



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, January 27, 2021**

Per RSA 91-A:2,III(b) the COAST Chair has declared the COVID-19 Outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting

PRESENT: Scott Bogle, Arthur Capello, Adam Causey, Jennifer Czysz (arr. 9:00am), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Marty Pepin, Dave Sandmann, Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, Maria Stowell, Juliet Walker, and Shelley Winters

ABSENT: Valerie Labrie, Dave Sharples, and Thomas Wright

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Michael Williams, Heather Hesse-Stromberg, and Margot Doering

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. Each member identified themselves, stated their location, and whether anyone was in the room with them and listening contemporaneously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pepin made a motion to accept the December 2020 minutes as presented and Ms. Joyce seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken to accept the minutes.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Joyce	YES
Mr. Pepin	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Ms. Stowell	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

November & December Financials

Mr. Nichols presented the financials for November and December. December was a lower cost month than we've had so far this year and was a better month for fare and contract revenues. Advertising revenues continue to be lower than budgeted. Federal assistance is lower but that is because our expenses were lower. Local match contributions have been coming in as expected. We will be billing the State of Maine once we figure out the details of that billing.

Wages in December were lower than in November. November tends to be a higher month because of the buyback of Paid Time Off. December is similar to how it's been in years passed but it is tight. Contract Services were down, and Materials and Supplies were up due to a timing issue in the delivery of fuel. Coordination continues to run under budget due to lack of demand. Contract services are higher due to DoubleMap, renovation of 6 Sumner and the fiscal audit.

Overall, we were 6% over budget in revenue and 2.9% under budget in expenses. After local share depreciation we have an almost \$90K gain year-to-date, and we could operate just over 2-½ months without any new revenues. Unrestricted net assets now sit at 20.3% through the first quarter (the goal remains 28.9%).

V. OLD BUSINESS

COAST Cares

COAST has a staff-led initiative called "COAST Cares" that gives our employees the opportunity to donate to local nonprofit organizations in COAST's service area. As a result of a December fundraiser, we were able to raise a total of \$505.00 for the New Hampshire Food Bank.

Gillig Bus Purchase Order

On December 22, 2020 COAST officially issued a purchase order with Gillig for our next four (4) heavy duty 35' buses. We expect that these buses will be delivered sometime in the first half of 2022.

Facility Needs Assessment

The ongoing Facility Needs Assessment that is being conducted by CMA Engineers is currently in the third task of the scope (Site Selection/Master Site Plan). Draft conceptual master site plans are nearing where they can be presented. The focus is on whether we should pursue renovation or build something new to make sure it can meet our needs.

NH Vaccine Distribution Plan (as of Jan. 16, 2021)

Vaccine distribution focus changed to first responders and those who are most vulnerable due to age or medical condition(s). The plan to vaccination critical infrastructure employees was set aside. COAST employees have been informed how to get the most updated information and to register for their vaccination.

National Transit Database (NTD) Annual Report

Staff is in the process of finalizing our NTD annual report to the FTA. The report is due January 30, 2021. For the first time in a long time, we did not receive an extension though we don't know why. We will do our best to submit the report by that date.

In early March we'll be submitting our annual Drug and Alcohol MIS Report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

Action Item #1: FY22 Municipal & Other Partner Funding Requests

Given the unprecedented impacts of the pandemic, and the financial support COAST has received through the CARES Act, staff are recommending that **our FY22 municipal requests will be held at the current FY21 levels.** Based on our financing plan developed as part of our recently

completed Comprehensive Operations Analysis, we had been projecting a need to increase municipal funding by 10% overall.

The funds contributed to COAST by the municipalities served by our newly designed system (Rtes. 1, 6, 12, 13, 14, 33, 34, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 100, ADA and 7 On Demand) are critical to matching and leveraging well over \$3,000,000 in federal funds to support our regional public transit system.

A table of municipal/partner request amounts for FY22 was provided.

Action Required: *The COAST Board of Directors approve municipal and other partner funding requests for FY22.*

Ms. Walker asked for clarification that we gave the communities a reimbursement/credit for COVID but that the request does not reflect any adjustment; it maintains the original ask for FY21. She expressed concern about the impact COVID will have on the future of public transit as there is no guarantee we'll get more funding from the federal government and the status of state funding is not clear. She noted that we need to be cognizant of the role of communities funding our services. Mr. Sandmann agreed that we need to be aware that communities are struggling because of COVID too.

Mr. Hebert made a motion to approve the municipal and other partner funding requests for FY22 and Mr. Shanahan seconded. Mr. Nichols suggest that if cities and towns receive an influx of funds through pandemic support, we might reconsider and revise our request to increase the requests as previously planned. Ms. Walker noted that, if we want to keep that option open to come back for additional funding, we want to include something about that in the request. Mr. Capello noted that we will want to handle that very carefully because it could backfire on us as communities are already on the edge. Mr. Scala agreed and does not think we should put anything in our letters about coming back for more. Mr. Pepin shared that Somersworth is looking at significant losses of revenue on both the school and city sides and many communities are looking at very tough budget years. Mr. Bogle suggested that we remind the municipalities that in order for COAST to be sustainable over the next 3-4, the current requests are not adequate, and we will need to fill the gap that will exist in funding in the coming years.

Mr. Shanahan noted that, in Dover, the request gets built into the budget. However, we will want to keep an ear to the ground and see if COAST staff need to come to the Council/Board to provide information to the group regarding the need for funding. Ms. Walker understands that communities are in a tough budget situation, but she's concerned about keeping the request at level funding and what that communicates to communities about COAST's needs.

Mr. Nichols offered to write a draft letter for review. Mr. Pepin gives a monthly report to Council on the status of COAST in support of COAST, but it may come down to a decision between educating children versus COAST services. He notes that it is incredibly frustrating to be constantly fighting this battle. Mr. Hebert suggested that we should not be putting anything out right now regarding adding a potential additional ask for fear that it will sour communities against us.

After the discussion it was decided that we will not include anything in our request regarding a potential additional ask should communities receive additional funding.

A roll call vote was taken to approve the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Ms. Czysz	ABSTAIN
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Joyce	YES
Mr. Pepin	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Ms. Stowell	YES
Ms. Walker	YES with reservations

Action Item #2: Draft FY20 Audit Approval

Mr. Nichols provided the draft Audited Financial Statements & Supplemental Statements for COAST's FY2020 (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020). Board review is required as part of submitting the NTD Report.

Summary of Audit Results –

1. The auditor's report expresses an unmodified opinion on whether the financial statements of the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation were prepared in accordance with GAAP.
2. No reportable conditions were disclosed during the audit of the financial statements.
3. No instances of noncompliance material to the financial statements of the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation were disclosed during the audit.
4. No reportable conditions were disclosed during the audit of internal controls over major federal award programs.
5. The auditor's report on compliance for the major federal award program for the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation expresses an unmodified opinion on all major federal programs.
6. There were no audit findings relative to the major federal award program for the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation.
7. The program tested as a major program was transit operations - the provision of bus transportation, CFDA number 20.507.
8. The threshold for distinguishing Types A and B programs was \$750,000.
9. The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation was determined to be a low-risk auditee.

The tax return will be forwarded by the auditors when it is available (in a few weeks).

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors accept the Draft 2020 Audit Reports.*

Mr. Bogle made a motion to accept the Draft 2020 Audit Reports which was seconded by Mr. Pepin.

A roll call vote was taken to accept the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Ms. Czysz	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Joyce	YES
Mr. Pepin	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Ms. Stowell	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

Action Item #3: Approval for SFY22/23 5310 Grant Submittal to NHDOT for ACT

COAST will be applying for the maximum amount of FTA 5310 funding available through NHDOT for our region in support of ACT and TripLink-supported activities coordinating transportation services and information and referral services. It is anticipated this will result in just over \$325K in FTA grant award funds for SFY22 and again in SFY23.

Jeff Donald continues to work with ACT and the NHDOT on the preparation of the grant that is awarded through the NHDOT. Board support and approval is required for the grant submittal.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors approve the submittal of the SFY22/23 5310 Grant application to NHDOT for ACT.*

Mr. Bogle made a motion that the Board approve the submittal of the SFY22/23 5310 Grant Application to NHDOT for ACT and Ms. Joyce seconded.

Mr. Bogle expressed thanks to Jeff Donald for assembling all of this and guiding ACT through its development.

A roll call vote was taken to accept the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Ms. Czysz	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Joyce	YES
Mr. Pepin	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Ms. Stowell	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – did not meet.

Board Development Committee – did not meet.

Legislative Committee – met on January 19 and discussed the State Biennial Budget process, upcoming presentations staff are making, and ongoing outreach efforts. Looking to do a webinar for legislators focusing on a specific community, or a couple of communities, as we roll out this mode of educating and informing state leaders on the needs for public transit.

Policy Committee – did not meet.

Finance Committee – will meet after the Board meeting today.

Discussion Items

None.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

FTA FY21 Appropriations Tables Released

The FTA released the annual appropriations tables on January 19. Initial assessments of the tables, still subject to the Governor's approval, appear to indicate an 0.1% increase in FTA 5307 small urban funding for COAST (+\$1,405) over FY20.

Ridership

Due to the second wave of COVID, we experienced a negative ridership trend over the month of November but bounced back a bit in December, particularly during the two holidays weeks. We do not anticipate much improvement in January.

Community Updates

Mr. Bogle noted that the planning commissions are working with COAST and the City of Portsmouth on two planning grant proposals covering two projects. The first is a pedestrian and bicycle access to COAST bus stops (July 2021-June 2022) and the second will be the following year and is an update to the Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan with ACT which is updated every five years.

Mr. Causey noted that February 1st will be the first meeting for the second JLUS grant between Kittery and the Shipyard to go over the 4 issues identified as part of the first grant (increased transit, transit hub, park & ride lots, and communication and housing). There have been some good initial meetings with the Shipyard. State of Maine released their climate plan (Maine Won't Wait) with the goal to increase per capita transit spending.

Mr. Shanahan asked how COAST operations are going with the Park & Ride vaccination site at Exit 9? Mr. Williams reported that we've gotten into a good rhythm and they have set up a bus turnaround spot for us. COAST will temporarily install a shelter there for the 4-month period the site is expected to operate.

Ms. Walker expressed thanks to COAST for working with Brinn Sullivan to get seniors to their vaccination appointments through Senior Transportation.

Ms. Winters expressed thanks to Michael and COAST for working with NHDOT and the National Guard on setting up the vaccination site. She reported that the JLUS consultants reached out to NHDOT and Ms. Winters was asked about funding. She noted she indicated that COAST is utilizing all the funds available to meet the needs of the area. She suggested that Mr. Bogle connect with Lucy St. John regarding Ride Share.

Mr. Bogle asked what the state of Maine does with the remaining balance for Dover, Rochester, Portsmouth UZAs. Mr. Nichols noted the rest goes to York County Community Action and the other trolley operations in the UZA.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Sandmann declared the meeting adjourned at 9:27am.