



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, June 22, 2022**

PRESENT: Scott Bogle, Fred Butler (virtually), Adam Causey, Marty Dumont (virtually), Ben Fletcher (virtually), Lauren Haley (virtually), Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Colin Lentz, David Sandmann, Michael Scala, Peter Stith (virtually)

ABSENT: Dennis Shanahan, Dave Sharples, Thomas Wright

OTHERS: Mr. Patrick Herlihy (Arv. at 8:42am)

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Margot Doering (virtually), Janice Outhuse

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:35am by Mr. Sandmann.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sandmann asked if a motion could be made to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2022 meeting. Mr. Lentz made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted, and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion. There was no discussion and Mr. Sandmann undertook a roll call vote.

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

The motion passed.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Nichols recognized Ms. Outhuse who achieved the 20 year mark as an employee at COAST. He recognized Ms. Outhuse as having held more titles than any other employee at COAST over her years of service. He thanked her for her exemplary service and commitment to our customers, fellow staff members, and COAST. The Board members thanked Ms. Outhuse for her service, and shared past experiences they had had with her.

No members of the public were in attendance to otherwise speak.

Mr. Patrick Herlihy joined the meeting, at which point Chairman Sandmann chose to reorder the agenda.

VI. New Business

Action Item #1: Commendation for Patrick C. Herlihy, Retiring NHDOT Director of Aeronautics, Rail, and Transit

A commendation was presented to Mr. Patrick Herlihy, retiring NHDOT Director of Aeronautics, Rail, and Transit.

Mr. Sandmann read the commendation:

Patrick has dedicated 38 years of service to the citizens and State of New Hampshire as a State employee. He began his career with the Office of Emergency Management, then worked as the Community Development Manager under the Office of State, the Bureau Chief for Homeless and Housing Services, serving in many areas helping to advance house development and sound financial management practices.

He became the Transportation Coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 2012 Patrick was appointed as the Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit under the Department of Transportation, working to further advance multi-modal transportation for citizens across New Hampshire. In this capacity he has served on several boards and commissions including the State Coordinating Council for Community Transportation in New Hampshire and the State Commission on Aging.

Patrick has been instrumental in leading key public transit and community transportation planning efforts, including the 2006 New Hampshire Statewide Community Services Transportation Plan, the 2016 New Hampshire Statewide Coordination of Community Transportation Services Plan and the 2020 Statewide Strategic Transit Assessment Study.

He has also been a leader in identifying and securing Federal grants to support the expansion and coordination of public transit and community transportation services throughout the State of New Hampshire.

Patrick is well respected for his compassion and care to provide transportation assistance to those in need, and throughout his career, he has always endeavored to serve the citizens of New Hampshire and takes great pride in performing his duties with the highest caliber of excellence.

Mr. Nichols stressed how much of a positive impact Mr. Herlihy had on public transit in his role at NHDOT.

Mr. Herlihy thanked the organization for the recognition and for the good work COAST is doing within the region.

Mr. Sandmann went back to the regular agenda.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Doering went over the year to date financials and balance sheet through May noting trends for the most part continued as they had previously. Fare revenues were up again, narrowing the amount that line is under budget. Advertising revenue was up, but some of that is related to COAST's own campaigns.

On the expense side of the financials, utilities were higher due to all bills coming in for 6 Sumner Drive (which had been running behind). Insurance experienced a small bump as we have added new vehicles onto the policy. A Miscellaneous items increase is due to COAST's marketing and advertising campaigns.

Ms. Joyce asked about a bus that is completely wrapped. Mr. Nichols confirmed that there was one. She asked if COAST had fully wrapped buses as a part of our campaign. Mr. Nichols commented that the ads COAST had placed were on the rears only of some of the cutaway buses and side rear windows of one trolley.

For the budget YTD, except for the recent increases in miscellaneous expenses, all budget lines continue to trend as they have previously.

Mr. Bogle asked if there was a way to measure the success of the marketing campaign. Mr. Nichols noted that the latest service suspensions complicate the ability to measure this.

There was some discussion over ridership trends, particularly with the new service reductions and rising demand for demand response services.

Ms. Doering added that on the Balance Sheet we are still waiting to resolve the like kind exchange for a vehicle we have retired due to collision damage and one of the new Gillig buses we recently purchased.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Staffing

Mr. Nichols went over the latest information provided in the writeup.

To be fully staffed, COAST needs an additional:

- 6 full time CDL operators
- 4 part time CDL operators
- 1 part time non-CDL operators
- 1 operations supervisor

We currently have 1 part time non-CDL operator and 1 part time CDL operator who have accepted positions and are going through background checks prior to starting training. We have 1 full time non-CDL operator and 1 part time CDL operator in the later stages of training now, though the figures above already assume their successful completion of training.

We have no other CDL applicants at this time.

We are monitoring additional capacity day-to-day to see if we can resume some individual runs on a consistent basis; however, one unexpected staff return was offset by another unexpected long-term leave, so we have not reached that point yet.

Fixed Route Technology

Mr. Nichols shared that we are now under contract with Passio Technologies and are working toward their real-time information system to go live in early September. Other integrations, headsigns and voice annunciators will go live on a later schedule.

Free Transfer Pilot Program

Mr. Nichols updated that based on Board member feedback and the Executive Committee's vote, we have announced the extension of the Pilot through the calendar year.

Between January and the end of May, we had collected 9,761 transfer tickets across the system on 97,901 total fixed route (FR) trips (excluding the Warming Center Shuttle). This equates to 10.0% of trips on the FR system being "paid for" with a transfer ticket over the five month period.

The impact on the average FR fare paid to date has been a -6.7% or \$0.08 reduction per passenger (\$1.03 vs. \$1.11) when compared to the 1st quarter of FY22. When compared to the average FR fare paid between Jan-June in 2021, there has been a -6.2% or \$0.07 reduction per passenger (\$1.03 vs. \$1.10).

Overall, the number of trips involving transfers continues to be lower than anticipated, as has been the impact on the average fare collected per FR passenger.

Facility Update

Mr. Nichols expected to have news that we could share very soon on our NH CDFA Tax Credit Application (\$500K). There has been no subsequent follow-up from the FTA on our recent 5339(b) application (\$7.7M).

In an email received on June 16, we were notified we made Senator Shaheen's list of congressionally directed spending requests that she submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations process. See more here – <https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/congressionally-directed-spending-requests> This means we have made it to the next round in the process. IMr. Nichols state that he had subsequently invited Senator Shaheen and her staff to a first-hand tour of our current facility, as well as a review of our future plans.

We have held a first conceptual design site meeting with engineers to review existing and future electrical, mechanical, architectural, and structural service and design details. The meeting produced several follow-up questions that have subsequently been researched and answers have been forwarded to the team. We will be meeting soon with our IT Engineer to review those systems and needs.

Marketing/Communications

Communications

Mr. Nichols added that on June 10, we sent out a rebranded Mailchimp email campaign to local our Federal and State elected officials, local elected officials, area partner agencies, and public transit supporters as part of a quarterly update from COAST (spring 2022). The distribution list totaled 259 individuals.

To date the analytics on the campaign have been very encouraging, with much higher than average “open” rates for most of the segments of the campaign. Feedback received has been very positive overall as well.

Our goal is to distribute quarterly updates , maybe a little less dense in the future, via COAST branded Mailchimp email campaigns in the future. This is a powerful new tool in our communications toolbox.

Marketing

We continue to highlight the cost advantage of public transit compared to the ever escalating cost of fuel.

We are in the process of designing a new monthly pass program developed just for employers, regardless of size. Under the program, businesses would order passes for employees directly from us, and we send them right to their office.

Employees would be charged for their passes with pretax payroll deductions, saving them money off the typical price, and saving employers on some payroll taxes. Or, employers could choose to subsidize passes further by deducting less than the full cost from their employees’ paychecks. We could also potentially discount passes through this program.

Because employers are buying directly from us, they would have access to:

- Easy, convenient ordering cycles
- Simple billing
- Dedicated program support

When ready, we expect to publicize the program through our membership in the region’s Chambers of Commerce.

AASHTO Final 2022 Report – Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation

Mr. Nichols shared the details of this annual report by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, using FY2020 data.

In this year’s report, NH ranked #49 for total state public transit funding (Federal & State funds). That was 2 positions worse than the previous year. Only Wyoming (\$18.96M) and Vermont (\$13.75M) received less Federal funding than New Hampshire (\$20.9M) and only Idaho (\$310K), Alabama (\$0), Hawaii (\$0), and Nevada (\$0) invested less state funding in public transit than New Hampshire (\$815K).

When comparing total state funding per capita and state operations funding per capita against the rest of New England, New Hampshire is once again investing less per capita than any state in New England, and by extremely large margins.

The good news – there is plenty of opportunity for improvement! The key will be to effectively illustrate to the NH Legislature & Senate the value of investing in local and regional community-based public transit. That will be key to raising the state funds necessary to leverage the significant new commitments to public transit made through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Mr. Scala asked if there were provisions in our by-laws to have a State Representative on the board. Mr. Nichols outlined that could happen if they also fell into one of the categories of entities outlined with seats on the board.

Mr. Hebert asked whether the report summary provided was comparing apples to apples in terms of the metrics used. For example, could all figures be related on a per capita basis. Mr. Nichols committed to compiling the data as requested.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item #2: Establish the Nominating Committee

Mr. Sandmann asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Ms. Joyce asked about the composition of the Committee and whether it would be okay for her to serve on it.

Mr. Sandmann related how the Nominating Committee is defined within the by-laws and noted Ms. Joyce was welcome to serve on the Committee.

Mr. Sandmann then requested Mr. Bogle and Lentz also serve if able.

Both Mr. Bogle and Lentz agreed to serve on the Committee.

Ms. Joyce asked about the mechanics of the Committee and when they meet. Mr. Sandmann described that was left up to the Chair of the Committee (Mr. Bogle), but that it usually only involved one meeting, after having confirmed members' willingness to be nominated for any open positions that may be available.

Mr. Nichols noted that there was an in-person meeting requirement for the Committee.

Action Item #3: Low Floor Cutaway Contract Award (*tentative*)

Mr. Nichols related that on Friday, June 17th we had received a single proposal from a bidder in response to our RFP for low floor cutaway buses.

The bid came in at \$34,394 to \$40,894 higher than estimated (per bus) depending on the chassis year (2022 vs. 2023). We had previously estimated the buses would cost just under \$150K each.

Because it is now a single bid situation, we will need to perform additional analysis to ensure fair competition, as well as determine that the price is fair and reasonable.

As such, we expect to bring this procurement back to the Board at later meeting for approval.

Our FTA 5339(a) grant award will not be enough to purchase four vehicles as intended. We may need to dedicate some of our FTA 5307 allocation to enable the purchase of four buses.

Mr. Bogle asked if this matched national trends. Mr. Nichols noted that this will be part of the analysis that will have to be conducted.

There was discussion over the low floor configuration of the bus we received a bid for vs. other potential competitors,

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Sandmann gave the update on Committee activities.

Executive Committee – met to conduct the business of the May Board meeting that did not have a quorum. All action items were approved.

Board Development Committee – outreach is ongoing to fill open positions on the board.

Policy Committee – did not meet.

Legislative Committee – did not meet.

Finance Committee – met on Tuesday, June 21 to go over the May financials.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item #1: Acting Board Officer and Executive Committee Member Changes

Mr. Sandmann gave an overview on the discussion item. After the resignation of Mr. Capello, Treasurer, Chair Sandmann reached out to members to inquire about filling open roles in an acting capacity until our annual meeting in September. The results of those conversations are outlined below:

- Mr. Scala has agreed to give up his Secretary role to be the acting Treasurer.
- Ms. Joyce has agreed to take on the role of acting Secretary.
- Mr. Dumont will be asked to be the Chair's appointee to the Executive Committee.

There was no further discussion.

VII. COMMUNITY UPDATES/INFORMATION ITEMS

Ridership

The tables and charts on the next pages show you where we are relative to the same month the previous fiscal year and versus the previous month.

- Overall ridership in May totaled 22,044. Ridership would have been higher had additional service suspensions not been implemented starting May 21.
- Fixed route ridership totaled 20,309. Average weekday fixed route ridership was only off by 2 from April, which had been the highest in any month since the pandemic began.
- After having lagged during the winter COVID-19 case spike in the region, demand response service riders continued riding more frequently in May, as expected. At 1,735 for the month, ridership equaled the highest level since February of 2020. Average

weekday demand response ridership was again the highest in any month since February of 2020.

- Portsmouth Senior Transportation is now experiencing higher ridership than it did prior to the pandemic. We also have added another new contracted demand response service, which has produced small ridership numbers to date.

Mr. Hebert asked if he could inquire about some questions he had received from the Town Selectmen. In particular;

- what is the expectation for community matching funds on the new facility, and
- when did the planning process begin for the new facility.

Mr. Nichols stated that we have identified sources for \$2.5M of the estimated \$3M in local funds that will be needed. We have also requested state capital match and will be pursuing private funds. There is the possibility that what we do not raise may need to come from held funds or through a loan. He noted that the expected annual operating savings could largely offset the need to use these funds. The impetus for the new facility was an analysis deficiencies with our current facility (2019), an assessment of our needs (2020), and then a review of options on how to best proceed forward with our facility given those findings (2021).

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sandmann adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 9:51am.

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Joyce, Acting Secretary