



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, June 25, 2014**

Members Present: Scott Bogle – Chairman, Cynthia Copeland (arr. 8:50 AM), Jen Decker, Steve Fournier, Martin Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Amy Vento, Juliet Walker

COAST Staff Present: Rad Nichols, Brian Deguzis, Jeff Donald, Jenn Hastings, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, Phil Smith

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bogle began the meeting at 8:31 AM. There was a round of introductions.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were delayed due to a lack of a quorum at the start of the meeting.

III. Public Comment: None

Employee Recognition:

Mr. Nichols recognized Phil Smith for reaching his 10-year anniversary with COAST. He was critical to our transition from contracting with C&J to running our own operation. We are lucky to have him on our staff. We are now in the best position we have ever been in terms of our fleet. We have had anywhere from two to four mechanics, and we currently have three. Mr. Smith said that it has been a pleasure and an honor to work for COAST. Mr. Bogle asked him if the new trolleys are better than the old ones. Mr. Smith said that it is like night and day. The trolleys are really buses underneath, so they dovetail nicely with the rest of our fleet.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2014 meeting, and Mr. Pepin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Report

April 2014 Income Statement and Balance Sheet

Mr. Nichols said that April was another good month. We are under budget overall. The positive trends regarding fare and advertising revenue continue. On the expense side, wages are under budget due to some parts of the budget not being implemented. Contract services are up due to additional repairs. This is the third month in a row that we received two fuel deliveries rather than one. We have not changed our service level, so Mr. Nichols is concerned about the volume of fuel we are using. On a positive note, we are now paying \$2.99 per gallon for diesel, which is the lowest price in several years.

May 2014 Draft Revenue and Expense Report

He presented the preliminary May financials. Income received was from insurance recoveries, Maine operating funds, and local match contributions from Pease and Great Bay Community College. We received almost \$37k in fares through the farebox and about \$20k in online fare media purchases. On the expense side, we have seen multiple engine repairs at Cummins Northeast. The increase in materials and supplies is due to the new brushes we purchased for the portable bus washing machine.

FY 2014 Coordination Update

Mr. Donald said that since we were able to sell a full wrap of the North Bus, we have created a fund balance. The purchase of service program has been slow to implement. Wages are down due to Dianne Smith's departure and the lack of part-time employees hired to staff the call center. TASC has put off accepting the mobility management funds due to concerns about the accessible transportation requirement. Ready Rides has begun using the mileage reimbursement, which is good news. The community health centers will begin sending trips using a Google Drive document, due to delays with our trip scheduling software. We are currently hammering out the details, but we hope to begin spending that money in the next few months. He and Mr. Deguzis recently went to an Easter Seals training about travel training.

Ms. Walker said that a bus buddy program would work well at the Portsmouth Housing Authority. Mr. Donald said that the travel training program would also likely focus on senior centers, senior housing, and high school age kids who may become bus riders in the future.

Ms. Copeland said that it would be useful to see what grants need to be spent down by what deadlines. Mr. Donald said that the United Way grant sunsets at the end of September, and the Endowment for Health is allowing us to extend the grant for another year. Mr. Donald added that we have four signed contracts with transportation providers, and we are waiting on some required supporting documentation. Mr. Nichols said that we have a signed MOU with ACT regarding

COAST being the accessible transportation provider of last resort for volunteer driver programs.

V. Old Business

Municipal Funding Update

Mr. Nichols said that we need to address the shortfall in Route 7 local match. Portsmouth will continue not to fund Route 7, Greenland zeroed us out of the budget, and Stratham is level-funding us below the request. In FY 2014 Route 7 cost \$330k to operate, including the associated ADA costs. The revenue shortfall amounts to \$37k. We plan to make the plazas in Stratham on-call only, and to stop only once in Greenland. Since we will not leave Rt 33, this will streamline the route considerably. Adding a surcharge for riders in these communities would not have the intended impact. He added that we have expanded coverage in Newmarket to more closely mirror Wildcat Transit's route. We are hoping this change will generate more COAST ridership from Newmarket riders who may be more accustomed to riding transit.

Ms. Walker said that in general, there is positive momentum for public transit in Portsmouth. The objection to funding Route 7 is that it replicates other service. If we could think creatively and find a way to serve another area of the city, we may get more support. Mr. Nichols said that the two most popular destinations for Route 7 are Great Bay Community College and the Fox Run Mall. We have talked about creating a transfer point at the Park and Ride or the community college and not extending to Newington. Ms. Copeland noted that many Newmarket families shop at the McKinnon's plaza on Route 1. She added that Steve Pesci has found that Wildcat Transit ridership on off-campus routes has been flat due to all the new on-campus housing. More students may be staying in or moving back to Durham rather than living in Dover or Newmarket.

Mr. Bogle asked about the potential for the community college to contribute more than \$5k. Mr. Nichols said that we may have a discussion with the college given the increased use of the system by Great Bay students. It is his understanding that the \$5k represents 25% of the student activity fee. Ms. Walker noted that the Great Bay expansion fell short of the required parking. This might provide some leverage, since bus service can offset the lack of parking.

Ms. Copeland asked how much money cutting the stops in Stratham and Greenland would save. Mr. Nichols said the cost savings would be minimal. Mr. Sandmann said that you cannot get from Exeter to Portsmouth without going through these towns.

Bylaws Subcommittee

The bylaws subcommittee had its first meeting. Mr. Bogle said that some topics

should be moved out of the bylaws and into a separate set of policies. Ms. Hesse-Stromberg will incorporate the committee's feedback into a draft for review at the July Board meeting. He added that the Board should encourage communities without a representative to appoint one. If staff members cannot regularly attend meetings, perhaps other people could be appointed. For example, the PDA could appoint a member of a major Pease employer or a TAP officer.

VI. New Business

Action Item

Nominating Committee

Mr. Nichols said that the nominating committee can have up to 5 representatives. It is responsible for nominating a slate of officers for FY 2015. The position of the past chair is typically vacant, because recent past chairs have not remained with the organization after their term ends. Mr. Sandmann and Ms. Copeland volunteered, and Ms. vonAulock was nominated to serve on the committee as well.

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the proposed nominating committee, and Ms. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

CMAQ

Mr. Nichols said that we have several successful CMAQ projects. Two are related to environmental mitigation measures for the Little Bay Bridge project (the TMA and the Rt 2/ trolley service expansions). The Clipper Connection is also a CMAQ project. Under MAP-21, the 3-year limit for CMAQ projects was waived for projects that started in 2012 or later. These projects can be funded indefinitely using CMAQ funds; however, there are only so many CMAQ dollars available in a given year. We believe that these three projects should receive continued CMAQ support, and they would require little to no additional funds from the state. He added that the Dover side of the Little Bay Bridge project is not expected to be finished until 2023, so we should press that the mitigation measures should be extended that far as well. The Route 2 service expansion has been more successful than the trolley expansion. The Clipper Connection has carried over 75,000 passengers to date. Our farebox recovery is about 50%, and we expect it to continue to climb. We are not using much of our CMAQ funds for this service, and the Shipyard is interested in continuing it.

He added that we hope to begin actually entering the Shipyard soon, which will enable us to provide more convenient service to our passengers. This will involve

paying about \$200 for each employee involved to be credentialed. If the more convenient service encourages more people to sign up for Clipper passes, the additional fare revenue will pay for the background checks and the additional staff time. Right now, the bus stops outside Gate 1 and must perform an intricate maneuver. Mr. Deguzis said that some employees may not be able to make it to the gate in time for the bus to depart, but the truck inspection station is half a mile closer. There are several operational questions to resolve, such as what would happen if a bus breaks down on the Shipyard. Mr. Deguzis added that the majority of the fleet has cameras, but the Shipyard will not allow buses on the yard with cameras.

Ms. Copeland said that we have not had a CMAQ round for 5 years. They are supposed to be annual. Mr. Nichols said that the DOT has not decided how the CMAQ funds will be divided up in the state. He is concerned that it might be used to fund expansions of rail service.

VII. Information Items

Mr. Nichols provided a letter from Secretary Foxx appointing him to TRACS. Senator Shaheen appointed him to this committee last fall. It will involve two trips a year to Washington, D.C.

We will not be renewing our agreement with Lamprey Health Care. Given the scarce federal funds available and Lamprey's diminishing ridership, we will be ending our relationship at the end of the month. We have asked that they follow a public notice process. The Coastal Route will end at the end of the month, and the other two "COAST" routes will become demand response. Ms. Decker asked for a written description of the history of our partnership with Lamprey. Mr. Nichols added that he hoped that Lamprey Health Care would continue to be a partner in the transportation coordination effort.

We will not be running the Downtown Loop this year.

Unless Congress approves more funding for the Highway Trust Fund, highway funding will run out in August and transit funding will run out in October. The DOT has already indicated that reimbursements will be delayed. Multiple solutions have been proposed, but we have not reached a crisis level yet. We cannot shut down construction projects in the middle of construction season, but Congress has been known to make some unwise decisions.

We are looking at ways to share net advertising revenue with communities. Outdoor advertising is generally considered an eyesore, and the rules are set at the local municipal level. Some communities have policies against bus shelter advertising, while other communities have advertising policies that are vague or no policy at all.

Mr. Nichols said that we are working with Portsmouth hotels to educate staff about the local transit options. Anne Rugg has developed rack cards with custom schedules for specific locations. Unfortunately, most of the people she spoke with had no idea that the bus comes to their location.

Ridership

We expect to provide over 500k passenger trips this year. The Clipper Connection had its first ever drop compared with the same month the previous year. Some of this could be explained as the PNSY pass program had a lot of changes this spring, and there was a lot of confusion. In addition, there seemed to be a number of passengers re-assigned to other states. ADA ridership continues to grow.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Fournier made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Pepin seconded. The meeting ended at 9:55 AM.