



Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2020

Meeting held by Video Conference

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/991579093>

United States: +1 (408) 650-3123

One-touch: <tel:+14086503123,991579093#> Access Code: 991-579-093

4:00 PM

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Greg Tansley called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.
2. **Members present on video/ call:** Greg Tansley, Alan Minthorn, Curt Koehler, Bette Brunswick, Doris Ortiz, Jessa Berna

Staff: Tony Scavuzzo, Craig Pendleton, Anne Austin, Doug Morison, Tammy Devine

3. **Public Comment** - No public comment at this time.
4. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes** –

Motion by Curt Koehler to approve the September 10, 2020 meeting minutes. Seconded by Alan Minthorn. No discussion. Vote by roll call. Alan Minthorn, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Jessa Berna, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Alan Minthorn to approve the September 24, 2020 meeting minutes. Seconded by Doris Ortiz. No discussion. Vote by roll call. Alan Minthorn, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Jessa Berna, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

5. **Financials** – Finance Manager, Doug Morison reviewed the financials as of September 30, 2020:

It is early in the fiscal year and as we are 25% through the twelve-month year, we are tracking approximately 25% of the way through our expense budget and revenue budgets. This year has been extraordinarily unique due to COVID and that continues to be the case as with the exception of Trolley season, we have not been collecting fares. As a result, Fare revenue for FY 21 is at \$49k compared to \$222k the previous year at this time. We recognized \$6k in Fare Revenue from the UNE contract that was signed and payment received. In October, we started collecting fares for the first time since the COVID crisis started. Using the Automated Fare Payment system that also kicked off on October 1, we

are able to collect fares with reduced contact of cash and also offer the benefits of capping the fares for the frequent users of transit services.

As a result of this drop in Fare Revenue, Fare revenue has fallen from 18% of our revenue at this time last year to 5%. Grant revenue has increased has been used to cover the remaining expenses, going from 31% of our overall revenue picture to 44%. This increase in Grant Revenue is the big story to be discussed as it promises to help strengthen the financial position of Transit.

Through July and August, and now September, we have not had to use the municipal contribution to fund operations. The Rural routes are being funded at 100% the Rural Cares Act leaving the regular 5311 funding untouched and available to use after Rural Cares funds are used up. There is a strong likely hood that these funds will last for at least a full year. The Urban Routes have also been funded at 100%. We are using the regular 5307 funds for the first 50% and the Cares Act Phase I and Phase II have been sufficient to cover the remaining portions up to this date. While we had originally anticipated that operations would not need to tap into Municipal Contributions for at least 10 months, we see the margin that is covered by the CARES act decreasing as PACTS becomes more sophisticated in its projections.

Our Personnel expenses are being closely monitored and we are currently at 22% of budget rather than 25% because we had 2 open positions that have not been filled at this time. This is a money savings and we are hoping to use those funds for other personnel costs, possibly for raises. Fuel costs have also been less than originally budgeted due to using only 1 bus on the Zoom line, and reduced hours and Sunday, as well as keeping the Maroon line on hold until further notice. Fuel costs are only 18% of budget. Other Costs are a bit higher than 25% at 29%. This might be partially explained by some costs being front loaded to the beginning of the year. Insurances often have a larger first payment required and Audit services are all used during the first quarter of the year.

We took the delivery of 2 coaches in October, and the \$1,045,460 grant has been used to drawdown 80% of the overall cost, and the remaining 20% was funded by the restricted balance. There will be some additional fit out costs that will be drawn down in the next 30 days or so and that should see the completion of that grant.

There was a question on the funding of the Planning component of the LONO Electric Bus grant. The original grant was written so that the planning and grant management component of the grant would be 100% funded by FTA, with Training expenses being 100% funded by local dollars. This was unusual in that typically; we would not be able to exceed the 80% requirement of FTA funding. This question was raised to our FTA Region 1 rep, and the decision was rendered in our favor.

In summary, we continue to expect that with careful husbanding of our financial resources, along with the assistance from the CARES act funding, Transit can hope to complete the year with a more solid financial position.

Approval of the financials –

Motion by Alan Minthorn to accept the financial reports as presented. Seconded by Curt Koehler. No discussion. Vote by roll call. Alan Mintorn, Jessa Berna, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

6. **Executive Director’s Presentation** – Executive Director Tony Scavuzzo presented via shared screen.

COVID-19 Response –

- Returning Zoom Express to full service on November 2.
- Keep ME Healthy/City of Saco grant for public education.
- Replaced custodial staff member, October 19 start date.
- Had a few bus incidents regarding mask wearing, police involvement.
- UV upgrade for Pomerleau office ventilation system complete.
- Continuing to leverage CARES Act support monthly. Doug/Tony completed Phase III projections (through 2022) for PACTS allocations. Our goal is to be back to pre-pandemic fare recovery levels by then and have our service meet our ability to financially support the “new normal”.
- All on board safety protocols still in place.

COVID-19 Response – Ridership update (Daily Averages thru September)

	Pre-COVID 19	Post COVID-19	Delta	Last 2 weeks	Delta	High
Zoom Express	90	14	(-84%)	16	(-84%)	22
Local Urban	294	162	(-45%)	190	(-35%)	256
Portland Intercity	78	62	(-21%)	65	(-17%)	98

- Total ridership back to 68% of expected (last 2 weeks)
- Fare Collection began October 1

Progress Update

- 2016 & 2019 Triennial review responses are still in process at FTA.
- Google Transit process continuing. Entering “sandbox” testing stage.
- Fuel bids out to RFP. Anticipating 1/3 less than last year (\$2.02).
- Partnering with Bonney Staffing to begin evolving Customer Service operation.
- Continuing “uniform” progress toward it being standard wear.
- American flag on jackets – question for Committee.

Project Update

- Electronic Fare collection – October 1 launched. Public facing fare collection gone well. Some configuration challenges lingering we are working on. Public seemed ready.

- New Zoom coaches – Delivered October 14. Maintenance and Operator training taking place. Open house event next week for Committee/stakeholders.
- New Trolleys – HGAC buying program being leveraged. Chance of new trolleys for next season. All funding secured.
- Electric buses – Delivery date November 2021. Configuration and Infrastructure discussions ongoing. Site visit revealed charging infrastructure in front of STC is impractical.

Future funding ladder proposed. Municipal contribution is currently \$165,000.

Proposing : FY 2022 - \$200,000

FY 2023 - \$220,000

FY 2024 - \$240,000

Downtown Circulator

- Still waiting on November funding support decisions at state level before beginning to present to stakeholders (UNE, Cities of Biddeford and Saco).
- Want to involve SMPDC for help in finalizing messaging and thoughts.
- Discussed free model internally. We have seen people riding during pandemic because of free model and leaving once fares began to be collected again.
- Hoping for more Committee discussion.
- Other topics for discussion:
 - Stops only, not free “hailing” of circulator.
 - Ensuring new trolleys have efficient space for advertising.
 - Some guidelines for riding.
 - A name for the service.

Proposed Circulator Route

- Will service major downtown destinations including both City Halls, Saco Transportation Center, Shaw’s Plaza, Mill district and all major downtown points of interest.
- Service times 6am – 10pm, 7 days per week. 20 minute loops.
- Supporting workforce transportation & congestion mitigation.

Downtown Circulator - UNE

- Students will now get access to the entire downtown areas of both cities.
- Trolley will service UNE 8-10 times per day, every two hours.
- UNE ID swipe is all that is needed to board.
- Alford Forum and Campus Center continue to be stops.
- Will continue to connect to rest of system & Amtrak for trips outside immediate area.

Downtown Circulator – Re-entering loop

- Will re-enter loop from UNE via Jefferson St & Main St in Biddeford.
- This avoids turn logistics and difficult left turns re-entering elsewhere.
- Opportunity to include additional businesses on the route.

Stakeholder New Coach Open House- will be held at the Saco Transportation Center on Thursday, October 29 11am-1pm or Friday, October 30 11am-1pm.

Future strategy discussion - PACTS changes in committee structure and funding framework on the horizon. Could set stage for “consolidation” and us having less say in our funding allocation through PACTS. Committee members discussed the pros and cons of consolidating. Discussion of a possible memorandum of understanding between transit agencies in the southern region/York County. To be discussed in more detail at a future meeting and/or summit.

Next time:

- Early December meeting, Dec. 3, 2020.
- Biddeford/Saco TOD presentation (GPCOG)
- Annual financial audit presentation
- Transit Tomorrow findings
- Early 2021 “Summit”

7. **Discussion/Approval of flag operator jacket** – Some bus operators are requesting to have a patch of the American flag added to the company winter jacket. Committee discussed at length. There were questions if all drivers were in favor of this. There was concern about why the drivers were asking for this and some concern over the current climate in the country. There was a suggestion to allow a pin on the lapel. Some members did not agree with the pin.

Motion by Alan Minthorn to add one or two eyelets to the left lapel to accommodate one or two pins of choice for the driver to personalize their jacket under the supervision of the Executive Director as to the appropriateness of the additions.

Discussion: There was concern over subjective approval. Some members felt hesitant and they could not second the motion. Motion died. Indication is the Committee is not in favor of having any flag on the jackets or customization of the uniform.

8. **Discussion/Approval of gift cards for employees** – We would like to give each employee (not including seasonal employees) a \$50 gift card for Thanksgiving to show appreciation for all the hard work through these difficult times. Basic gift cards would be given such as a Visa gift card as to not angle toward one particular brand or store. The cost would be in the \$2,000 range. It would be part of our own institutional costs/municipal contributions. All Committee members were in favor and support this purchase.
9. **Discussion/Approval of the updated BSOOB Transit Employee Handbook, October 2020** – The handbook was updated with a policy regarding an employee running for partisan political office. This was integrated into the handbook.

Motion by Doris Ortiz to approve the updated BSOOB Transit Employee Handbook October 2020 as is. Seconded by Curt Koehler. No discussion. Vote by roll call. Alan Mintorn, Jessa Berna, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

10. **Executive Session – 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(A) – Personnel matter- Executive Director Employment Contract**

Motion to enter into Executive Session under 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(A) – Personnel matter by Alan Minthorn. Seconded by Curt Koehler. Vote by roll call. Alan Mintorn, Jessa Berna, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

****** Entered Executive Session at 5:27pm******

Motion to come out of Executive Session by Doris Ortiz. Seconded by Bette Brunswick. Vote by roll call. Alan Mintorn, Jessa Berna, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

****** Exited Executive Session at 5:40pm******

Motion by Doris Ortiz to extend the Executive Director, Tony Scavuzzo's current contract under the same terms it is currently under for the next six months with the intent to perform an evaluation of Executive Director Tony Scavuzzo with some input from other employees in the organization after the holidays. Seconded by Bette Brunswick. No further discussion. Vote by roll call. Alan Mintorn, Jessa Berna, Curt Koehler, Doris Ortiz, Bette Brunswick were all in favor. Passed unanimously.

11. **Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by:
Anne Austin