

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ETD MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING
Friday, August 9, 2024
91 N. Main Street, Middletown, CT and
Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. In attendance included: Charlie Norz (ZOOM), Leslie Strauss, (ZOOM), Tim Griswold, John Hall (ZOOM), Kathryn Russell (ZOOM), David Lahm (ZOOM), Joan Gay, (ZOOM), Christine Marques, Michelle Benivegna (ZOOM), Brendan Rea (ZOOM) arrived at 9:14 a.m., and Beverly Lawrence (ZOOM), arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Guests: Cathy Gross, DOT, Sara Radacsi, DOT

Staff: Chris Dennison, Brendan Geraghty, Joe Comerford, Halyna Famiglietti, Mutez Ennab

VISITOR COMMENTS – None.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

John Hall made a motion to accept the minutes of the 6/14/24 Board meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the 6/14/24 Expansion Committee meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes of the 6/21/24 Legislative Committee meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously,

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes of the 6/6/24 Facilities meeting as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

COMMUNICATIONS

A letter received from David Cox, Town Manager, East Hampton, was included in the Board’s packet. East Hampton’s Town Council accepted the District’s invitation to join River Valley Transit.

TREASURER’S REPORT – No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee – The minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting were included in the Board’s packet. Joan Gay, Chairman, updated the Board on the Facilities initiatives including

DOT update, Facilities update, both Middletown and Shoreline, electrification, the Bus Shelter program and the Middletown Terminal renovation project. Joan was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Facilities Report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee

A quorum could not be established at the last Finance Committee meeting, however, Charlie Norz, Chairman reported that the financials of the District remain healthy. We are in receipt of a full year of financial data as a “combined” District.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Finance Committee Report as presented. Kathryn Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Committee

The consultant’s Marketing initiatives are on-going, i.e. social media, brochures, etc. Board members were encouraged to distribute the new brochures throughout towns.

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

Legislative Committee

The minutes of the Legislative Committee meeting were included in the Board’s packet. Joan Gay, Chairman, updated the Board on the Legislative initiatives including: the 2024 Legislative Session and a summary of Bills from past sessions that are still of concern. Bills of concern include: Public Act 22-40 Freezes Transit District funding, Public Act 22-25 prevents State from procuring diesel-fuel buses, Fare-Free Public Bus Transportation seeks to make fare-free public bus transportation permanent for residents of the State. The role of the CT Association for Community Transportation lobbyists relative to same was discussed.

Joan was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

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

Transit Advisory Committee -

Tim Griswold reported on initiatives of the Transit Advisory Committee including the Passio system equipment (vehicle location) installation, Smart Grant (used for tap and go fare), Service Expansion review (all new services have been well received), Park Connect summer program and bus shelter project.

Tim was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Transit Advisory Committee Report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Expansion Committee – Tim reported:

- As noted above, East Hampton has joined the District.
- Portland requested a sample Resolution to be considered by the Town.

The Committee is working on analyzing an appropriate fee structure as towns join the District.

Kathryn Russell made a motion to accept the Expansion Report as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee

All existing incumbents were interested in serving another term. The Nominating Committee recommends the following:

Leslie Strauss – Chairman, Joan Gay, Vice Chairman, Tim Griswold, Secretary and Charlie Norz, Treasurer.

Leslie Strauss made a motion to accept the Slate as proposed by the Nominating Committee. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Committee – No report.

COG Update – Brendan reported on COG initiatives as follows:

- TOD (THRIVE) Grant work is on-going (Transit Oriented Grant)
- COG will apply for a Waste Grant that explores alternate fuels, i.e. converting food waste into propane.

Brendan was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the COG Update as presented. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joe reported:

- Bus project – first electric buses currently being road tested.
 - Anticipated arrival at the District – September
 - Work on-going relative to charging electric buses.
 - The District is hosting training for First Responders (response to electrical fires is challenging). All local Fire Departments invited.
- He attended a DOT staff meeting related to Signal Preemption Technology – this technology would allow for extended green lights if a bus is running behind schedule or during busy times.
 - Joe will speak to the DOT about potential costs to the District for use of this technology.

- Taxi Voucher Program – will award bid to a different contractor – the previous contractor cannot meet the needs of the District.
 - Taxi company will also supplement ADA rides.

John Hall made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT PLANNERS REPORT

Brendan reported on the following:

- Xtra Mile Expansion
- Fixed Route Expansion
- Smart Grant
- Bus Shelter Project
- Park Connect Program

Brendan was available to address questions/comments posed by board members

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Transit Planner’s Report as presented. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Copies of the financial reports were included in the Board packet and screenshared.

Halyna provided an overview of the financial documents and reported that the Auditor has reviewed documents and will return when the FY books are “closed”. It is anticipated that the Audit will be completed on time.

The District received a resignation from the Accounts Payable staff member. Several resumes for the position were received and the new staff person is currently being trained.

Halyna was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Finance Director’s Report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ridership figures were included in the Board packet. Brendan provided data on individual routes and was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Operations Director’s Report as presented. Kathryn Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – No report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Labor Contract Negotiations

Charlie Norz made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:20 a.m. to discuss labor contract

negotiations. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Joe Comerford was invited into the Executive Session.

Regular session resumed at 10:54 p.m. No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Assignments

Each Board member is obligated to serve on at least 1 committee. Leslie encouraged board members to reach out to her for committee assignment.

Conflict of Interest Forms

Each Board member should return their Conflict-of-Interest form to Chris Dennison as soon as possible.

DOT Authorizing Resolution

John Hall made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Chairperson, Leslie B. Strauss, and/or in her absence or inability to act, the Vice Chairperson, Joan Gay, having been since August 9, 2024, are, hereby authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to obtain funds from the Connecticut DOT.

Christine Marques seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AAA Authorizing Resolution

John Hall made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, and/or in his absence or inability to act, the Chairperson, Leslie B. Strauss, are hereby authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to obtain funds from the Senior Resources Agency on Aging.

Kathryn Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Emergency Repair of Cooling System Authorizing Resolution

Joan Gay made the following motion:

WHEREAS the HVAC system for 91 N. Main Street, Middletown, which houses the administrative offices and maintenance facility has failed; and

WHEREAS, this system failure affects the health, safety and work environment of employees, in addition to equipment; and

WHEREAS the conditions stated above are urgent and represent compelling reasons to allow ETD to enter a contract to address these repairs; and

WHEREAS the Connecticut DOT and the FTA approved waiving ETD's purchasing policy for a formal procurement for purchases equal to or greater than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), in order to cause the necessary repairs to be made in an expeditious manner; and

WHEREAS, Modern Mechanical Services, LLC was named the lowest, responsive and responsible Bidder for the aforementioned tasks;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors waives the requirement for a formal procurement for the repair of the HVAC system at 91 N. Main Street, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the ETD to award the winning bid and sign a contract with Modern Mechanical Services, LLC for the aforementioned tasks for ETD, in an amount not to exceed sixty-one thousand two hundred fifty-five dollars (\$61,255.00).

Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bus Purchase Authorizing Resolution

Charlie Norz made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the ETD to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to purchase up to four (4) body-on-chassis buses for the ETD from the Greater Hartford Transit District or Greater New Haven Transit District joint bus procurement contracts in an amount not to exceed \$700,000.00.

Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Labor Contract Resolution

John Hall made the following motion:

WHEREAS there exists a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the ETD and Teamster's Local 671 for all full-time and part-time bus drivers and Paratransit van drivers employed by ETD's Middletown division which expires 12/31/25;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of ETD to negotiate and execute an extension of the aforementioned collective bargaining agreement.

Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Dissolution of MTD

Christine Marques will give the Middletown Mayor a copy of a sample Resolution relative to dissolving MTD. The District's attorney recommends this course of action as the most expedient way to dissolve MTD.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Leslie welcomed the town of East Hampton to the District.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Leslie Strauss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 a.m. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – October 11, 2024 - 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk