

Minutes of the Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors
April 8, 2020 Meeting
706 Rockingham Road, Rockingham, Vermont
45 Mill Street, Wilmington, Vermont
Video Meeting

President Chip Stearns called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members: Chip Stearns, Joel Blumming, Scott Tucker, Randy Capitani, Seth Boyd and Jamie Storrs

Invited Guest: Tim Bradshaw

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present: Randy Schoonmaker, Rebecca Gagnon, Christine Howe and Keith Johnson

Public Input: None

Review of Minutes: Reviewed with no comments.

Amend Agenda: Motion: Randy requested to add garage addition at the end of old business.

Old Business

Coronavirus Update: Randy outlined the impact to our ridership, routes and drivers due to COVID-19. We have several staff members at home waiting on test results, and we had one staff member who tested positive but is due back next week. Staff who are out have been directed to contact unemployment directly. Some staff are out on FMLA of which Keith is handling. Drivers with no route hours are cleaning and stripping busses of vinyl during the lull in route activity. Drivers are cleaning busses daily before their routes with wipes and spray disinfectant. Cloth masks were made and distributed to all staff and volunteers and are required to wear them whenever working for the SEVT. Critical care and essential rides are still being provided. Meal sites are still open to curbside service and meals on wheels. We continue to provide shopping trips. We are fare free and may see an uptick in homeless population riders. There have been no more route changes since the emergency meeting. There have been no complaints about the reduced service and having to wear a mask, we are getting everyone to where they need to go for essentials and work. The head dispatcher is working from home, and office dispatch staff is working from 9-3. Finance staff are all working from home except for the director. We are spraying all busses with Lysol, if we run out we have foggers to take up the slack until new supplies arrive. We are screening all riders, if they have symptoms we will not be able to transport them until they contact their doctor. Starting Friday, we will require all riders to wear masks, and will not provide a ride to anyone without a mask. This has

been approved by VTrans and vetted by counsel. The drivers are very appreciative of this new policy and feel it is necessary. The board did agree with this new policy. We are reaching out to our riders via social media, website, TV local newspapers, signage in busses and word of mouth via the drivers whenever there are changes.

Ridership: Ridership has declined significantly this past week from cuts in service due to COVID 19. As of the first week of the COVID 19 pandemic we are down company wide 8%. During the five weeks of March the Current fixed routes are down 63%, Current demand response is down 56%, MOOver fixed routes are down 69% and MOOver demand response is down 67%. Tim mentioned these numbers are consistent with what he is seeing around the state and nation.

Financial Overview: Chip stated that the financial report was consistent with the budget. However, we will be impacted by COVID 19 going forward to year end. Potential new funding sources are the Cares Act for capital and operating expenses, revenue losses, and emergency relief expenses. We are not sure if we will want to apply for the SBA loan but will review it.

The FY20 projected budget is impacted by COVID due to our potential inability to draw down grant funds based on diminished routes and driver wages. Fundraising is impacted due to market drop. Randy contacted Orvis, Rossignol, and Dalbello who will not commit to advertising next year due to the current health of the economy. Randy stated that fundraising may not pick up again until next spring at the Current division. Randy is projecting we will be losing \$71,000 for the year, even with the loss of driver wages and fuel.

Randy mentioned that staff will keep an eye spending through next July in order to limit the line of credit draw down and manage cash flow.

Randy is asking the board to approve the FY21 proposed operating budget for the FY21 grant application. This budget has no relationship to COVID or Medicaid revenue or expenses per VTrans' instructions.

Motion 1: Scott motioned to accept the budget as presented for staff to submit the grant application. Joel seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Randy presented the FY21 proposed capital budget which was reviewed by Chip beforehand due to a deadline previous to the Board meeting. This includes vehicle and non-vehicle capital. Randy reviewed the list with the board.

Motion 2: Joel motioned to approve the three-year capital grant application as presented. Randy C. seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

Partner Updates: Rebecca mentioned we will be meeting with Okemo in May. We will be reviewing the routes and discussing opportunities for next season. Dartmouth College is closed. Dartmouth Hospital is focused on the impact of COVID. Both organizations have put conversations on the back burner.

Fundraising update: Randy sold \$1,500 for an extension of advertising.

Re-Branding: We are spotting the two new Brattleboro busses as planned. Randy asked the board approval for us to focus on spotting the three new MOOver busses next instead of the remainder of

the Brattleboro fleet since we have capital funds to pay us for spotting the new buses. The board agreed.

NEMT: Randy presented the motion at VPTA as recommended by our board. It failed to generate a second. The board members of VPTA felt it was premature because they are not sure about the cost allocation plan impact and the financial direction of VPTA. They are not ready to vote. Randy said VPTA is in no rush to consider our re-entering into the Medicaid business.

Route 30 Study Update: Joel mentioned he is putting off requesting asking business for contributions at this time.

Garage addition Bid: Randy stated of the three bids we received the lowest was roughly \$400,000. We are still qualifying the bid and have not awarded it. Randy reviewed the budget relative to the balance left in the earmark along with state match. We are hoping to start design within the next few weeks. All Seasons was the lowest bidder.

New Business: Randy presented the board with a request to give our staff bonus pay for those who are still coming in to work. The bonus would be \$3 per hour. This is an additional expense paid for by the Cares Act. This would be retro to when the state of emergency was declared. To qualify an employee must be reporting to work, not working from home or on leave.

Motion 3: Joel motioned to accept the proposal as presented contingent upon FTA/ Cares Act funding. Seth seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

Company Updates: There will be a standing agenda item at future meetings addressing employees and bringing them back at the same level they left with the same benefit etc.

Board Member Comments: Chip commented on an email that was forwarded to the board about a Current rider who commended our drivers for making her feel safe and at ease during this time. Chip said that this not an exception to the rule and in fact our drivers are always incredibly gracious and exceptional at what they do. Randy C. would like to make sure we send out a thank you to all the staff from the board in the next newsletter. Seth thanked Rebecca and Christine for paying a lot of attention to the staff. The extra communication is going a long way during these times of heightened anxiety.

Randy stated that our company was the first to make sure we had supplies before shelves were empty, staff concocted homemade hand sanitizer, made face masks in one weekend for the entire company, and the mechanics were very creative with the fogger suggestions for sanitizing the busses long before anyone else thought of it.

Future Agenda Items: No new items

Adjourn: 6:30 pm