

Jason Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 10:16 am. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members:

Jason Rasmussen
Randy Capitani
Chris Company
Sue Fillion
Dan Thoemke

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present:

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

Invited Guests:

Jeremy Whiting, VTrans

Public Input: None

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Review December 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes: The minutes were reviewed.

Ridership Review: Christine presented the ridership review which included the Christmas holiday period. The White Line, #1, and #2 routes continue to do well. The 57 ridership is off, and we're not sure if the flooding there has an impact. The 71 is doing well and even though the 72 and 73 routes are off, the 70's routes as a whole are ahead of last year. The 101 Shopper is off but should rebound as we linked it to the Windsor MicroMOO service this week. Rockingham fixed routes are up 7%, and are up 8% including Okemo. We had several record days on the Okemo route over the holiday. We are doing more demand response rides than last year but we are doing fewer volunteer rides because we have fewer volunteers. Overall Rockingham is up 1%. Jason asked if the 71 is up because of people returning to work in the office. Christine said yes.

In Wilmington the Rt 100 MOOver route is slowly closing the gap from last year. We had a very poor summer weather-wise. The West Dover and Bennington routes' ridership is based on the number of students using the service. Year-round routes in Wilmington are off 21% from last year. The winter routes are impacted by variable winter weather and are off a total of 8%. The Mount Snow route used to serve six hotels and now there are only three. The Parking Lot routes are up 5%. Stratton ridership is up 30%. Total winter ridership is off 11%. Overall, the company is off 4% from last year. Randy noted that we are comparing stop by stop ridership on the 61 and 57 routes to see who is riding and where they are going. Randy C asked if a time change could help routes like the Brattleboro or Bennington routes. Randy S explained that there are hard stop times on other routes such as before school stops/starts, meeting buses on other routes, etc.

Randy reviewed the Christmas week ridership for the past five years plus 2010 which was the record week. Out of 28 Christmas weeks 2023 was 14th. Dan reported rain events have impacted business at Mount Snow as well.

Route Performance Report: Jeremy Whiting walked the Board through the FY23 Route Performance Report. He explained that the state uses cost/ride to measure successful, acceptable and underperforming routes throughout the state. Routes that are not meeting performance benchmarks are looked at closely by the state. Local funding is increasing and is now higher than state funding. SEVT has no underperforming routes. The Blue Line and #1 Springfield In-Town routes are above the cost per ride benchmark. Randy S said that we are looking at re-doing the Brattleboro service in the spring. SEVT's cost per ride for demand response and tourism are some of the lowest in the state. For rural routes the Wilmington-West Dover is the lowest cost per ride in Vermont. Jason asked how we have two routes on under performing routes on one chart but not in another. The answer is that one chart is for underperforming routes for at least two consecutive years, while the other table is just for one year. Randy S added that the West Dover route which has a high cost per ride is because the route is 20 minutes long and ends in Wilmington where it starts on another route. The Town of Dover gives us \$4,000 for this service, so there are reasons why some routes look underperforming but may be necessary to continue. Sue asked if there are other metrics such as equity that are used to analyze route performance. Jeremy replied yes, and that decisions and analysis are not always about money. Sue asked how does the state analyze microtransit? Jeremy said it is analyzed by ridership vs cost. Randy presented a microtransit overview that Ross is showing the Legislature.

Finance Committee Report: Randy S presented the executive summary of the data produced for the Finance Committee meeting even though we did not have one last week. Budget vs actual is \$108,721 less than last year due to Medicaid income being off \$116,712. The \$546,000 line of credit balance will be paid off shortly as soon as we receive the third quarter prepaids from the state.

Keith reviewed the audit summary. There were no material weaknesses or findings. There were some adjusting entries. Randy C and Jason noted that they reviewed it and that it looked fine to them. **Motion 1: Randy C moved to accept the report of auditors for 2022-23, Chris Company seconded, motion passed.** Randy C asked if the audit was delivered earlier than last year as a goal we had. Keith reported yes. Jason asked if we ever asked the auditors to present the report to the Board. Randy S replied that we used to do this. He suggested that if we have issues the auditors should come, but to spend \$400-500 for an auditor to attend a Board meeting may not be worthwhile. Keith mentioned the auditors welcome questions any time.

VTrans Update: Jeremy had nothing to add.

Brattleboro Microtransit Funding Options: Last week we signed an MOU with the BDCC for \$118,000 which will cover \$18,000 worth of software and \$100,000 of operations that will hopefully cover the period April 1-December 31, 2024. We also signed a change order with HBSS for \$7,000 to add the microtransit module we need specifically for Brattleboro. We will go public with an announcement in a few weeks after we field test the new Brattleboro software features. We are grateful for BDCC's report. Per Jason's previous concern we will note that this is a pilot with no guaranteed long-term funding at this point.

Board Funding Priorities: As a carryover item from the last meeting Randy presented a list of capital items for the Board to prioritize. Jason said vehicle replacement is a priority. Randy C asked if the electric/hydrogen charging infrastructure project is related to vehicle replacements. The answer is that they are two separate programs. This year SEVT is applying to do two Level 2 charging stations in Rockingham, with the purchase of two Ford E-Transits in FY26. Randy C thought the Brattleboro facility should be at the bottom of the list. Dan agreed that fleet replacement is also the highest priority followed by the Wilmington storage barn. Randy S noted the difference between the Rockingham fleet's exteriors and Wilmington's, with Rockingham having indoor storage. Sue asked for a fuel transition plan to see what we need for infrastructure. Randy C asked if the \$75,000 gasoline tank should be done sooner rather than later because of its relatively low cost compared to

the other projects. Randy S suggested it might be a midrange priority. He thought Sue's suggestion was a good one. Jason asked how the high cost of alternate fuel infrastructure fit into the priorities. He summarized what he heard the Board was saying, making the fleet replacement, Wilmington gas tank, Wilmington bus barn, and then the infrastructure as the priority order. Randy S said he would change the list with those priorities for the next meeting.

Executive Session if Necessary: None

Other Business: Sue asked if the minutes from the Emergency Meeting will be sent to the Board and Christine said yes. Chris asked about the status of Senator Harrison's bill. Randy S explained the bill is well intentioned but there are some significant flaws in it. The state's other seven providers are also against it. Two issues are the towns would appoint the majority of the transit board, leaving the non-profit with no control of its own Board. The second is that the most populous towns would have the Board seats, precluding small towns' representation on the board. When the original law was written in the 80's the landscape was entirely different. VPTA will be lobbying against the bill and will be drafting our own version of the bill. Randy C said that there are many things that are wrong on this on several different levels. Chris and Jason spoke to the need for regional representation. Randy C asked that this topic be an agenda item at the next meeting. Randy S spoke of the need for the Board to review Rochester's transit company Board training at a future Board meeting. Jeremy noted that that company is very well run. Randy C asked where we stand with potential new Board members from Springfield and Ludlow. Randy S will be following up this week.

Chris motioned to adjourn, seconded by Randy C, adjourned at 11:30 am.