



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, July 23, 2014**

Members Present: Cynthia Copeland, Jen Decker, Steve Fournier, Martin Pepin, Dave Sandmann, John Stoll, Maria Stowell, Juliet Walker

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

I. Call to Order

In the absence of both the chair and vice chair, Ms. Walker chaired the meeting. She called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fournier made the motion to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2014 meeting. Mr. Pepin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment: None

Employee Recognition:

Mr. Nichols said that next week all three of last summer's new management team hires (Anne Rugg, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, and Brian Deguzis) will have reached their one-year anniversaries. They are all a pleasure to work with and have at COAST.

IV. Financial Report

May 2014 Income Statement and Balance Sheet

Mr. Nichols said that our local match is down in May to reflect the fact that we will not receive FY13 local match support from Farmington. A correction was made to reflect workers' compensation expenses appropriately. Ms. Copeland asked if we have considered Primex. Mr. Nichols said Primex is not interested in our business. Property Liability Trust (formerly known as LGC) has also been much cheaper than the open market.

We continue to run under budget in wages. Contracted services are up, but many

of these expenses are offset with insurance recoveries. We have not resolved the issue of our increased fuel consumption. We are using about 620 gallons of fuel per day, which has not changed.

Ms. Copeland asked if our planning funds are all committed. Mr. Nichols said that they are committed in our budget. We do have some planning funds on grants that are not committed. Ms. Copeland strongly urged us to hire someone to help with our CMAQ applications.

The balance sheet shows that we remain in a strong position relative to our cashflow needs. We need to allocate additional effort on coming up with a fund balance policy. Our current fund balance target is between \$1.2 million and \$1.4 million.

June 2014 Draft Revenue and Expense Report

The preliminary June financials were not available due to vacation schedules.

V. Old Business

Bylaws Subcommittee

Mr. Nichols said that the bylaws subcommittee has been unable to meet due to training and vacation schedules. He hoped that the committee will meet in August so the Board can review suggested changes at the August Board meeting.

Lamprey Health Care

Lamprey's Coastal Route was eliminated on June 27. Changes were also made to the Newmarket, Lee, Durham, Madbury and Exeter routes. Unfortunately, despite our clear directions, the appropriate public notice process was not followed.

VI. New Business

Action Items

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee proposed the following slate of officers: Mr. Ortmann as chair, Ms. Walker as vice chair, and Ms. Decker as secretary/treasurer. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the proposed slate of officers, and Mr. Fournier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Committee

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to form a five-person personnel committee for Mr. Nichols' evaluation, and Mr. Fournier seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Walker said that the Executive Committee will form this committee. Anyone else interested in serving on the committee should let the chair know.

Accessible Bus Purchase

Mr. Nichols said that last summer COAST applied for funds through the NHDOT on behalf of Strafford County to purchase a new vehicle for Riverside Rest Home. We are currently finishing the specifications with the County. We hope to get bids by August 8 and award the contract in mid-August between board meetings. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to authorize the procurement as proposed, and Mr. Pepin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

Budget Update

Mr. Nichols said that the FY 2015 operating budget calculated for the purpose of setting municipal requests was just over \$5 million. Now that we have more experience in FY 2014, we will be able to fine tune the FY15 operating budget. Challenges include a projected \$62k shortfall in local match (half of which is from Route 7 communities), and the continued growth of our ADA program. We projected a 3.4% overall growth rate, but Mr. Nichols and Ruzinsky are working to refine that number downward. We do not foresee a fare increase in FY 2015, unless the commuter benefit that pays for Shipyard passes is increased. We will need to look at options for Route 7, including re-alignment, restructuring, or even elimination. We may eliminate another late run of the Clipper Connection. We will scale back our coordination effort to match the funding realities now faced.

Mr. Nichols is planning to propose a draft budget at the August meeting, with the option for a budget workshop on September 10th. The Board will vote on the budget at the annual meeting in September.

Ms. Copeland asked if we have discussed opportunities to serve the Route 7 communities with Wildcat Transit. Mr. Nichols said that we had had a strong proposal to do just that in the past, but Wildcat Transit had not been interested. Ms. Walker said that the City of Portsmouth would be more inclined to support Route 7 if it made a different route through Portsmouth. Mr. Nichols said that one option would be to run a commuter-based service from Newmarket and Exeter to Pease and Portsmouth. Alternatively, we could run between Newmarket and Exeter only, and passengers needing to get beyond Newmarket could use Wildcat Transit for the connection. He added that when we limit the number of

communities along a route, each of the remaining communities must pay a higher portion of the local match.

Ms. Walker said that we should poll the Board about availability for September 10th. She felt the budget workshop would be a good refresher.

VII. Information Items

5339 Funding

Mr. Nichols said that we would like to use 5339 capital funds from the NHDOT to buy three buses. These buses would replace our three (3) 2001 30' low-floor buses, which will each have about half a million miles.

Ladders of Opportunity US DOT Grant

Mr. Nichols said that he recently participated in a webinar about the Ladders of Opportunity grant opportunity. There was a large volume of people on the webinar, and overwhelming interest. There will be only \$100 million available nationwide, and the average grant size will be about \$10 million. He said COAST would not be applying.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

We are working on getting about 20 key staff members credentialed so the Clipper Connection buses can pick up inside the Shipyard, rather than at Gate 1, in the afternoon. There is too much traffic to get on base in the morning. We will have to leave half an hour earlier to get through security. If the added convenience attracts 18 new riders, we would make up the cost of the additional time and the background checks. We plan to implement the change in early August.

He added that Anne Rugg rode the Clipper Connection buses recently and gave out ice cream to thank the passengers for riding. We have had no climate issues lately—the air conditioning is working well. We have also added a seat tracking feature on our website to let the Clipper Connection passengers know how many seats are available.

commuteSmartseacoast has launched two new incentive programs to generate new riders. We are also investigating the purchase of two (2) used coach buses for the Clipper Connection as well.

Demand Response/ Coordination Software

Mr. Nichols said that we are hoping to transition to the same version of the software that other pilot sites in the state will be using. The state is looking to us

to help troubleshoot the system. We are hoping to make better progress as we push to wrap up the volunteer module and make the transition.

Ms. Decker asked about concerns about camera systems on the Shipyard. Mr. Nichols said that we are running vehicles without camera systems. The Route 41 trolley, which does have a camera, will have to wait outside Gate 1, where people can make transfers.

Mr. Nichols mentioned a number of upcoming events, including Try Transit Week in mid-September.

Ridership

We continue to see the same ridership trends. Route 2 is seeing single-digit gains. Route 6 ridership is flat, but it has recovered from a drop earlier in the year. Route 7 is seeing some gains, perhaps due to the minor tweaks we made in the schedule. Route 33 is still responding to the fare increase and service cuts. Trolley ridership is flat overall. The Clipper Connection ridership has seen its first drop, probably due to the issues with recertifying. We are seeing explosive growth in our ADA program again. A staff member with expertise in statistics has been conducting a detailed analysis of our ADA ridership since FY 2012, and that analysis correctly predicted trends in FY13 and 14. Applied to FY 2015, the analysis predicts 26% growth.

FTA Triennial Review

Mr. Nichols said that we were notified last week that our Triennial reviewer has changed. We expect some questions between now and the new reviewer's visit in August. We continue to tie up loose ends in preparation for the review.

Ms. Copeland asked about the 5339 funds. Mr. Nichols said that they used to be called 5309. There are fewer of those dollars than there used to be.. Ms. Walker asked about the status of the coach buses. Mr. Nichols said that the NHDOT has raised concerns, but he hopes they can be overcome once a dialogue can be initiated.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Fournier seconded. The meeting ended at 9:40 AM.