

Jason Rasmussen, called the meeting to order at 10:26 am. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

**Board Members:**

Sue Fillion  
Randy Capitani  
Dan Thoemke  
Brenden McNamara  
Jason Rasmussen

**Members of the Public:** Senator Wendy Harrison

**Staff Present:**

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

**Invited Guests:**

Jeremy Whiting, VTrans

**Public Input: None**

**Amendments to the Agenda:**

**Review minutes of July 16: Reviewed with no changes**

**Finance Committee Meeting executive summary:** Randy C said ridership was discussed at length and discussed financials that we will hear more about later on this agenda.

**This item was discussed before we had a quorum Ridership:** Christine reviewed ridership noting many fixed routes in Rockingham are up. The Red, White, and Blue Lines in Brattleboro continue to increase. The 70's routes were combined in June. The 71 and 72 are up but if all three routes were still running, the ridership is down from a year ago. Microtransit in both Windsor and Brattleboro continues to increase. Rockingham fixed routes are up 29%. The van demand response routes are down 1%. Volunteer rides are down 19% from a year ago. Rockingham total is up 14%. Randy S noted that SEVT added capacity for demand response which resulted in more O & D social trips and far less denied rides. Wendy Harrison asked if there were ridership goals set for Brattleboro microtransit. Randy S. explained we hoped for higher ride count, but it just started in April so may take some time. In Wilmington there's a 54% increase on the fixed routes. Some of this is from the fireworks, but a great bump in ridership across the board. The demand response in Wilmington is doubled from a year ago, as the Townshend shopper continues to increase. Wilmington is up 56%. SEVT is up 18% from a year ago.

**This item was discussed before we had a quorum VTrans update:** Jeremy said that VTrans is working to finalize grant agreements.

**Change Wilmington West Dover summer evening schedule:** Randy S presented the changes in service on the Wilmington-West Dover route, eliminating the evening hours in the spring, summer and fall. This would save \$6,615 in local share and the same amount in 5311 Operation funding. The ridership is very low, and this would have a minimal effect. With board approval we would post this

for public comment and start the change October 4, 2024. Randy C asked if this was permanent or one year suspension. Randy S said if the funding came back, we could revisit, but ridership is so low not sure it would be worth the cost, so to be determined. There was some discussion regarding people using this for work and how it would affect them. The public comment posting is when we hear from those people that may be affected. **Motion 2: Dan motioned to accept proposed changes on the Wilmington to West Dover route. Sue seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0**

**MTI Grant:** Randy S reviewed the proposal based on the previous Board meeting giving Randy S approval to pursue Springfield Microtransit. Ross would like us to submit an application that converts the Springfield in town route to Microtransit in Springfield with two Ford ETransits electric vehicles. A 20% percent match is needed, and Randy S charged the Springfield Regional Development Commission to secure the local match. The original estimate was approximately \$200,000. There is an additional cost for the software to bring the approximate cost to \$220,000. SEVT will put in charging infrastructure in Rockingham to charge the vehicles. We need Board approval to submit this grant but there have been some recent developments, including the vehicles' don't have transit style doors. Other providers that are using the Ford E Transits are hesitant to recommend them for fixed routes without a door that opens via the driver's operation. Also, this may convert to CMAQ next year and we need guidance from Ross for dates of application. Randy S is not ready for the Board to approve this project today. Randy S asked if this can be approved via email. Jason stated with the open meeting law it has to be a meeting and all are available for a special meeting. Randy C asked for the cost offset if applicable from the fixed route service now versus this microtransit route. Randy S explained that is complex but will try to get that information prior to the special meeting for the application approval. In FY24 the In town Springfield cost \$171,000.

**FY25 Budget Update:** Randy S. presented the notes on the FY24 actual numbers. SEVT has to repay VTrans 5311 operation funds that we could not spend down. It will show that the gross deficit is \$389,000, which includes \$196,000 of Operation funding we were advanced and have to return. In reality the operating deficit was \$192,000. State funding only matched a small portion of the operation funding. Prior to COVID we were receiving more state operating funds, and costs were lower. We have a much higher cost of business, but the local match and state operating has not kept up with the rising costs. Senator Harrison explained there is a study in the legislature for funding transportation. Randy S said he is aware of that and has been part of the prior studies. Randy S explained he, Christine and Keith have been working on the FY25 budget since late March. We applied what happened last year to this year's process, breaking out the expenses into the siloed grant income. We need several hundred thousand dollars more on top of the already \$1.2 million in local match we already generate. We need some new source of statewide public transit funding. This is a very conservative budget, and any bump can cause a deficit. There are two actions, cut routes or increase revenue to cover the deficit. All the routes we have are performing well, with all the recent route changes made. SEVT is skinny in admin and corporate structure. We worked with Ross to move money from one silo to another without increasing the original grant request. We have squeezed capital to only what we can afford. We started a couple weeks ago with a \$154,000 budget deficit. Christine worked on the budget further to bring the deficit to \$124,000. Ross came up with state funds to cover \$80,000, and we have some small income coming from disposed vehicles and additional O & D funding that we will see mid-year to bring that us to break even. This also includes another budget item of reducing evening service on the Wilmington West Dover route. Keith explained some of the cost increases included in the budget, but noted we will have another insurance quote coming that may also affect this budget. Randy S explained we need a vote for the operating budget and the updated capital budget for FY25. Randy S presented the updated small capital budget. Sue asked about the stormwater project, and clarification. Randy S explained it is for permit compliance. Sue recommended to look into some other grant programs. Jason will ask if this project will be eligible. Randy C asked if SEVT tracks vehicles for long term capital. Randy S explained we do, but forecasting miles is more difficult but we focus on what we need. **Motion 1:**

**Randy C motioned to approve the updated FY25 capital budget as presented Dan seconded.  
Passed 6-0**

**Motion 3: Randy C motioned to accept the revised FY25 budget as presented Sue second  
the motion. Motion passed 6-0**

**Executive Session if Necessary: None**

**Motion to adjourn by Randy C second by Sue adjourned at 11:20 AM**