



**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, January 27, 2010**

Members Present: Jon Frederick – Chairman, Scott Bogle – Vice Chairman, Kenn Ortmann – Secretary/ Treasurer, Barbara Broderick, Cynthia Copeland, Leif Gerjuoy, Richard Hayes, Jerry Hejtmanek, Tom Morgan, Sylvia von Aulock, Michael Watman, Ed Wojnowski

COAST Staff Present: Rad Nichols, Jeremy LaRose, Jenn Knox, Dianne Smith

Others Present: Bob Ruzinsky

I. Call to Order

Mr. Frederick called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He introduced two new Board members, Mr. Jerry Hejtmanek from Portsmouth and Mr. Michael Watman from Somersworth.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Gerjuoy made the motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2009 meeting, and Mr. Bogle seconded. The motion was unanimous with two abstentions: Mr. Watman and Mr. Wojnowski.

III. Public Comment

A letter from Dover Children's Home was included in the Board packet. The letter thanks COAST for matching donations of punch tickets for the children around Christmas. Mr. Nichols also read an email from an appreciative passenger who saw a bus driver use his judgment to avoid a collision. Mr. Nichols added that the letter was put in the employee's personnel file.

IV. Employee Introduction

The employee introduction was postponed to a future meeting.

V. Financial Report

The financial report for November 2009 was included in the board packet, and Mr. Nichols distributed the newly available December 2009 financials as well. Mr. Nichols commented that the November financials show a significant decrease in advertising revenue, which is due to advertisers paying their bills late.

VI. Old Business

- **Municipal Funding Formula**

Mr. Nichols presented background about how the municipal funding formula worked. The selectmen of the town of Stratham had requested that their contribution request be lowered to \$6,000 to reflect the departure of the NH

Community Technical College, a major source of employment in the town, and thus also show their having fully met COAST's request. Ms. Broderick commented that the selectmen were very supportive of public transit and were not planning to reduce their usual \$6,000 contribution, but they did not feel that the voters would support the current request. Mr. Gerjuoy made the motion to lower Stratham's request for the purpose of discussion, and Mr. Ortmann seconded. Mr. Nichols explained that two of the four figures used in the funding formula, the population and employment data, are not updated regularly. Even when this information is updated, it can be very difficult for the regional planning commissions (RPCs) to access it. COAST does not adjust the funding formula in response to known employment changes in a particular community, such as the technical college moving out of Stratham or the new Target opening in Greenland. Instead, COAST will use the same employment figures for all communities until new region-wide data is made available.

Mr. Ortmann suggested that COAST consider lowering the request amounts for smaller communities that have lost a major employer, but not raise the requests for communities that have gained major employers. Mr. Watman said that this may lead towns to search for ways to prove they lost jobs in order to lower their funding requests. Mr. Hejtmanek said that it would be dangerous to start tinkering with the funding formula in this manner. The communities that saw their assessments go down might be supportive, but COAST would have difficulty defending the changes to any communities that saw their assessments go up.

Ms. Broderick asked when, if ever, the funding formula is changed. Mr. Nichols explained that the last change was passed in 2004 as a result of new DOT regulations barring COAST's application for rural transit funding and the 2000 census, which split the service area into two urbanized areas. Mr. Nichols added that COAST would likely not adjust the funding formula again until 2012 or 2013, in response to the results of the 2010 census.

Mr. Nichols explained that Stratham's request has been \$10,000 – 11,000 for the last few years, but the town has consistently paid \$6,000. He explained that as he understood the original agreement, the idea had originally been that the town would ramp up from a zero contribution level to meeting the full request over a period of years. Mr. Frederick commented that it's up to each community to consider COAST's request and determine the degree to which they contribute. Lowering the request to the amount that the community expects to pay would compromise the integrity of the system that all the communities had originally agreed to.

The motion to lower Stratham's funding request failed 9 to 1, with Ms. Broderick voting in favor.

VII. New Business

Action Items

- **Regional Coordination**
Mr. Nichols said that the Local Government Center and COAST's corporate attorney reviewed the proposal and have no concerns with the proposed

structure. Ms. Smith updated the Board on ACT's accomplishments since COAST's November Board meeting. In December, ACT adopted formal by-laws. Any organization that wanted to become a member signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ACT. So far fifteen (15) organizations have signed MOUs. In January, ACT elected officers and updated the work plan. On January 14th ACT submitted paperwork requesting that it become recognized by the State Coordination Council (SCC) as the Regional Coordination Council (RCC) for this region. On January 25th ACT was informally advised that this proposal would be recommended for approval. Mr. Nichols stated that these steps were taken because they are required of any organization wishing to be designated a RCC.

Because the RCC would be making recommendations about contracts (specifically the one between a broker and DHHS for non-emergency Medicaid transportation), there is some risk of liability exposure for members of the RCC. The proposed solution would create legal protection for the RCC by housing it under an existing entity. In ACT's case, this would be COAST. Any increase in the cost of COAST's liability insurance as a result of housing ACT would be funded through ACT's grants.

Mr. Bogle made the motion to establish ACT as a committee under COAST, and Ms. Copeland seconded.

Mr. Nichols said that one reason the proposal would be reevaluated in 2011 is that pending legislation may make this structure unnecessary. Senate Bill 321 would indemnify members of the RCC for their work with the committee.

Ms. Smith distributed a list of the 15 members. Mr. Gerjuoy asked whether ACT was making any effort to recruit more organizations. Ms. Smith said that not all the organizations that have historically been part of ACT are on the list, because some have not signed an MOU yet. ACT is working on soliciting more participation from other organizations as well as citizens living in the service area.

The vote in support of the motion was unanimous.

- **Agreement for State (NH) Matching Funds**

There was no discussion. Mr. Ortmann made the motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter into subsidy agreements, and Mr. Gerjuoy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **ADA Vehicle Procurement [ARRA]**

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to authorize the Executive Director to procure a new ADA accessible minivan for a price not to exceed \$39,888, and Mr. Watman seconded. Mr. LaRose explained that the procurement of an ADA vehicle has been on COAST's ARRA project list. ADA ridership is significantly increasing and a new vehicle is urgently needed. The main ADA vehicle in service now is 6 years old, and it is on the street around 10 hours a day, 5 days a week. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

- **Second Stimulus Bill (the “Jobs” Bill) Project(s)**
Mr. Nichols explained that COAST has outgrown both its maintenance facility and its administrative offices. One priority would be to allow the fleet to be housed indoors overnight, to prevent the buildup of ice and snow on the vehicles. The staff would like to have a new facility designed so that we would be ready to go should funding for the construction become available. The DOT has already taken measures to include such funding in the TIP/STIP. Ms. Copeland commented that she thinks the legislation stands a good chance of passage. Mr. Nichols added that COAST would be in a good position due to our timely handling of other ARRA funds. Mr. Frederick asked whether anyone objected to this idea, and no one did.
- **FY 2008 990**
Mr. Nichols said that COAST had a clean audit with no filings. Ms. Copeland asked whether COAST had any responsibility to pay the government any of its earnings from selling old federally funded buses for scrap metal. Mr. Ruzinsky said that if a bus sells for less than \$5,000, COAST does not owe the government anything, and if it sells for more than \$5,000, we can invest the money in a replacement bus. Ms. Copeland asked how often COAST had to put out an RFP for auditors. Mr. Nichols replied that they would have to do that this coming year.

VIII. Information Items

- **Legislation of Interest**
Ms. Copeland asked Mr. Nichols to elaborate on HB 1481 and its implications for COAST. Mr. Nichols said the new language as written appears to prevent toll revenues from being used for public transit projects. This is a concern as it is currently unknown how EIS projects for the Little Bay Bridge project will be funded.
- **Ridership**
Mr. Nichols said that ridership on the system had been tremendous through the first quarter of FY 2010. COAST set a new record for ridership for the period.
- **Staff Professional Development**
Mr. Ortmann encouraged COAST to take photos of notable staff in front of a bus and submit it to the business section of Foster's.

XI. Adjournment

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wojnowski seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.