Minutes of the October 15,2024 Southeast Vermont Transit Board of Directors Meeting

Via Video

October 15, 2024 10:00 am

Seth Boyd called the meeting to order at 10:01am. Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were as follows:

**Board Members:**

Randy Capitani

Chris Campany

Jason Rasmussen

Dan Thoemke

Seth Boyd

**Members of the Public:** None

**Staff Present:**

Randy Schoonmaker, CEO, SEVT

Christine Howe, General Manager, SEVT

Keith Johnson, Finance Manager, SEVT

**Invited Guests:**

None

**Public Input: None**

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Add strategic and succession plans under Board assessment

**Review minutes of September 17th:** Reviewed with no changes

**Ridership:** Christine presented ridership as of October 6th. Rockingham fixed routes are up except for Route 57 which is off slightly. Routes 71 and 72 are gaining on total 70’s routes’ ridership when there were three routes. Rockingham fixed routes are up 31%. Our demand response bus and van routes are flat. The volunteers are down by 20% but total Rockingham is up 14%. Seth asked about the decrease in volunteer rides. Christine explained that the Medicaid rides are currently down by about two hundred rides a week. The O & D trips have increased but not the volume if we had all the Medicaid trips as well. The Wilmington fixed route is up 26%, and the demand response in Wilmington is up 44%. The total company is up 14%. The Stratton Manchester route begins November 11, Okemo December 23, and the Wilmington winter route begins Thanksgiving week.

**Financials:** Keith presented the financials. Medicaid income is $110,000 behind the budget as VPTA is behind in payments. Some of the losses are also because of the drop in service for Medicaid but we will also realize savings in the expenses. We are tracking income differently on the BVA. In years past we would track revenue as pre-paids, and at the end of year we would true up our budget. This year we are tracking our grants as we spend the grants month to month. Keith walked through each grant spending year to date. Overall income is $105,000 below budget year to date. The expenses show some of the savings from the Medicaid ridership dip. Note the increase in the expense in insurance due to auto liability increase. This occurred to all providers in the state. We are $140,000 ahead of budget on expenses. We are showing a $31,000 surplus relative to budget. Randy C asked what the plan was for health insurance for renewal since BCBS increase was so high. Keith explained we are going back to MVP that has an increased HRA but our HRA experience equates to the same coverage to employees and only generates an 8.5% increase. Randy C asked if the staff is concerned about leaving BCBS. Keith explained we just made the decision and have not rolled out to the staff. Keith explained we had MVP prior and had a great experience therefore we do not anticipate any employee concerns.

**Board Training, Strategic Planning and self-assessment:** Randy S reviewed the self-assessment results but are still missing three board members’ assessments. He discussed the strongly disagree or strongly agree topics. Seth asked Randy S to give more time for more Board members to send assessments in. At the last meeting we discussed sending the Strategic Plan in word version for Board members to make comments on and send them back. Randy S also included the Succession Plans as well. He explained we have two succession plans, one for emergency situations and one regular succession plan. Seth suggested that we work on the Strategic Plan either as a Board or based on a committee. Jason felt the committee was probably best. Seth agreed and asked for volunteers for the committee. Jason and Seth will be on the committee and Chris offered to help but cautioned that his plate is full so it would depend on when meetings happen. Randy S will send a Doodle Poll for a committee meeting on either Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

**Route 57 Change:** Randy S explained we are requesting the change for the winter season on the weekends. The ridership is down, and several regular riders have gotten cars and there is a facility that is closed and therefore loss of ridership. The 57 used to go back and forth once in the morning and once in evening with very low ridership. On weekends the proposal would be to run once up to Ludlow using the Route 61 bus and again at the end for the day leave Ludlow using the same bus. Therefore, we would still offer the service for employees to and from Ludlow while saving expenses and still offering service. VTrans has supported this. We would need a Board vote today to go to the public for comment to make the change. Seth asked if we anticipate negative feedback from the public. Randy S noted we do not expect any concerns on this route. We originally formed these hours on the weekend for Okemo employees, however now those employees are living in Rutland so there has been a shift. **Motion 1: Randy C moved to support changes as presented, Dan seconded. Jason asked to clarify that the motion is to advise the public. Randy S stated we post and advertise this change and offer a public meeting if requested. Motion passed 5-0**

**FY26 Windsor Microtransit Funding:** Randy S discussed with VTrans the state match funding for microtransit programs including Windsor. He is going to ask Windsor for $20,000 and will meet with Tom Marsh and partners in Windsor to ask for guidance on how to get as much local funding as we can. Ross cannot commit in either way for any State match for Windsor for next year. Worse case if we do not get all the 20% match we would discuss decreasing the hours of service. Last year we used $33,000 of our own funds to cover the cost of the service. Randy C asked if there are other large businesses we can go to for funding requests. Randy S explained we have a good partner network, but they are mostly human service agencies, but we will look at anything. Seth asked in the Mt Ascutney Hospital was able to help more there. Randy S is going to ask them, but they are small and not sure how much money they have to help. Jason asked when this is needed. Randy S said the start of FY26, so July of 2025. Randy S said we are in the same funding situation in Brattleboro, but they have more robust human service funding and an application for the Town’s Human Service Fund has already been filled out. We are hopeful that the Brattleboro local match is covered for next year. Randy S gave a summary of other funding we are seeking, including foundation monies and more in town appropriations. Seth asked if there is help needed from the Board. Randy S explained he will work with Sue for Brattleboro and will call for Board help when needed as we work through the process. Chris warned the Board that some of these towns are going to be struggling from the flooding over the summer so some funding from these towns may not be able to support the additional funding requests. Jason said he could help Randy S if he had specific towns he would like information about.

**Other Business:** Annual Meeting date is needed at least 30 days prior for posting. **Motion 2: Randy C moved for the annual meeting date on November 19th, Dan second. Motion Passed 5-0**

**Executive Session: None needed**

**Motion to adjourn by Chris seconded by Seth adjourned at 10:57 am**