



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
Minutes of the Board of Directors  
Wednesday, January 27, 2016**

**Present:** Donna Benton, Scott Bogle (depart 10:03), Cynthia Copeland (arr. 8:46), Jen Decker, Colin Lentz (arr. 8:36), Kenneth Ortmann, Marty Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Maria Stowell, Juliet Walker (arr. 8:39)

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. All in attendance introduced themselves.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept the October 28, 2015 minutes as presented. There are no minutes for the November or December meetings, due to a lack of a meeting quorum. Location and time changes mostly caused these issues. Mr. Pepin seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**III. Public Comment**

Mr. Nichols stated none.

**IV. Financial Report • November 2015 Income Statement & Balance Sheet**

Mr. Nichols reported that there was a notable difference between October and November revenues. There was a significant increase in farebox revenue. Mr. Nichols reported that advertising revenue continues to see small increases each month but the recovery is slower than we'd like.

Mr. Nichols indicated that fringe benefits are much higher in November due to the PTO buyback. Once a year COAST buys back all full time employees PTO down to 120 hours. This has been done since 2001. Contract services increase is the result of the annual audit and the initial payment. Miscellaneous expenses continue to be higher due to the new facilities at 6 Sumner.

Mr. Ortmann inquired about questions, and there were none.

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented which was seconded by Mr. Pepin. All voted in favor.

**V. Old Business**

Route 1 Ridership Performance

Since implementing the additional \$0.50 fee on passengers boarding in Somersworth due to the City's underfunding of COAST, weekday ridership on Route 1 has experienced a notable drop. While initially around a 17% decline when compared with the previous six month average, weekday ridership appears to be averaging an approximate reduction of 13.5%. This month Mr. Nichols has added the calculations for a year-to-year comparison for each month.

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Aug. WD avg.	221	253	-12.6%
Sept. WD avg.	229	266	-13.9%
Oct. WD avg.	237	248	-4.4%
Nov. WD avg.	232	257	-9.7%
Dec. WD avg.	229	270	-15.2%
Jan. WD avg.	212	236	-10.2%
Prev. 3 month avg. *	275		
Prev. 6 month avg. *	266		

Avg. Saturday ridership since August 1 started down, but has recovered, with some fluctuation, more quickly than ridership on weekdays (-6.4%). This is evidence of importance of Saturday service to residents of the City of Somersworth.

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Aug. Sat. avg.	142	171	-17.0%
Sept. Sat. avg.	159	167	-4.8%
Oct. Sat. avg.	161	171	-5.8%
Nov. Sat. avg.	134	153	-12.4%
Dec. Sat. avg.	145	154	-5.8%
Jan. Sat. avg.	143	128	+10.9%
Prev. 3 month avg.*	160		
Prev. 6 month avg.*	157		

\* Prior to August 2015

Mr. Nichols noted that towards the beginning of January, there was more ridership and as the month proceeded ridership declined. The same was true for December.

Emergency Backup Generator

Mr. Nichols has executed a contract with The Generator Connection of Barrington for an emergency backup generator for our facility at 42 Sumner Drive. The generator will be capable of handling the entire peak load of the facility in a power failure.

Comprehensive Strategic Planning & Management Systems

Mr. Nichols announced to the board that a RFP for these services was released on January 20, 2016. Questions and requests for clarification may be submitted through 2 pm on February 9. Proposals are due on February 16, 2016.

Mr. Ortmann wanted to know if anyone has expressed interest. Mr. Nichols reported that there was at least one.

#### Federal Commuter Tax Benefit Parity

Mr. Nichols included an excerpt from The Hill on 12/16/15 which touched upon the year-end government funding and tax deal. This increases the federal government's transit benefits from \$130 for last year up to \$255 for 2016. Mr. Nichols expressed the positive impact this could have on the Clipper Connection.

Mr. Boggle asked if this was a Department of Defense raise. Mr. Nichols responded stating that this was managed for the Navy by the DOT, who has decided to reimburse to the full extent allowed by the new law. Mr. Ortmann wanted to know the effective date. Mr. Nichols responded with January 1.

Mr. Ortmann inquired about any further questions, there were none.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Action Items**

#### **Action Item #1: Draft 2015 Annual Audit Acceptance**

Mr. Nichols presented to the board the Audited Financial Statements and Supplemental Statements for COAST's FY 2015. Mr. Nichols mentioned that Robert Ruzinsky had found an error on the listing of the Federal Grants, on page 2 of the financial statement which had been subsequently corrected.

Mr. Nichols reported that there were no findings during the audit. Mr. Ortmann stated COAST was a low risk auditee and proceeded to inquire about questions. There were no questions.

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors accept the 2015 Audit Report and CY2014 Form 990, prior to the submittal to the IRS and the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.*

Mr. Pepin made a motion that the Board of Directors accepts the 2015 Audit Report and CY2014 Form 990. Ms. Decker seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

#### **Action Item #2: Small Bus Procurement (COAST & ACT)**

Mr. Nichols informed the Board of Directors that COAST needs to replace two body-on-chassis buses in the current fleet, as well as one minivan, which have all surpassed their useful lives. Additionally, through the regional transportation coordination effort COAST has awarded the opportunity to purchase vehicles for Rockingham County Nutrition/Meals on Wheels, two minibuses.

COAST received two responses to the solicitation: Alliance Bus Group, Inc. (Eldorado) and Sheppard Brothers, Inc. (Coach & Equipment).

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract with Alliance Bus Group for five (5) small buses.*

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept. Mr. Bogle seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Bogle inquired as to whether or not the COAST mechanics have knowledge on these buses. Mr. Nichols indicated in the affirmative.

Mr. Ortmann inquired about the purchase process with Rockingham Nutrition/Meals on Wheels. He wants know if it's a pass through purchase? Additionally, Mr. Ortmann asked for an explanation of how a vehicle transitions to a minibus. Mr. Nichols responded with it's a lease for life and they (RNMOV) are responsible for a 20% local match. They are also required to participate in the regional coordination program. A minibus or cutaway, is a vehicle that starts out as simply a chassis upon which a body is added.

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept. Mr. Pepin seconded. All voted in favor.

**Action Item #3: FY 17 Municipal Funding Formula & Requests**

FY 2017 Budget Assumptions:

- o Potential service related changes
- o Another 10% of growth in ADA service miles and hours
- o Slight ridership growth (2-5%) over FY16 on all fixed-routes, 10% on ADA
- o Overall expense growth rates of 3-5%, with exceptions.

Mr. Nichols refers to the handouts and has an overhead presentation with several Funding Formula situations. Mr. Nichols indicates that COAST needs to increase funds to a range of \$560K - \$618K.

Ms. Walker inquired about the Newington population and whether or not 35 residents was accurate. Mr. Nichols responded that it was accurate in accordance with the block level population data from the 2010 Census.

Mr. Nichols highlighted Routes 7 and 20 have been underperforming. In the case of Route 20, there will likely be a recommendation to eliminate the service near term. In the case of Route 7, we may find that communities make decisions for us.

Ms. Walker suggested looking for continued support for Route 7. She also suggested that we start looking towards other communities: Rye, Hampton and North Hampton. There is real potential there. Mr. Nichols mentions the idea of a seasonal route in Hampton.

Mr. Nichols concludes the presentation with his recommendations found on page 17 of the handout. Mr. Ortmann requested a motion to accept, Ms. Decker makes the motion and Mr. Sandmann seconds.

Mr. Ortmann opens a discussion in regards to the City of Somersworth. Mr. Pepin mentions that COAST will be lucky if they receive the same funding they received this year. He is unsure how to approach the City Council. He does not believe the City of Somersworth will like the formula. He is unsure how to help. The financial situation is difficult in Somersworth. The City Council accused Mr. Pepin of not standing up for the citizens, pushing for COAST, writing off

the taxpayers. Mr. Bogle suggested we demonstrate value. Provide them with actual numbers, the number of trips that are provided and what the cost would be in a private market.

Mr. Nichols met with some of the staff in Somersworth on how to strategize working with the Council this budget season. What he took from that meeting was that the city wants to attract younger professional families and have a strong economic development. COAST has very similar goals.

Ms. Copeland suggested using other means to collect data to present to city council. Look into other factors such as how many children receive free lunch.

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors establish the overall municipal request amount and approve the release of the FY 17 Municipal Funding Formula as the basis for COAST's FY 17 funding requests.*

Mr. Ortmann asked to vote in motion to Formula #6. All voted in favor.

Ms. Walker moved the board reconsider the motion. Ms. Copeland seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Ortmann stated the original motion is back on the table. Ms. Walker moved the board reconsider the motion with an amendment to authorize the Executive Director to propose the maximum base rate for each community (a place holder) pending further discussion with the Route 7 communities. Ms. Decker seconded the motion.

Mr. Bogle inquired if Route 7 could be treated like the Trolley, operating outside of the formula. Mr. Nichols stated that it is not the case to date, however if we were at that point, then yes. The cost would increase. Mr. Ortmann requested clarification. Would Route 7 move under other partner projects? Mr. Nichols responded with yes. Ms. Walker clarified the intent of her motion to allow Mr. Nichols at his discretion to ask for the higher amounts and amend his requests to lower amounts as needed.

Mr. Ortmann called a vote on the amended motion and all voted in favor.

**Action Item #4: 5310 Purchase of Service and Formula Funding Application**

With the recent December announcement of the grant opportunities for 5310 Formula Funds through the NHDOT, COAST is in the process of preparing an application submittal. Grant applications are due on February 29, 2016.

The 5310 Formula fund grant will support the administrative functions of the ongoing regional coordination program.

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant under the 5310 program in support of COAST's ongoing operating needs to further advance the regional coordination program managed by COAST on behalf of the Southeast Regional Coordination Council.*

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept as presented. Mr. Lentz seconded.

**VII. Information Items**

## **Discussion Item #1: Route 20**

Mr. Nichols referred all to the handouts regarding Route 20. Ridership is dramatically lower than any of our other commuter services. It is not sustainable. COAST has been trying to work with Pease employers, which has been unsuccessful to date. There is currently a proposal with Lonza, which has two twelve (12) hour shifts, (7 am to 7 pm). We are waiting to hear back from them after they finish surveying their employees to judge potential usage. COAST is also trying to engage Long Term Care Partners to partner with Lonza.

Ms. Copeland inquired as to whether or not Route 20 has multiple stops and is open to the ADA program. Mr. Nichols replied, stating that it is currently subject to complementary ADA paratransit services.

Mr. Bogle inquired about the FY16 Operating Budget, does the \$138,541 include the ADA cost? Mr. Nichols responded with, yes. Ms. Decker asked for confirmation that there was no current actual ADA usage. Mr. Nichols confirmed and stated that he does not anticipate any ADA related usage in the future either.

Ms. Stowell wanted to know if the proposal to Lonza and Long Term Care Partners included ADA. Mr. Nichols could not recall, whether the service proposal limited the stops to the point of being exempt from ADA.

Mr. Ortmann stated that by better accommodating shifts need; perhaps other businesses might want in on this. He also inquired whether there are other ways to get home with other routes? Mr. Nichols informed them that there are other ways to get home using COAST.

## **VII. Information Items**

### New HD Gillig Buses

We had quite a nice New Year's gift this year at COAST. The build for our three (3) new HD low-floor Gillig buses was pushed up nine (9) months from March 2017 to July 2016. We are currently finalizing details on upgrades/equipment changes. Delivery should be in early August.

### FAST Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorizing surface transportation programs through Fiscal Year 2020.

The FTA has a thorough summary of the changes to their grant programs at:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/2015\\_FAST\\_Act\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/2015_FAST_Act_Presentation.pdf)

There are also a variety of program fact sheets on the FTA's site at:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/FAST\\_16653.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/FAST_16653.html)

### We're On the Route

Mr. Nichols informed the board that this campaign kicked off last week. So far ten (10) businesses had signed up. There has been a significant response on social media thus far.

Mr. Ortmann asked if there were publicity pictures. Pictures of our buses in front of the businesses. Mr. Nichols has asked for pictures from the businesses.

Ridership & Performance

Mr. Nichols reviewed the materials as presented in the board meeting packet.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Ortmann suggested a motion to adjourn at 10:05 am. The motion was made by Mr. Sandmann. This motion was seconded by Mr. Pepin and all voted in favor.