

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ESTUARY
TRANSIT DISTRICT MEETING
March 20, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Estuary Transit District was called to order by Chair Richard Cabral at 9:04 a.m. at the Old Saybrook Town Hall in Old Saybrook Connecticut.

ROLL CALL

Those in attendance included: John Forbis, Virginia Zawoy, Noel Bishop, Richard Cabral, Ralph Eno, Mike Pace, Jack Spangler, and Leslie Strauss.

Absent: Dick Smith

Staff: Joseph Comerford, Halyna Famiglietti

PLEDGE

Richard Cabral led the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Ralph Eno made a motion to accept the minutes from the Regular ETD meeting dated February 20, 2009 meeting, with corrections. Jack Spangler seconded the minutes. The motion passed. Virginia Zawoy abstained from voting.

Correction: Note – the correct spelling for Tyrrell

John Forbis made a motion to approve the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting dated February 2, 2009. Ralph Eno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No report at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS

Joe Comerford reported on two letters received from the DOT. The first letter pertains to the current fiscal year. The DOT is increasing all core services by 6%; however, the District has budgeted for 7%. Joe continued that he has spoken to the DOT and hopes to receive the budgeted 7% (additional \$5,000).

The second letter from the DOT indicates that they concur with the auditors regarding fiscal year 2006. The letter indicates that they owe us \$14,207.00 and they directed us to bill them in that amount. This bill has been sent and we await payment.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director's Report was included in the Board's packet of information. Any questions on same should be directed to Joe Comerford.

Virginia Zawoy made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report as presented. Mike Pace seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Joe Comerford proposed that the Board plan a retreat to facilitate setting goals for the District.

Ralph Eno expressed concern over the costs associated with such a retreat and possible ethical issues for elected officials if they attend such a retreat.

Mike Pace responded that such a retreat can be planned at minimal costs. Mike and Joe will work toward setting a date for the retreat and report back to the Board.

The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Report

Joe Comerford reported that the DOT directed him to market the Niantic route. This route provides five connections each weekday between SEAT Route 3 and 9 Town Transit's Niantic Rte. The routes connect in downtown Niantic, where passengers can transfer for free between the two services.

Mike Pace indicated that there is an on-line newspaper that may be beneficial as a marketing tool for the District.

Leslie Strauss suggested the District also use the Events Magazines distributed by several of the towns in the District. Joe responded that he has met with Essex Printing and intends to use the Events Magazines for marketing.

Joe is attempting to add to the District's exposure by advertising in New London area papers.

John Forbis reported that he recently attended a Round Table discussion in Old Lyme. This discussion included social service representatives. Joe will distribute information via e-mail to these participants.

Marketing Sub Committee

Ralph Eno suggested formation of a sub-committee for marketing. Leslie Strauss will chair this sub-committee. The goal of the committee is to market the 9 Town Transit District. Any pertinent information should be forwarded to Leslie.

The Board briefly discussed the possibility of bus stop signs, benches and bus stops.

A copy of the logo for the new buses was distributed.

Jack Spangler expressed concern that the transit logo is not lit up on some buses. Joe was aware of the situation and reported that several of the lighting mechanisms do not work. Joe is pursuing and added that there are some programming issues with some of the busses as well.

Mike Pace suggested listing the 9 towns participating in the 9 Town Transit District on the back of the busses.

John Forbis made a motion to accept the Marketing Report as presented. Ralph Eno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE MANAGER'S REPORT

Bank statements and the Statement of Cash Flows were included in the Board's packet. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Halyna Famiglietti.

Regarding the Cash Flow report, Halyna reported that if we do not receive the expected payment from the DOT, the District will have to utilize the line of credit and or credit card. She has talked to the DOT and they indicated that the money is in route. Halyna continued that she spoke to Diane Hoadley at Essex Savings Bank. The paperwork for the line of credit needs to be signed and completed. This will be addressed later on in meeting.

Mike Pace reported that the cost for the audit, \$16,000 seemed excessive. Ralph Eno reported that he felt it was a fair price considering the amount of work involved. Mike added that as the scope of work is changing, he feels the price of the audit should go down. Leslie commented that the District did "shop" for the auditor and the company used offered the best price.

Mike Pace was concerned with the money being spent to park the busses. Joe Comerford responded that he intends pursue office space for lease in a building in the Town with

plenty of parking available. The Board briefly discussed possible issues with drivers, routes and scheduling if the busses are parked elsewhere.

Virginia Zawoy made a motion to accept the Finance Manager's Report as presented. John Forbis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

The Operations Manager's report, included in the board packet will be discussed at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

ETD Rider Policy

A copy of the Estuary Transit District Rider's Guide was included in the Board's packet. Joe Comerford reported that the District needed to address the No Show Policy and the Cancellation policies as issues have been costing the District considerable money.

Joe continued that Subscriptions can only be booked for medical, school and work reasons. An individual cannot schedule a recurring trip unless it is for one of these reasons.

Under the No Show Policy, an individual would accrue points. After so many points, the offender would receive a suspension of service. Joe reported that he has used this type of point system and it works well.

Ralph Eno made a motion to adopt the Transit District Rider's Guide as presented. Virginia Zawoy seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Richard Cabral asked that a Table of Contents page be added to the Rider's Guide.

The motion passed unanimously.

Vacation Policy

Joe Comerford reported that the audit determined that our practice regarding vacation was not as the policy indicated. A copy of the Vacation Policy was distributed.

Highlights of the policy include:

- After one (1) year of eligible service, employees hired prior to March 1, 2009 will accrue vacation time at the rate of 1.25 days per month up to a maximum of fifteen (15) vacation days each year.

- After five (5) years of eligible service, employees hired March 1, 2009 or later will accrue vacation time at the rate of 1.25 days per month up to a maximum of fifteen (15) days each year.

A vacation benefit year begins on your anniversary date. Vacation time not used by the end of an employee's benefit year may be carried over to the next benefit year; however no employee may have more than 20 days of accrued vacation time at any time. When you reach the maximum accrual, you will stop accumulating time until you fall below the accrued vacation time maximum of 20 days.

John Forbis made a motion to approve the Vacation Policy as presented. Mike Pace seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

The Board discussed a clause relative to last in first out accounting for accrued vacation days.

John Forbis amended the motion to approve the policy with the inclusion of a clause relative to last in first out accounting for accrued vacation days. Leslie Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The original motion, as amended was passed unanimously.

Holiday Policy

A copy of the Holiday Policy was included in the Board's packet. Joe Comerford briefly defined the major and minor holidays and the Board discussed same.

John Forbis made a motion to accept the Holiday Policy as presented. Mike Pace seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Lending Resolution

A Borrowing Resolution from Essex Savings Bank was distributed to Board members.

John Forbis made a motion to authorize the ETD officers (Richard Cabral, Dick Smith and John Forbis) to enter into the Borrowing Resolution as presented. Leslie Strauss seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Mike Pace had concerns and needed clarification on item #3 of the resolution. Item #3 states: "To discount any bill receivable, instrument or paper held in the name of or by the Estuary Transit District, with full authority to endorse the same in the name of the Estuary Transit District."

Mike Pace amended the motion to add that item #3 of the Resolution is clarified to the unanimous consensus of those signing on behalf of the transit district. Noel Bishop seconded the motion. The amended motion passed unanimously.

The Main Motion passed unanimously.

Bus Stop Improvements

Joe Comerford reported that part of the Economic Stimulus request was for bus stop signs, benches etc. The Board discussed the current bus stop at the train station as well as the need for signage at our major stops (Stop and Shop, Walmart). Joe continued that the biggest need is for bus stop signs along the routes which would add to the safety of system.

Joe reported that approximately 100 signs would be needed for the entire system and this amount of signs would be expensive. He anticipates an answer on the stimulus money in the near future and report on same at the next Board meeting.

The Board briefly discussed the type of permission (P&Z) needed in order to place any sign in the towns as well as the possibility of town crews installing the signs as a cost savings mechanism for the District.

Health Insurance Policy

At the last Transit meeting, the Board discussed the use of Medicare for eligible employees. Insurance options regarding Medicare were added to the Health Insurance Policy of the District. The new Policy was distributed to Board members.

John Forbis made a motion to accept the Health Insurance Policy as presented. Jack Spangler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Please note that an employee suggested this change in the policy and that this change has the potential to save the District considerable money. The Executive Director will thank this employee, on behalf of the Board, for bringing this cost saving issue to light.

CHAIR CONCERNS

None.

BOARD CONCERNS

Software- Ralph Eno reported that he recently met with the Regional Planning Agency. He questioned if that agency would be able to use the District's software. Joe Comerford responded that if a web based program was used, a password could be given to the Regional Planning Agency for their use. The software will be discussed at future meetings.

Noel Bishop reported that he has been impressed with the updates and thoroughness of the reports presented at the Transit meetings.

Virginia Zawoy requested the status of the Middletown Service. Joe reported that he received a schedule and he is investigating the possibility of trips to connect with the Middletown system. He has received permission from the state and feels such service could begin in June.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Leslie Strauss made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:01 a.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel raises. Jack Spangler seconded the motion. No one was in favor of the motion. The motion did not pass.

ADJOURNMENT

Ralph Eno made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:02 a.m. Virginia Zawoy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Strauss
Secretary

Suzanne Helchowski
Recording Clerk