

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

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING
6/17/11

17 INDUSTRIAL RD., CENTERBROOK CT

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Estuary Transit District was called to order by Richard Cabral, Chair at 9:02 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Richard Cabral led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was established with the following Board members present: Leslie Strauss, John Forbis, Virginia Zawoy, Richard Cabral, Roland Laine, Ralph Eno, Noel Bishop, and Jack Spangler.

Staff members presented included: Joe Comerford, Halyna Famiglietti

Absent – Dick Smith

VISITOR COMMENTS –None

Minutes

Ralph Eno made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the April 15, 2011 meeting, with corrections. Roland Laine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Corrections: Page 1 – proper spelling – “Allegiance”

Westbrook Letter

Noel Bishop reported that, in lieu of taxes, Vista, a tax exempt organization in Westbrook, contributed funding to Westbrook. In return, the Westbrook BOS donated portions of this funding to various worthy organizations, including a \$500 donation to 9TT. Joe Comerford reported that this funding was deposited into the Unrestricted Net Assets Account.

Richard Cabral directed Joe Comerford write a thank- you letter to the Town of Westbrook.

Communication from DOT

Included in the Board’s packet was a letter from the DOT regarding the District’s request to expand the Saturday Shoreline Shuttle Service. Unfortunately, no additional federal or state funds are available for this expansion.

Additional Correspondence

Virginia Zawoy reported that the DOT has approved the District's request for funds under the 2011 Connecticut Clean Fuel Program (3 vehicles @\$43,000 per vehicle).

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Forbis reported the District is considering switching to Liberty Bank (currently the District uses Essex Savings Bank). Essex Savings Bank will not accept bagged coins unless it is in specific amounts. Rolling several hundreds of dollars in coins is a time consuming task. Liberty Bank is willing to accept the District's bagged coins. They also offer other banking services at no cost and are interested in the District's line of credit.

The Finance Committee will research other area banks as well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – No report at this time.

Marketing Report

Richard Cabral reported on the Rural System of the Year Award recently presented to 9TT in Indianapolis. He commended Joe Comerford for his representation of the District. Leslie Strauss added that this award would not have been possible if not for Joe Comerford. The Board thanked Joe and David Lee for their efforts.

John Forbis encouraged Board members to inform their respective Board of Selectmen and Boards of Finance about this award.

Executive Director's Report

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

Joe Comerford reported that funding under the Municipal Grant is still unknown. He anticipates information next week.

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.

Halyna Famiglietti reported that the \$100,000 line of credit was paid off in 3 weeks.

Joe Comerford reported that although you may not "shift" grant funding, he anticipates that the District will come in slightly under budget. Richard Cabral added that this does affect how the state matches funds.

Operation Manager's Report

The Operation Manager's Report was included in the Board packet.

Joe Comerford reported that there has been a 40% increase in ridership over the past two years.

Richard Cabral added that Mike Sanders, DOT, commented on the District's figures at the conference in Indianapolis.

The Shoreline Shuttle ridership has grown significantly and it may now be time to investigate the use of a 30 ft. bus. Joe Comerford reported that a 30 ft. bus could be added to the District's two year Capital Plan.

OLD BUSINESS

Property Search

Leslie Strauss reported that the property discussed is still available. However, without a commitment from the DOT, the project cannot move forward. The state's budget and re-organization at the DOT is slowing the process. Leslie suggested that the District elicit assistance from Mike Sanders, DOT.

Ralph Eno requested an analysis of the costs associated with building ownership.

John Forbis reported that he can identify a Professional Engineer willing to donate his time to walk through and identify costs of remediation at the site. He will arrange a meeting with Max Greenwood, P.E.

NEW BUSINESS

Audit Contract

Joe Comerford reported that the Principal at the District's auditing firm has left. As a result, no one at the firm has experience in government auditing. A resume from James O'Connell, the Principal's replacement was included in the Board Packet.

The District is entering year two of a 3 year contract. According to contract, if the District does not approve the new person, the District has the right to go to the second low bidder which was Seward & Monde. Seward and Monde will honor their pricing from the bid.

Noel Bishop commented that Westbrook has been pleased with Seward & Monde and they are open to negotiations.

Joe Comerford added that the District was also happy with Seward & Monde's performance in previous years.

Ralph Eno made a motion that the Board move its audit function back to Seward & Monde given the proviso in the existing contract which enables us to do so given the circumstance that the Principal has left the firm and as part of the process to move forward, we inquire that the rate for the first year of the agreement be the one applicable for the 3 year contract. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Medical Leave Policy

Ralph Eno made a motion to table the discussion on the Medical Leave Policy until the next meeting. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Free Transportation Policy 330

A copy of policy 330 Free Transportation was included in the Board packet. The only change from the previously approved policy is the last sentence: "For Off-route or demand response trips, the fare will be discounted by the on-route adult fare price."

Richard Cabral made a motion to add the following sentence to Policy 330: "For Off-route or demand response trips, the fare will be discounted by the on-route adult fare price". Virginia Zawoy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Town of Haddam Request

Joe Comerford reported that Haddam is interested in a Mid Shore stop (similar to the arrangement the District has with Madison). He continued that the District does not have operating authority in Haddam and would have to apply to the state for same. Haddam's Municipal Grant funds go through Middletown. Additional staff hours would be necessary to accommodate their request, but these costs would be passed onto Haddam.

No action taken at this time. Additional information will be provided at the next meeting.

Joe Comerford encouraged Board members to review the DOT authorizing resolution currently in place. This will be discussed further at the August meeting.

Equipment Disposal

Virginia Zawoy made a motion whereas ETD has received two replacement buses; and whereas the ETD wishes to dispose of buses 601 and 602 which are beyond their useful life as established by the CT DOT; therefore be it resolved that the Executive Director, Joe Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the ETD to dispose of said vehicles in accordance with CT DOT guidelines, which includes auction and/or donation to a municipality. Noel Bishop seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Ralph Eno expressed interest in one of these vehicles. Joe Comerford responded that both vehicles need work.

The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Richard Cabral made a motion that the ETD go on record, with unreserved endorsement of Suzanne Helchowski in support of her application to be the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen in Westbrook. Leslie Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Leslie Strauss questioned the status of the previously discussed open air trolley running through Essex, Deep River and Chester.

Roland Laine gave a brief description on the history of the trolley which started in Old Saybrook. While beneficial to boaters and marinas, the trolley was not a good business proposition and service was discontinued.

Joe Comerford reported that he has received no written documentation on the trolley and that the Essex Chamber of Commerce should include the District in the spec process.

Leslie Strauss reported that the 30th Anniversary party was a success and that a “hybrid event” will be scheduled.

John Forbis made a motion to acknowledge, in writing, individuals who donated goods/services for the 30th anniversary event. Leslie Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Leslie Strauss suggested adding a QR (Quick Response) icon on future Transit publications, business cards, letterhead etc.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None

The next meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski