

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
April 8, 2022
91 North Main Street, Middletown, CT and
via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was established and in attendance included: Peter Bierrie (left at 10 a.m.), John Hall, Leslie Strauss, Charlie Norz, Tim Griswold, James Irish, Karl Kilduff, David Lahm, Joan Gay, Laura Francis and Joe Samolis.

Absent: Angus McDonald

Also in attendance: Christina Denison, Joe Comerford, Lisa Gibson, Jared, Whitcomb, Maria Creel, Halyna Famiglietti, Sam Gold, and Peggy Lyons.

Leslie welcomed new board member James Irish, Middlefield's representative.

VISITOR COMMENTS – Peggy Lyons reported that the Town of Madison is interested in joining the District.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the minutes from the 3/11/22 Board meeting. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the ETC Committee Minutes of 3/22/22. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS – None.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Finance Committee lacked a quorum this month.

Charlie Norz reported:

- The District will need to designate a new bank due to the merger/transition. Will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ETD/MAT Expansion Committee

Joan reported:

- Fare Study:
 - Vendor selected and scope being developed.
 - Requested DOT representation on the committee.
- HR Study:

- More than one proposal received for consultant
- Proposals currently under review
- Marketing/Branding Study:
 - Deadline extended due to large number of questions received.
- Facilities:
 - Work on-going on shoreline site, Middletown terminal and electrification project.

Laura Francis reported that much of the merger plan has been implemented. Additional projects will need discussion/approval by the entire ETD Board. She encouraged board members to consider when an appropriate time would be to disband the Expansion Committee.

David Lahm made a motion to accept the ETD/MAT Expansion Committee Report as presented. James Irish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee – No report.

Marketing Committee

Leslie reported:

- Four proposals were received for the Marketing/Branding study – ZOOM interviews were conducted with 2 consultants. The District is in need of a new logo, name, colors, etc. Proposals will be forwarded to all Board members.
- Board members expressed appreciation to staff relative to the “Dump the Pump” campaign. This program allows for 3 months of free fares beginning 4/1 through 6/30. A raffle is available for an additional month of free fares.
- The District was featured in the DOTs recent pod cast.
- The Trip Planner software is now working in both Middletown and 9TT.
- The Park Connect brochure is currently being developed/printed.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Marketing Committee report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Committee

Joan reported that the Committee determined that a joint Legislative and First Selectmen breakfast was appropriate as opposed to holding two separate events. An event will be scheduled sometime in June (tentatively).

As reported at the 3/11/22 meeting, the District submitted testimony on Bill 5256 (Consolidation of Transit Districts). The District’s testimony stated that the District opposes this bill and feels that consolidation of districts should not be a foregone conclusion as it may not be the “right fit” for all. Unfortunately, the final Bill includes text stating that any districts serving under 100,000 individuals would be penalized by the DOT if they do not consolidate. The District feels that the DOT should have studied the matter further.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Legislative Committee Report as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Transit Advisory Committee – None.

Service Study Committee – None.

Nominating Committee – None.

Personnel Committee – None.

COG Update

Sam Gold reported:

- The RiverCOG Executive Committee approved a Transit Planner position. This individual, when hired, will work initially on ETD projects associated with the merger, the Transit Study and other ETD projects. Joe Comerford will be involved in the hiring process.
- The funding mechanism for the Transit Planner is being determined. The next contract with DOT, starting July 2023, may include funding for this position. Funding from now until 2023 is to be determined (combination ETD and COG funds).
- Leslie clarified that the Transit Planner would be on the staff of the COG; not ETD.
- Sam attended a workshop with Senators Murphy and Blumenthal relative to “earmarks”. Potential project for an “earmark” would be a Shoreline facility. Joe reported that we would have to involve DOT for their support and in addition, matching funds (20%) are also required for earmarks.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Joe reported:

- CTDOT has completed scope with VHB to look at improving bus parking at the Middletown passenger terminal, expect report in 30 days
- RiverCOG approved the shared planner position and is advertising for candidates
- Met with CTDOT to present FFY2022 capital request; apportionment tables were published this week so we should receive split agreements in late May
- Agreed with CTDOT on combined TODs for SFY2023, will reduce the total number of operating grant programs
- Received new supplemental agreement from CTDOT
- Visited CTTransit to see electric buses; delivery expected in 2024
- Engaged new IT contractor to merge the MAT and ETD networks, saving about \$40,000 annually
- Fare free promotion began April 1 and runs through June 30
- Reviewing radio build week of April 26th
- A scaled down ParkConneCT will run again for 2022 beginning Memorial Day

As previously reported, the Town of Chester is interested in an Extra Mile/Micro Transit service program to potentially provide transportation from the marinas to the Town Center and Deep River. The costs associated with this program would be \$20,000 (\$10,000 from the Town and \$10,000 provided by 9TT). Towns were encouraged to let Joe know if they have an interest in a similar program.

Laura Francis expressed appreciation to the staff for their outstanding work relative to the merger. She recommended the District begin advertising the District in their communities. She invited the District to provide a bus and attend Durham’s Memorial Day Parade, Farmer’s Markets and other town events.

Laura Francis made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s Report. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Bank Statements, Cash Flow Forecast, and Budget vs. Actual reports, including Middletown, were included in Board packet and "screen shared". No issues reported. Halyna was available to address concerns/questions from Board members.

John Hall made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report as presented. Karl Kilduff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jared reported that ETD office facilitates ADA and Dial a Ride dispatch and Middletown facilitates the Fixed Route dispatch.

Additional drivers have been hired and the District is currently interested in hiring seasonal drivers for the Park Connect program

Ridership report included in the Board packet and screen shared; numbers continue to increase but not yet back to pre-Pandemic numbers.

David Lahm made a motion to accept the Operations Director's Report. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joe reported that the recently hired mechanic accepted an offer elsewhere. The position is posted.

Joe reported that Pat Hevrin and the maintenance department have improved the fleet tremendously and have been able to maintain the ten smaller buses in Middletown that were purchased at the same time. These vehicles are currently well beyond their useful life. Replacements have been ordered but there is no delivery date yet scheduled. Having the same "branding" on the buses will allow them to be "shifted" from one district to another.

Laura Francis made a motion to accept the Maintenance Director's Report as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Joe reported that Maria Creel has resigned. Chris Dennison will move into the role of Administrative Assistant/ADA Assessor.

By-laws

A copy of the By-Laws for the Expanded Estuary Transit District, developed by the ETC Committee, was included in the Board's packet.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the By-Laws as presented. Laura Francis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: The Director's Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form should be filled out by Board members and returned to ETD.

Fare Study Authorization

A copy of the Fare Study Authorization was included in the Board's packet.

Joan Gay made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that Hatch LTK be awarded the bid to review all current procedures and processes related to fare collection and recommend fares, fare collection technology and inter-operability procedures and technology with connecting transit systems;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the ETD to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents with Hatch LTK in an amount not to exceed \$110,000.

Laura Francis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HR Study Authorization

A copy of the HR Study Authorization was included in the Board's packet.

Joe Samolis made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that Tangible Analytics Consulting, LLC be awarded the bid to review all current procedures and processes related to human resources and recommend and implement policies and procedures for the new larger, combined district that are consistent with all applicable laws and regulations;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the ETD to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents with Tangible Analytics Consulting, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$75,000.

Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Property Transfer Resolution

A copy of the Property Transfer Resolution was included in the Board's packet.

Joan Gay made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to accept the transfer and conveyance of the ownership and management of the property from MTD to ETD pursuant to the Federal Transit Act (FTA Circular 5010.1E).

Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Authorization to Execute MOU with Teamsters Local 671

Joe Comerford reported that the Teamsters agreed to do a MOU replacing MAT as the employer with ETD. The District's labor attorney developed an MOU accordingly.

Tim Griswold made a motion to authorize Joe Comerford to execute an MOU with the Teamsters Local 671. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

Joan Gay made a motion to add to the agenda the Board Operations Policy. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board Operations Policy was included in the Board's packet (part of the By-laws information).

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Board Operations Policies as presented. Laura Francis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Leslie reported that negotiations with First Transit are on-going and include amended language relative to the merger of MAT and ETD. We are awaiting First Transit's legal department feedback.

CHAIR COMMENTS

The Board briefly discussed the protocol for board member absence at two consecutive meetings. Page 44 of the Board Operations Policies document states: "if a Director fails to attend two or more consecutive regular board meetings, the Transit District shall notify that Director's CEO in writing with copy to the Director concerning their continued absences".

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

Next Meeting – May 13, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Joan Gay made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski, Clerk