

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ETD MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING
Friday, June 13, 2025
91 N. Main Street, Middletown, CT and
Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. In attendance included: Charlie Norz (ZOOM), Leslie Strauss, Tim Griswold, John Hall, (ZOOM), Kathryn Russell, Lori McElwee, Mike Pelton, (ZOOM), Beverly Lawrence (ZOOM), Bob McGarry (ZOOM), James Irish, (ZOOM), Joan Gay (ZOOM).

Guests/Staff: Chris Dennison (ZOOM), Brendan Geraghty, Joe Comerford, Halyna Famiglietti, Jared Whitcomb, Eli Arthurs, Mutez Ennab, (ZOOM), Lori McElroy

Welcome New Member Town – Bob McGarry, Haddam

VISITOR COMMENTS

Bus Stop Project – Eli Arthurs, Wesleyan Institute for Policy Founder and Co-Director of Urban Policy Research

Eli Arthurs, Wesleyan Institute for Policy Research provided an analysis to the District researching the District's transition to physical bus stops.

Recommendations include:

- Include a transit map and ride guide on the bus shelters
- Identification of ideal locations for bus shelters
- Develop an Adopt a Stop program to engage the community
- Add links to nearby campuses (Yale, Trinity and Connecticut College)

His report was screenshared and Eli was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members. The final report will be emailed to Board members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Kathryn Russell made a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/11/25 Board meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/11/25 Expansion Committee meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/29/25 Special Board meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes of the 5/20/25 Finance Committee meeting as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

Kathryn Russell made a motion to accept the minutes of the 5/23/25 Special Board meeting as presented. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the 6/10/25 Transit Advisory meeting as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

On a motion made and duly seconded the minutes of the 6/11/25 Facilities Committee were unanimously approved as presented.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the minutes of the 5/20/25 Finance Committee meeting as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

COMMUNICATIONS –

Haddam Membership

A letter from Rob McGarry, First Selectman, Haddam accepting the District's invitation to join River Valley Transit, was included in the Board's packet.

TREASURER'S REPORT – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee

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

Highlights of the meeting include:

- Middletown
 - To review the wetlands, approval is needed from the railroad along with a permit to access the property. The DOT has submitted applications.
- Electrification – both electric buses have been in service for approximately 2 months.
- Bus Shelter Program – Middletown P&Z passed an amendment allowing bus shelter installation.
- Shoreline Facility
 - A site walk of the Pequot Park property uncovered wetland encroachments. A feasibility study of the property will be scheduled.

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

Finance Committee

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet. The Committee reviewed all financial documents and reported no issues. It is anticipated that the fiscal year will end under budget.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Finance Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

Marketing Committee

The website usage reports were included in the Board packet and show a growth in the use of the transit app.

On a motion made and duly seconded the Marketing Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

Legislative Committee

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

Joe Comerford provided an update on the recently passed State budget as it pertains to fares and the funding cap.

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

On a motion made and duly seconded the Legislative Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

Transit Advisory Committee

The Transit Advisory meeting minutes were included in the Board's packet. Tim Griswold provided an overview of the meeting including:

- Data on the Xtra Mile Expansion
- Bus Shelter Program
 - As stated above, the bus shelter zoning amendment passed Middletown's Planning and Zoning.
 - The "flag system" will be phased out
- Bus stop signs will be installed – locations are being finalized.

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

Expansion Committee

As previously reported, Haddam was welcomed into the District. Discussions will be scheduled with the following towns regarding their potential membership into the District:

- East Haddam
- Madison – Madison has been pleased with the Xtra Mile service.
- Guilford
- Cromwell – they currently operate Senior buses but have no formal bus service

The Committee will continue to evaluate the calculation of dues.

On a motion made and duly seconded the Expansion Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

Nominating Committee – No report.

Personnel Committee – No report.

COG Update

Brendan updated the Board on COG grant initiatives.

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the COG Update as presented. Kathryn Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Lori McElroy, Mobility Manager, updated the Board on the services available for veterans, senior citizens, and low-income individuals in need of transportation. She regularly visits, senior centers, food pantries, group homes and assists individuals with forms and other applications. The program is funded via a Grant. She has office space at the District and reports regularly to Joe. Lori was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

Joe provided an update on the following:

- Electric Buses – currently in use
 - Energy usage chart screenshared
 - Charging times are better than anticipated
 - Results may differ during the winter months
- Medical Transportation – new vendor being used (better rates)
- Taxi Voucher program
- Tap and Ride program
- Additional service: 644 route (Saturday service), Clinton Trolley, 642 route

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

Mike Pelton made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT PLANNERS REPORT

The Expansion Ridership, One Year in Review presentation was screenshared and included:

- 2024 Service Expansion Review
 - Fixed Route Ridership expansion
 - Xtra Mile Expansion - zone ridership
- Brief update on zoning regulations for bus stop/bus shelters – both state and municipalities
- Reviewed parameters for bus shelters - crosswalks, accessibility
 - Working with the contractor – speed of permitting/approvals will affect timeline of the project.

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

Charlie Norz made a motion to accept the Transit Planner's Report as presented. Kathryn Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Copies of the financial reports (Budget vs. Actual and Cash Flow) were included in the Board packet and screenshared. No issues were reported.

Halyna reported that the Auditors have been in the office and have started their work. It is anticipated that they will return at the end of August.

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

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

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ridership figures were included in the Board packet and screenshared.

Jared reported:

- Middletown – a new Training Manager was hired
- Shoreline is fully staffed
- There is a new dispatcher in Middletown
- Ridership is up throughout the District

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

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Operations Director's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Maintenance Director's report was screenshared. Joe reported that the state's training on the electric buses is on-going.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of FY25/26 Budget

The proposed 2025/26 ETD Budget was included in the Board packet and screenshared. No comments on the budget were received from the Public.

Joan Gay made a motion to approve the FY25/26 ETD Budget as presented. Charlie Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Retreat Follow-up

Leslie commended the Board and David Lee for a productive Board Retreat.

By-Laws Amendment

The duties of the Treasurer were updated as follows:

“Treasurer: The Treasurer shall have the care and custody, and be responsible for, the funds and securities of the Transit District, subject to the direction of the Board of Directors. **The Treasurer will work with the Financial Director to obtain access to all financial information, including but not limited to the identity and function of all financial business partners, financial documents and periodic reports.** Along with the Executive Director, the Treasurer shall receive all funds and sign, make, and endorse in the name of the Transit District, all drafts, warrants, and orders for the payment of money, and pay out and dispose of same and receive receipt thereof, under the direction of the Chair and the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall make a full and complete financial report whenever requested by the Board of Directors.”

Kathryn Russell made a motion to approve the Duties of the Treasurer as presented. Mike Pelton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mission Statement

A draft Mission Statement was included in the Board’s packet and discussed/word smithed.

Charlie Norz made a motion to approve the Mission Statement as discussed. Jim Irish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS - None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Revised bus schedules are available.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlie Norz made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 a.m. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting – August 8, 2025 - 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk