



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation  
DRAFT Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, January 26, 2022**

PRESENT: Scott Bogle, Fred Butler (virtually), Adam Causey, Sönke Dornblut (virtually), Martin Dumont, Benjamin Fletcher (virtually), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz (virtually), Dave Sandmann (virtually), Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, and Peter Stith (Virtually)

ABSENT: Arthur Capello, Lauren Haley, Dave Sharples, Shelley Winters, Thomas Wright

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Margot Doering

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 am by Mr. Shanahan. He noted that the agenda would be moved around a bit today to accommodate our guest speaker.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Nichols noted that there was no public comment that he had for the Board. No members of the public were in attendance to speak.

**VI. New Business**

**Discussion Item #1 Capital Campaign for a New Facility**

Mr. Shanahan welcomed Ms. Maryellen Burke as the guest presenter and members present (in-person and virtually) introduced themselves.

Ms. Burke gave a presentation on the various elements of a capital campaign and discussion ensued.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Shanahan asked if a motion could be made to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting. Ms. Joyce made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted, and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. There was no discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Scala	Abstain
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Dumont	Abstain
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Dornblut	Yes

Mr. Lentz                      Yes

The motion passed.

#### **IV.      FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. Doering went over the year to date financials and balance sheet through December.

Quick highlights included better results in fare revenues. Advertising revenues have been jumping around. December was a three pay period month so higher expenses in that line. Fringe benefits expenses includes the November buy back of PTO.

Our ARP grant has been approved. The Maine state funds grant for year two are in the process of being finalized. We expect the use of Maine state funds to trend the same in FY22 as it did in FY21.

NTD annual report is nearly done. She mentioned that this year was easier for her vs. last year, which was her first time dealing with this report.

#### **V.      OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Staffing**

Mr. Nichols gave a brief update on staffing, including that there really has not been any improvements in this area. After announcing our wage increases for the start of the year we did receive 8-10 applications, however most of those candidates have evaporated and we are only continuing with one candidate at this point. Mr. Scala asked if the candidates were qualified. Mr. Nichols responded that was mixed, but likely that less were fully qualified to meet our needs.

##### **COVID-19 Impacts (January)**

Mr. Nichols reported that as the omicron variant became dominant in the region, it has also become much more impactful for COAST staff. Through the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 12 staff have had to either isolate or go into quarantine protocols, leaving no choice during the weekdays of January 10 – 14 to have to further suspend services. Despite further impacts after the MLK/Civil Rights Day holiday weekend, he noted that we have been able to maintain all services at our November 13 published schedule levels. Employees who first went out in the beginning of January have started to return to work and relieve some of the pressure again. He commended the staff who are able to come in and keep everything running despite all of the absences.

##### **New Gillig Bus Build**

Mr. Nichols informed the board that the fourth and last bus to be built by Gillig will hit the line today. This same bus will come off the production line on February 14. We should receive all four buses by early to mid-March. Ms. Joyce mentioned how fast the buses were manufactured.

##### **GACIT Transmittal Letter to the Governor**

Mr. Nichols referred members to the letter he had included in their packet and the comments that had been included in the GACIT transmittal letter to the Governor about public transit and the need for a statewide study of need. Mr. Nichols gave an update on the first hearing of HB 2022 relative to the 10 Year Transportation Plan.

### **Transit Advertising Sales Update**

Mr. Nichols gave a quick update that while advertising revenues were much better in December than in November, they remain lower than budgeted. He shared some additional context however:

- Open receivables total just over \$34,000 currently
- Contract balances not yet invoiced total just over another \$70,000
- Contracts in the final phases of being signed total another \$50,000

He assured the Board that this is all very good news as the final quarter of 2021 was extremely successful for contract sales.

### **Free Transfer Pilot Program**

Mr. Nichols went over a very small snapshot of data for the first week of the pilot but noted that until we get a full month or two of data any assessments were premature. He noted that one of the bigger concerns thus far were delays caused due to the issuance of transfer tickets.

### **Marketing and Communications Consultant Engagement**

Mr. Nichols explained that he has begun working out details with a consultant to help the organization strategically connect with our core audiences using consistent and compelling messaging. The consultant will facilitate a planning process with key staff and stakeholders to create a written communications and marketing framework that will guide the organization's activities in 2022 and beyond. Project kickoff is planned for late January with a written framework, with key messages for each identified audience, and appropriate activities identified by mid-April.

Mr. Scala asked staff had received any pushback on the shelter removal at the Public Library stop in Rochester. Mr. Nichols noted that very few comments had been received.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Action Items**

#### **Action Item #1: Draft 2021 Audit Acceptance**

Ms. Doering first asked if there were any questions board members had about the materials presented by the auditors. There were no questions.

She went over her takeaways, including how she appreciated the auditor's presentation of revenues and expenses. Additionally, the small unadjusted audit difference, which is the difference between how we recognize grant funds coming into the organization and differing state vs. GAAP rules on how that is presented.

She also pointed out the Management letter from the Board of Directors to the auditors and the representations made in that letter.

Mr. Shanahan asked about the auditor's comments on difficulties tracking coin counting related to fare revenues. Ms. Doering explained how that issue had arisen and then has subsequently been resolved in a way that has been approved by the auditors.

Mr. Shanahan asked for a motion to approve the draft audit. Mr. Dumont made that motion and Mr. Hebert seconded the motion. Mr. Dornblut thanked staff for all of the work that went into the successful audit. There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Dumont	Yes
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Dornblut	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes

**Action Item #2      FY23 Municipal Funding Formula & Financial Requests**

Mr. Nichols presented the latest five year projections based on varying levels of service and demand. He noted that he had not received any further feedback since the last meeting when these figures on the formula and resultant financial requests were first presented.

The overall bottom line request of municipal funding increased by 15%, and partner requests varied according to in-place agreements or other factors.

Ms. Joyce asked about what we were approving in terms of requests vs. required payments. Mr. Nichols explained that we can only submit requests. Ms. Joyce followed up with an inquiry around what happens if a community does not fully fund a request. Mr. Nichols explained current policy which includes potential service cuts and/or fare surcharges.

Mr. Bogle asked whether the FY23 increase as presented would impact the five year projections that had been provided. Mr. Nichols concurred that the five year projections included the FY23 increase as presented.

Mr. Sandmann made a motion that the COAST Board of Directors approve the proposed FY23 municipal and other partner funding requests for FY23. Mr. Dumont seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan undertook a roll call vote.

Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Ms. Joyce	Yes
Mr. Dumont	Yes
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Causey	Yes
Mr. Hebert	Yes
Mr. Fletcher	Yes
Mr. Dornblut	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee** – met on Monday, January 24 at SRPC to go over November and December financials as well as the draft audit report. There were no real questions or issues expressed at that meeting to share, or that weren't also touched already today.

**Executive Committee** – did not meet.

**Board Development Committee** – being reconstituted due to members having left the board. Mr. Dumont has agreed to sit on the Committee.

**Policy Committee** – being reconstituted due to members having left the board. Mr. Causey has agreed to sit on the Committee.

**Legislative Committee** – being reconstituted due to members having left the board. Mr. Scala has agreed to sit on the Committee. Been involved in review of draft testimony for HB 2022 and SB 437 to date. Will be involved in further communications on upcoming bills in the House and Senate Committees.

Mr. Bogle noted the per capita investment in statewide transit operations in NH and how low it is compared to New England and national averages.

Mr. Scala asked how many other public transit operators there are in the state that are funded with the current \$200,000 in the state budget. Mr. Nichols responded that he believed the number was nine.

Mr. Hebert asked when COAST had last considered a fare increase. Mr. Nichols could not remember exactly, but thought it was around 2013. Mr. Hebert wondered if it were time to look at that again, with the goal of ensuring riders, like communities were being asked to pay their fair share. Mr. Nichols remarked that it was time, however he would like to do that in concert with any results that come out of the free transfer program pilot now being undertaken. He also remarked that the real benefit would be to also move to an electronic fare payment system too. There was discussion around this as a desirable direction to head in.

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

Ridership information was presented.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Dumont made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Scala seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10am.