

**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Monday, February 2, 2009**

Members Present: Jim Wiggin – Chairman, Jon Frederick – Vice Chair, Cynthia Copeland – Secretary/Treasurer, Scott Bogle, Carol Gulla, Dan Merhalski, Kenn Ortmann, Chris Sterndale, Sylvia Von Aulock

COAST Staff Present: Janice Outhuse, Rad Nichols, Jenn Knox

Proxies: Richard Hayes, Maria Stowell

I. Call to Order

Mr. Wiggin called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM.

II. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols read a commendation letter from Governor John Lynch dated December 15, 2008.

III. Employee Introduction

Mr. Nichols introduced one of COAST's senior operators, Janice Outhuse. Ms. Outhuse has been driving for COAST since 2002. Members of the Board of Directors asked her questions about her background and experiences driving with COAST.

Ms. Outhuse departed to return to driving her bus route.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Frederick made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2008 meeting, and Ms. Gulla seconded. Mr. Merhalski asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect that he was absent with notice rather than a proxy. With this change, the minutes were approved unanimously.

V. Financial Report

- **November 2008 Income Statement and Balance Sheet**

Mr. Nichols presented the financial report for November. Mr. Wiggin asked what "outside bus repairs" meant. Mr. Nichols said that this typically refers to body work, and engine/ transmission work that cannot be done in house. He stated that having a mechanic on duty from 2PM to 10:30 PM when most buses are in the yard has allowed the shop to address minor vehicle concerns very quickly. This has made a tremendous difference for operator morale. Mr. Nichols stated that the accounts payable line is very high due to 20% outstanding on the new Gillig buses delivered in the Fall. As of that day, there remains only 6% outstanding, which will be paid off after the last couple of issues are resolved over the next month. Mr. Wiggin asked if any buses had been retired. Mr. Nichols stated that two are slated for retirement, but none has been retired so far given the upcoming implementation of the next phase of FastTrans service.

- **Annual Audit Update**

Mr. Nichols stated that he just received the audit report and there were no findings, as has been the case for many years. He will provide a final copy to anyone who is interested. Ms. Copeland asked whether there was anything about the application of new standards that other agencies have encountered this year. Mr. Nichols stated that he had not had a chance to examine the report in detail, but he had not seen any comments to that affect.

VI. Action Items

- **Updated Conflict of Interest Policy**

Mr. Nichols stated that COAST had had a conflict of interest policy, but with a new emphasis in this area for Nonprofit entities it was time for an update. He had sent a draft to COAST's attorneys, who sent back a significantly enhanced version. Ms. Von Aulock made the motion to adopt this policy, and Mr. Frederick seconded. Mr. Nichols stated that this policy will be updated every year, probably at the annual meeting. After some discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

- **Interior Lighting Upgrade**

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to approve the procurement of new energy-efficient lighting for COAST's facility, and Mr. Merhalski seconded. Mr. Nichols explained that the yard and shop lights drive up COAST's utility bills, and the shop lights do not even provide effective coverage. There are dark spots when there is a bus in the shop, so mechanics have to use headlamps to work on engines during the day. Mr. Frederick commented that the City of Portsmouth had received a 50% rebate from PSNH for a \$70,000 project, and suggested that COAST look into a higher rebate than the proposed \$1,500. Mr. Nichols stated that he would do so, and that he would get the greenest lighting possible as long as it is cost-effective. Mr. Wiggin asked about the lighting for the rest of the facility. Mr. Nichols stated that if he had known that economic stimulus projects could go past the 90-day mark, he would have included more facility upgrades. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Discussion Items

- **Economic Stimulus Package Projects**

Mr. Nichols stated that COAST began contacting our Washington delegation in November regarding ready-to-go projects. The Spaulding Express service was recently included based on Ms. Copeland's conversations with the FTA's Region 1 planning staff. However, it now appears that operations projects are not eligible for funding under the stimulus package. The money can only be used for capital projects, such as new vehicles, vehicle rehabs, ITS projects, and passenger amenity upgrades. Specific people and organizations contacted include Carol Shea-Porter, Jeanne Shaheen, John Lynch, the Commissioner of Transportation, the Bureau of Rail and Transit, and the New Hampshire Transit Association. Mr. Nichols has also encouraged employees to participate in a write-in campaign. Mr. Wiggin stated that if the name and address list is made available to the Board, individual directors will send letters in support. Mr. Sterndale had previously asked Mr. Nichols whether these ready-to-go projects are consistent with COAST's capital plan. Mr. Nichols stated that the capital plan did not necessarily

reflect all the projects listed, however surveillance on all vehicles, which the Board had expressed interest in doing if the pilot program was successful. Mr. Nichols stated that the DOT's initial project list had included no funding for any type of public transit except rail.

Ms. Copeland reminded the Board that all funding requests have to be on the TIP. She suggested that COAST write more letters stressing how important it is that operations be included as well, especially considering the economic impact of bus service. COAST helps people get to their jobs, and new service would provide jobs too. She suggested including Senator Gregg in this campaign as well. Mr. Merhalski commented that he would be attending a meeting on Friday in Concord concerning these projects. Ms. Copeland emphasized that none of the MPOs or regional planning commissions have been invited to these meetings, and that they have to be involved for any organization to get on the TIP and receive the funding. Mr. Nichols stated that it looks like the transportation funding will be distributed through the regular channels, and COAST is already a designated recipient for federal funds. UNH put in for \$2 million in funding, which COAST is supporting because it will be outside the regular apportionment.

Ms. Copeland stated that the Spaulding Express service was approved as a mitigation measure through CMAQ in 2001 in conjunction with the Little Bay bridges project. The need for adequate local match has caused the delay. Since the economic recovery funding would be 100%, this would take care of the problem and allow the service to get off the ground.

VIII. Information Items

Mr. Nichols asked everyone if they had any questions or comments regarding the information items presented.

- **Newington's Participation in COAST**

Mr. Nichols stated that he has received no response from Newington relative to his latest letter requesting to be placed on a Newington Selectboard Meeting agenda. Based on the Chairman's suggestion, he stated that he is now planning to appear at a Selectboard meeting and request the opportunity to open a dialogue with the Town during the public comment period. Ms. Von Aulock stated that she would be interested in going too. Mr. Merhalski commented that the entire Board should attend the meeting and show support. He also suggested that a Board member write an op-ed in the paper in advance of the meeting. Mr. Frederick asked if it would be appropriate to mention to Newington the prospect of cutting service to their community if they do not fund their share of the service. Mr. Ortmann suggested choosing a meeting with a low-profile agenda, if the agenda is known far enough in advance.

Mr. Bogle asked if Mr. Nichols had had any dialogue with the Greenland Town Manager about funding, and Mr. Nichols replied that he had not.

- **Dover FastTrans**

Mr. Wiggin commented that the new medical complex on Indian Brook Drive should bring in more ridership for Route 33. Mr. Nichols stated that the complex is now an on-call diversion stop used primarily to reach the hotel, but it may become more popular as the medical offices begin to become active.

- **Coordination**

Mr. Ortmann asked about Medicaid funding. He said that Patrick Herlihy had indicated that Medicaid funding cannot be used as match for DOT programs. Mr. Nichols stated that this goes against more than 20 years of coordination planning. Mr. Bogle added that if the Medicaid funding itself had community match, it could be used as FTA match for contract services. Mr. Nichols added that the recently passed Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) appears to greatly expand the definition of "disability." This may not have as significant an impact in labor or HR matters, but it has a potentially huge impact for public transit operations.

- **Staff Professional Development**

Mr. Nichols added that Jeremy LaRose will be going to Burlington, Vermont later in the week to attend the Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Train the Trainer Certification Workshop. This course is offered through the Community Transportation Association of America.

- **Ridership Update**

Mr. Nichols stated that the last quarter of CY08 had been a tremendously successful period for COAST ridership.

IX. Old Business

Mr. Nichols stated that COAST has purchased two used Gillig buses with the assistance of Mr. Ed Pigman at Transit Resource Center. They should be on the property this week. The buses were inspected by Mr. Phil Smith and are mechanically sound. They will require cosmetic upgrades before they are put into service.

X. New Business

Mr. Nichols explained how service was curtailed on Wednesday, January 28 due to a winter storm. He said he would be surprised if this has happened three times in the last 12 years. Operators notified passengers as they boarded the bus that operations might be curtailed in the afternoon. COAST did not get any telephone calls from angry, stranded passengers.

Mr. Nichols stated that he and Mr. LaRose met with UNH Wildcat Transit to discuss a possible joint CMAQ application for expanded service. COAST would be able to reduce some of the communities' burden if we could leverage the state funding that Wildcat receives. Ms. Copeland asked if service could be added during UNH breaks, when Wildcat does not operate service. Mr. Nichols stated that Wildcat Transit does not have any interest in expanding service during these times, but it would be a consideration of any service that is operated as a partnership.

XI. Adjournment

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to adjourn, and Ms. Von Aulock seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 A.M.