



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, May 24, 2023**

PRESENT: Kendra Amaral (virtual), Scott Bogle, Robert Gibson, Colin Lentz, Michael Mates, David Sandmann, Michael Scala, Dennis Shanahan, Peter Stith, Nick Taylor, Fred Butler (virtual, 8:32am), Sonke Dornblut (virtual, 9:00am)

ABSENT: Ben Fletcher, Lauren Haley, Denis Hebert, Margaret Joyce, Kristen Murphy, Shelly Winters, Thomas Wright

STAFF: Rad Nichols, Margot Doering, Michael Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by Mr. Shanahan.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Shanahan asked if a motion could be made to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2023 meeting. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted, and Mr. Scala seconded the motion. There was no discussion and Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call.

Ms. Amaral	Abstain
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Gibson	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Mates	Abstain
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Stith	Abstain
Mr. Taylor	Yes

The motion passed unanimously with three abstentions.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment to share.

IV. FINANCIALS

Ms. Doering noted the financials were in more draft form than they normally are, due to some missing demand response data that affects the federal draw. This information will likely appear in the following month's financials.

Ms. Doering noted advertising revenues have a strong pipeline despite the up-and-down nature of monthly receipts. Additionally, fringe benefits and materials and supply expenses were down in April.

Mr. Gibson asked what happens to staff's unused paid time off, and if paid time off usage will impact schedules. Ms. Doering responded that paid time off usage is uneven throughout the year, and that COAST buys back unused paid time off down to a set amount in November. Additionally, she noted that only a certain number of staff are off at a time to protect service levels.

Mr. Nichols noted he had a call with our FTA representative about a possible debt ceiling default. He noted FTA was quiet about this issue, but it seems FTA staff would not be furloughed under current rules, though it is unclear if COAST would have access to our federal grants. He noted COAST's reserves would cover about four and a half months of operations.

There were no further questions for Ms. Doering.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Williams went over the old business updates.

Staffing Update

We have one full time CDL operator, one full time non-CDL operator, and one vehicle cleaner positions vacant. However, day to day we have fewer staff available due to hired staff not yet trained, or staff on leave.

Passio Implementation Update

Very little progress since the last update. Passio has a plan in place to fix problems but has been slow to implement that plan.

Mr. Nichols went over additional old business updates.

Return of Suspended Service

We returned most of our Saturday service on May 20, 2023. Ridership jumped up on Saturday as a result.

Replacement of Shop Truck

A replacement shop truck is being prepared for service. It arrived earlier than expected.

Fundraising

Ms. Doering and Mr. Nichols attended the Nourish Portsmouth event hosted by Northeast Credit Union. This was a beneficial time of connecting with potential community partners. Another such event is scheduled to be held in Rochester. NH Gives Campaign is coming up on June 6th and 7th, 2023.

NH Transit Association

Mr. Nichols has been nominated to be the chair of the New Hampshire Transit Association (NHTA). The annual meeting is on June 8, 2023. COAST helped form NHTA in the late 1980s, but this will be the first time COAST has had a leadership role in NHTA since the 1990s. This is good timing with COAST's legislative efforts but is also a significant time commitment. Mr. Shanahan said he felt very good about Mr. Nichols taking on this role and expressed interest in ways the board could help Mr. Nichols in this role.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

Action Item #1: Safety Plan

Mr. Williams presented COAST's update for the Safety Plan. COAST updates the FTA required Safety Plan annually. This revision will be effective June 1st. Changes to this revision are as follows:

- On page 6, there is a chart showing safety risk categories. COAST is proposing changing category 10 from unacceptable risk to acceptable risk with monitoring (red to yellow).
- On pages 19 and 20, the plan separated out the minimum employment standards for positions that don't require driving a revenue vehicle off COAST property. It then reduced some of the restrictions for these positions only. This change does not affect any position that drives a revenue vehicle off COAST property (including operators, mechanics, dispatchers, supervisors, etc.).
- On page 21, the annual performance measures and targets have been updated.
- On page 24, the number of management seats was increased from one to two to match current practice and provide better management engagement and representation. These seats are currently filled by Heather Hesse-Stromberg, Director of HR & Compliance, and Phil Smith, Manager of Fleet and Facility Maintenance.

The plan has historically been updated in the Spring due to the original timing of FTA's regulations. However, the performance targets are aligned with the fiscal year. COAST plans to put forward a new update to this plan in October 2023 to realign the plan update with the start of the fiscal year. This will make more sense for target setting and will align the timing of these targets with those of the Transit Asset Management Plan.

Action Required: *That the Board of Directors approve the June 1, 2023 Safety Plan.*

Mr. Shanahan asked if a motion could be made to approve the Safety Plan Update. Mr. Sandmann made the motion to approve the Safety Plan Update, and Mr. Bogle seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and Mr. Shanahan took the vote by roll call.

Ms. Amaral	Yes
Mr. Bogle	Yes
Mr. Gibson	Yes
Mr. Lentz	Yes
Mr. Mates	Yes
Mr. Sandmann	Yes
Mr. Scala	Yes
Mr. Shanahan	Yes
Mr. Stith	Yes
Mr. Taylor	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item #2: NH Gives Board Contributions

Mr. Nichols explained that this was a request of Ms. Joyce at the previous board meeting.

Mr. Shanahan then explained that NH Gives was coming up in June. One methodology to increase contributions is to have a board match or a board challenge. Mr. Shanahan then invited the board's thoughts on simple, workable board participation.

Ms. Doering stated she is getting the website set up, and that another option is to set a goal, and that if that goal is reached the board contribution is activated. She outlined a variety of options for how this can be structured.

Mr. Bogle stated this is a good idea to the extent that board members are willing because this is also advantageous for other opportunities that may look for 100% board member participation.

Mr. Taylor shared his experience structuring these incentives with the Workforce Housing Coalition fundraising efforts. He shared how the participation rate is emphasized over the size of the donation. He also asked if other organizations may offer a match against public contributions.

Mr. Nichols stated a match effort would likely be for next year's campaign. He stated support for the number of donors to be the goal, rather than the size of donations.

Mr. Scala asked how the funds would be used.

Mr. Nichols stated the funds would go into our general fund to support our operation and capital programs. Ms. Doering shared the examples COAST is putting on the website of what each donation amount can accomplish. She also noted there is already a match opportunity, as every donation will be matched by the federal government.

Ms. Amaral noted that Kittery could make a non-profit contribution from the Town's budget as it supports Kittery's residents and support's the town's climate goals.

Mr. Shanahan proposed board members contact Ms. Doering to pledge an amount if they wished. The total would then become the board's participation if COAST hits a certain number of donors in the NH Gives campaign. A participation level could also then trigger the Town of Kittery's match.

Mr. Bogle asked if those donations should be made on the day of through the NH Gives Campaign.

Ms. Doering expressed concern about making those donations through the website. Challenge funds are normally collected offline, separate from the fundraising through the website.

Mr. Shanahan repeated that this was entirely voluntary.

Ms. Doering encouraged board members to share the NH Gives information on social media.

Mr. Sandmann stated it would be advantageous to have 100% participation by the board, in whatever amount each member can contribute.

No action was voted on for this action item.

Committee Reports

Mr. Shanahan gave an overview of recent committee activities.

Executive Committee – met on May 12 to discuss the fiscal picture beyond FY24. The committee anticipates presenting materials to the board in the near future.

Board Development Committee – nothing to report.

Policy Committee – did not meet.

Legislative Committee – more information to be provided in the discussion item on the Statewide Public Transportation Coalition update

Finance Committee – met on Monday, May 22 (2:30pm, Rochester City Hall Annex, 2nd floor Conference Room).

Discussion Items

Discussion Item #1: New Facility Update

Mr. Nichols mentioned that the engineers expect the final items from the initial TRC meeting will be buttoned up shortly to resubmit for the early June TRC meeting with the City of Dover.

He added we are currently waiting for an authorization from the FTA to submit our categorical exclusion (CE) from NEPA. We cannot apply for additional funds to support final design and construction or move ahead with contracts for those services until such time as we have the CE in hand. The CE from NEPA is currently the main hurdle in the project.

CDFA tax credit outreach has increased in May. There remains \$282,000 left to sell, and COAST has until March 2024 to sell these credits. Mr. Nichols stated he would like to work with board meetings to generate leads.

Mr. Nichols shared that local match fund raising continues to be a struggle. He had a conversation with NHDOT about possibilities for state contribution to local match funding. COAST has also worked to prepare applications to private foundations.

Discussion Item #2: Statewide Public Transportation Coalition Update

Mr. Nichols stated that the transit funding in the SFY24-25 budget bill (HB1) approved by the House has not come up as part of conversations in Senate Finance. In conversations he has been told Senate Finance has not identified the public transit funding as an item of interest or a target for removal. There remains a concern that this could change in a Committee of Conference.

Mr. Shanahan asked Mr. Taylor how the Committee of Conference may view public transit funding, procedurally, if it was the same in each of their budgets.

Mr. Taylor noted the Committee of Conference is all or nothing. If there is a Committee of Conference, every part of the budget is up for consideration, not just the difference between the House and Senate budgets.

Mr. Bogle noted that the Committee of Conference does tend to focus on the differences.

Mr. Nichols noted that as Chair of NHTA, one of his goals will be to form a legislative caucus to continue to build on the work of the Coalition.

VII. Community Updates/Information Items

Ridership

Mr. Nichols went over ridership in April.

- Shorter month, so overall totals were down compared to April 2022 and March 2023.
- Average weekday ridership continues to climb month over month.
- May is looking even better than April, and very strong on the fixed route side.
- On demand response, we continue to get back to close to pre-pandemic levels. We continue to see demand rise.
- With the expansion of Saturday service, this will be a positive development for ridership.

Other Items

Mr. Taylor noted Mr. Nichols came to the Seacoast Economic Development stakeholders meeting a few weeks ago and did a great job. He noted it was a good presentation.

Ms. Doering shared that the NH Gives website has the video from the Strafford CAP award. Mr. Nichols shared that this video was impactful to him.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shanahan adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 9:26am.