



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, February 26, 2014**

Members Present: Scott Bogle – Chairman, Kenn Ortmann – Vice Chairman, Cynthia Copeland (arr. 8:53 AM), Jen Decker, Dave Sandmann, John Stoll, Sylvia von Aulock, Juliet Walker

COAST Staff Present: Rad Nichols, Jeff Donald, Jenn Hastings

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bogle began the meeting at 8:33 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2014 meeting. Ms. Decker seconded. The motion passed unanimously (6-0) with John Stoll's abstention.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Ortmann said that he has been taking the bus regularly, and he was amazed at the sense of community among riders. There was a discussion about ways to improve visibility for passengers waiting in dark areas.

There was a discussion about snow removal at stops. Ms. Walker said that when communities do not have the resources to adequately clear an entire area, it would be great if COAST could help prioritize the stops that get the most use. Mr. Nichols related that this winter has been particularly challenging for bus stops and even buses getting through their routes (i.e., Market St. in Portsmouth, Green St. in Dover and High St. in Somersworth).

IV. Financial Report

December 2013 Income Statement and Balance Sheets

Mr. Nichols said that we continue to run under budget.

Revenues continue to be ahead of budget year-to-date. We are seeing very positive trends in farebox and advertising revenue. Non-cash contributions are over budget due to Lamprey not needing to cut as much of its transportation program as we anticipated.

On the expense side, we are under budget in many areas. Fringe benefits are up due to the annual PTO payout, but that will level out as the year progresses. Contract services are up due to an expensive collision in Somersworth. These expenses however were offset in the insurance line with recoveries collected. Ms. Decker asked about the process in the case of passenger injuries. Mr. Nichols said that we rely on our insurance company to follow through with any claims after the fact.

Mr. Nichols said that Mr. Donald was able to secure additional grant funds to support the coordination program, which is reflected in the balance sheet.

V. Old Business

Local Match: Town of Farmington

Mr. Nichols said that the Town Administrator had reached out to him to advise that the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee in Farmington voted to zero out financial support for COAST. After speaking with the Town Administrator and advising him of our plan of action, we are now reaching out to passengers on Route 6 to let them know about the upcoming town meeting, get a picture of how they use our services and prepare a press release to inform Farmington residents of the importance of the service.

Unfortunately, the town meeting starts after our services have already ended for the day. We could not run additional service to bring passengers to town meeting to advocate for restored funding without making an exception. Ms. Bogle said that CART ran into a similar concern: municipalities do not want local funds being used to influence local policy decisions. Mr. Donald said that perhaps a North Bus volunteer driver would be able to help.

Mr. Nichols said that he plans on attending the meeting. Ms. Walker said that if Farmington has concerns about COAST service, they should take advantage of their seat on the COAST board. Mr. Ortmann said that partner agencies rely on the COAST bus to bring their clients to and from their offices. We should reach out to these partner agencies to spread the word.

VI. New Business

CommuteSMART Social Marketing Consultant Services

Mr. Nichols said that we solicited bids for a social marketing firm to help us

increase ridership from Dover and Rochester to Pease. We received three proposals, all around \$15,000. One was deemed non-responsive, because it did not provide all the requested materials. It also relied heavily on the research component of the project rather than the marketing component. We would like to move forward with the proposal from WorldWays.

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to approve the proposal as presented, and Mr. Sandmann seconded. Ms. Walker asked about deliverables. Mr. Nichols said that the consultant would help us analyze data, form a strategy, and prepare campaign materials, but not actually assist with media purchases.

There was a discussion about technology to provide real-time status information about bus routes. Such solutions would help build choice riders, especially millennials. Ms. Walker said that the City of Portsmouth is planning a marquee at the Hanover Garage as part of its wayfinding program, and this may be an opportunity to update people about bus service as well.

The motion passed unanimously.

Emergency Ride Home Program

Mr. Nichols said that we currently offer a Guaranteed Ride Home program for Clipper Connection passholders. Under certain circumstances, these passengers can request a trip home or back to their car. We would like to change the name to Emergency Ride Home, and then incorporate it into the commuteSMARTseacoast program. Ms. Walker asked about the service area, since many employees commute from far-off communities. Mr. Nichols said that CommuteSMART would reimburse the commuter up to \$50.00 for a taxi ride or car rental; there is no geographic boundary. In order to be eligible, the employee must be enrolled and the employer must be a member of the TMA. Ms. Copeland asked why an on-the-job injury is not a qualifying reason for a ride home. Mr. Nichols explained that was beyond the intent of the service.

Ms. vonAulock left the meeting at 9:30.

There was a discussion about membership in the TMA. Mr. Nichols explained that joining the TMA would be free at least initially, to encourage membership. He noted that we do not currently offer the ride home service to the broader COAST ridership. COAST is currently providing these guaranteed ride home trips with our own staff, but we would not be involved in the operation of the Emergency Ride Home program. Mr. Bogle said that the trip allowance seems generous. Mr. Nichols said that our Guaranteed Ride Home use is low, in the sense that passengers rarely take advantage of it.

COAST Route Design Changes

Mr. Nichols explained that he would like to propose a number of minor changes to the routes to better highlight what they do for passengers.

The run of the Route 2 (northbound) that originates at the PNSY in the early evening will be further designated with the "cc" title to indicate to riders that it is part of the Clipper Connection services. Riders will either have to show a Clipper Connection Monthly pass or pay the prevailing Clipper Connection cash fare to board at the Shipyard before connecting back to Market Square and NH.

The bus route operating directly between Rochester and the Pease Tradeport will be named Route 20. Riders will either have to show a COAST monthly pass or pay the prevailing \$1.50 cash fare to ride. Stops on the Tradeport will be on request or flag.

The runs of the Route 41 (Lafayette Road Trolley) that terminate or originate at the PNSY will be further designated with the "cc" title to indicate to riders that they are part of the Clipper Connection services. Riders will either have to show a Clipper Connection Monthly pass or pay the prevailing Clipper Connection cash fare to connect between Market Square and the Shipyard.

Route 103 will only consist of those runs directly connecting Rochester and the PNSY.

New Clipper Connection pamphlets and a new Bus Commuting Guide to the Pease Tradeport/Portsmouth are being designed for near-term production.

VII. Information Items

Safety-Sensitive Employee Designations

Mr. Nichols said that historically, our staff has been interchangeable, and people could be called upon to perform different roles. Therefore, all employees were considered safety-sensitive for the purposes of our drug and alcohol program. That is not the case anymore. The office manager, program manager, TMA manager, and community transportation manager do not perform any safety-sensitive functions, so those positions have been removed from our drug and alcohol testing program. This change will not limit anything these employees are currently doing.

NTD Report

The NTD report was due at the end of January. The report was streamlined this year thanks to the waiver in MAP 21 for transit agencies with fewer than 30 vehicles.

Drug and Alcohol MIS Report

Mr. Nichols reported that staff is working on submittal of this annual report, which also includes reporting on Lamprey Health Care as a contractor of ours.

Ms. Decker asked about drug and alcohol testing. Mr. Nichols explained that in addition to pre-employment testing, we have random, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion testing. We do not do return to duty testing, because anyone testing positive would be terminated or not hired.

Lamprey Health Care

Mr. Nichols said that Lamprey Health Care have seen a significant drop in ridership over the last few years. We need to continue discussions with them, because their program will impact our FY 2015 budget. We have partnered with Lamprey since 1985. They are now carrying about 8,000 riders per year, but at their highpoint they carried approximately 50,000. At this point we could likely use the FTA funds dedicated to this agreement in a more advantageous way. We pay about \$70k per year now, which is a quarter of the cost of the transportation program. For this contribution we receive equivalent in-kind match. Mr. Bogle said that due to the way BEAS counts "units of service," one person doing multiple errands could constitute 5+ trips. A relatively few number of people could change the total significantly. Ms. Decker asked for a written summary of COAST's relationship with Lamprey over time.

Ridership

Mr. Ortmann noted an ongoing decline in Farmington ridership. Mr. Nichols said that it is declining relative to FY13, which was the routes second-highest year ever. Ridership on Route 6 is still at near-record levels. Ms. Walker said that she would like to discuss ways to improve ridership on Routes 40/41. The City of Portsmouth is expecting a report. Mr. Nichols said that this was a priority for staff and part of that meeting would be to re-confirm the City's priorities.

New Financial Report: January 2014

Mr. Nichols said that we created a new report showing draft financials. A number of bills have not come in yet, but the report gives a sense for how we are doing. Mr. Ortmann said that the report is interesting, but it does not present a complete picture and takes staff time to create. He did not think the trade-off was worth it. Ms. Walker said that we could try it for a few months and see if it is helpful.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Sandmann seconded. The meeting ended at 10:25 AM.