

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT RVT MEETING

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT

REGULAR MEETING
March 10, 2023
Middletown Offices and via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Leslie Strauss, Chairman at 9:11 a.m. A quorum was established with the following board members present: Leslie Strauss, Tim Griswold, Joan Gay, DG Fitton, Jim Irish, Angus McDonald, John Hall, Karl Kilduff, David Lahm, Beverly Lawrence, and Bobbye Knoll Peterson.

Absent: Charlie Norz

Also in attendance: Joe Comerford, Chris Denison, Brendan Geraghty, Jared Whitcomb, Halyna Famiglietti, Ben Florsheim, Ben Limmer and Mutez Ennab.

Mayor Florsheim and Ben Limmer were welcomed to the District.

VISITOR COMMENTS – None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

DG Fitton made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of the 2/10/23 Board meeting as presented. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the minutes from the Finance meeting dated 2/24/23 as presented. Jim Irish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes from the Board meeting dated 2/27/23 as presented. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joan Gay made a motion to accept the minutes from the Facilities Committee meeting dated 2/28/23 as presented. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS – None.

TREASURER'S REPORT – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities – Joan provided an update as follows:

- The walkthrough of Shoreline site was done in January.
 - Owner is open to selling
- Master Plan includes Title VI and NEPA study for both MAT and Shoreline
 - Septic system negotiations to be concluded and notice to proceed could be issued withing 30 days
- Updated topographic and property survey done for MAT maintenance facility

- Bureau Chief will tour the Middletown property.
- Environmental Site Assessment/Phase II has been complete.
- Electrification - Energy Consultant is analyzing data

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Facilities Report as presented. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee – None.

Marketing Committee

A copy of the Marketing Committee report was included in the Board packet and “screen shared”. The Board had an in-depth discussion regarding the upcoming “rollout” of the District scheduled on 4/1/23 including bus logos, branding, clothing/uniforms, advertising, website updates, signage, stationery, and fare media.

Brendan is working on trifold a brochure including maps. Note that this is an interim brochure as upcoming service changes will affect routes.

April 1 was chosen as the “launch” date as fares will resume on 4/1.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Marketing Committee Report as presented. Karl Kilduff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Committee

- The first Legislative/Selectman Breakfast is scheduled on 3/29 @ 8 a.m. All were invited to attend.
- A copy of the District’s testimony regarding several bills under consideration at the Legislature was included in the Board packet. Joan provided an overview of the testimony and was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.
 - The Legislative Committee agreed, as a whole on the positions reflected in the testimony submitted.

As previously discussed, the State has expressed an interest in our Fare Study. The free fares being “pushed” by cities would not be viable for the District. We do offer free fares for qualified individuals.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Legislative Committee report as presented. John Hall seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Joe Comerford reported:

- The Triennial review is on-going (due to the merger this is the second year in a row of a Triennial review as MAT was done last year).
- The State review is also underway because part of the District is considered “rural”.
- The Fare Study is “paused” as we work with the state on the expanded scope of the project.
- The buses that were ordered 2 years ago have been delivered and wrapped with the new logo. Additional buses are on order.
- On going projects included:

- Security cameras at maintenance facility
- Preparation to re-start fare collection on 4/1 (preparing ticket outlets).
- Radios are being programmed.
- AVL is being installed.
- Working on a free Transit App that can be used on various systems; i.e. NYC and throughout the State of Connecticut.

Angus McDonald made a motion to accept the Executive Director’s report as presented. Karl Kilduff seconded the motion the motion passed unanimously.

TRANSIT PLANNER’S REPORT – New RVT Transit Brochure

A copy of the brochure/map was included in the Board’s packet. Brendan provided an overview of same. As discussed above the brochure/map is temporary/interim for next 3 to 6 months as the District is being “relaunched”.

Brendan reported:

- XMile – Middletown route– began again last semester. Wesleyan provided funding for Friday and Saturday runs.
- Fare boxes are being upgraded.
- Terminal upgrades are on-going including electric signs with real time information, updated screens inside terminals with information on routes, outdoor kiosk.
- Madison has expressed an interest in the District.
 - Received over 200 responses and good feedback as a result of the survey
- Outreach – public feedback sessions on-going relative to schedules and route changes.
 - Upcoming Public Meetings – 3/29 in Clinton and 3/30 in Middletown (ZOOM options available).
- Applied for the State’s Micro Transit program for up to 2 years of service.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

Additional discussion will take place when the contract is ratified by employees.

NEW BUSINESS

Micro-Transit Software Purchase

Angus McDonald made the following motion:

Resolved, that the Executive Director, Joseph Comerford, is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents by and between Via Mobility LLC and the Estuary Transit District required to purchase Microtransit Software for the Estuary Transit District in an amount not to exceed \$86,226.00 in initial fees exclusive of annual licensing, maintenance agreements, and hosting, upon final approved by the Chairman, Leslie Strauss, Treasurer, Charles Norz, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Jan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Name Change –

The following motion was made at the 2/10/23 meeting:

“Tim Griswold made a motion to adopt River Valley Transit as the District’s official name, subject to all appropriate procedures. DG Fitton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously”.

After further discussion with the District’s attorney it was determined that there was no benefit in “officially” changing the name of the District. It was recommended that the Estuary Transit District remain the legal name of the entity and “River Valley Transit” be the DBA (Doing Business As).

Joan Gay made a motion to rescind the motion made at the 2/10/23 meeting and retain Estuary Transit District as the legal name of the District and River Valley Transit as the DBA. Angus McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bus Advertising

The Board engaged in a lively, in-depth discussion on the pros and cons of allowing advertising on the buses. Of note:

- Approximately \$55,000 in revenue realized from advertising contracts.
- The Board has limited control over what may be placed in the advertisements.

At the 2/10/23 meeting, the Board directed Joe to develop and RFP for advertising on the buses (back only) for Board consideration.

Angus McDonald made a motion to stop accepting new ads for the buses and to not solicit any new contracts for ads until the next budget season, effective 3/10/23. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Leslie commended the staff for their work on a variety of projects including branding, the upcoming launch of the District and the Triennial and State reviews.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

Next meeting – 4/10/23

ADJOURNMENT

Angus McDonald made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 a.m. Joan Gay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk