

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

**Board Members:**

Randy Capitani  
Joel Bluming  
Jason Rassmussen  
Dan Thoemke  
Chris Company arrived 10:06

**Members of the Public:** None

**Staff Present:**

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

**Invited Guests:**

Terry Johnson, SWRPC  
Jason Cooper, SWRPC  
Chloe Gross, SWRPC  
Stephen Falbel, Steadman Hill Consulting  
Jeremy Whiting, VTrans

**Public Input:** None

**Amendments to the Agenda:** None

**Next Generation Transit System for the Monadnock Region:** Terry Johnson from the SWRPC presented “A Next Generation” Transit System for the Monadnock Region powerpoint and explanation of the project. Terry explained the reason for presenting was also to identify SEVT as an entity that they will potentially look to help sponsor the system in the future. Jason asked Randy S what his thoughts are on this project. Randy S said he has enjoyed working with them, but as far as moving forward, clearly funding is the key determinant as to who and how it will be done. Randy S spoke highly of the organization. He asked Terry what the goal date for the operating entity to run the system. Terry explained they are hoping to have the system running by FY28. However, if it happens sooner, they would look to make it happen faster. Randy S asked if there was a deadline for commitment from a potential operator. Terry said it would be nice to have good sense by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2025. Terry said, based on the operating model we select, there would be an RFP most likely. Jason asked if the MOOver was okay to do interstate operations and were there any hurdles. Randy S answered we are in good shape, and it all boils down to funding. Jeremy said he would see if there were any thresholds with the two states and oversight requirements. Randy C asked about the funding we got from New Hampshire, and Randy S confirmed it is only Hinsdale and DHMC. Terry clarified the mode of transportation they are looking at in the future is Microtransit in Keene. Stephen explained why he feels it would not be an RFP but rather a subrecipient agreement, parallel that what SEVT already does within the State of Vermont. The difference in New Hampshire is that the Medicaid service is not braided, therefore that may not be part of the transportation as of now. Joel asked if there was any movement for connecting Brattleboro and Keene. Terry noted that yes, that would be future expansion for the service. Jason recognized it is an interesting idea, and if the funding is there it is something to keep discussing.

Chris noted that given the current climate while this is an encouraging conversation, he emphasized that right now we want to keep the service that we already have. Randy C echoed Chris' concerns and asked Christine how hard it would be to get up and running. Christine explained it is a simple operation at this point and not a big concern. The funding is really the hurdle. Terry added there are not many rideshare services like Uber or Lyft serving the area. Jason thanked Terry and Stephen for the presentation and asked them to keep talking about the possibilities in the future. Upon the end of the presentation, the SEVT board discussed further without the SWRPC present. Randy S asked if the whole board wanted him to continue to participate or what the next step would be. Randy S asked the Board to permit him to meet with them and get more information. Randy C and the Board agreed to just stay in touch with them. Randy S envisions a few phone calls or a meeting and return the information to the Board, but feels he needs to tell them June 30<sup>th</sup> is not going to happen for a commitment from SEVT. The Board agreed that the June 30<sup>th</sup> commitment is not achievable but to continue conversation. Jason asked Randy S to report back to the Board on any updates.

**VTrans Update:** Jeremy said that the FTA chose another provider to review for their annual audit so that SEVT was not chosen. The state review of SEVT will be finished by the end of the fiscal year. Jeremy said there will be more information by the end of the week of April 8<sup>th</sup> with funding and we should have more information at the May Board meeting. Randy C asked Jeremy what the other providers have done for routes changes and cuts. Jeremy said we are still collecting all that information but looking like yes. GMCN voted last week for their cuts, and the number VTrans gave those providers were met. Jeremy does not have the full information from other providers, but everyone is doing their part.

## **Board Vote;**

**FY 26 Operating and Capital Grant Budgets:** Randy S presented the capital operating budget, noting Keith, Christine and he have worked hard on this for the last several months. There was discussion regarding FY26 grant budget versus the projection of the FY25 budget year end. The FY26 bottom line looks good with another small surplus but slightly bigger surplus compared to this fiscal year. This budget does not reflect any major changes to Medicaid funding. We also have to discuss long range capital, particularly the Brattleboro facility. We have run out of space there for vehicles and we are spending money to move vehicles back and forth to Rockingham. We need the state's support for this project as we don't want to mortgage another facility. Jason asked Keith to run through any notes. Keith explained the expenses are reflective of the route cuts we have made, and it will reflect in line items that deal with operations. Keith reminded the Board that this is a grant budget and there are always mid-year adjustments that offer other opportunities. We will see the revenue increased from this fiscal year's contracts, Medicaid and O & D funding are the main increases, while our expenses are down. Driver's wages this year compared to next year are flat even with an anticipated 3% wage increase due to route changes and attrition with drivers. Dispatch wages are increased because of the two open positions that we had for most of FY25. Chris asked about the tire budget being lower than the FY25 projected. Christine explained the tires don't all get done in the same year so next year we do not feel we have all tires in FY26. Jason asked about the dues and subscriptions drop for FY26. Keith explained this is due to still being on the older dispatch software that was not intended to still be in use at this time. The new dispatch software should be in use in FY26 bringing the quarterly billing down for that line item. The operating surplus budgeted is \$224,118, after mortgage interest, principal and capital match, the surplus is \$72,198.

Randy S presented the capital budget, noting we are continuing to procure good used vehicles to right the fleet. This is a lower cost for more rolling stock. Nonvehicle capital presented shows additional stormwater permit renewal, a security camera upgrade in Wilmington, and planning for a Brattleboro facility. Randy S said that there needs to be a conversation with Ross and Jeremy about getting in line for funding for a major project as well. The capital match for FY26 is \$83,100. There is a three-year plan that is a grant application requirement. The change from the previous version of long-range capital plan for the state is the removal of electric vehicles. The updated version includes the Brattleboro facility, as a bare bones facility. Randy C asked if we are revisiting what we had in Brattleboro for facility options. Randy S explained we are starting over and that we will look at other

less costly sites. Chris asked if there is any consideration for working with VTrans to use some space on their site on Route 9 if that ever happens. Randy S said we did look at that, but will revisit.

**Motion 1: Chris Company motioned to approve the FY26 Grant Operating and Capital budgets as presented, seconded by Randy Capitani, motion passed 5-0**

Randy S asked if the Board wanted to meet at the next regular date of May 20<sup>th</sup>. Chris and Randy C will not be able to make May 20<sup>th</sup>. May 13<sup>th</sup> is a better date, so the consensus is to move the May board meeting to May 13, 2025 at 10:00.

Discussion ensued surrounding possible funding concerns that may occur on the federal level.

Motion to adjourn Joel second by Chris adjourned at 11:19 AM