

**Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
Minutes of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, October 21, 2009**

Members Present: Jon Frederick – Vice Chair, Cynthia Copeland – Secretary/ Treasurer, Scott Bogle, Richard Hayes, Kit Morgan, Kenn Ortmann, Sylvia von Aulock, Ed Wojnowski

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

I. Call to Order

Mr. Frederick called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM. Mr. Nichols stated that there was a quorum present at the meeting, and that COAST's attorney confirmed that Mr. Morgan, as an ex-officio member of the Board, could be counted toward the quorum.

II. Public Comment

Mr. Nichols stated that there was no public comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2009 and September 23, 2009 meetings. Mr. Bogle seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Report

Mr. Nichols reviewed the August financial report for the benefit of the Board members who were not present at the September meeting, when the report was first presented. He added that COAST recently sold two vehicles at the state auction. The 1999 trolley brought in \$16,000 and a 1996 Bluebird sold for \$2,500. Mr. Bogle asked whether any of this money had to be returned, or if the vehicles were fully depreciated. Mr. Nichols responded that since the money will be reinvested in capital equipment, COAST does not have to return it. Otherwise, for sales over \$5,000, COAST would have to give 80% back to the FTA.

V. Discussion Items

- **Spaulding Turnpike Express**

Mr. Nichols reintroduced another topic that was discussed at the September meeting: Spaulding Express service. He explained that the CMAQ funds that COAST was awarded in 2001 are not sufficient to launch the original Spaulding Express service, due to rising costs. Mr. Nichols stated that if COAST could generate the necessary local match, we could go ahead with the original service. The expanded service earlier in the morning and later in the evening, as included in the mitigation measures outlined in the Newington/Dover EIS, may not be necessary,

considering the most common shift times at Pease. He stated that COAST may have to choose between two CMAQ options: the expansion of the Spaulding Express or the expansion of existing Route 2 and trolley service to ½ hour headways during peak periods (Bus Alternative #3 in the Newington/Dover EIS). Mr. Morgan commented that the NHDOT has not determined whether the CMAQ funds could be used to fund the original service instead of the expansion. It is unclear how it will raise the money to honor the commitments in the EIS.

Mr. Nichols stated that the DOT commissioner had recently clearly stated that turnpike toll revenues would not be used to fund public transit. Mr. Morgan explained that the toll revenues are needed to operate and maintain the turnpike, but it's possible that the turnpike bonds could partially fund public transit.

Mr. Ortmann asked whether COAST is considering turning back CMAQ funds. Mr. Nichols said no, COAST would prefer to have the money redistributed to fund Bus Alternative #3 in the Newington/Dover EIS (expanded route 2 and trolley service).

Ms. Copeland expressed strong support for the Spaulding Express service, which she said residents north of Dover really need. She was concerned about the DOT incorporating an approved CMAQ project into its own plans (EIS).

Mr. Morgan added that the Spaulding Express was an approved CMAQ project, and it was supposed to happen anyway. The only part of the project that was part of the mitigation measures (EIS) was the expansion of service on the shoulders of the COAST project. Mr. Ortmann asked whether we could ask CMAQ for more money. Mr. Nichols stated that we could ask for an amendment, but he is concerned that the upcoming CMAQ round is already over-subscribed. Ms. Copeland added that she is concerned about how COAST not implementing a funded CMAQ project could hurt its chances in future CMAQ rounds.

Mr. Bogle asked whether there was a constitutional issue with using the highway funds. Mr. Morgan said there was not, and explained that some of the confusion may have arisen from the difference between toll revenue and toll credits, which are not actual money. In any case, the turnpike system is not part of the highway fund. Mr. Bogle stated that the Rockingham Planning Commission's understanding was that the entire express service was part of the EIS. Mr. Morgan said that the actual text of the EIS makes it clear that only the expansion was included. Mr. Bogle said that he had heard that the DOT may decide that the mitigation obligation had been made in light of the higher than expected ridership on C&J, and that further measures were not necessary. Mr. Morgan stated

that personally he does not feel that C&J and the COAST express service would serve the same market, but that the DOT had not made its decision.

Mr. Frederick asked about the timeframe in which staff would need a decision from the Board. Mr. Nichols said that staff needs to set up a meeting with DOT on this issue, and invited any Board members who wished to be part of the discussion.

- **RSA Chapter 91-A Amendments**

Mr. Nichols welcomed Mr. Wojnowski, COAST's new Board member representing Newmarket. Mr. Frederick thanked Mr. Morgan and Mr. Wojnowski for attending the meeting and helping to create a quorum. Mr. Ortmann asked Mr. Wojnowski if he had considered nominating an alternate, in case his schedule precluded him from attending on a regular basis. Mr. Wojnowski stated that attending would not be a problem.

Mr. Nichols explained that over the last one and a half years, COAST has had a fuller complement of members participating on the Board. As such, and with the ability to use proxy votes to establish a quorum, the organization has not had difficulty meeting and conducting business. However, with the Attorney General's recent guidance on how to comply with RSA 91-A and the recent stepping down of members from Stratham, Dover, and Farmington, a quorum has been more difficult to reach.

Mr. Nichols stated that with Mr. Wojnowski's participation, and efforts ongoing in both Stratham and Dover to reappoint representatives, he did not currently envision the need to make any changes to the Boards By-laws relative to establishing a quorum. He noted that he felt the board should be hesitant to lower the number of members required for a quorum, as mentioned at the last meeting. He also committed to continuing to attempt to solicit additional members from communities and organizations that have not yet appointed representatives.

VI. Action Items

- **Board Elections**

Ms. von Aulock made the motion to elect Jon Frederick as Chairman, Scott Bogle as Vice Chairman, and Kenn Ortmann as Secretary/Treasurer, and Ms. Copeland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Proposed FY10 Board Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Nichols presented the meeting calendar for the upcoming fiscal year. He stated that meetings would continue to be generally held at 8:30 AM on the fourth Wednesday of the month, but adjustments had been made for the holidays and summer vacation schedules. Mr. Ortmann made the

motion to adopt the proposed schedule, and Mr. Hayes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Onsite CCTV Video Recording Policy**

Mr. Nichols stated that the previously approved CCTV system had been installed, and now COAST needed a policy to allow for its use. The proposed policy was based on the current on-board surveillance policy, and had been reviewed and approved for adoption by COAST's attorney. Mr. Hayes made the motion to adopt the proposed policy, and Mr. Ortmann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Maintenance Equipment Procurement**

Mr. Nichols said that this procurement would allow maintenance staff to store more equipment on the truck that responds to vehicle breakdowns. Mr. Hayes made the motion to authorize COAST to procure a service truck body from Precision Truck Body Equipment Co. for a price not to exceed \$7,300. Mr. Bogle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Information Items

- **Regional Transportation Coordination**

Mr. Nichols mentioned that the ACT hiring subcommittee had an interview the previous week with a very promising candidate for the Manager of Coordination Planning and Operations position. A second interview was planned for following week. Mr. Nichols said that the current candidate would bring tremendous experience to the position.

- **FastTrans**

Mr. Nichols distributed a copy of a marketing piece that will be distributed to Dover households in early November. It includes a coupon for a free ride on FastTrans. He stated that since the service changes implemented on Oct. 12 there had been a notable rise in ridership on Routes 33 and 34, and 35 has provided a much-needed link between the middle/high schools and after school programs downtown.

- **Recent COAST Marketing Efforts**

Mr. Nichols distributed a press release about the new "Take a Closer Look at COAST" bus wrap. He also presented two of the new bus stop signs, which provide schedule information for all buses serving each particular stop. Mr. Nichols credited Mr. LaRose for the design.

Mr. Frederick asked for an update about Twitter. Mr. LaRose said that COAST's Twitter feed now has over 30 followers. Many of the first groups to follow Twitter were local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, but an increasing number of bus users are following COAST as well. Mr. LaRose added that the website is updated with the most

recent tweets. Unfortunately, Google Transit is not accepting new transit systems at this time, so that feature is delayed.

- **Ridership Update**

Mr. Nichols stated that the ridership on Route 2 and Route 6 has been down compared to previous year, and is being attributed to the tough economy and the lower price of fuel this year. On the other hand, ridership on Rtes. 1 & 7 each set new annual records. So far, the October ridership numbers look fantastic. COAST is averaging around 1,430 passengers a day.

Mr. Nichols added that staff made some small improvements to the Route 2 schedule so that there is a whole run to Rochester on Saturdays where there used to be a half-run that only ran as far north as Dover. In addition, Route 32 now stays in service between Dover Point and Newington/Portsmouth, making an often-requested connection between the Dover High School and many students' after-school employment.

VIII. Old Business

Mr. Frederick asked Mr. Nichols to send the City of Portsmouth the annual letter about the cost of this year's Vintage Christmas Trolley. Mr. Nichols affirmed he would do so.

Tom Morgan entered the meeting.

Mr. Nichols reminded the Board of some discussions that took place in the late summer in executive session regarding two employees on leave. One employee is back to work, and staff is working on making some accommodations so that the other employee can return very soon. The minutes from these earlier discussions had been sealed until the present meeting. Mr. Ortmann made the motion to seal the minutes of these two executive sessions permanently, due to their HIPAA-protected content. Mr. Morgan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Copeland asked about future plans for the Beach Bus. Mr. LaRose said that COAST needs to approach Hampton and Exeter about funding. The service had been funded with the support of local businesses and NH Parks and Recreation, because the service was not ready early enough for the town budget cycle. Mr. Nichols added that the weekend-only Beach Bus service had demonstrated the demand for a 7-day a week schedule. Obviously such a service would require a much larger commitment of both federal and local contributions. Ms. von Aulock mentioned that the Exeter Transportation Committee does have some funding, and staff should consider presenting some numbers to them. To begin the process for 2011, staff should have some plans ready by May or June 2010.

Tom Morgan mentioned that he has heard strong interest in bus service along US Route 1 in Seabrook.

Ms. Copeland asked about projects that COAST was considering for the upcoming CMAQ round. Mr. Nichols added that in addition to the conversations with NHDOT, COAST was interested in cooperating with Wildcat Transit on NH Rte. 125 between Rochester, Barrington, Lee and Durham/UNH. He added that he suspects this round of CMAQ grants is already oversubscribed. Mr. Ortmann added that COAST may be able to pick up some private sector support through apartment complexes and landlords whose tenants would benefit directly from the route along Rte. 125.

IX. New Business

Ms. von Aulock stated that she would like the Board to consider drafting a letter in support of using the federal government's electronic tolling pilot program on 1-93 at the Massachusetts border. Ordinarily interstate highways cannot have tolls, but the government is testing a new interstate toll system in three states. Two states have already been chosen, leaving one open spot. New Hampshire may have a good chance, since we are relying exclusively on our regular revenues to fund the improvements. Mr. Frederick asked whether the tolls would be taken out once the bond is paid off, and suggested that they might stay permanently.

Ms. von Aulock made the motion to send the letter, and Kit Morgan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment

Ms. von Aulock made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Ortmann seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.