

Seth Boyd called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members:

Seth Boyd
Jason Rasmussen
Randy Capitani
Chris Company (left meeting at 11:00am)
Sue Fillion
Dan Thoemke
Joel Bluming

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present:

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

Invited Guests:

Jeremy White, VTrans
Ross MacDonald, VTrans

Public Input: None

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Senator Harrison: Senator Harrison explained a bill she is working on, and Jason had helped with the concept, that towns coordinate with transit providers when property development happens to require amenities for transit. Seth asked for a copy to be sent around for all to read. Senator Harrison clarified that it does not designate the cost or maintenance responsibility. She also discussed when discussing housing at the Legislature level to keep transit in. Sue noted that Randy S has been forthcoming to say that when housing development discussions happen to invite SEVT to the discussions to ensure there is coordination to offer transit. Senator Harrison still has concerns about governance issues with transit Boards of Directors. She commented on the ridership increase and how well the drivers are liked. Seth explained that when he conducted the SWOT in both locations, it was noted that the staff stated that SEVT is a preferred employer.

Review November 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes: No changes on minutes. Jason asked if Randy S reached out to Springfield or Ludlow regarding board members. Randy S explained that he had reached out and Springfield will let SEVT know after the first of the year. In Ludlow, Brandon may join himself. Seth was happy to hear regarding potential board members.

Review Finance Committee Documents: Keith presented the budget versus actual. The income level is slightly up due to timing of billing income. On the expense side there was nothing notable. Overall, we are slightly ahead of budget year to date compared to last year. Our capital is almost all completed as well. Randy S commented that although the driver wages are on budget, the increase compared to last year is high due to wage increases as well as new routes such as Windsor Micro Transit that was not running last year at this time. Seth asked about staffing for the winter seasonal staff. Christine explained that we have hired seven drivers in Wilmington with all but one already CDL licensed. In Rockingham both fixed route and demand response drivers are fully staffed. Randy S explained that office staff will still be out there during holiday weeks driving, but nothing

like the last two years. Seth asked about the Line of Credit balance. Keith said we drew \$40,00 last week and will probably continue until the next prepaids come from VTrans. Keith also noted that somewhere around the second week of January we will probably be able to pay off the line of credit. Randy S. updated the Board on the final true up from VPTA, as noted in the board documents.

Ridership Review: Christine presented the ridership review. The ridership includes Thanksgiving weekend and Mount Snow seasonal routes, but not Okemo as that does not begin until December 23rd. As noted, Brattleboro continues to increase. Route 53 will gain slightly as that route will now keep the New American riders from SIT on the bus and drop them at MCC on Birge St. on the second morning run. Springfield, has leveled out, which is actually a gain from previous months of being behind. The Bellows Falls Intown route continues to increase, and the 70's routes have increased as well. The Rockingham fixed route has increased by 10%. Demand response van and ridership is higher than last year and volunteer rides are down which results in a 3% total increase. In Wilmington the West Dover Wilmington route has bounced back. The winter routes for the first weekend of service were up 25%. Stratton to Manchester is up 7%. SEVT overall is up 2%. Sue asked what we were studying on the 70's routes and if the Microtransit was in the demand response ridership. Christine explained that we are in the very beginning stages of looking at the 70's stop by stop performance. The MicroMOO has its own ridership line item and is not included in the demand response numbers. Jason asked for clarification on Route 57. Christine and Randy S explained the changes, as well as the added Cavendish stop. This route should rebound as the winter gets in full swing. It was noted that the flood in the summer affected Route 57 as well.

VTrans Update: Ross noted that with the flood impacts an increase of 2% ridership looks good. VTrans received Senator Harrison's draft bill for review and feedback. Ross discussed the in-person summit Randy S and Christine attended the week prior to review the Public Transit Policy Plan. VTrans looked at legislative reports to be presented in the upcoming session. The budget constraints were discussed. The midyear amendments for SEVT were completed with Randy S. There may be another adjustment in later spring. Ross asked to be kept in the know if the O & D funds start to be tight enough to consider restraints. Joel asked about Route 30 corridor funding. Ross explained there are no plans at this time to invest in additional fixed route services. At this time the focus on funding will be in the demand response mode. Ross noted that even if VTrans wants to fund more micro transit routes, there are no funds without taking from another route. Randy S. noted that Ross decided to stay on as SEVT's Grant Coordinator.

Brattleboro Microtransit Funding Options: Randy S. presented four possible funding scenarios regarding Brattleboro Microtransit offering a variety of funding sources. These scenarios assume a March 1st startup. Scenario One is just BDCC funds, offering up to ten months of service. Scenario Two is BDCC funds and Brattleboro Town Social Service Funding, which allows for up to 12 months of service. Scenario Three is BDCC funds and VTrans funds, if secured, and would be used only upon one being exhausted before the other is used, allowing for up to 14 months of service. Scenario Four combines BDCC, Town Social Services, and VTrans funding and allows for up to 18 months of service. Under Scenario Three, using inkind to draw down federal dollars faster, Ross cautioned and stated VTrans would not recommend that option. Randy C asked if the money showing as VTrans funding on these scenarios would be new money or money taken from other SEVT routes. Randy S. explained it would be new money. Randy C. asked about other funding sources once these funds ran out and asked if there is time for Randy S and Christine to find this funding. Randy S stated that the BDCC would do the lion share of finding the new funding for future.

Randy C. was in support of starting it and seeing where it goes. Seth asked Sue and Chris what support from Brattleboro might be available. Sue said she is in support as the largest town and employer in this area. If we demonstrate that it works, there may be potential for employers to help fund it in the future. Senator Harrison noted that this is positive, and it would make sense employers in the future would help pay for this service. Senator Harrison noted temporary money might be a challenge because it can affect service reliability. Randy S noted that we need a Board vote yes or no

to continue moving forward with this project. Randy S stated that employees will not be the only riders this service serves, so it shouldn't be expected that employers will pay solely for this in the future. Jason noted his concern regarding sustainability, however, if we are very clear about that from the start then he will go along with the Board. Randy C noted that if the app offers a donation for the service to keep that as an option in the future for partial funding as well. **Motion 1: Randy C motioned to pursue Scenario One and allow staff to spend any funds provided by BDCC beginning in March, Sue seconded the motion. Jason asked for clarification that the route will only run as far as the money will allow. Randy S confirmed, yes only as far as the money will fund. Motion Passed 6-0**

Board Funding Priorities: Randy S presented long-term capital project priorities for the Board to consider, edit, and prioritize. Discussion ensued, and Seth asked the Board to digest the suggestions and return with thoughts at the next Board Meeting. Sue asked if the fleet replacement catchup is based on what fuel source of vehicles. Randy S mentioned it would be more defined when we get there, but probably a combination of all types.

2023 Annual Meeting: Randy S. explained we need 30 days to post and looking at January 16th, 2024 at 10:00 for the Annual Meeting with the regular meeting to follow.

Executive Session if Necessary: None

Other Business: Seth asked for an update about the gates at Mount Snow. Randy S explained they are working, and we are using them. So far so good, but we have not seen it very busy yet. Dan Thoemke agreed, the flow is doing well at this time.

Motion to adjourn by Joel motioned seconded Seth by adjourned at 11:18