

Minutes of the Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors Meeting  
February 10, 2021

Via Video

President Chip Stearns called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

**Board Members:** Chip Stearns, Joel Bluming, Wendy Harrison, Randy Capitani, Matt Mann, Dave Moulton, Seth Boyd arrived at 5:14 pm. Scott Tucker arrived 5:18 pm

**Members of the Public:** Tim Bradshaw

**Staff Present:** Randy Schoonmaker, Christine Howe and Keith Johnson

**Public Input:** None

**Review of Minutes:** Wendy commented that the Red Line was very successful, and Christine stated she thought that was in previous meeting minutes.

**Amend Agenda:** None

**Executive Session:** None

**Old Business:**

**Coronavirus Update:** Tim and Ross invited us to do a statewide procurement on ultraviolet air cleaning technology. Tim received a research grant and Dartmouth College is working with VTrans to get specifications to retro fit the buses with this technology. This will allow the opportunity to test the ultraviolet technology. Chip explained since our last meeting the State received a grant award to be able to now begin researching and procuring the technology. Tim thought it would be at least eighteen months before we are able to start testing the technology, utilizing Dartmouth College research assist. The three agencies will each have a size for their buses. It is based on a dollar amount which will dictate the numbers we can attain based on the information we get back for specs and costs. It works with air circulation and uv light.

**Ridership:** Overall company is off 61% during the pandemic. Demand response ridership in this report is pre-Medicaid. Year to Date (fiscal) ridership Rockingham is off 39%, but in Wilmington we are off 78%. Our parking lots are doing pretty well. Total company fiscal year to date is off 62%. Randy C asked if we could overlay with Mountain numbers? Dave M explained Mount Snow is probably off by 35% from a volume standpoint. Dave M explained that most weekends they are at the max capacity. Seth asked what the plans are to reestablish the routes that we gave up and get back to business levels pre COVID. Randy S. explained ski area transit will probably not change, but next year we will have the routes back if we have drivers. Housing is a big challenge to hire people.

**Financial Overview:** The finances were reviewed on the financial overview summary.

**Re-Branding:** We continue to work on buses, and most other items are finished. Randy S showed the demo of the new website that will be launched any day now. It is one large website, two locations, and the routes are separated by regions within the locations. Wendy commented that she likes the site but recommended a fare free note on the routes. Seth commented that the more photos with masks on riders and drivers would be great, as people are noticing that now.

**Earmark project update/projection:** Christine and Randy S went through with the contractor today for a punch list. They did a good job, except they are a few months behind. Punchlist items should be done a week from Friday (2.19.21) We added exterior keypads to open the garage doors. Randy showed pictures of the progress of the renovations for the office. Randy S walked through the budget for the project. There is a projected balance of \$11,352 to spend down prior to June 30, 2021. It must be garage related and in line with the nature of the earmark. The consensus is the waste oil furnace, even if we must supplement the balance of the cost with our own money. Tim offered that if there is anything in the FY22 budget asks that could be pushed to FY21 needs, but the FY22 needs are more costly since they are not covered 100% by state and federal funds like the earmark is.

**Partner Updates:** Covered in the ridership overview.

**Mount Snow:** None

**Stratton:** Seth would like to bring this back up with Stratton and he will work on that.

**Okemo:** None

**NEMT:** Christine provided an update on the first week or two of Medicaid. Randy S updated the board on the volunteers we are working with. Wendy asked if the ridership would go down or up. Tim explained that as the pandemic lifts, we will have increased ridership. SEVT territory for Medicaid was second largest only to RCT. Tim stated that not one complaint call has been received by the VTrans, which is great. This transition has been very smooth.

**Route 30 Study:** Joel asked if this can be the time to start some preliminary items. He asked about the extra money, but Chip explained this is an earmark and has to stay within the purpose of the earmark. Randy S said we have a grant to do the study, and Tim and Randy need to agree on a work scope. Tim and Randy will schedule something after March is over. Chip said that if Joel had parties interested in the local share, that would be good for the grant study paperwork. Joel would like to be part of the conversation, regarding the scope with Tim and Randy S. Discussion ensued.

**New Business:**

**Strategic Plan:** The executive summary of the strategic plan was reviewed. Long term goals are considered to be three to five years, and short term goals were less than three years. The plan will be updated over the next two months. Randy C things there needs to be a focus on drivers, and development and retention.

**Training Program:** Randy S. discussed the current topics surrounding training for companies. The list of a training program was presented and reviewed with the board. There are six subjects addressed one month at time with videos and hand outs for our staff to have three weeks to review and sign off on them. Wendy requested the board also partake in the training. Randy S will send the

links to the board members. Scott would encourage Christine and Randy to continue this and keep it ongoing.

**Vote on Brattleboro Facility Funding Request:** Randy S explained Brattleboro is building a new public works building in the next couple of years and are considering rolling the bond votes for all their projects into one large vote for all their long-term capital needs. The thought is SEVT would be part of the Brattleboro town works building to share the cost. This funding would be CRRSA funds. The potential storage options and vehicle wash was discussed and shown as potential, with our cost being \$3.1 million for storage, wash, and fuel station. This would save SEVT about \$2 million in cost in planning, permitting, scoping, design, and site work costs. The timing is a year plus away, and we feel strongly we need to solicit the funds from VTrans. Randy discussed other capital projects to put in front of VTrans with the hope we would have future funding opportunities. We also have 19 buses that are past their useful life. Tim explained not all funding available is 100% but CRRSA funds are, so whatever falls under CRRSA would be 100%, the balance of funding would be regular funding with local match required. **Motion 1: Permission to revise letter and submit to VTrans for consideration. Scott moved, Randy C seconded. Wendy will abstain due to her husband being town manager. Motion passed 7-0**

**Company Updates:** Randy S discussed the Electric Bike Racks idea. Tim Chock who owns a bike store in Brattleboro agreed to try to design something. We are trying to be proactive in getting a rack for the electric bikes. Matt said some of them are 80 to 85 pounds.

**Board Member Comments:** Scott thanked us for bringing back Medicaid riders. Matt also thanked us for bringing back Medicaid. The Nominating Committee needs to come up with a slate of officers for the Annual Meeting for next month. The Annual Meeting is followed by the regular Board Meeting.

**Future Agenda Items:** Route performance report and the Recovery and Job Access Grant.

**Adjourn: Motion 3:** Joel moved to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:06PM