



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

Present: Donna Benton, Scott Bogle (arr. 8:35), Jennifer Decker, Carol Gulla (arr. 8:37), Denis Hebert, Julian Long, Martin Pepin, Maria Stowell (arr. 8:34) and Juliet Walker

Absent: Daniel Chartrand, Cynthia Copeland, Steven Fournier, Dave Sandmann

Staff: Rad Nichols, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, Michael Williams

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Hebert made a motion to accept the March 22, 2017 minutes as presented and Mr. Long seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols reported that the recent article in Fosters Daily Democrat may have caused some undue concern given how it was titled. The article's title implied COAST was experiencing financial struggles but the text of the article spoke to the struggles of some of our passengers and the importance of COAST in helping them improve their situations.

IV. Financial Report – March 2017 Income Statement and Balance Sheet

Mr. Nichols reported that we continue to run well under budget and are, in fact, \$30,000 to the positive. Revenues for March included strong farebox and advertising revenues. He noted that wages were high in March because of Overtime costs, but were not as high as we had anticipated. We continue to have trouble filling operator positions. This is reflecting a nationwide shortage of commercial drivers. Mr. Nichols noted that even school bus companies are struggling to find drivers. Year-to-date our farebox revenue is 19.7% below what was anticipated and reflects falling Shipyard pass sales. Mr. Nichols noted that ridership has been down system-wide. Year-to-date advertising revenue is up 39.2% over what was anticipated and has helped offset the shortages in other non-federal revenue lines.

V. Old Business

Municipal Funding Update

Mr. Nichols gave an overview of where COAST stood in the budget processes of member communities to date. Three communities were highlighted as not proposing or passing full funding as requested by COAST.

Berwick will be voting on their budget in early May and, although the Town Manager is very supportive of COAST, the Budget Committee is recommending level funding. This would result in a shortfall of just over \$8,900.

Mr. Nichols reported that Dover has COAST funding in the yet to be approved budget at just over \$180,500. He indicated that, if HB 121 passes, they would have the revenues to fully-fund COAST's request. He noted that HB 121 passed the Senate Committee and is going to the Senate floor tomorrow. At the \$180,500 level, this would result in a shortfall of \$18,000.

Mr. Nichols stated that Somersworth was proposing once again level funding COAST at just under \$58,000. This will be the fifth year at this funding level should the budget pass. Ultimately, level funding will result in a shortfall of just over \$27,600.

Newington, has also failed to fully fund COAST's request, however it is to a much smaller degree, only representing an \$1,170 shortfall.

Mr. Hebert stressed that we need to find a way to get the word out about COAST and become better at explaining the service and its value or the funding situation will not improve.

Ms. Walker suggested COAST follow up to non-fully funding communities to let everyone know who contributed what and highlight the services we provide and the people we serve. Mr. Nichols noted that Ms. Polychronis is currently collecting stories on why people use our service. Ms. Decker noted she hopes the stories are helping to change the perception of public transportation. Ms. Walker suggested that the Executive Committee draft a letter to bring to the next Board Meeting.

There was discussion about how the Board can take an active role in starting the conversations to change people's attitudes and to stress that the lack of state funding makes the burden of public transportation fall on town/cities. Ms. Walker noted that this is tied to one of the Board Strategic Plan objectives and that we should discuss it at the May meeting. Mr. Long stated that COAST should be in the infrastructure of town/city budgets, NOT in social services. Members agreed that this should be part of COAST's Board's messaging.

Federal Budget Update

Mr. Nichols presented an article dated 4/16/17 on President Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package.

Unrestricted Funds Balance Policy

This is a Board objective that requires research on a rationale for increasing the unrestricted fund balance level for COAST. It may be best to establish a small subcommittee to work on this to present to the full Board.

35th Anniversary Event (mid-September)

Staff is proceeding with the concept of a mid-September event to celebrate our 35th Anniversary of providing service in the Greater Seacoast. Board members are encouraged to provide their thoughts and ideas on the event.

Maintenance Software Procurement

We are considering our options for maintenance software after only having received one proposal.

Website Design, Creation & Maintenance

COAST is currently soliciting for the design and creation of a new updated website and hope to contract with one firm to provide all conceptualization, design and implementation. Part of the project is a complete overhaul of our e-commerce site. Proposals are due by May 26th.

Architectural & Engineering Services

We continue to work on a solicitation for A&E services to assist staff with design, engineering, cost estimation and project management for a number of facility improvements needed at 42 Sumner Drive.

DBE Goal

After a resubmittal of our DBE Goal, it has been accepted as satisfactory.

All Staff Meeting

We held our second mandatory all-staff meeting on Saturday, April 8. It was a very successful meeting with a majority of staff able to attend.

NTD Report

Our 2016 National Transit Database report was finalized and closed early this year, after only two rounds of edits.

VI. New Business

ACTION ITEMS:

Action Item #1: Clipper Connection Proposed Fare & Service Change

When the PNSY was not able to secure grant funding for continuation of the Clipper Connection routes this winter they asked us to consider proposing a \$255/mo. pass rate, if that could support the service. The analysis indicated that it would come very close to meeting that threshold, with some small service adjustments, which were also proposed.

On March 27, 2017 the public comment period was opened via press release, public announcements on COAST's website, Facebook page, twitter accounts and onboard the buses themselves. The public comment period ran through April 25 and resulted in no public comments being submitted.

Informally, while riding the buses, distributing and explaining the announcement, there were comments about the elimination of the late Rte. 100 bus. This bus allows some riders to work a longer schedule, which is sometimes preferred. Further analysis of the costs to operate the late bus indicated that we need 18 riders to be purchasing passes associated with the late bus. Currently the average number of riders on any given night is 3.2 thus far in FY17 and comparatively was 3.1 in FY16.

Additionally, two (2) public hearings were held, April 11 in Rochester and April 13 in Somersworth, at which no members of the riding public attended.

At this time staff is recommending moving ahead with a fare increase on the Clipper Connection routes as follows:

Cash fare	\$ 7.00
Half-fare	\$ 3.50

Monthly Pass \$255.00

Additionally, staff is recommending the elimination of the following services:

- “late” Rte. 100 bus, departing Gate 1 at the PNSY at 4:45pm
- 2cc bus, departing Gate 1 at the PNSY at 5:10pm.

Suggested Timeline:

Implementation (fare change)	For June pass sales (May 10th)
Implementation (service changes)	For June 1, 2017

Action Required: *The Board of Directors approve the recommended base cash fare increase and resultant monthly pass rate to ride Clipper Connection routes, as well as the proposed service changes.*

Ms. Walker asked if there are restrictions on traffic impacting the late bus and if it would be possible to revisit this if the restrictions are removed. Mr. Nichols noted that COAST has no opportunity to survey riders and, while PNSY could survey them, they do not. Mr. Nichols stated that a request to bring the late bus back would certainly be considered.

Ms. Gulla made a motion to accept the fare changes and service changes as outlined. Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Action Item #2: Procurement Manual Threshold Updates

Mr. Nichols reported that the federal regulations have revised the definitions for micro-purchases and small purchases.

For purposes of maintaining consistency within our procurement program, staff is recommending that the thresholds for micro-purchases and small purchases at COAST mirror the FAR definitions in 48 CFR part 2, subpart 2.1. Currently these values would read as follows in COAST’s Procurement Manual:

- Micropurchases - purchases/contracts that do not exceed \$3,499.
- Small Purchases – purchases/contracts that are between \$3,500 and \$149,999.
- Large Purchases – purchases/contracts that are \$150,000 or over.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors authorize the definitions for micro, small and large purchases in COAST’s Procurement Manual to be revised and maintained consistent with the definitions for the same purchase thresholds in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), 48 CFR part 2, subpart 2.1, as amended*

Ms. Hebert made a motion to accept the definition revisions as presented. Mr. Long seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Action Item #3: NHDOT Contract – Certificate of Authority

As required by the NHDOT for COAST to enter into an agreement for the FTA 5310 funds awarded to COAST and managed by the NHDOT. The FTA 5310 funds are formula funds totaling \$132,808, and are for support of COAST mobility management activities performed on behalf of ACT between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors authorize the acceptance of funds and the execution of a Certificate of Authority to enable the Executive Director to enter into a contract for said funds with the NHDOT.*

Mr. Bogle made a motion to allow the acceptance of funds and for the Executive Director to enter into a contract. Mr. Pepin seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item #1: DR Service Expansion Concepts

Mr. Williams presented to the Board the goal of expanding COAST's Demand Response services. Currently ADA is the majority of service with a small amount of Medicaid Transportation and Community Rides. ADA is the most expensive to provide so if we can increase our partners and increase our rides, we can increase our efficiency with the goal of getting closer to charging our fully allocated costs. We are exploring the possibility of providing this service to members of the public in lieu of taxis but there are regulatory issues to consider. We would use our vehicles and drivers, and it would likely be a shared ride.

Another potential benefit would be that these rides tend to be a feeder service to fixed-route which extends the reach of fixed-route and, as a result, increases our ridership.

Board members were very supportive of this concept. It was noted that, with rideshare, we need to be transparent with existing passengers.

Discussion Item #2: Fleet Impacts – Expansion of the use of Non-CDL Operators due to CDL Operator Shortage

Due to the shortage of commercial drivers COAST is transitioning some of its service to non-CDL drivers and vehicles (e.g., Route 7, Portsmouth Parking Shuttle). COAST's current Demand Response fleet is 5 minivans and 6 cutaways. Currently our spare ratio is 9%. Spare ratio is the percentage of unused vehicles during peak service periods. Our goal is to have a spare ratio of 20%.

COAST plans to purchase 3 additional accessible Demand Response minivans and anticipate expanding the number of cutaways in our fleet.

To combat the shortage of commercial drivers, COAST is looking for CDL Training organization's in partnership with C & J and school bus companies.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

Rte. 6 Bus Storage Relocation and Associated Costs

This past winter the Town of Farmington advised us that we would not be able to securely park our bus at their new safety complex in Town. We reviewed a number of options and were approved by the NHDOT to store our bus at the Rochester maintenance shed off of Route 16. Given this new bus storage site staff looked at service options to minimize the additional deadhead costs we now must incur (approx. \$13,724 annually). Ultimately, the decision was made to proceed with the least disruptive option to the service, which is also easier to

implement. It will add an extra 45 minutes of deadheading time to the route on a daily basis. Alternatively, we could eliminate the least productive mid-day run at 1:25pm vs. 2:04pm. This was not supported at this point due to regular ridership that would be negatively impacted. We may have to re-evaluate the impact of this change when we next perform an evaluation of our services (scheduled for this fall).

Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation

This element of our current Demand Response (DR) services has been slowly tapering off in terms of the number and mix of rides COAST is being asked to provide. We continue to evaluate our involvement in this program and whether it holds promise for us from a business standpoint. It is not clear to staff that we are currently benefitting from involvement in this contract.

Triennial Review

FTA and their consultant will be on site May 24 and 25. The Review will focus on 17 functional areas to determine COAST is in compliance. The Review is the most comprehensive look FTA takes at grantees on a regular basis and is used as one measure to determine whether further FTA reviews or audits are conducted.

Ridership & Performance Information was presented as part of the Board Packet.

Takeaways

1. How can we serve as spokespersons for COAST
2. Executive Committee will meet in May in lieu of a full Board Meeting
3. Next Board meeting will be June 28, 2017 at 6 Sumner Drive

VII. Adjournment

Ms. Gulla made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Pepin seconded. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42am.