

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING

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

August 20, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Estuary Transit District was called to order by Richard Cabral 9:00 a.m. at the Estuary Transit Offices, Centerbrook, Connecticut.

ROLL CALL

A Quorum was established. Those in attendance included: Dick Smith (arrived at 9:06 a.m.), John Forbis, Virginia Zawoy, Richard Cabral, Jack Spangler, Leslie Strauss, Noel Bishop and Mike Pace (arrived at 9:20 a.m.).

Absent: Ralph Eno.

Staff: Joe Comerford, Halyna Famiglietti, Paul Tyrrell, David Lee

PLEDGE

Richard Cabral led the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Minutes

John Forbis made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2010 meeting. Jack Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS

Included in the Board's packet were two letters from the DOT. The first letter, from Mike Sanders, referred to increased service of the Riverside Shuttle. The second letter,

from Mike Guerrero, was regarding increased services of the Shoreline Shuttle. There were no comments from Board members pertaining to these letters.

TREASURER'S REPORT

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

None.

Marketing Committee

Included in the Board's packet were 3 recent Press Releases. Leslie Strauss commented that PR on the District has been great and she commended Joe Comerford for a job well done.

The Board discussed the possibility of using the local on-line publications for information on the District.

Leslie Strauss suggested assembling a binder with a history of the District's press releases.

Joe Comerford reported that the recently launched on line portal on the web site has been successful. This portal is a good resource for customers and requests have been increasing.

Virginia Zawoy made a motion to accept the Marketing Report. Jack Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director's Report was included in the packet.

Joe Comerford reported that the Municipal Grant Program's funding was restored to \$30,000.00. The Senior Fare Program is fully funded for next year.

Leslie Strauss made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE MANAGER'S REPORT

The Finance Manager's Report, Budget vs. Actual Report, Bank Statements and Cash Flow Report were included in the Board's packet.

Joe Comerford clarified the reporting method on the Budget vs. Actual Report. The report shows a negative balance; however, the line item is in the positive. John Forbis suggested a computer override program may be appropriate.

John Forbis reported that for the entire year, the District is under budget by 7%. Also, in terms of revenue and advertising programs, the District is over. John congratulated the staff for these accomplishments.

Joe Comerford responded that unfortunately, the State will recalculate next year's funding based on this year's spending. David Lee commented that this is an issue throughout the country.

Joe Comerford continued that because the routes are running more efficiently, the trips per hour are increasing and costs are not going up at the same rate as the ridership.

John Forbis made a motion to accept the Finance Managers Report. Virginia Zawoy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

The Operations Manager's report was included in the board's packet.

Paul Tyrrell reported that many of the routes are "taking off" and extra times have been added. The demographic of riders is moving from senior citizens to working individuals. The additional Dial a Ride route has allowed the Riverside Route to run closer to schedule. Joe Comerford added that the majority of the Dial Ride customers are in Chester, Deep River and Ivoryton. They use the Dial a Ride because the Riverside Shuttle does not begin service until 10:00 a.m. These users need earlier service to commute to work. The plan is to extend the Riverside Shuttle to accommodate 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. workers.

Paul continued that the new computer system is working well and the drivers continue to adapt to the programs.

Mike Pace commented that the Long Island Transit system works well and accommodates working individuals. He suggested using this model for the ETD. Mike Pace continued that a 3 to 5 year business plan for the District should be prepared and presented to the DOT.

John Forbis suggested a meeting with key people at the DOT to review our needs. Joe Comerford responded that it is difficult to meet with the DOT and added that it may be beneficial to have an elected official request a meeting and advocate for the District. Mike Pace reported that this issue will be placed on the agenda at the next Lower Valley Selectmen's meeting.

Noel Bishop made a motion to accept the Operations Manager's Report. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Indigent Definition

A copy of the Black Law Dictionary definition of "Indigent" was included in the Board's packet.

Mike Pace commented on the importance of the District having a policy for FOI requests. Without a policy including the "indigent" definition, FOI requests can be quite expensive.

John Forbis made a motion to table the Indigent definition until the October ETD meeting and directed Joe Comerford to provide a policy on same at the October meeting. Jack Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Borrowing Authorization

A copy of the Borrowing Authorization was included in the Board's packet. This authorization called for allowing the Chairman, Richard Cabral, or Vice Chairman Leslie Strauss and Treasurer, John Forbis, to borrow up to \$100,000.00 from Essex Savings Bank on the revolving credit line for the operating expenses of the ETD.

Mike Pace and Richard Cabral expressed reservations about giving an "open check" to board members; thus, putting the District at risk. Dick Smith suggested using the surplus account if needed.

Joe Comerford reported that cash flow issues are a result of late payments from the State. Halyna defined the process for requesting payment from the state.

Dick Smith suggested setting the authorized amount equal to the amount of one month's expenses. These expenses include salary, fuel, and insurance. The monthly payment received from the state is approximately \$65,000.00. Also, if additional funds are necessary, Joe Comerford was directed to notify Board members (in writing).

Dick Smith made a motion authorizing the three executive board members Chairman, Richard Cabral, or Vice Chairman Leslie Strauss and Treasurer, John Forbis to secure one month's operating expenses, not to exceed \$65,000 and directed that a policy be put into place that when necessary, the Executive Director will notify the entire Board of his intent. Noel Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Deep River Festival

Joe Comerford reported that Deep River's request to use the District's buses for the Deep River Festival has been approved by the state.

Joe Comerford reported that the direct cost for the use of the buses is \$30 per hour.

Mike Pace made a motion authorizing the use of the Transit District Buses for the purpose of Deep River Day 2010. The fee will be at a rate equal to the direct cost. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

First Transit Contract Renewal

Richard Cabral reported that the Board of Directors has continually been impressed with First Transit and Joe Comerford.

Dick Smith made a motion to renew the contract with First Transit at a 3.5% increase, pursuant to Section 5 of the contract, the fee for the year commencing December 1, 2010 will be \$9,194.66 per month for a total \$110,336. Leslie Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Staff Hours

Jack Spangler made a motion to table Administrative Staff Hours. Dick Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Essex Trolley

Joe Comerford briefly reported on a request made by the Essex Board of Trade. The Board of Trade requested that the ETD manage their trolley that currently runs from downtown Essex through Ivoryton and Centerbrook.

Mike Pace commented that if the ETD decides to run their operation, it would be a "cost plus" operation. The Board of Trade must assume all responsibility for repairs, maintenance etc. He continued that this type of service is not the District's core business and stated that before any determination could be made, a formal proposal from the Board of Trade would be necessary.

No action was taken at this time.

Bus Purchase Approval

Dick Smith made a motion to authorize the Executive Director Joe Comerford, on behalf of the ETD, to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents required to purchase one bus for the Estuary Transit District from the Greater New

Haven Transit District vehicle contract with Matthews Buses, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$110,000.00. Mike Pace seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Richard Cabral requested that Board members schedule the ETD meeting for 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. every other month.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mike Pace reported that Leslie Strauss made full disclosure at the time that the contract on the current ETD office space was brokered.

John Forbis commented that out of the 60,000 total rides, the 26,500 rides were purchased at Stop & Shop or Adams. He was hopeful that A&P would begin selling the bus passes.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

John Forbis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. Virginia Zawoy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – October 15, 2010

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Recording Clerk

Virginia Zawoy
Secretary