

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ETD MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING
Friday, November 17, 2023
91 N. Main Street, Middletown, CT and
Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. In attendance included: Leslie Strauss, Charlie Norz, Karl Kilduff, Jim Irish, John Hall, David Lahm, Tim Griswold, Angus McDonald (arrived at 9:10 a.m.), Beverly Lawrence, Joan Gay (arrived at 9:30 a.m.) and DG Fitton.

Staff: Chris Denison, Mutez Ennab, Joe Comerford

VISITOR COMMENTS - None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

DG Fitton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of the 10/13/23 Board meeting as presented. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DG Fitton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of the 10/24/23 Facilities Committee meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Fiscal Year 2023 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review final report was included in the Board's packet. As previously reported, the "findings" relative to Maintenance are being addressed.

The District has received the Award Letter regarding Micro Transit. It is anticipated that the programs will begin next Summer.

TREASURER'S REPORT – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Marketing

- Signs are being delivered (trolley, bus stops, Middletown terminal)
- A "logo wrap" will be installed at the terminal.
- On-line marketing/social media contractor will merge all Facebook accounts.
- New website – data indicates riders are using the website.
 - As part of Title 6 requirements, information is also offered in Spanish.
- The Statewide Transit app is well utilized.
 - App may be used to purchase tickets and provides real time live data.
 - The Statewide app allows for seamless transitions/transfers.
- The trolley is currently having the District's "branding" installed as well as the "wood" treatment, cow catcher and cupola.

Jim Irish made a motion to accept the Marketing Committee report as presented. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Facilities

- Angus provided a status report on the Middletown Property and Shoreline property.
 - A survey is necessary in Middletown to determine the property's proximity to the flood zone.
 - The results of said survey will determine if "fill" is necessary.
- Westbrook – test wells and soil testing is complete. The Electrification Study has been received.
 - Discussions are on-going relative to electrification "challenges" including weight capacities resulting from the need for batteries, conversion to "full size" buses or doubling the fleet size to accommodate length of routes.
- Ceiling tiles, lighting and signage have been updated at the Terminal.

Leslie reported that a meeting with the Mayor of Middletown took place and in attendance included Joan, Joe, Beverly, Chris and Leslie. Board members and staff expressed concern about the proposed alternative location (40 Union Street) for the Terminal. The DOT was to complete a study of the Union Street location. If chosen, an additional 5 to 10 years would be added to the timeline to accommodate studies, site plans, etc. In addition, the Mayor was updated on the safety concerns at the existing Terminal. Board and staff members stressed the need to maintain the current facility and acquire adjacent property. Joe continued that the DOT will be reaching out to the adjacent property owner. Joe will meet with the Mayor and DOT on 11/30/23.

DG made a motion to accept the Facilities Report as presented. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joe reported:

- Another mechanic has been hired and will begin duties after Thanksgiving.
- A Christmas Trolley in Middletown will start the weekend after Thanksgiving (Saturday/Sunday only).
- It is anticipated that the new trolley will be running next Summer in Clinton.
- Specs are being finalized for electric charging.
- A timeline for the \$700,000 fixed route expansion is being finalized. Additional drivers will be hired to accommodate the expansion. As required, a Public Hearing will be scheduled and a Marketing Campaign will begin, including social media, etc., at the appropriate time.
- No new information from DOT regarding additional funding for evening and weekend service in Middletown.
- Pursuing funding for additional runs on the Middletown to East Hampton route.
- National Transit Data Base Report, due 10/30 was submitted. The report is required by the FTA/Congress. The report includes data on ridership and expenses. Note that our percentages were "off" because this is the first "combined" year.
- The District continues to hire staff (drivers, dispatchers).
- The District has been selected to participate in a Pilot Program (CT ITMP Smart Grant) to expand options for payment of bus fare. The District will procure technology to test with other CT Transit routes. The results of the pilot program will help the State determine which fare technology to purchase statewide in the future.

DG Fitton made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT PLANNER’S REPORT

Joe reported:

- Brendan is facilitating programs at Wesleyan University. The District partnered with CT Rides for these programs.
- Brendan and staff from the Kennedy Center are meeting with local Senior Centers to outline programs/services, etc.
- Recent route changes (October)- feedback received was overall positive.
 - Previous route concerns in Middletown have been addressed via the route changes.
 - Busses are late less often.
 - Drivers have some time between runs.
 - No negative impact to ridership
 - “Pulsing” in Old Saybrook is going well. Adjustments will be made as necessary.
 - Passio – work is on-going with the vehicle location vendor (installations, kiosks). Passengers are able to receive voice announcements a live updates via their transit apps.
 - Intercity bus proposal is being developed to provide additional access from rural areas into the city (Middletown).
 - Potential options for East Haddam being developed in the event of funding availability.

DG Fitton made a motion to accept the Transit Planner’s Report as presented. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 Meeting Scheule

DG Fitton made a motion to hold 2024 Regular meetings of the Estuary Transit District on the 2nd Friday of every other month beginning at 9 a.m. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

The motion passed with all Board members, with the exception of Beverly Lawrence, voting “aye”.

A “Doodle Poll” will be forwarded to Board members and discussed at the December 2023 Board meeting.

OLD BUSINESS – None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

CHAIR COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

DG Fitton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – 12/8 – 10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski, Clerk