

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ETD BOARD MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING
Friday, October 11, 2024
91 N. Main Street, Middletown, CT with Remote Options

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. In attendance: Michelle Benivegna (ZOOM), Ryan Curley (ZOOM), Joan Gay (ZOOM), Timothy C. Griswold, John Hall (ZOOM), Jim Irish (ZOOM), David Lahm (ZOOM), Christine Marques (ZOOM), Charles Norz (ZOOM), Kathryn Russell and Leslie Strauss

Staff: Joe Comerford, Chris Denison, Mutez Ennab, Halyna Famiglietti, Brendan Geraghty, Lisa Gibson

Guests: Alejandro Almodovar, CTDOT, Transportation Planner; Mikala Ansarra, CTDOT, Transportation Planner; and Catherine Gross, CTDOT, Transportation Planner

Absent: David Cox, DG Fitton, Beverly Lawrence, and Brendan Rae

Strauss welcomed Ryan Curley, Town of Portland, First Selectman to the Board.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS – None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kathryn Russell made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 9, 2024, Board meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 9, 2024, Expansion Committee meeting as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 10, 2024, Transit Advisory Committee meeting as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Strauss made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 12, 2024, Marketing Committee meeting as presented. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

John Hall made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 8, 2024, Facilities Committee meeting as presented. Christine Marques seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Norz made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 9, 2024, Finance Committee meeting as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS

A letter received from Ryan Curley, First Selectman, Portland, was included in the Board's packet. The Town of Portland's Board of Selectmen has accepted the District's invitation to join.

TREASURER'S REPORT – No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee – The minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet. Due to illness of Joan Gay, Chair, Strauss, updated the Board on the Facilities initiatives including CTDOT update, Facilities update, both Middletown and Shoreline, electrification, and the Middletown Terminal renovation project. Strauss and Comerford were available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Hall made a motion to accept the Facilities Report as presented. Marques seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet. Norz, Chairman, reported that the financials of the District remain healthy.

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

Marketing Committee

The minutes of the Marketing Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet.

Strauss reported:

- The consultant's Marketing initiatives are on-going, i.e. social media, brochures, etc.
- The committee will meet on a quarterly basis
- An RFP will be issued for bus stop signs

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

Legislative Committee – No Report.

Transit Advisory Committee -

The minutes of the Transit Advisory Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet.

Griswold reported on:

- Middletown bus shelter program
- Tap and Ride
- Xtra Mile Expansion

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

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

Expansion Committee –

The minutes of the Expansion Committee meeting were included in the Board’s packet

Griswold reported:

- As noted above, Portland has joined the District.
- The Committee continues working on analyzing an appropriate fee structure as towns join the District.

Griswold made a motion to accept the Expansion Report as presented. Brendan Geraghty seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee – No report.

Personnel Committee – No report.

COG Update –Geraghty reported on COG initiatives as follows:

- TOD (THRIVE) Grant work is on-going (Transit Oriented Grant)
- COG has applied for a Waste Grant that explores alternate fuels, i.e. converting food waste into propane and is awaiting feedback.
- Central CT LOOP Study which would link the Airline bike trail to Meriden through Middletown, incorporating the Arrigoni Bridge and the Mattabasset trolley trail.

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Comerford reported:

- Bus Electrification project –
 - The Governor is likely to extend individual waivers for the purchase of electric buses to transit districts due to infrastructure constraints.
 - ETD’s first electric buses are in Hartford being inspected and road tested. The portable chargers have been delivered to Middletown and need to be commissioned. Once the buses are fully accepted and the chargers commissioned, the buses will be delivered to Middletown. Geraghty will work to determine where the buses will be deployed.

Ryan Curley and Michelle Benivegna left the meeting.

- Tap and Ride pilot program-- began earlier in the week and a press conference with CTDOT and USDOT in attendance was held. Long-term goals for the project include

integrating senior and disabled fares.

- Statewide Fare Study -- The State has completed the statewide fare study to set fares the same throughout the State and is now working with ETD to determine the best fare collection equipment to purchase under a statewide procurement.
- Labor Contract-- the contract was renegotiated with the Union and wage increases implemented as discussed at the October Board meeting.
 - The increases have helped with hiring and retention. Middletown is currently fully staffed and Centerbrook is down one (1) position.
- Transportation Software--A contract is being negotiated with Swiftly, Inc. for new software to provide passengers with more accurate real time information. The new program will work with the State's transit app which has been increasingly popular with riders
- CACT Conference -- Several staff members attended the state association's conference in Hartford earlier in the month.

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

TRANSIT PLANNERS REPORT

Geraghty reported on the following:

- Xtra Mile Expansion
- Bus Shelter Project
- Park Connect Program
- Middletown Holiday Trolley

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

Russell made a motion to accept the Transit Planner's Report as presented. 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.

Famiglietti reported:

- CTDOT has paid all invoices for FY24
- She and Comerford are working on a report for the National Transit Database
- The auditors will be in the office next week to continue preparing for the audit
- Budget and cash flow look healthy.

She was available to answer questions/comments posed by Board members.

Russell made a motion to accept the Finance Director's Report as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ridership figures were included in the Board packet. Comerford reported that ridership is up and

was available to answer questions from Board members.

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

Jim Irish left the meeting. Loss of Quorum

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – No report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

Irish returned to the meeting, re-establishing the Quorum.

NEW BUSINESS

Bus Purchase Authorizing Resolution No. 25-006

Hall made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to purchase up to four (4) body-on-chassis buses for the Estuary Transit District from Coach and Equipment in an amount not to exceed four hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$470,000.00).

Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Fixed Route Planning Software Purchasing Resolution No. 25-007

Gay made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to purchase fixed route planning software from Carahsoft Technology Corporation for the Estuary Transit District in an amount not to exceed sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000.00).

Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2025 Meeting Schedule

The Board will continue to meet at 9:00 a.m. on the second Friday of every other month (February, April, June, August, October and December).

December Meeting and Holiday Party

Strauss reminded everyone that the December meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. followed by the holiday luncheon.

Board Retreat

Plans for a Board Retreat were discussed and will continue at the next Board meeting. Members were asked to think about topics and locations.

Catherine Gross left the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS – None.

CHAIR COMMENTS –

Committee Assignments - Each Board member is obligated to serve on at least 1 committee. Strauss encouraged board members to reach out to her for an assignment.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Strauss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:58 a.m. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – December 13, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Denison
Clerk