DRS for future fundraising efforts.

### **Music Fundraiser – 2027**

I reached out to a well-known national act interested in working with COAST on a fundraiser. We tried to make it happen this fall during their tour, but the venues we were considering were either booked or the dates were outside their season. And it is a big lift. We are now working to secure a venue for next year and will keep you posted. This would be a very exciting event!

### **Hearst Family Foundation Grant**

We are working on this rather large application and asking for \$1M with all the pertinent information about the challenge grant.

Mr. Hebert asked if this grant is a challenge grant, like the Haas Foundation grant. Ms. Muckenhoupt answered that it is not.

### **NH Gives**

We received \$1,235 in donations from 21 unique donors, both the highest we have achieved in our time participating.

### **Donor Advised Fund (DAF) Donation**

We received a \$500 DAF donation from new donors! They are Dover residents and we do not know yet what prompted this gift.

Mr. Nichols thanked the board of directors for their donations, noting that 100% of the board has donated.

## **V. New Business**

### **Action Items**

#### **Action Item #1: Title VI Program Update (2026-2029)**

Ms. Hesse-Stromberg presented the Title VI Program Update.

Every three years COAST is required to update its Title VI Program. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in the receipt of, any of COAST's services on the basis of their race, color, or national origin. All Title VI Programs must be approved by the recipient's Board prior to submission to FTA.

COAST's Title VI Program includes all the required program elements. They are:

1. **Notice to the Public of their rights under Title VI and their right to file a Title VI Complaint.** *Notice appears in all vehicles and in both COAST locations. Notice, COAST's Title VI Program, Complaint Procedures, and a Complaint Form are available on the COAST website.*
2. **Procedures for Filing a Complaint.** *This includes COAST's procedures for processing a complaint.*
3. **A record of Title VI Investigations, Complaints, or Lawsuits.** *To date, COAST has not received any Title VI Complaints, nor been subject to any Title VI lawsuits.*
4. **Promotion of Public Participation.** *COAST's Public Participation efforts are detailed.*
5. **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Four-Factor Analysis and COAST's Language Assistance Program.** Part of this analysis is to determine if there are any LEP populations in COAST's service area that reach the threshold that require COAST to have vital documents translated into those languages. Currently there are no LEP populations that reach the numbers that would require the translation of those documents without a request to do so.

*The Four-Factor Analysis includes the following:*

- a. *The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by COAST.*

- i. This involves a deep dive into the Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates data from 2024 (most recent).*
- b. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with COAST.*
  - i. This considers data from COAST's 2025 Customer Survey and a survey of COAST staff with direct contact with our customers.*
- c. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by COAST to people's lives.*
- d. The resources available to COAST for LEP outreach, as well as the costs associated with that outreach.*

*The Language Assistance Plan looks at much of the same data and identifies the resources available to COAST to assist LEP persons including LanguageLine for interpretation services and NH DHHS Communication Access Team to assist with document translation if requested.*

- 6. **Minority Representation on Planning and Advisory Committees.** *COAST has no active transit-related, non-elected planning or advisory committees.*
- 7. **Assistance Provided to Subrecipients.** *COAST provides assistance to its 5310 recipients through Alliance for Community Transportation staff.*
- 8. **Determination of Site or Location of Facilities.** *This requires an equity analysis with regard to where facilities are located to ensure locations are selected without regard to race, color or national origin.*

Addition elements are required for Fixed-Route Transit Providers including:

- **Requirement to set system-wide Service Standards** including
  - Vehicle load
  - Vehicle headway
  - On-Time Performance
  - Service Availability
- **Requirement to set system-wide Service Policies** including
  - Distribution of transit amenities
  - Vehicle Assignments

Action Recommended: *That the COAST Board of Directors approve the updated COAST Title VI Program for 2026-2029.*

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to approve the 2026-2029 Title VI Program Update and Mr. Lentz seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Mr. Shanahan called for a vote and all voted in favor (no abstentions). The motion passed unanimously.

## **Action Item #2: ADA Fare Simplification Proposal**

Mr. Nichols presented the ADA fare simplification proposal. COAST is preparing to implement a new demand response scheduling software called Spare. This is targeted to go live on October 1.

While configuring settings, we found the software would function more smoothly if all ADA rides had the same fare, instead of basing the fare on how many fixed route transfers would be required to make the trip as we do today. This would mean all one-way ADA trips would cost \$4, instead of most costing \$4 and some costing \$8. Based on ridership last year, making this change would result in \$628 less ADA fare revenue annually. For that price, we would be purchasing less confusion for customers, drivers, and TripLink, fewer data errors, and faster reservation booking by TripLink.

Because higher fare trips are longer trips, there is a possibility the higher price is suppressing demand and aligning it with other trips could lead to an increase in average trip length.

We are recommending a one-year pilot of this change to see how demand is impacted and to leave the door open to ending it if the negative impacts are greater than anticipated.

*Action Recommended: That the COAST Board of Directors approve a one-year pilot of a single fare for all ADA paratransit rides regardless of how many equivalent fixed route transfers would be required to make the trip.*

Mr. Clancy motioned to approve the one-year pilot for a flat \$4.00 ADA fare. Ms. Wright seconded the motion.

Ms. Joyce asked if this proposal is related to COAST's efforts to train people on how to use the fixed route service. Mr. Nichols noted that the two programs are related. Mr. Nichols noted that the work Mr. Santana, COAST's Transit Accessibility Specialist, is doing with the ADA program very is positive. Mr. Williams noted he did not have statistics with him, but that anecdotally he has many positive stories of assisting people, including to learn to use the system to access food who had gone days without food. Ms. Polychronis noted that COAST purchased some snacks for people in this situation. Mr. Sandmann asked if Mr. Santana and COAST partner with other organizations, and warned against mission creep.

Mr. Williams acknowledged the concern and stated the Mr. Santana does have relationships with and direct people to other organizations. Mr. Williams also stated that the ADA evaluation program has already broken even on costs based on recent analysis. So, while denying ADA paratransit is not the goal—the goal is to connect people to the best service for them—the evaluation process has reduced costs for COAST.

Mr. Dornblut noted the ideal is for people with disabilities to be able to use the fixed route service, and that redirecting people to fixed route is a positive step.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

### **Discussion Items**

None.

### **Committee Reports**

Nothing to report

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

Mr. Nichols presented community updates.

**Ridership**

- Overall ridership in April totaled 34,887. This was up 2.6% from March, and down 2.9% from April 2025.
- Fixed route ridership totalled 32,274, up 2.6% from March, and down by 3.2% from April 2025. Average weekday ridership was 3.0% higher than in April 2025.
- Demand response ridership totaled 2,613 for the month. This represented a 2.1% increase from March, and a 1.8 % increase in ridership from April 2025.

Mr. Hebert asked if particular routes were down in ridership. Mr. Nichols stated he did not have those numbers with him but would provide them after the meeting.

**VII. Adjournment**

Mr Sandmann made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hebert. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.