



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, January 28, 2015**

Members Present: Kenn Ortmann, Scott Bogle (arr. 8:45 AM), Cynthia Copeland (arr. 9:55 AM), Marty Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Maria Stowell, Amy Vento, Juliet Walker

COAST Staff Present: Rad Nichols, Jenn Hastings, Heather Hesse-Stromberg

I. Call to Order

A discussion began at 8:50 AM without a quorum.

II. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols said that this is Jenn Hastings' last week as the Office Manager. She has been with COAST just shy of seven years, and is leaving COAST in a much improved condition from when she arrived. Jenn is moving on to a professional editing and proofreading opportunity, which is a passion of hers. Jenn reminisced about the changes that had occurred at COAST over her tenure.

V. Financial Report

November 2014 Income Statement and Balance Sheet

Mr. Nichols said that we are under budget in revenues and expenses. We noted however, that we are tighter than we have been in previous years at this point. We have been in the red for the first two months of the fiscal year due to lower than projected fare and advertising revenues. We have seen a notable decline in Clipper Connection monthly pass sales. We are expecting a rebound in these pass sales as a result of the large amount of hiring taking place at the Shipyard, as well as from placing our new coaches into service. Unfortunately the process for getting approved for the incentive program, already arduous, is being made more arduous. Instead of recertifying quarterly, employees now have to recertify monthly. Advertising revenues are down due to Portsmouth Regional Hospital's unforeseen and sudden withdrawal from participation. Their contract is up, and we have not been able to reestablish a line of communication with the hospital regarding their advertising plans.

Advertising Policy

Mr. Nichols said that we pulled the advertising policy from today's agenda to save time. ATA is currently looking at our history to see how much of our previous advertising could be considered non-commercial.

Staffing Updates

Mr. Nichols said that we have filled the Assistant Manager of Operations and Planning position by promoting Toby Schreier. This promotion created a vacancy. Brian Deguzis is interviewing internal candidates for the Safety and Training Supervisor position. We have not advertised the Demand Response Supervisor position as of yet.

Office Space Expansion

Mr. Nichols said that we have serious space constraints at our facility. We looked into modular office space, but it is very expensive. There is available office space a few hundred yards from our current office. We are considering leasing that space and moving some of our administrative staff down the street. The rent would be \$2,000 per month for approximately 3,500 square feet. The owners wanted a higher rate, but he suggested that they make a donation to the organization. That will have tax benefits for them, and it will create paper match on our books. We are discussing ways to make the space ADA accessible.

Route 7 Update

Mr. Nichols said we had a Route 7 meeting in early January. Since then, we have heard that Stratham's budget committee zeroed out COAST funding, and that this change is unlikely to be reversed. This cut may be the nail in the coffin for Route 7 as a fixed-route service. Mr. Sandmann said there is no meaningful support in Stratham for continuing to fund the route. He did not have hope for COAST funding from either Stratham or Greenland. Mr. Nichols said that at the last meeting, there seemed to be the most support for a demand-response service on a community-by-community basis. The February 11 Exeter stakeholder meeting is still scheduled. Mr. Bogle said that Newmarket will need to make a decision, because they will have to change their service if they are to maintain anything. Mr. Nichols said that the demand-response service would be less expensive for Newmarket, so we would need to determine how this change would affect the amount we invoice.

Executive Director Review

Mr. Ortmann said that the Executive Committee would set up a meeting regarding the Executive Director's review. Any other Board members who are interested in participating should contact him.

Discussion Items

Board Development Committee

Mr. Sandmann said that the Board Development Committee met on January 13. They discussed the need for active membership to ensure that we have at least a quorum at all meetings. He spoke to Karen Anderson, who said that she was reluctant to attend meetings because Greenland was not financially supporting COAST. He felt that since the route still goes through Greenland, Greenland is still a member of the COAST family. He encouraged every board member to name an alternate if they have not done so already. The committee also discussed the open positions, including the City of Dover, a representative from a Chamber of Commerce in our service area, a private sector employer in our service area, and up to three at-large members. The committee will also work on setting expectations for members and assessing the board's effectiveness. Mr. Sandmann, Ms. Walker, Ms. vonAulock, and Ms. Copeland serve on the committee, and there is one more opening if anyone else is interested. There was a discussion about the ability of board members to participate in meetings via telephone. Mr. Bogle said that under 91-A, members can participate by phone but they cannot count toward the quorum. Mr. Nichols said that when we had updated the by-laws the COAST board had made a conscious decision to move away from this option.

Mr. Ortmann suggested that we consider at-large members from other entities in the area that provide transportation, such as Community Partners. Mr. Bogle said that the fact that Community Partners has a contractual relationship with COAST may preclude them from being members on our board. We may be able to recruit our private sector representative through the TMA, but we must be careful not to overstretch our committee members. Ms. Walker said that if we lose Route 7, we will lose the representatives from those communities on our board.

Information Items

Triennial Review

Mr. Nichols said that we submitted our final response to the FTA. We had only two items to report on. It was a fairly clean Triennial Review.

2014 NTD Report

Mr. Nichols said that we have requested a 30-day extension, and we have not found out yet if it has been granted. We also filed a small-grantee waiver from the full report.

5339 Grant

Mr. Nichols said that the NH DOT is working on contract documents associated with this grant. We were hoping to have a production slot at Gillig in time for delivery in December 2015 or January 2016.

Service Performance Reports

Mr. Nichols provided updated reports.

Community Updates

Mr. Nichols said that we are considering reversing our route in Farmington to alleviate perceived problems near our current stops. One main stop would be relocated near the old town hall.

Mr. Pepin said that gaining support for more COAST funding in Somersworth would be especially difficult this year due to a \$2 million increase in the school budget. Mr. Nichols said that we are working on a proposal for revenue sharing for communities that allow shelter advertising. This would give the communities another way to meet our request. The City of Somersworth is also considering heavy rail service. Mr. Nichols said that heavy rail service is funded by the Federal Railroad Administration rather than the FTA, so it would not compete for 5307 funding.

Maria Stowell said that the multi-use path in Pease has been completed. It received a lot of use this fall.

Ms. Walker said that the writer of *Walkable Cities* came to Portsmouth and gave a talk. He said that Portsmouth's transit system was quite robust for its size.

Audit Discussion

Mr. Nichols said that we had a clean audit and we remain a low-risk auditee. The auditors did point out a few things, but they are not findings. There was a fuel inventory miscalculation caused by an incorrect tank reading. The auditors said that new accounting rules required us to capitalize a website development expense rather than consider it an operating expense. On the revenue side, some prior year income from Strafford County was reported as income for this year. Bob made a retroactive adjustment to income for our coordination program, so that we can use our local match to the greatest benefit. There was also a correction made regarding the treatment of the refunds from the Local Government Center. The consensus was that the Executive Director could submit the audit report.

The gathering was about to end at 9:55 when Ms. Copeland arrived.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Ortmann called the meeting to order at 9:55 AM.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the minutes, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Bogle's abstention.

VIII. Action Items

FY 15 Municipal Funding Requests

Mr. Nichols said that the only thing that has changed since last month's municipal funding formula discussion is the likelihood that we will be running Route 7 next year. He recommended that the board move ahead with the requests on page 11 of the handout. These requests are slightly higher than the amounts on page 12. If a decision regarding Route 7 is made before the communities vote on these requests, we will be able to tell them that their requests will be adjusted down. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the FY 15 requests on page 11 as presented, and Mr. Pepin seconded.

Ms. Copeland asked about the impact to board membership. Mr. Nichols said that if communities no longer have fixed-route service, they would no longer have representation on our board, unless other opportunities for board service, such as at-large membership were utilized.

The vote in support of the motion was unanimous.

Audit

Ms. Copeland made the motion to approve the audit report, and Mr. Bogle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Small Bus Procurement

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to approve the small bus procurement as presented, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5210 Purchase of Service and Formula Funding

Mr. Pepin made the motion, and Ms. Copeland seconded. The motion passed

unanimously.

Non-Public Session

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to enter into a non-public session under 91-A:3 II (e). Ms. Copeland seconded. The motion passed unanimously in a roll-call vote.

Mr. Bogle made a motion to leave the non-public session and seal the minutes until the issue is resolved. Mr. Sandmann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Mr. Pepin made the motion to adjourn, and Ms. Copeland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.