

Minutes of the Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors Meeting
September 20, 2018, 5:30pm
45 Mill Street, Wilmington, Vermont

President Chip Stearns called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

Board Members: Chip Stearns, Jonathan Meeks, Travis Wendell, Marco Tallini, Joel Bluming, Wendy Harrison, and Matt Mann.

Invited Guest: Tim Bradshaw, VTtrans and Scott Tucker

Members of the Public: None

Staff Present: Leona Linney, Randy Schoonmaker, Rebecca Gagnon, and Christine Fayette

Public Input: None

Amend Agenda: Chip requested that the Board go into executive session at the end of the regular meeting, inviting only Board members.

Review minutes Chip noted a spelling correction under old business and Motion 1, change Mommittee to committee and string to strong. Chip reiterated Matt's comments regarding the function of the Nominating Committee and the need to outline protocol. Chip asked if the Board agreed with the process of meeting with a candidate and making a recommendation to the Board within a 30-day period. There were no objections from the Board. The Nominating Committee will draft a procedure for the Board to review.

Old Business:

New Board Member: Chip introduced Scott Tucker as the newest nominee of the Board. The Board and employees were introduced. **Motion 1:** Wendy motioned for Scott Tucker to be the next Board member, Jon seconded. Scott introduced himself. He recently retired and became Town Manager of Wilmington. Scott worked on the Rutland police force for 38 years, in 1995 he became second in command. He served as night supervisor and business manager. Scott was the Executive Director of Project Vision in Rutland for five years and has served on the Vermont Recovery Network, Turning Point of Rutland, was President of the Vermont Police Association, Chair of the legislative committee for Vermont Police, and currently serves on NeighborWorks of West Rutland. Motion passed 7-0.

Ridership: Chip reminded the Board that the ridership and finances are reviewed by the Finance Committee at an earlier date and combined into an executive summary. Randy reviewed the ridership with the Board, reminding everyone that last year was a banner year for the MOOver and would be difficult to replicate. Overall SEVT is down 7%. We hope to see an increase in ridership with new routes starting in Brattleboro in October. On the MOOver side ridership off due to the soft turnout of the July 4th events. Randy reviewed in detail for Scott route locations, how routes are funded, and the outline of the ridership document.

Brattleboro Update: The new route schedules will begin October 15th. The brochure has been printed and mailed to all Brattleboro addresses this week. The website has been updated and the new brochures will be available on the bus October 1st along with poster updates, news releases and informational meetings starting the first week in October.

Current Fleet Overview: Randy stated we have had substantial fleet issues and failures within the last six weeks, stressing the operation. We've had to utilize outside resources for repairs and have required mechanics from the MOOver to help. Our expenses for this year will be extensive as we catch up on repairs. To date we have brought all but one of the out of service buses back into service. David Meeks will have a technical advisor role once the new mechanic is hired within the next few weeks. We will adopt a new preventive maintenance program with his assistance. Most of the Current's fleet was purchased before the merger. Randy reviewed the status of the fleet, indicating that a high percentage has met its useful life and needs to be replaced, while some have a long way to go but are experiencing many high cost failures such as engine, transmission, electrical, and air conditioning. VTrans is entertaining assisting us with some of the high repair cost. Randy also identified other capital items needed based on unforeseen issues during our grant process and the increased Brattleboro service. They have asked SEVT to request this need in a separate document. These items include additional cost for high end repairs, additional towing, shop tools, shop equipment, waste oil furnace, and additional Brattleboro operations funding due to new routes.

Stratton and Okemo Update: Ted Reeves will no longer be working for Okemo since the Vail purchase. He was instrumental in supporting our service and helped open the door to new service at Okemo. Since the purchase of Okemo, conversations have been put on hold. We are hoping to resume the conversation at a later date for the next season. We have established contact with Stratton's Seth Boyd. We had a meeting recently at the MOOver with him and he was encouraged by the Mount Snow model. Stratton is investing in housing to support their employment crisis. Randy suggested a model like Mount Snow by investing in transit to bus employees in from Route 30. This would better serve the staff and possibly be open to the public. The meeting was positive, and we will be following up for continued discussion this month.

Earmark update: Randy reviewed the options provided by Steve Horton to complete the building renovations and draw down the Earmark. Randy is requesting the Board vote on the options provided. We have roughly \$444,000 remaining in federal funds of which require an \$111,000 match for a total of \$556,000 in funds to work with. We are expecting that the state will supply the match. Options #1 Bus Wash \$496,693, Option #2 New Bay for Parking \$750,000, Option #3 Office Renovation \$9,500. Randy stated at the last meeting the Board voted to approve Option #3 but tied on Option #1. Randy presented a video comparing both bus washes. Randy would like the Board to vote on option #1 and for us to solicit the state and request the extra funds. Once the Board votes Randy would have to present to VTrans for approval. **Motion 2:** Marco motioned to continue with Option #1 pending approval from the state and the states commitment to local funds for match funding. Joel seconded. Motion passed 8-0.

Fundraising update: Randy presented the Board an outline of fundraising task. Each task is assigned to an employee with a due date. Task completion ranges October thru November. We will provide an update at the next meeting. Board members recommended soliciting businesses for donations.

E&D Update: Randy updated the Board on our E&D partner contracts and funding. A typical funding split is 80% grant funding and 20 % match from our partners. Partners in the past have been allowed to use volunteer hours as in-kind to help match the grant and decrease the amount of cash they need to pay. This draws the grant down faster, potentially putting the service at risk or the company in a deficit if we overspend the grant. Last year the in-kind exceeded 13% of the match causing a deficit in the SEVT budget of \$17,000. We are in the process of finalizing the contracts with the partners. It will be noted that SEVT will no longer be able to run a deficit, and that volunteer in-kind will be used at a minimum and partners will need to either apply more cash or cut service if grant funds run out and VTrans is unable to provide additional grant funds.

Promoting the bus: Wendy would like to publicize the bus in the *Reformer*. She would like to ride the 53 bus from her home in Brattleboro to her work in Bellows Falls. Along the hour-long trip maybe a member of the press could ride along to interview the driver and see how easy it is to ride. While doing that she can identify the fact that while she can get there she can't get back home do to length of service, it stops too early. Wendy said, "it's a balance between encouraging people to ride the bus and letting them know that we need more funding". This will get people to start thinking about the bus and use it. Chip felt that this was inappropriate, and it would be identified as a

publicity stunt that may backfire. “This is not a good thing for a Board member to pull a stunt like this”, Chip said. A member of the public who uses the bus regularly may be a better idea, since they ride the bus and actually use it, said Chip. Board members agreed with the idea but recommended the promotion be done by an actual rider who may be willing to do the interview. Wendy said her motive is just to get people to ride the bus, and that this is not a stunt. Members also thought the idea of highlighting that Board members ride out of choice was a good idea.

Company Updates: Randy highlighted the work that has been done on the fleet since our fleet mechanic left. He indicated there may be a need for additional funds to maintain and clean up the rust of the older busses with high miles. The staff at the MOOver have re-skinned two of the Current busses by eliminating the rust and vinyling over the old graphics and replacing them with new ones. The result is spectacular, creating a new clean looking bus.

Randy has been asked to speak at the National Rural Transit Conference this October. The topic is mergers. We were the subject of a national study last summer, and they asked us to be on a panel at the conference in October.

Marco left the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Board Member Comments: Joel wanted to know what a planning commission can do to support public transit. Randy recommended writing Barb Donovan at VTrans for support first and second stating your commitment to public transit in the town plan.

Future Agenda Items: Tim will available for the Board to review one of two types of planning efforts - Short Range Transit Plan and/or Long-Range Capital Plan.

Executive Session: Motion 3: Wendy made the motion to go into executive session at 7:35 and excused all present except Board members. Jon seconded. Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.