



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, March 24, 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, Martin Dumont, Denis Hebert, Valerie Labrie, Colin Lentz, Dave Sandmann, Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, Dave Sharples, Juliet Walker, and Shelley Winters

**ABSENT:** Thomas Wright

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

**GUEST:** Sönke Dornblut

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. Each member identified themselves, stated their location, and whether anyone was in the room with them and listening contemporaneously.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Some minor edits have been made to the January 2021 minutes, but none impact the content of the minutes. Mr. Bogle made a motion to accept the January 2021 minutes as edited and Mr. Shanahan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken to accept the minutes.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Mr. Dumont	ABSTAIN
Mr. Hebert	YES (provided edits don't impact content)
Ms. Labrie	ABSTAIN
Mr. Lentz	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Mr. Sharples	ABSTAIN
Ms. Walker	YES

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Al Ebersole, our PM Mechanic, reached his 5-year mark in January. Mr. Williams noted that Al is a fantastic mechanic and great to work with. Prior to Al's hiring, this position saw a lot of turnover and Al has brought stability to the vehicle maintenance staff. Mr. Hebert recognized how challenging that work can be. Congratulations to Al from the Board.

**IV. FINANCIAL REPORT**

**January and February 2021 Financials**

Farebox revenues continue to be below budget and, while advertising revenues continue to be below budget, we saw a significant increase in advertising revenue in February. We are hopeful, and ATA is optimistic, that this positive trend will continue over the coming months.

COAST has gathered data regarding one-time costs related to COVID, which are mostly in the Materials and Supplies line of the budget and are mostly one-time expenses (for example, the \$80K for the driver protection barriers).

The Finance Committee meets on the Monday before each Board meeting. This gives the Committee the opportunity to review the financials prior to the meeting and to ask any questions they might have regarding the financials.

#### **FY20 Form 990**

Due to timing issues, the full Board did not get to review the Form 990 prior to its submittal to the IRS. The Executive Committee members reviewed it prior to IRS submittal, and it has been distributed to the full board for review.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **American Rescue Plan**

Under the American Rescue Plan the two (2) urbanized areas of Dover/Rochester and Portsmouth will be apportioned and allocated just over \$4M in additional 5307 funds, which is another large infusion coming into the region. These funds are only allocated to 5307 recipients (COAST and Wildcat Transit) and can only be used on operating expenses. These funds are available through FFY24. A summary from CTAA was attached to the Board Packet.

#### **Facility Needs Assessment**

This project continues to advance. Most recently a charette was held with staff and project Steering Committee members to discuss all new build alternatives considered, a new build preferred concept, and a renovation option. Staff's goal is to advance the project to the point of the engineering firm presenting to the full Board in April. The property that surrounds COAST's Operations facility has been purchased and is in the process of being developed. There is an easement on our property that we are working through with the new property owner. COAST staff is meeting with the City of Dover to present initial concepts before the end of the month.

#### **Triennial Review**

We anticipate that our 2020 Triennial Review will finally be conducted sometime in late April or early May 2021. Our reviewer has recently been in touch and they are awaiting some new guidance and direction on COVID related questions that are being incorporated into reviews before scheduling can be finalized.

#### **National Transit Database (NTD) Annual Report**

The NTD Annual Report was submitted in early February and we are currently working through issues that have been raised as it proceeds through review by the FTA's contractors.

### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Action Items**

##### **Action Item #1: Acceptance of Newmarket Appointee, Sönke Dornblut**

In early February, COAST received notification that the Newmarket Town Council had recently appointed Mr. Sönke Dornblut to represent the Town on the COAST Board of Directors. Mr. Dornblut has previously been very involved in expanding transportation options and access within the region and state when he was at the UNH Institute on Disability.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors accept Mr. Dornblut as Newmarket's representative on the COAST Board of Directors.*

Mr. Bogle made a motion to accept Mr. Dornblut as Newmarket's representative on the COAST Board of Directors which was seconded by Ms. Walker. A roll call vote was taken to approve the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Mr. Dumont	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Labrie	YES
Mr. Lentz	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Mr. Sharples	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

**Action Item #2: July 4 Holiday**

Traditionally, COAST has celebrated holidays such as July 4<sup>th</sup> strictly on the day it falls. This year July 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday and the observed holiday is Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. With the implementation of our new fixed route system a significant portion of our staff now work on Saturdays.

Given how July 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday this year, there have been several questions raised about whether we will recognize the observed holiday on Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup> in order that many staff could then have two (2) days off in a row that holiday weekend. July 5<sup>th</sup> is a national holiday as well.

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors consider and vote on when to observe the July 4 holiday.*

Mr. Capello made a motion to observe the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday on Monday, July 5, 2021 which was seconded by Mr. Sharples.

Mr. Hebert asked what the impacts to the public would be and Mr. Nichols noted that we would not be providing service on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Shanahan suggested COAST develop a policy that allows for COAST to recognize observed holidays. Mr. Sandmann suggested the Policy Committee take this up. A roll call vote was taken to accept the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Mr. Dornblut	YES
Mr. Dumont	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Labrie	YES
Mr. Lentz	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Mr. Sharples	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

**Action Item #3: Accessible Minivan Procurement**

COAST is replacing two already retired demand response minivans to maintain our fleet size. We had started a vehicle procurement last year but COVID impacted that process. One of the current vehicles is always out of service and one is reaching its service threshold. We will need these vehicles to be replaced as demand for service continues to increase.

The vehicles are being procured as a small purchase, as the total purchase falls under the small purchase threshold (\$250k). Quotes were solicited from multiple vendors and the contract type will be a firm fixed price. This was chosen as there should be no reason the price of these vehicles should change after quoted.

Two written quotes were received:

	Advanced Modifications	Mobility Works	Alliance Bus Group
Cost:	\$47,074 (only one available)	\$91,446.00 (\$45,723 each)	Currently Unavailable

Advanced Modifications only has one new vehicle available, and at a higher price than Mobility Works. Alliance Bus Group’s vehicles have not completed Altoona testing and are not currently available. Mobility Works had several new (previous year models) still available at the quoted price.

**Action Required:** *That the Board of Directors approve entering a contract with Mobility Works for two (2) new accessible minivans for a price not to exceed \$91,446.*

Mr. Bogle made a motion to approve entering a contract with Mobility Works for two (2) new accessible minivans for a price not to exceed \$91,446 which was seconded by Mr. Capello. Mr. Capello asked if this is being purchased through a grant and Mr. Nichols noted that 85% will be covered by an FTA grant.

A roll call vote was taken to accept the motion.

Mr. Bogle	YES
Mr. Capello	YES
Mr. Causey	YES
Mr. Dornblut	YES
Mr. Dumont	YES
Mr. Hebert	YES
Ms. Labrie	YES
Mr. Lentz	YES
Mr. Sandmann	YES
Mr. Scala	YES
Mr. Shanahan	YES
Mr. Sharples	YES
Ms. Walker	YES

### **Committee Reports**

**Executive Committee** – did not meet.

**Board Development Committee** – met on March 9 to discuss new member recruitment and a Board Self-Assessment Survey. Committee members have provided feedback on the tool we’ve used in the past and that feedback is being compiled into a new tool to be distributed to the full Board at a later date.

**Legislative Committee** – did not meet.

**Policy Committee** – did not meet.

**Finance Committee** – met on February 22 and March 22.

### **Discussion Items**

None (The Five Year Operating & Capital Need Projections (FY22-26) will be presented at the April meeting.

## **VII. Community Updates/Information Items**

### First Seacoast Bank Award

First Seacoast Bank recently awarded ACT a \$4K grant to support their ongoing activities. The funds are unrestricted in their use.

### commuteSMART Seacoast TMA

COAST, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, and Rockingham Planning Commission are in the process of establishing an agreement for ongoing management and support of the TMA by the RPCs, and continued expenditure of the FTA Grant funds that COAST was awarded for this project. The intent is to bridge the gap between the current grant and a next CMAQ grant cycle. RPCs are handling the day-to-day activities of commuteSMART. The goal is to use the remaining funding to get to the next CMAQ round.

Mr. Lentz added that the RPCs applied jointly for FTA grant funds through the NHDOT to update the Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan for the region and for looking at ways to assess and potentially improve accessibility at key bus stops on the system.

### Ridership

Since we restarted fixed route service in mid-May of 2020, COAST had been seeing small gains in ridership month over month until the second wave hit in late 2020. We are hoping that, given the arrival of Spring and increases in the number of people who are vaccinated, we will see ridership begin to climb again month over month. We are still around 50-55% of ridership pre-pandemic in fixed route with demand response services ridership being slightly better. The concern over exposure while riding, the fact that many people continue to work remotely, and the prevalence of telehealth availability work against our ridership.

### Effects of COVID on Mobility

Mr. Bogle noted that the RPCs are writing an article for *NH Municipal Association Magazine* on COVID impacts on mobility. Mr. Nichols has provided some very helpful information on the impacts of COVID on ridership.

Mr. Scala thanked Mr. Williams and Mr. Nichols for quickly taking care an issue with one of the stops in Rochester.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Sandmann wished everyone well declared the meeting adjourned at 9:20am.