

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT
ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026 at 11:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Joan Gay, Chair, at 11:34 A.M.

ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Joan Gay, Christine Marques, and Michael Pelton

Also in attendance:

Staff: Joe Comerford, Christina Denison, Brendan Geraghty

Guests: Leslie Strauss, Board Chair

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

Chair Gay provided copies of Written Testimony on the Department of Transportation Budget and the transportation portion of the Governor's budget.

Joe Comerford recently presented testimony to the Joint Appropriations Committee regarding the DOT budget. He reported:

- The Governor's budget includes \$9.3 million for bus operations which falls short of the \$11 million requested by DOT to continue existing services
- No funding for micortransit is included in the budget

MICROTRANSIT/EXTRA MILE

Chair Gay provided copies of Proposed Bill No. 9, Proposed Bill 5100 and the Microtransit Pilot Program map.

Comerford reported:

- Funding for the microtransit pilot program ends on June 30, 2026
- \$10 million is needed to fund the microtransit program throughout the State
- The program has received strong legislative support, including the entire Democratic caucus and representatives from New Haven and surrounding areas, in the form of Proposed Bill No. 9 and Proposed Bill 5100
- There are ongoing efforts to gather written and in-person support for the microtransit/ExtraMile funding from stakeholders, including local officials, residents and students.

- The districts are working with Quinn and Hary to finalize and distribute statewide materials to support microtransit funding and encourage public testimony.
- A public hearing for SB9 is scheduled for February 23.

AFL/CIO PROPOSED BILL

Chair Gay provided copies of the proposed bill.

The committee discussed the proposed AFL-CIO bill on workplace health and safety for transit workers. Comerford expressed concerns that the bill contradicts federal law and does not address local needs. CACT lobbyists are working to determine legislative support of the bill. Comerford will keep the committee informed of the bill's status.

PA 24-5

Chair Gay provided a summary of PA 214-5.

Comerford reported on the impact of PA 24-5 which changed the definition of municipality to exclude transit districts and now requires transit districts to participate in paid family and medical leave. He noted that since the law went into effect, the district has been challenged by significant staffing challenges, with high absenteeism and the need for additional staff to cover routes. Comerford reported that the issue has been discussed with our State representatives but efforts to modify the law have been unsuccessful. He noted that the legislature is not looking to make any exemptions to the policy and the goal is to add all municipalities and state employees as well.

OTHER CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE ISSUES -- NONE

ELIMINATION FO TRANSIT FUNDING IN FEDERAL TRANSIT BILL

Comerford reported that the current federal transportation bill expires at the end of September. He has received communication from the national association that there is a proposal from the administration to remove public transit from the transportation funding in the next reauthorization. The proposal has been met with opposition.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Denison
Clerk