



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
Minutes of the Board of Directors  
Wednesday, September 24, 2014**

**Members Present:** Scott Bogle, Kenn Ortmann, Jen Decker, Martin Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Amy Vento, Sylvia vonAulock

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

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Bogle called the meeting to order at 9:46 AM.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2014 meeting. Mr. Pepin seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Ms. Walker's abstention.

**III. Public Comment: None**

**IV. Financial Report**

**July 2014 Income Statement and Balance Sheet**

Mr. Nichols said that we are well under budget year-to-date. We had a gross gain of about \$53,000. We saw no significant movement in our expense and revenue lines in July. Ms. Copeland asked about the federal assistance in July, which seemed significantly low. Mr. Nichols said this was due to the timing of draws.

**V. Old Business**

**Used Coaches**

We have been working with the NH DOT to have two used vehicles transferred to us. We expect that the transfer will be announced within the next month or so. These vehicles are coaches previously used by Concord Coach. We would use them on our Clipper Connection routes to address capacity constraints, reduce

our operating expenses, and provide a more comfortable ride. We will be leading the outreach to the press to help celebrate this out-of-the-box solution.

### **Try Transit Week**

Mr. Nichols said that Ms. Rugg and our other partners in the region were successful in generating buzz around Try Transit Week. We are following up to see what worked well and what could be improved next year. He thanked Mr. Deguzis and his staff for their assistance.

### **Pease B2B Commuter Challenge**

Ms. Rugg is getting ready to launch a new annual event at Pease. During a two-week period in October, companies will compete for three prizes related to alternative commuting: most miles logged, best social media buzz, and best team spirit. Six companies have signed up so far, but there is room for more.

Ms. Copeland asked if the coaches were from the Boston Express. Mr. Nichols said no, they were from Concord Coach. They ran long haul routes from Berlin and Littleton. He added that we will be able to get them for just under \$10,000 per bus. Ms. Copeland asked about rehab and paint. Mr. Nichols said that we will probably use a vinyl product rather than paint, due to the style of vehicle. We may make some other modifications, such as removing the footrests and possibly even the bathrooms.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Election of Officers**

Mr. Bogle thanked the nominating committee for their work. The proposed slate of officers was as follows:

Chair: Kenn Ortmann  
Vice-Chair: Juliet Walker  
Secretary/ Treasurer: Jen Decker

Mr. Bogle would serve on the Executive Committee in the position of past chair.

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the proposed slate of officers, and Ms. Copeland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ortmann thanked Mr. Bogle for his leadership. He said he was grateful to Commissioner Clement and the NH DOT for being willing to work outside the usual parameters. He identified a few challenges for COAST, including the need to right-size our services, adequately funding services, and strategic planning. It

was important to consider the life cycle of the decisions we make and the long-term implications they may have.

He said it would be nice to be able to use his phone to find out whether the bus is on time without having to call a dispatcher. He related that he felt that riding the bus was good for work/ life balance, because he sometimes leaves work earlier than he otherwise would have in order to make the bus.

### **Board Meeting Schedule**

Ms. Anderson made the motion to approve the proposed 2014/2015 Board calendar. Mr. Sandmann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **FY 2015 Budget**

Mr. Nichols said that the updated handouts include the TMA and coordination activities. He presented three budget options. All three options included improvements to the Saturday Route 2 schedule and three additional FTEs: assistant manager of operations, ADA administrator, and bookkeeper. Option #1 included no change to Route 7 service, Option #2 included changing Route 7 to a commuter-based service with two runs per day, and Option #3 included eliminating Route 7. Mr. Nichols pointed out a chart showing the lack of growth in administrative staff compared with the growth in operations staff. We need more administrative staff to keep up with the workload.

Mr. Ortmann asked if the new coaches could help alleviate capacity issues on Saturday Route 2. Mr. Nichols said that it would be very difficult to keep a coach on that schedule due to the additional time required for boarding.

Mr. Nichols said no changes on Route 7 would take effect until March 2015. We are planning a stakeholder meeting with the communities along Route 7 to discuss how to move forward. Another option may be to support an on-call/ demand response route serving targeted populations, such as the elderly and disabled. If we scale back services, we would also scale back the revenues we could expect from the communities.

Ms. Copeland asked whether the communities along Route 7 would lose their Board representation if the route were cut. Mr. Nichols said that according to the by-laws, these communities would no longer have voting positions on the COAST Board. Ms. Copeland said that she was concerned as much from an organizational perspective as a service perspective.

Ms. Walker made a motion to approve Option #1 of the proposed FY 2015 operating budget, with the understanding that that does not preclude us from maintaining Route 7 service or Board membership for Route 7 communities. Mr. Pepin seconded.

Mr. Nichols said that Option #1 was the option staff recommended because it does not dictate the outcome of the stakeholder discussions. The first stakeholder meeting is scheduled for October 1.

Mr. Ortmann asked if it would be possible to combine the ADA administrator with the assistant manager of operations position to see if we really need both roles. That would be one way to reduce expenses in what is a deficit budget in all cases. Mr. Nichols said that in the past 6 months, we have found that we need additional attention on our ADA program. Brian Deguzis needs another person to help him manage the operations so that we can focus more attention on the planning effort. Mr. Deguzis said that there is risk inherent in everything we do. He felt that spending more money on management would ultimately save more money in the long run.

The vote in support of the budget was unanimous.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Mr. Sandmann made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Pepin seconded. The meeting ended at 10:30 AM.