



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, October 28, 2015**

Present: Donna Benton, Scott Bogle, Dan Chartrand (arr. 8:37), Cynthia Copeland (arr. 8:35), Jen Decker, Kenn Ortmann, Marty Pepin, Dave Sandmann, John Stoll (arr. 8:38), Maria Stowell, Juliet Walker

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:35am. All in attendance introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept the September 23, 2015 minutes as presented. Mr. Chartrand seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

III. Public Comment

There was a very large and positive response to Free Fare Friday again this year. The Second Annual Try Transit Week was moderately successful. Mr. Nichols noted we were late in announcing/publicizing the event so that may have impacted participation. Mr. Nichols noted we will be offering free fares to Veterans and family accompanying a Veteran on Veteran's Day (Weds., Nov. 11, 2015). Mr. Ortmann asked if there will be any free fare events during the holidays and Mr. Nichols indicated that maybe right before Christmas they will offer free fares but that is yet to be determined.

IV. Financial Report • August 2015 Income Statement & Balance Sheet

Mr. Nichols reported that there was a huge increase in fare collection in August. Mr. Ortmann asked what this might be attributed to. Mr. Nichols noted that there has been a significant increase in Clipper Connection riders due to the large hiring boom at the PNSY in the spring. Mr. Nichols reported that advertising revenue continues to see small increases each month but the recovery is slower than we'd like.

Mr. Nichols indicated that fringe benefits are lower than expected due to a HealthTrust refund received several months ago but that it is unlikely that there will be a refund in the coming year, if ever again. Lower fuel prices and costs associated with materials and supplies continue to help our numbers. Miscellaneous expenses continue to be higher due to the new facilities at 6 Sumner.

Mr. Ortmann noted that there was an increase in ridership when gas prices increased and asked if we have seen a decrease in ridership in connection with the lower gas prices. Mr. Nichols noted that that does not appear to be the case.

Mr. Chartrand asked about limited partnership participation with regard to Coordination. Mr. Nichols indicated that the partnerships are increasing slowly but in the right ways.

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented which was seconded by Mr. Pepin. All voted in favor.

V. Old Business

Route 1 Changes

Since implementing the additional \$0.50 fee on passengers boarding in Somersworth due to the City's underfunding of COAST, weekday ridership on Route 1 has experienced a notable drop. While initially around a 17% decline, weekday ridership has recovered in October to only being a 10.5% reduction when compared to the previous six month average.

Aug. WD avg.	221
Sept. WD avg.	229
Oct. WD avg.	238

Prev. 3 month avg.	275
Prev. 6 month avg.	266

Avg. Saturday ridership since August 1 started down, but has recovered fully.

Aug. Sat. avg.	142
Sept. Sat. avg.	159
Oct. Sat. avg.	163

Prev. 3 month avg.	160
Prev. 6 month avg.	157

Mr. Pepin noted that Somersworth is completely strapped financially due to a shortage of about \$1,000,000 in the school budget.

Ms. Walker noted that the Board needs to honor its commitment with regard to the Somersworth Committee and indicated that the group will meet and follow through.

Mr. Nichols noted that Somersworth has agreed to let COAST advertise on shelters so that is a good source of additional revenue.

Ms. Copeland requested updates on Farmington, Exeter and Newmarket given the issues that have existed with funding in the past. She also noted that the bus is very visible in Newmarket now that it is operating more frequently.

FTA VTCLI Grant

Although previously directed to close the grant out by the end of September, FTA has indicated that COAST can continue to keep the grant active to serve the original purpose of the scope of work. Mr. Nichols reported that this is excellent news as a number of potential capital projects,

that had not previously been possible under the time constraints we were given, may continue to move forward.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Nichols reminded the Board that a speaker had been arranged for the Annual Meeting in September, 2015, but she made a scheduling error and was unable to attend. Mr. Nichols noted that he has had conversations with consultants regarding the Strategic Planning process and that this has stressed to him that the process is driven by the staff of an organization since it is their guiding document. While all parts of an organization have ownership of the document (Board has a role, all parts of the staff have roles), it is intended to assist staff in making intentional decisions to get them toward whatever mission they define. Mr. Nichols noted that a genuine strategic planning process can take around 6 months to truly engage an organization at all levels. Mr. Nichols is looking to go out for proposals in 2015 with a potential start of the process in January/February. The projected budget for this effort would be approximately \$25,000.

Mr. Sandmann expressed his support of staff engaging in such a process and said it is a great idea in terms of getting COAST where it wants/needs to go. Ms. Copeland agreed that it was a good idea and noted that her organization had great success with focused interviews. Ms. Walker also agreed that it is a wonderful idea. Mr. Ortmann noted that he wants to make sure the Board participates in the process and, as such, asked if any plan for Board participation can be made far in advance so as many Board members as possible can attend.

VI. New Business

Action Items

Action Item #1: Acceptance of Dover Representative Appointment, Ms. Donna Pohli-Benton

According to the COAST By-Laws, Article VI – Board of Directors, Section 1, The Board of Directors shall hold office for an unlimited number of two year terms, subject to the intervention of resignation or removal. All appointments must be confirmed by a majority vote of those members present and voting at a meeting.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors confirms Ms. Donna Pohli-Benton, the City of Dover's appointment, to the COAST Board of Directors.*

Ms. Copeland made a motion that the Board of Directors appoint Ms. Donna Pohli-Benton to the Board of Directors. Ms. Decker seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Action Item #2: HealthTrust Authorizing Resolution

As a member of the "January groups" COAST is being asked to execute an updated Membership Agreement with HealthTrust. Prior to the execution of the Membership Agreement, the governing body must adopt the Certificate of Authorizing Resolution (Exhibit A or the Membership Agreement). Adoption of the resolution and execution of the new Membership Agreement is required for membership and/or continued participation in HealthTrust and participation in its coverage lines.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors approve the HealthTrust Authorizing Resolution as presented.*

Ms. Copeland made a motion to approve the Authorizing Resolution and Mr. Sandmann seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Nichols noted that COAST will likely make some significant changes to the benefits offered due to the impacts of the Affordable Care Act and the Cadillac Tax. Ms. Copeland noted that they, too, will have to make some significant changes.

Action Item #3: NHDOT Contract Extension for commuteSMART

The original contract for the very successful commuteSMART TMA project is in need of extension as the project started approximately one year later than originally envisioned.

At the same time the NHDOT has agreed to include the local matching funds for CMAQ funding continuing in years 4 & 5 (\$56,000), as originally intended, into the contract extension.

This extension establishes the TMA project as funded for an initial five (5) years through both Turnpike and CMAQ funding, as originally envisioned.

As required by the NHDOT for COAST to execute the Agreement Extension the Board of Directors must authorize a Certificate of Authority as provided.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors authorize the Certificate of Authority as presented.*

Mr. Nichols noted that both NHDOT and COAST were caught off guard that the funding is ending at the end of December 2015 as both thought funding ran through 2016.

Mr. Bogle made a motion to authorize the Certificate of Authority and Mr. Sandmann seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Walker requested confirmation that the funding would then continue through 2018 which was confirmed. Ms. Copeland noted that at a recent Planning meeting there was a Turnpikes update and work is just starting on the Spaulding interchange near the Dover Tolls. She reported that this will be very challenging to COAST and that she has been very clear that SRPC and COAST need to remain very involved when discussions about the projects North of the Bridge occur.

Ms. Copeland noted that, as a Task Force member, she advocated for the transportation demand projects, especially because of the impact on the Spaulding.

Ms. Stowell noted that the trolleys running every half hour is enabled by CMAQ so loss of funding would mean they go back to running every hour. Mr. Ortmann noted that perhaps Ms. Pohli-Benton could sit down with Mr. Nichols and Ms. Copeland to learn more about these issues. Ms. Walker and Ms. Chartrand noted that they would welcome additional education on these issues and that perhaps it should be part of a Board Meeting.

Mr. Bogle noted that there is a week left for public comment on the GACIT hearings and that all written comments are due on 11/4/15.

Action Item #4: Small Vehicle Procurement Authorization

COAST needs to replace two (2) body-on-chassis buses in our current fleet, as well as one (1) minivan, which have all well surpassed their useful lives. Given the growth of the ADA program and coordination, we are looking to replace these three vehicles with small body-on-chassis buses with a capacity for up to eight (8) ambulatory passengers and two (2) passengers who use wheelchairs.

Additionally, through the regional transportation coordination effort COAST has awarded the opportunity to purchase vehicles to the following agency:

- Rockingham County Nutrition/Meals on Wheels – two (2) minibuses

As part of the solicitation COAST will also include options for up to three (3) additional minibuses as additional replacements for COAST and/or regional transportation coordination partners.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors authorize the Executive Director to procure five (5) body-on-chassis minibuses for a price not to exceed \$375,000, and options for another three (3) minibuses for up to another \$225,000.*

Mr. Nichols noted that these vehicles are a way to entice partner agencies to participate in coordination since they'd have access to these vehicles and only be responsible for 20% of the cost.

Mr. Sandmann made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to procure five (5) body-on-chassis minibuses for a price not to exceed \$375,000, and options for another three (3) minibuses for up to another \$225,000. Ms. Walker seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Mr. Bogle noted that COAST offered TASC an arrangement like this and it has continued a nice partnership.

VII. Information Items

Discussion Item #1: LSRs Filed

Representative Patricia Higgins has filed two LSRs that could be beneficial to public transit in NH if passed.

1. Relative to the maximum optional fee for transportation improvements charged by municipalities when collecting motor vehicle registration fees

It is our understanding that the proposed change includes raising the maximum fee that may be charged by a local municipality to \$10 vs. the current \$5 maximum.

2. Relative to interference with traffic devices

The initially drafted language change is indicated in red. This would allow for public transit buses to potentially pass through intersections more efficiently by for example

holding a stale green for the bus. Any such system would require retrofitting the buses and integrating them with select and enabled signals along the corridors they travel.

CHAPTER 265, RULES OF THE ROAD - Traffic Signs, Signals and Markings

265:15 Interference With Traffic Devices, Signs, or Signals. –

- I. No person shall, without lawful authority, attempt to or in fact alter, deface, injure, knock down other than accidentally, remove, or possess any of the following items, or any part thereof, which have been previously installed by lawful authority:
 - (a) Any official control device; or
 - (b) Any railroad sign or signal; or
 - (c) Any inscription, shield or insignia found on any of the above.
- II. (a) No person shall use or attempt to use any device designed or intended to change, disrupt, or interfere with the operation of a traffic signal.
 - (b) A person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor if convicted under this paragraph.
 - (c) This paragraph shall not apply to:
 - (1) Federal, state, or local law enforcement personnel while in the course of their official duties.
 - (2) Firefighters while in the course of their official duties.
 - (3) Emergency medical services personnel while in the course of their official duties.
 - (4) State or municipal department of transportation or highway personnel while in the course of their official duties.
 - (5) Fixed-route public transit (bus) operators while in revenue service.**
 - (d) The exemptions set forth in subparagraphs (c)(1)-(c)(5) shall only apply to such personnel when they are operating licensed ambulances, licensed fire apparatus, or government-owned vehicles.
- III. The fine for a violation of this section shall be \$150.

Ms. Walker asked if the intention was for this to be employed on a stale green light. Mr. Nichols indicated that was correct, the system could keep the green light in place slightly longer to help the buses get through an intersection, but that the bus operator would have no ability to otherwise affect a traffic signal. Mr. Nichols reported that this would all be pre-programmed and not a case-by-case situation.

Ms. Decker noted that LSR's are place holders and the language can, and does, change dramatically through the legislative process.

VII. Information Items

GACIT Hearings

Staff attended two of Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation Hearings (Rochester and Hampton). We highlighted our concerns for projects that are or have traditionally been funded through CMAQ no longer being possible should the NHDOT sweep the funds into "more flexible" programs. Mr. Nichols noted that the Rochester GACIT hearing was one of a few that were accessible by public transit, however they ended after hours so people could get there but not back. He urged that that should be taken into account when planning these hearings in the future.

2015 Audit

Auditors from F.G. Briggs, Jr., CPA Professional Association will be onsite at COAST during the week of December 7. The audit is anticipated to take four (4) days.

Transit Asset Management System (NPRM)

On September 30 a notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register on FTA Transit Asset Management and National Transit Database. The proposed rule would establish a National Transit Asset Management System to monitor and manage public transportation capital assets to achieve and maintain a state of good repair, improve safety and increase reliability and performance. In addition, the NPRM proposes amendments to the National Transit Database regulations to conform to the proposed reporting requirements for transit asset management. Comments to the NPRM are due by November 30, 2015.

Ms. Copeland noted that she was recently at the AMPO Conference and there were whole day workshops on Asset Management and the Conference hosts raised concerns about Asset Management and the FTA. She questioned whether a joint letter from SRPC, RPC, COAST and Wildcat regarding the structure of the system might be valued.

New ADA Circular

On October 5 the FTA released the new final circular for assisting grantees in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Circular is to take effect on November 4, 2015. Staff is currently working our way through the nearly 300-page document to assess which aspects of our program may need to be modified.

Mr. Ortmann asked Ms. Decker whether GSIL develops Fact Sheets to help distill the information contained in the Circular. Ms. Decker said she would ask the Advocacy Director.

Bus Shelter Order

COAST executed an agreement for the purchase of ten (10) new bus shelters from Daytech Manufacturing for \$66,625 on October 14. It is anticipated that the order will be delivered just after the new year. It will be a busy spring for installations. All new bus shelters are designed to hold advertising.

Mr. Ortmann asked whether these new shelters would allow for the replacement of a shelter requested by Farmington. Mr. Nichols indicated it would. Ms. Decker asked what the next step with regard to a Farmington representative might be given the current representative has not attended in many months. Mr. Nichols noted that he has made several efforts to connect but has not been successful. Mr. Ortmann suggested we contact Farmington directly and let them know we'd like someone to participate.

New ADA/TASC Vans

A new ADA accessible van for COAST's ADA operation, and one for TASC to meet their ADA obligations once they begin to accept FTA funds, were delivered in early October

Ridership

Despite a tremendously challenging winter, select reductions in overall service levels, and the recent imposition of an additional fare in Somersworth, FY15 ridership ended the year only 0.5% below our FY14 levels.

Charts regarding Ridership were distributed with the Board packet.

Ms. Walker asked for an update on Real-Time noting that there is an app that parents can pay for that tracks their child's bus. She wondered if that might be an option for COAST riders, especially if they contributed by purchasing the app.

There was discussion about whether UNH's software and COAST's would work together; most likely they would not.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Pepin made a motion to adjourn at 10:00am. The motion was seconded by Ms. Decker and all voted in favor.