

Minutes of the Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors Meeting
January 17, 2019, 5:30 pm
45 Mill Street, Wilmington, Vermont
706 Rockingham Rd, Rockingham, Vermont

President Chip Stearns called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members: Chip Stearns, Jonathan Meeks, Travis Wendel, Joel Bluming, Wendy Harrison, Scott Tucker and Matt Mann.

Invited Guest: None

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present: Leona Linney, Randy Schoonmaker Rebecca Gagnon and Christine Fayette

Public Input: None

Review of October Minutes: Let it be known Scott Tucker was in attendance at the October meeting.

Amend Agenda: Randy requested that we go into executive session to discuss Contracts

Old Business

Old Business: Jonathan stated that there are no requests from committee members to serve on any of the committees, and encouraged them to consider making a request to serve. Chip mentioned that unless someone's term is up the committee members stay in place. Scott Tucker said he would serve where necessary.

All of the town offices have the warning posted of our annual meeting. Chip reminded everyone that the annual meeting is next month at 5:30 On February 21st.

Ridership: Randy reviewed ridership saying ridership is doing very well. We were down 8% a couple months ago but now are at break even and gaining. Route 74 and the Brattleboro routes are progressing and the 57 and 61 are slightly off from last year but they look as if they are rebounding. Demand response vans are down, and volunteers are up which is what we want since we are doing more rides with volunteers with our new model of delivering service. The Current is even with a year ago is a positive note.

The MOOver is having a good winter. The MOOver's 100 route is doing well and recovering from last 4th of July's low numbers. Most winter routes are up 26% over last year. We are hoping to see the MOOver make 280,000 rides this year. The MOOver is up 8% and the company is up overall 4%.

Brattleboro is doing very well, we are 8% ahead since making the route changes in October, this is without counting the transfers. If we counted the transfers, we would be up 16% in Brattleboro.

Randy reviewed the graphs, specifically designed for Brattleboro, the board members liked the presentation of ridership in this manner.

Wendy said that Rebecca stated the ridership numbers in 2017 are erroneously increased on the 53 due to a technical glitch in Genfare. This only impacted Route 53. We are now hand counting and the numbers are looking more in line with subsequent years.

Financials Randy said in general the MOOver is up as much as the Current is behind. The Current is waiting on additional funding for their increase in cost due to vehicle maintenance issues earlier this year. This would change the Current's financial picture. The company as a whole is \$10,000 ahead of budget.

Strategic Plan: Randy reviewed the plan, noting that there are one or two areas to work on, one in particular is establishing a long-term model for fiscal stability.

Wendy request it be noted that we need to add in route expansion, particularly Route 30 and Keene. Randy mentioned we are working on additional routes with Stratton and Okemo next year and thinks we should have a different conversation about Keene in particular for future services. Chip recommended adding additional services under *Increased ridership*. Matt suggested adding under *Increase ridership complete* the route 30 study as it is completed.

Wendy wanted it noted that we should have connectivity to train stations and airports as a long-term plan and that it needed to be noted in this plan. Most importantly the train stations.

Matt noted that a regular bus shelter review should be done to identify if more or different shelters need to be installed and taking a look at improving shelter accommodations. Randy said presently there is not input from the public that there is a need or a want. We presently have a maintenance plan that's adhered to and this includes bus shelters and schedule holders located at specific stops system wide. Shelters are a high maintenance cost, particularly regarding vandalism. Matt and Wendy felt strongly that the company should take the stance to identify new locations and upgrades system wide. Wendy stated that the cost does not necessarily need to be the responsibility of SEVT, some town' and businesses are willing to cover the cost. She feels we need to facilitate with the people that want to put them in. She said we could have a statement about coordinating with people who are interested in putting in shelters. Travis indicated that he has built a shelter for the Gray Ghost, located on the MOOver route, specifically because the owner of Gray Ghost state if people are not out there directly by the sign the bus will not stop. The owner did not want to inconvenience her clients, so she had a shelter built with help from town funding. Scott stated the concept is good. However, maintaining them can be costly due to vandalism. Randy asked the General Managers to ask the drivers if riders are requesting new bus shelter locations.

Randy stated that although we don't have a specific budget to maintain shelters and have other capital priorities we will identify through our drivers if there is a need for additional shelters and we will find a way with private or public partnerships to get those installed should they appear to be necessary.

Fundraising: In our direct mail campaign we have spent so far \$4,700 and have received almost \$900 to date. The campaign is still on our Facebook pages and websites and people are still contributing. Through this campaign we have established an awareness to the community of our need. Randy has identified that we need to focus on foundations, grants, trust and corporations. Most lend themselves to capital funding rather than operations. Presently we need to replace 12 busses in the next two years. We are anticipating a need for \$250,000 as local match for this

procurement. Randy would like to switch gears and focus on fundraising for this capital project rather than general operating support. The board in conversation agreed with this direction.

Succession Plan Outline: Randy presented an outline for the board to review. Once the outline is approved Randy will flush out the details. Randy focused mostly on the emergency plan indicating that critical staff is not limited to the CEO. The goal is having a plan for any pertinent staff who leaves unexpectedly, leaving a hole for other staff to fill. Chip request some changes to the plan, 4d, i, and J can all be combined, it's training. 4e change the word replace to fill, this is a replica to 6a, 6c and should be labeled or identified as cross training. 4h is identical to 6b. He thinks 6 is a duplication of 4 and can be eliminated altogether. Some members agreed that cross training in very important and should be a focus within this plan. Chip identified once 1-4 is complete that will be the detail for the rest of the plan. Having staff cross trained will maintain the operations of the company.

Current Addition Update: The board voted last year to approve the addition of a new bus wash at the Current, using the existing earmark. However, the earmarks' intent does not identify this as a need. VTrans' responsibility in managing the earmark must be consistent with the requirements of the earmark which was intended to increase bus storage at the Current facility. Tim Bradshaw stated that VTrans has agreed to support the additional bus storage and provide the local match required with state funds to complete the project. Randy will revisit with Steve Horton the original estimate of \$750,000 and update with VTrans. VTrans will confirm with Randy total amount left in the Earmark. Randy is asking that the board make a motion to approve the process in moving forward with the project to build an additional bay for storage utilizing the Earmark and match by VTrans for local funds.

Motion 1: Scott motioned to authorize Randy to pursue moving ahead with the building expansion as long as there is no cost or local match required by SEVT. Joel seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

New Business: None

Executive Session: Motion 2 Chip motioned to go into executive session at 6:58 to discuss a personnel matter and contracts. Asking guest and staff except Randy to leave. Session adjourned at 7:15pm

Company Updates: There are many new faces on the state transportation committee who we hope will identify the need for transportation in the state and may possibly increase funding state wide as well.

Board Member Comments: Joel asked if there is continued interested in supporting a new bus wash for the Current. Randy said we need to work on a long-term capital investment plan and talk about the needs company wide; Brattleboro needs indoor storage, the MOOver would like covered storage and there are many more needs company wide. Chip asked if we could find support in paying our mortgages. Randy will look into it. However, he feels a capital fundraising plan is more attractive and would gain support to offset cost more easily.

Future Agenda Items: None

Adjourn Motion 3 Joel motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm, John seconded, all approved.