

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT RVT MEETING

RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2022
91 Main Street, Middletown, CT
And via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. In attendance included: Leslie Strauss, Karl Kilduff, John Hall, Charlie Norz, Joan Gay, Tim Griswold, Bobbye Knoll Peterson, Angus McDonald, David Lahm, Beverly Lawrence, DG Fitton and, Jim Irish.

Staff: Joe Comerford, Chris Denison, Lisa Gibson, Brendan Geraghty, Halyna Famiglietti, Sam Gold, Patrick Hervin

Guests: Robert Yamartino, First Selectman Middlefield, Bob McGarry, First Selectman Haddam, Irene Haynes, First Selectman, E. Haddam (arrived at 10:26 a.m.).

VISITORS' COMMENTS – None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Karl Kilduff made a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes dated 11/18/22 as amended. David Lahm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: page 2 – under “Marketing Committee” – should read “to accept the Marketing Committee report” not “Legislative Committee report” as reported.

Karl Kilduff made a motion to approve the 11/22/22 Facilities Committee minutes as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to approve the 12/7/22 Finance Committee minutes as presented. Karl Kilduff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS – None.

TREASURER'S REPORT - None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee – A copy of the Committee report was included in the Board’s packet. Joan reported:

- A walk-through of the proposed Westbrook property will be scheduled.
- No action on Middletown Terminal renovation until newly appointed Bureau Chief of Public Transit takes office.
- The Environmental Compliance Consultant has completed Phase I of the Middletown property.

- Scoping of the Master Plan in Westbrook and the 2 sites in Middletown are being finalized. Negotiations to begin thereafter.
- Energy Consultant to review the Middletown facility for power upgrades.
- Graham Curtis has been instrumental at the meetings. The next meeting is 12/26.

Joe briefly reported on the difficulty in contacting the property owner of the potential Westbrook site. However, Graham is comfortable moving forward with studying the property. John Hall will assist in contacting the property owner.

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the Facilities Committee report as presented. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee – Charlie reported that the Finance Committee has reviewed all financial statements in detail. No concerns noted.

The DOT did provide a payment to the District. Note that on-going staffing issues at the DOT delayed the payment. As targeted, 3 months of operating expenses are available.

Joe reported that the State is working with the auditors to allow the DOT “fronting” the District funds without review.

Charlie reported that the Finance Committee is recommending that the Board approve a 3% increase in Town Dues. This item will be discussed further later in the meeting.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Finance Committee report as presented. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Committee – copies of the new logo were screenshared. The logo will be used in a variety of iterations (website, bus, letterhead, etc.). The logo will also be used on the website.

As previously discussed, the Governor and Legislature did extend the “fare holiday” until the end of March. This “free” fare will be publicized. The extension of the free fare will allow the District the ability to determine what electronic fare equipment is necessary for the buses.

Karl Kilduff made a motion to accept the Marketing Committee report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Committee – None.

Transit Advisory Committee - None

Service Study Committee – None.

Nominating Committee – None.

Personnel Committee – None.

COG Update – Sam Gold reported:

- The COG has submitted Technical Assistance and Transit Oriented Development grant applications.
- The COG assisted in the creation of an application for funding for the Village of Moodus (destroyed in an urban renewal project).
- The Mayor of Middletown was approached relative to an application for technical assistance for transit planning.
- Rob Haramut is leading the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. The plan is updated every 4 years. A Virtual Public Workshop is scheduled on 12/13. The Plan is due in the Spring.
- The COG is developing an EDC strategy to be used for future grants.
- A Regional Housing Committee will be developed by the COG. Transit will be an important part of the Committee.
- An RFQ for a consultant to assist with planning the Airline Trail is being developed. The Airline Trail (ped and bike trail) will go from Portland to Middletown, connecting to the Meriden train station. Funds are in place for planning and design.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Joe

reported:

- Radios are currently being installed. The new system will provide excellent coverage and all buses will be able to communicate with one central dispatch. This will allow for the consolidation of dispatch.
- The Micro Transit software procurement will improve the Extra Mile service. Advances in the technology will make the program more efficient and will allow for additional features.

Joe provided an update on the significant staffing changes that have taken place at the State DOT in the past several months.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Executive Director's report as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT PLANNER'S REPORT – Brendan reported:

- The Extra Mile program in Middletown will end on 12/18/22 (the last day of Wesleyan's semester). Ridership has been good and funding sources to continue the service are being researched.
- Over 190 surveys have been returned and have provided overwhelmingly positive comments on the District and proposals.
- Real time data will be available at kiosks, in various locations (Madison, Old Saybrook).
- Transit App – the State and District are pursuing a state-wide app that will provide information on the entire State transit system.
- Presentations, in conjunction with the Kennedy Center, have assisted riders.
- Brochures of the newly merged system are being developed.

- Madison is exploring options for service.
- Fare Study – the District is in the process of determining the what equipment is necessary to collect fares. As reported, the extension of the free fare will assist in this process. The goal is to have one fare system in use throughout the State.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Transit Planner’s report as presented. Tim Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Copies of the Budget vs. Actual and Cash Flow reports were included in the Board’s packet.

Halyna was available to address questions/comments from Board members.

Halyna reported:

- Consolidation of grants is on-going.
- The District will be required to participate in the Triennial Audit. The Nine Town Transit 2019 Triennial found few “findings”. MAT’s audit, completed last year, had several “findings”.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Finance Director’s report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR’S REPORT

A copy of the Operations Director’s report was included in the Board packet. Jared reported that ridership continues to increase and the District is now above 2019 ridership. With regard to staffing, there remains one open position in Middletown and two at 9TT. The supervisor and dispatch positions have been filled.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the Operations Director’s report as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Patrick reported that as preventative maintenance on the vehicles is on-going, breakdowns are less frequent. The new vehicles are more complex and there have been some issues in obtaining parts. In addition, another mechanic is needed but it has been difficult to find a qualified individual.

David Lahm made a motion to accept the Maintenance Director’s report as presented. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

2023-24 Town Dues

Tim Griswold made a motion to approve a 3% increase in Town Dues, as recommended by the Finance Committee. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2023 Schedule of Meetings

A copy of the proposed 2023 Meeting Schedule was included in the Board’s packet as follows: 1/13/23,

2/10/23, 3/10/23, 4/14/23, 5/12/23, 6/9/23, 7/14/23, 8/11/23, 9/8/23, 10/13/23, 11/17/23 and 12/8/23.

John Hall made a motion to approve the 2023 Meeting Schedule as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bus Purchase Resolution – An updated Resolution is necessary as vehicle costs have increased significantly.

Joan Gay made a motion 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 five (5) body-on-chassis buses for the Estuary Transit District from Coach and Equipment in an amount not to exceed \$775,000. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of PTASP Revision – A copy of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) was included in the Board's packet. As a recipient of Federal Funds, we are required to adopt the Plan.

DG Fitton made a motion to adopt the PTASP Revision as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS – None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Leslie thanked Chris for her efforts in organizing today's Holiday Party.

Joe will investigate the possible installation of lighting at the bus stops.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Contract Negotiations

Joan Gay made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:36 a.m. for the purpose of a discussion of strategies for Labor Contract Negotiations. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Invited into the Executive Session: Suzanne Helchowski, Joe Comerford and Board members and Irene Haynes and Bob McGarry.

Regular Session resumed at 12:06 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlie Norz made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:07 p.m. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – 1/13/23 9 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk