

Minutes of the March 10, 2021 Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors
Via Video

President Chip Stearns called the meeting to order at 6:06 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, Scott Tucker

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present: Randy Schoonmaker, Christine Howe and Keith Johnson

Guest Present: Tim Bradshaw, VTrans, Elaine Haytko, VPTA

Public Input: None

Review of Minutes: Review of February minutes was moved to later due to time constraints.

Amend Agenda: Move NEMT on the agenda to the next item, as there is a guest in the meeting for NEMT.

Executive Session: None

Old Business:

NEMT: Board introduced themselves to Elaine Haytko from VPTA. Elaine gave an introduction, she is the Executive director of the Vermont Public Transportation Association, and her main role is the Medicaid contract. Randy S discussed Windham county Medicaid, since it was the first month. Windsor started last week, but we don't have enough data to discuss that at this meeting. Randy discussed the rides and the percentage of different ride modes. Randy explained the way the funding for Medicaid works. SEVT is about the third largest in the state and we have the highest number of super users in the state. A super user takes more than 10 rides a month, means we have a large number of rides compared to the number of unduplicated clients. Elaine explained how the unduplicated count is calculated. It is on a 365-day rolling client count. Wendy asked and Elaine clarified that there is no way to control the client count. Randy S explained the board update dated March 8, 2021 in the board packet, including the way the providers are paid based on a base payment, and that we all share in deficits/surpluses based on percentage of expenses. Randy reiterated this is not a projection, and the "sky is not falling" that we will work on the revenue side. There is a VPTA meeting next Thursday to decide how to accommodate the drop in the unduplicated counts. Tim said thank you for saying "let's not panic" there is always ways to work on things. Chip asked Randy S to draft a letter of thank you to Elaine and send to her. Randy S would also like to send letters of thanks to VTrans, GMCN and Marble Valley as well.

Coronavirus Update: Nothing new to update

Ridership: Randy S reviewed the ridership report in the board packet. The company is off 62%, close to two hundred thousand rides, due to the pandemic. During the February vacation week the parking lots are holding their own and only off 21% even during the pandemic. Randy discussed the seasonal route in Okemo as well, showing a 62% loss in ridership due to the pandemic.

Financial Overview: The finances were reviewed on the financial overview summary. Chip thanked VTrans for the funding to keep companies whole through the pandemic. Randy S noted the grant application should be coming out later this week. Tim explained other funding opportunities coming up and SEVT would be able to try for a grant request for additional capital funding in the grant application for the next two to five years. Tim explained in SFY22 Operating, CMAQ, PM, Admin and E & D will be at 100% federal. Randy S explained this is a rare opportunity and very important. Matt asked if there is a time frame the funds need to be spent down. Tim explained how he sets it up in the state tracking system, at least a year or more to spend the money. Wendy asked if the T bill in legislature can be discussed at the next month meeting. Matt asked for someone speaking to the board at the level from the legislative perspective.

Randy S explained the additional funding we will have to spend this FY21. We have a list for the board to see that we would like to spend the remaining funds, that have already been budgeted. This is not additional funds; it is only to spend what we already had been granted for and approved by the Board in our final FY21 budget. If we do not spend the money then we have to return the funds to the state which we do not want to do. The series of projects is listed with estimates to spend the funds. Tim explained that there is sixty days after the money is spent to bill for the reimbursement. Chip brought the Board's attention back to the list, noting that if there is something that needs permitting that would not happen between now and June 30th. Chip noted we need to focus on these items since these tasks can be completed within the three months left in the FY.

Motion 1: Scott moved to approve the funds be used as the lists was presented, Randy C seconded. Motion passed 8-0

Partner Updates:

Mount Snow: Season is extended to April 18th, depending on weather.

Stratton: Nothing new

Okemo: Randy S is explaining that Okemo wants SEVT to take over the three in town routes next year. This will be an ongoing discussion. Chip asked Tim if Okemo would qualify us for more grant funds? Shuttle service is not really "public transit" service. Randy S explained that this would be similar to Greenspring routes, so it would be private funding.

Route 30 Study: Randy S explained the work thus far, the work scope for the Route 30 study which is included in the board packet. Tim explained that there is a smaller piece of the feasibility study with another study for route 11/100, but much of the focus will be on Route 30. Tim will send Randy S and Joel the final workscope. The Brattleboro train station or transportation center would be one end point, and Stratton Mountain Resort could be the other end. The consultant will lead the study, so points of stop would be identified. Chip asked about the potential Stratton-Manchester route and if that would be wrapped into the scope. Tim has a conference call

with internal VTrans departments as well to have a draft to get sent out next week. By the next Board meeting this will already have gone out to bid with a consultant under contract.

New Business:

Recovery and Job Access Grant: Tim explained the new grant, as a pilot in Rutland and in the NEK. The pilot in Rutland has only one client using the service. Since there was some uncommitted money VTrans felt it was time to expand the grant statewide. This grant is to capture assistance for clients that are not already eligible for Medicaid and E & D services. It provides transportation to local recovery centers, or training and work. This can be used for job access for at least two weeks for interviews. SEVT is being awarded twenty thousand dollars for this grant. There will be a kickoff meeting to get the word out and go over eligibility requirements. Chip asked about forms of transportation. Tim explained it is any form of transportation, including items like gas cards.

Brattleboro Micro Transit Study: Randy S explained that micro transit is like “Uber”. You can either use an app or call for a ride. In an ideal situation it will replace an underperforming fixed route. Randy reviewed and discussed the micro transit summary found in the Board packet. Ross has agreed to do a study for micro transit in Brattleboro next year. Maybe we have some electric vans in Brattleboro doing micro transit at some point in the future. Also, Ludlow has been soliciting VTrans for service, and we are trying to get Ludlow and Okemo connected into this study. Randy is also on the Springfield Region WCC and he is trying to see if this might also work there. Matt brought up he would like to see the newer technology like electric vehicles being used. Randy explained the infrastructure needed for electric vehicles, and Tim explained that there is a consultant the state is working with to get the infrastructure in the state.

Company Updates: None

Board Member Comments: Matt M asked about the strategic plan, which will be covered at May’s board meeting. Seth appreciated tonight’s democracy, so wanted to thank everyone for working thru that. He would like to keep these meetings efficient, and going from 5 to 8:30 pm is not sustainable.

Future Agenda Items: Wendy wanted to discuss the “reopening” plans regarding as restrictions get lifted, and how will we handle that.

Adjourn: Motion: Joel moved to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM