

Seth Boyd called the meeting to order at 10:32 am. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members:

Seth Boyd
Jason Rasmussen
Randy Capitani
Joel Bluming
Chris Company

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present:

Randy Schoonmaker, CEO SEVT
Keith Johnson, Finance Manager, SEVT
Christine Howe, General Manager, SEVT

Invited Guests: Ross MacDonald

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Review June 20, 2023 Minutes: Reviewed with no changes.

Review July 13, 2023 Finance Committee Executive Summary and Ridership Accepted with no changes. Randy C mentioned we are in good shape coming to the year end. Keith reminded the Board the line of credit increase was approved and that is a safeguard which we hope to not use.

Ridership Review: Randy S presented the fiscal year end ridership since 2015. FY19 was the last pre-Covid year. Rockingham gave more than 256,000 rides which is a solid year. Wilmington's year round routes had a good year but not their best. Over the last four years we have not had great winter seasons which effects the ridership. Wilmington had over 244,000 rides. SEVT barely broke over half a million rides, with a strong June to end the fiscal year. This is only the third time SEVT has broken that level. Jason questioned if the lower ridership on the 70's routes is due to more people working from home. Randy S. explained it is, and the riders that utilize those routes are very loyal. Jason asked for clarification on why the West Dover route ridership is so low. Christine explained that is a route run during the school year that connects Dover to the Twin Valley Middle High School bus and to the Brattleboro bus to go on to Brattleboro Union High School. This ridership has swings based on where students from Dover attend school. Randy and Christine plan to talk with the Dover School Board to see if we can work on increasing ridership. Jason thanked Randy S. for presenting these numbers.

Randy S. presented ridership numbers directly comparing FY23 vs FY19 to show how we have done vs pre-pandemic levels. Rockingham fixed routes were up around 25,000 rides. There was no Medicaid in FY19. The total Rockingham ride increase of 80,000 rides is mostly Medicaid rides. In Wilmington there was less change but FY19 was a record winter season. Overall Wilmington is down by 44,000 rides, which is driven by winter ridership. Seth was curious if this is typical across the state. Ross stated that we are seeing this similar across the state. Ross noted that Brattleboro has surpassed pre-Covid numbers which is notable.

Randy S. presented ridership goals for FY24 which is a 6% increase over FY23. Seth asked that we track these goals next year. Discussion ensued regarding the Route 30 start up service. It was noted that if we are to get funded for the route, we will approach the towns to ask them to be ready to help with the local match.

SEVT Title VI Plan Approval: Christine presented the Title VI program update explaining that while some information is basic policy, there is data that is updated based on staff surveys, volunteer ethnicity forms, and census. SEVT was very grateful for the help from Steadman Hill, a consulting firm that VTrans has on retainer. The firm helped organize the data SEVT sent to them and finalize this update. **Motion 1: Randy C. motioned to accept the Title VI changes as presented, seconded from Joel, motion passed 5-0.**

Bus Stop Sign Plan Status: Randy S. presented the graphics of the new schedules. The materials have arrived, and the new graphics are being designed for each stop. The new schedules also have a QR code that leads to the schedules when scanned. Brattleboro will be completed first starting this week. We expect to complete the project by the end of August. Chris thanked SEVT for all the work on this and getting it completed.

Fundraising Collateral: Randy S. presented the 90-second video that was created for donation purposes. The Board commented on the quality of the video. Seth asked where the video gets exposure. Randy S. will send any inquiries a video and an annual report which was also presented. Seth asked if the municipalities have a link to our web page for support, noting that may be a good source of web presence. Randy C. commented on how nice the fundraising collateral piece is and the information should be cherry picked to present to the towns and municipalities.

Resort Updates: Randy S. noted things are quiet with Stratton and Okemo. As they progress and we get closer to the season the Board will be updated. Dan Thoemke is on vacation and not present but should be at the next Board meeting to discuss a plan to substantially change our bus drop zone. We have concerns about it, and we are working with them on this issue. There may be a request for the Board to become actively involved in this discussion should the Board feel they need to be. Seth updated that Stratton uses the MOOver service primarily for employee service, and is navigating securing housing locations. Seth will encourage outreach from Stratton for winter services.

Microtransit updates – Windsor and Springfield: Ross explained that Springfield is really interested in microtransit. Springfield was studied in the feasibility stages, but the cost is high and there is no funding at this time. Randy S redirected that there was a meeting between Springfield economic development and the state, emphasizing Springfield needs transportation to support economic development. SEVT gave Springfield the cost of a two-van service. The Springfield economic group was thinking there may be another source of funds. If there is one time funding, however, that may not be sustainable.

Windsor Microtransit had a spike in ridership last week. Shopping and personal trips are the largest type of rides. We are expanding the area very slightly to a corridor up route five up to Hartland three corners, one mile past where we end now. Also, an extension out of Windsor to Exit 8 which will include the Windsor Motel a trailer park. We are working with HBSS to get the software adjusted. We then need to go out to the public with notification. This can increase ridership. Randy C asked if ridership does not increase but costs do will you pull back. Randy S explained there is no new cost because we are not adding hours, but if the ridership increases so much that the headways increase too much there will be discussion then.

Seth asked about the scheduled meeting with Senator Harrison on August 8th. Randy S said as of now it is at 11:30 am on August 8 in Wilmington and as the agenda is finalized it will be passed on to the Board.

Executive Session if Necessary: None

Motion to adjourn by Joel motioned seconded by Chris adjourned at 11:38.

