



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 30, 2014**

Members Present: Scott Bogle – Chairman, Cynthia Copeland, Jen Decker, Steve Fournier, Martin Pepin, Dave Sandmann, John Stoll, Amy Vento, Juliet Walker

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

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bogle began the meeting at 8:35 AM. There was a round of introductions.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2014 meeting, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Mr. Fournier's abstention.

III. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols welcomed Ms. Vento as the newly appointed representative from Farmington. He said that the Board has not had a Farmington representative for many years and was very glad to have Ms. Vento participate.

IV. Financial Report

February 2014 Income Statement and Balance Sheets

Revenues

Mr. Nichols said that we continue to run under budget. Our fare and advertising revenues continue to be strong. He noted that we have not sold any equipment for scrap. Since our expenses have been lower than projected, our federal assistance is lower than expected. We continue to see slow growth in the coordination program. The Lamprey line is over budget, due to the fact that Lamprey was able to continue more of its transportation program than we expected at the time the budget was put together.

Expenses

Wages are well under budget, partly due to the fact that we had a mechanic position open for several months. Fringe benefits are slightly over budget due to the PTO payout in December. Contract services are up due to a large vehicle repair in January. Fuel prices are lower than projected. Utilities are up due to the long, cold winter. Year-to-date, we have had a gain of \$66k and have not had to dip into reserves.

Ms. Decker asked if we want to see our farebox revenues within a certain margin. Mr. Nichols said that we look at fare revenues as a percentage of operating expenses. On rural routes, we might see that percentage under 10%. Routes 1 and 2 are in the mid-20% range. The Clipper Connection is about 50%. October tends to be our highest month in terms of ridership and fare revenue, although we do not know why. That said, we expect to see 60% of our annual ridership in the next 5 months.

March 2014 Draft Revenue and Expense Report

Mr. Nichols presented the preliminary March financials. We received an unexpected return of surplus from Health Trust. There are no surprises on the expense report. Our fuel expenses seem high because we had three fuel deliveries in March rather than the usual two. Mr. Bogle asked about the staff time needed to create these reports. Ms. Hesse-Stromberg said that it takes 2-3 hours. We already set up the structure, so now we just have to tweak it. Ms. Walker said that it would be helpful if the rows had totals. Mr. Pepin asked about the jump in passenger information materials. Mr. Nichols said that we were running out of schedules, so we had more printed. Ms. Walker asked if the Emergency Ride Home program could be listed as an item, so we can track how often that service is being used. Mr. Nichols said that it could be part of a quarterly TMA update.

V. Old Business

CommuteSMART Seacoast

The TMA launched last week at Red Hook. The launch was covered by Foster's and the Portsmouth Herald. The reception was a great opportunity to touch base and talk about opportunities. At the time of the launch, 20 organizations were members of CommuteSMARTSeacoast, and two more have joined since. These employers represent over 10,000 employees in the region. The website, commutesmartseacoast.org, also went live last week. Mr. Bogle said that the press conference was very successful. Mr. Patrick Herlihy, Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit, had read a letter from the governor, and leaders of several major Pease employers spoke about the value of the TMA for employees and businesses.

Clipper Connection

We continue to see strong ridership on the Clipper Connection. One concept for managing the capacity would be to replace the buses used for that route with coaches when the time comes. Coaches provide a different environment, and they would allow us to carry more people with one vehicle. Coaches have a capacity around 55 people, and our seated capacity now is about 37. Mr. Nichols added that he is not worried about finding coaches that satisfy Buy America. The 1995 New Flyer buses used on the Clipper Connection routes now are prone to heat and air conditioning issues. Ms. Walker said that she felt that the coaches would be appealing to commuters. She encouraged staff to pursue real-time tracking programs. Mr. Nichols said that he agreed that it can be very disconcerting for passengers wondering, "Did the bus just go by or not?" There was a discussion about open-source solutions that would use the same feed as Google Transit does.

VI. New Business

Action Items

5310 Purchase of Service and Formula Funding Application

Mr. Nichols said that the NHDOT requires the Board of Directors to take action before we can submit our grant application for Purchase of Service funds set aside for our region. These funds support our work with area providers and our ongoing management efforts. The primary focus is on getting people to medical services.

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to authorize the Executive Director to submit grants under the 5310 program on behalf of COAST and the RCC. Ms. Decker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

2014 Triennial Review

Mr. Nichols explained how the FTA comes on site to evaluate us once every three years. This time they will look at 17 functional areas and the time frame for the review has been very compressed. We had only 20 business days to provide the first set of responses for the pre-site review, which involved about 150 documents and over 90 pages of answers to questions. The second round will be due by May 16. The FTA contractors will be on site on August 21st and 22nd. Mr. Nichols said that this will be his 7th Triennial Review with COAST.

Traditionally, any findings resulting from the reviews have been very small and easily remedied. Past findings were in two areas: maintenance, which should not

be a problem this time due to better adherence to our preventive maintenance schedules, and contractor oversight.

Preparing for this review is a very significant endeavor. He added that UNH will have its Triennial Review on August 19th and 20th, just before ours.

Procurement Policy Update

Ms. Hesse-Stromberg gave a brief overview of COAST's newly drafted Procurement Policies and Procedures. She noted that at all times we need to ensure we are providing full and open competition and that the bidders are "responsible," meaning that they have proven they can perform the work they are being asked to complete.

Mr. Nichols added that as part of the triennial review we were advised that we are not encouraged to use the State of NH's procurement contracts, because the state may not have followed the same process that the FTA requires.

Title VI Program

Ms. Hesse-Stromberg explained that COAST is required to update our Title VI program every 3 years. Our next update is due by the end of the week, and some regulations have changed since our last submittal. We need to show that we are not discriminating against any minority or low income populations. A major part of this program deals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations. If at least 5% or 1,000 people in our service area responded that they speak English "less than very well" on the last Census, we would need to develop a plan to meet their needs. In our service area, there is no one language group within the population of LEP individuals that is near the 5% or 1,000 individuals threshold. Mr. Bogle said that the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the Salem area caused CART to clear the 1,000-person threshold. Mrs. Hesse-Stromberg thanked Mr. Bogle for the assistance of the RPC in helping put together the demographic data needed for the program update.

Statewide Coordinating Council (SCC) Appointment

A brief discussion was held on Mr. Nichols appointment to the SCC and the consensus of the Board of Directors was for Mr. Nichols to step down.

VII. Information Items

Mr. Nichols said that information about the proposed Grow America Act was released yesterday, so he has not had much time to absorb it. His first impression is that funding seems to be increasingly directed to large urban areas with large capital needs.

Bike/ Walk to Work Week is in mid-May. COAST's team is called Team COASTers and we are looking for members. There are still openings for the CycleSavvy bike safety course hosted by CommuteSMARTSeacoast.

Lamprey Health Care has signed on to provide accessible rides for Ready Rides trips. He added that COAST can also provide accessible trips for volunteer driver programs.

Ms. Walker asked when Route 20 will begin. Mr. Nichols said that it would start on June 2nd.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Pepin seconded. The meeting ended at 9:50 AM.