

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT MEETING
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Friday, April 11, 2025
91 N. Main Street, Middletown CT and via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. In attendance: Leslie Strauss, David Cox (ZOOM), DG Fitton, Tim Griswold (ZOOM), John Hall (ZOOM), Irene Haines (ZOOM), Beverly Lawrence (ZOOM), Christine Marques (ZOOM, partial meeting I – VIII), Charles Norz (ZOOM), Mike Pelton, Brendan Rae (ZOOM), and Kathryn Russell

Staff: Joe Comerford, Chris Denison (ZOOM), Mutez Enaab (ZOOM), Halyna Famiglietti, Brendan Geraghty, Lisa Gibson (ZOOM), and Jake Layman

Visitor(s): Dave Lee (ZOOM)

Board Members Absent: Michelle Beniveгна, Joan Gay, Jim Irish, and David Lahm

VISITOR'S COMMENTS – None.

Strauss noted that three items needed to be added to the Agenda.

DG Fitton made a motion, seconded by Kathryn Russell, to amend the agenda to include Item IV.5 the Acceptance of the Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2025. Motion carried.

Fitton made a motion, seconded by Russell, to amend the agenda to include Item XIII.4 Approval of Proposed Route Changes. Motion carried.

Russell made a motion, seconded by Charles Norz, to amend the agenda to include item XIII.5 the formation of an Ad Hoc committee to discuss due structuring. Motion carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Tim Griswold made a motion to accept the minutes of the 02/14/25 Expansion Committee Meeting as presented. Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

John Hall made a motion to accept the minutes of the 02/14/25 Board Meeting as presented. Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

John Hall made a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/8/25 Facilities Committee Meeting as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Fitton made a motion to accept the minutes of the 04/09/25 Finance Committee Meeting as presented. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Christine Marques made a motion to accept the minutes of the 2/28/25 Legislative Committee Meeting as presented. Michael Pelton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

TREASURER'S REPORT – No report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities

The minutes of the Facilities Committee, dated 4/8/25, were included in the Board packet. Joseph Comerford reported that a walk of the Westbrook property is being scheduled.

Hall made a motion to accept the Facilities Committee Report as presented. Marques seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Finance Committee, dated 4/9/25, were included in the Board packet. The Committee has reviewed all financial documents and no issues were reported.

Fitton made a motion to accept the Finance Committee Report as presented. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Joe Comerford reported that marketing efforts have focused on graphics for social media promoting the route expansion. Comerford will address the marketing of payment options besides Tap and Ride with SRMC.

Russell made a motion to accept the Marketing Committee Report as presented. Pelton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Comerford reported that the budget is being followed. Also being followed are the DOT Commissioner's bill which would repeal Public Act 2240 which freezes transit district funding at FY24 levels and Senate Bill 1243 which provides free fares for veterans.

Russell made a motion to accept the Legislative Committee Report as presented. Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Griswold provided an update on the initiatives of the Committee including:

- Tap and Ride program – the program has seen consistent growth since its October launch.
 - Senior and disabled registration is now available.
 - The program is being actively marketed on the website, ad racks, posters, etc.
- Bus Stop Project – the transition from a flag stop system to a designated bus stop system was discussed. A vendor to replace old signs and install new signs, 4 new bus shelters and other amenities in the region has been selected.

Russell made a motion to accept the Transit Advisory Committee Report as presented. Griswold seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXPANSION COMMITTEE

The minutes of the 2/14/25 Expansion Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet. Griswold reported that Haddam is seeking approval from the Board of Selectmen to join the district. Discussions with East Haddam continue. Long-term plans include discussions with Madison, Guilford and Cromwell to determine interest in joining.

Fitton made a motion to accept the Expansion Committee Report as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – No report.

COG UPDATE – Brendan reported on COG initiatives as follows:

- Transit bills are being reviewed
- The THRIVE grant has been submitted.
- A Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Plan is being developed
- A vendor to study waste management in the region has been retained

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joe reported:

- Tap & Ride has been integrated with Token Transit, the district's mobile ticketing vendor.
- The 2024 capital grant has been executed. The grant contains \$1.6 million in capital funds for the purchase of 3 new small buses and additional fare box money, allowing the district to complete its fare box project.
- Fare Box Study – The State has asked the District to facilitate state-wide fare boxes. Specs are expected to be completed by the end of June at which time the State will go to bid.
- Electric Buses went out on the road for the first time last week.

- Swiftly App – The district is switching to Swiftly to analyze transit data and to create more accurate real-time information for passengers. The program will feed into the State transit app and integrate the microtransit app.

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

Russell made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report as presented. Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Christine Marques left the meeting.

TRANSIT PLANNER REPORT

Brendan provided the following information:

- 2025 Service Changes to go into effect at the end of May
 - Route 640, 642, 644 and 645 deviated route to fixed-route with accompanying ADA service
 - Issues with staying on time when deviations occur
 - Route 644 Saturday Service expansion
 - Route 643 will be commuter service, with no deviations
 - Route changes and tweaks to improve on-time performance and efficiency
 - More service will be added to Deep River. He will present information at the next Deep River Board of Selectmen meeting
- Expansion Ridership Review
 - Xtra Mile:
 - Middletown: 2000 riders in February
 - Madison and Guilford: steadily growing; growth mirrors Old Saybrook with 60-80 rides a day. 10k rides were reached last week since inception on May 20, 2024.
 - East Hampton: slow to grow, slight uptick recently reaching 20 rides on busiest day
 - Fixed Route Expansion:
 - Weeknight: Average 200-250 riders (10-15 riders each night) in February
 - Saturday: Average 100 riders each Saturday in February
 - Sunday: Average 170 riders each Sunday in February
- Bus Stop Project
 - A vendor has been selected
 - Stops are being finalized and reviewed
 - Permitting has been a hurdle

- Laurie McElwee, Regional Mobility Manager (mobility ombudsman) formerly employed by the Kennedy Collective will join the staff on May 1

Fitton made a motion to accept the Transit Planner's Report as presented. Pelton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Copies of the financial reports were included in the Board's packet. No issues reported.

Famiglietti reported that several grant applications have been completed and submitted. Work will begin on the 25/26 budget. A Special Finance Committee meeting and a Special Board Meeting will be scheduled for May.

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

Fitton made a motion to accept the Finance Director's Report as presented. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ridership and Customer Service figures were included in the Board's packet.

Jake Layman reported:

- the District is still hiring drivers and is in need of a dispatcher
- On-demand ridership continues to grow
- Ridership on the fixed routes has been consistent
- In March, 8 valid complaints were received, average wait time was 35 seconds and average handle time was 1 minute, 40 seconds

John Hall made a motion to accept the Operations Director's Report as presented. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Comerford reported:

- A second full-time mechanic has been hired, making the maintenance department fully staffed
- Progress is being made with preventative maintenance with 22 services being performed last month
- The electric bus manufacturer has been on site installing third party equipment on the buses

Strauss made a motion to accept the Maintenance Director's Report as presented. Norz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Strauss reminded members that they are required to serve on at least one committee.

REVIEW of BY-LAWS and BOARD POLICIES REVISIONS

Copies of the revised By-laws and Board Policies were included in the Board's packet.

The Board reviewed and discussed the revisions, with David Cox suggesting further changes.

Pelton made a motion to approve the By-laws and Policies as presented and revised. Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-009

Tim Griswold made the following motion:

WHEREAS, bids for an experienced Contractor to satisfy Estuary Transit District's need for bus signs, poles, and shelter installation for its fixed and deviated-fixed route services were solicited and opened on March 20, 2025;

BE IT RESOLVED, that K5 Corporation. be awarded the bid to assume responsibility for the aforementioned tasks;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, hereby is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents with K5 Corporation in an amount not to exceed four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000.00).

Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED ROUTE CHANGES

Fitton made a motion, seconded by Russell, to approve the route changes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

FORMATION OF AD-HOC COMMITTEE

Griswold made a motion, seconded by Fitton, to add the responsibility of devising a formula to calculate due structure to the Expansion Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Board Retreat

Strauss introduced David Lee, facilitator. The agenda and materials for the Retreat will be forwarded to Board members.

CHAIR COMMENTS – None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING - 6/13/25

Strauss made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:11 a.m. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Denison
Clerk