



**MUNICIPAL PARTNERS TRANSIT COMMITTEE
BREWER AUDITORIUM CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Jeremy Caron, City of Brewer
Karen Fussell, City of Brewer
Ron Harriman, City of Old Town
Linda Johns, City of Brewer
Laurie Linscott, Community Connector

Connie Reed, BACTS
Amy Rau, MaineDOT
Janna Newman Richards, Town of Orono
Tom Spitz, University of Maine

Guests Present:

Martin Chartrand, Transportation for All
Marcia Larkin, Penquis
Galen Lavertue, Penquis

Kole McBairty, Pequis
Tammy Tewhey, Penquis

Call to Order: Karen Fussell called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Introductions were made.

Approval of September 6, 2017 meeting minutes: Tom Spitz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Karen Fussell seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

FY19 Budget Process Timeline: Connie Reed let the Committee know that she met with Mike Crooker on November 29 and he anticipates having preliminary FY19 Community Connector budget numbers to discuss with the Committee in February. With the November meeting being pushed to December and the January meeting falling directly after the holidays, the Committee will not meet on January 3. However, meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of February, March and April to work through the budget process/season. All three of these meetings are scheduled for 10:00 a.m. at the Machias Savings Bank Conference Room in Brewer.

2017 Ridership Statistics: Community Connector ridership statistics indicate ridership continued to decrease in FY 2017. Five-year ridership statistics by Municipality were presented. Several factors contribute to the decreases; however, it is essential for the system to increase ridership in order to meet Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) service factors to qualify for the performance-based funding. This funding has been a substantial portion of Community Connector federal funding since 2013.

STIC FUNDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY CONNECTOR TOTAL FTA \$5307 FUNDING			
FFY	Total STIC Funding	Factors Met	% of Total FTA Funding
2013	\$ 541,382	3	40.92%
2014	\$ 576,049	3	42.12%
2015	\$ 377,575	2	32.34%
2016	\$ 378,864	2	31.97%
2017	\$ 382,076	2	31.81%

Community Connector 101 Presentation: Laurie Linscott presented the history of the bus system in Bangor, which began in 1976 with 6 buses and 4 routes. Today, Community Connector operates 24 buses on 14 routes, 10 of which are unique routes.

In 2005, the University of Maine in Orono contracted with Community Connector to offer students free fare with their student ID. The program was so popular, it was expanded and now, with the recent addition of Beal College, all Universities and Colleges in the area now participate in free fares for students and staff with School IDs. In FY 17, 123,105 rides were provided through these contracts.

Community Connector experienced many major changes in 2013. Joe McNeil, the long-time Bus Superintendent retired; bus drivers Unionized; the Governor designated the City of Bangor as an FTA direct-recipient; and MaineCare changed their non-emergency transportation program.

With the FTA direct-recipient designation, the City of Bangor receives funding directly from FTA, rather than receiving sub-allocated funding through MaineDOT, and is subject to FTA reporting and review requirements. In 2016, Community Connector had its first FTA Triennial Review covering FY 13, 14 and 15. The next FTA Triennial review will occur in 2019, covering FY 16, 17 and 18.

Community Connector has been working to update the bus fleet. In 2015, 2 buses with mid-life overhauls were purchased. In 2016, 4 buses with end of life overhauls were ordered and put in service in 2017. In September 2017, 2 brand new buses were delivered. In 2016, Community Connector was awarded a discretionary grant to purchase 5 new buses. These 5 buses will be acquired as part of a piggy-back contract with the State of Connecticut. Although the manufacturer has not confirmed the schedule, Community Connector plans to stagger the bus purchases with 2 in CY 2018, 2 in CY 2019 and 1 in CY 2020. When purchasing new buses, FTA requires pre-production and post-production reviews. In 2016 and 2017, Laurie and Eric Willett, the City of Bangor's Director of Fleet Maintenance, along with a third-party contractor, traveled to the Gillig manufacturing plant in California for these reviews. For the upcoming piggyback purchase of the 5 new buses, Laurie and Eric will travel to Gillig once for a pre-production meeting on all 5 buses, and again prior to each delivery for the post-production factory inspection. At the 2017 Tri-State Transit Conference in September both Laurie and Eric attended the 3-day CTAA Vehicle Maintenance Management and Inspection Training and Certification Program so they will not have a third-party contractor assist them.

Fixed-route public transportation providers are required to provide ADA Complementary Paratransit services for individuals that are unable to use the regular fixed-route service due to disability. There is an eligibility process which must be met in order to be able to use the service. Riders must schedule their trip a day in advance so it does not provide as much flexibility or freedom for the rider. The application,

interviewing and reservations process is done at the Community Connector administrative office on Maine Avenue and transportation is currently provided by LYNX.

The Community Connector administrative office, Hannaford, municipal offices and other retail locations sell bus tickets, at least one location in each town served by the bus system. Drivers do not sell tickets on the bus. When this process changed, riders adapted quickly to the change. There is also a vending machine at the bus depot that the City of Bangor Economic Development Department funded.

Currently, the Community Connector administrative office is staffed by a Superintendent, an Operations Manager, a Compliance Office and a full-time Dispatcher. Success has required more time and effort for the staff to meet the duties required of a direct recipient. There are also between 35 and 37 bus drivers on staff.

Community Connector's funding model is antiquated. Communities share of bus revenues and expenses are all individually counted and credited for each specific route. This is no longer working and the City of Bangor is working on a new cost sharing model that will be introduced with the FY19 budget. The new model will be a more system-wide model that more closely mirrors industry-wide standards of billing based on hours and miles. This will make it easier to track and make equitable in a more formalized manner. Community Connector needs to acquire more technology to adequately collect data.

Transit needs to be considered early in project review by municipal leaders and developers. Get Community Connector staff to the table to ensure that transit is available and able to physically service the planned developments. Planning Boards and Councils should add Community Connector to their checklists and include them early in the project planning phase.

The Community Connector administrative office will be moving into the new building in a couple weeks. The new address is 475 Maine Avenue located at the same site as the Motor Pool.

Some of the projects Community Connector is currently working on include designating stops. The proposed designated stops, along with a bus stop/ bus shelter policy, and maintenance requirements will be presented to the Committee. New maps and brochures will be produced once finalized. The City of Bangor just completed the RFP process for Paratransit Service, and is finalizing and RFP for Technology/Software to enable collect data and eventually provide real-time bus data anticipated to be completed Friday (12/8) or Monday (12/11).

The Community Connector system provided 605,083 revenue miles and 46,893 revenue hours in FY 2016. The annual budget for Community Connector in FY 2018 is \$3.2 million, compared to \$3.1 million in FY 2017 and \$2.8 million in both FY 2015 and 2016.

Advertising income offsets local costs. Advertising can be purchased for both the interior and exterior of the bus. To wrap a bus it costs approximately \$1,500 for production and about an hour of labor to apply. Material used for the wrap is based on the length of the contract. A more expensive material is used for longer contracts, but shorter contracts can use a less expensive material to produce the wrap. Community Connector does not require printing to be done at any particular location. Any non-profit organizations can get advertising free on the bus if space is available. Interior advertisements can be printed on any material.

The student bus pass allows students through high school to purchase an unlimited monthly pass for \$20. This program has not been as popular as they had hoped for. In addition students of Penobscot Job Corp and Alternative Education can participate in the student bus pass program. There is no age restriction for children riding by themselves.

Future Agenda Items: Marcia Larkin said she would like to do a presentation for the Committee about the public transportation programs and different funding sources that LYNX offers. Linda Johns suggested that BACTS compile a list of available public transportation providers and options to distribute to member municipalities so that they can provide residents with information about available public transportation resources and options.

Laurie Linscott stated that in February, Community Connector will be presenting municipalities participating in the bus system with a service contract.

Karen Fussell requested that the February meeting also include a Community Connector Finances 101 presentation as the new funding model is developed to help keep all participating municipalities an active part of the process.

Additional short-term projects to be on future agendas include proposed changes to routes and fixed-stops, and proposed bus stop and shelter maintenance policies.

Other Business: Martin Chartrand told the group that Transportation For All is requesting the Committee for assistance in getting surveys regarding expanding the bus hours to individuals who are not necessarily already riding the bus. Martin said he will send the survey for members to add a link or the survey to their websites, social media accounts and/or newsletters. Janna Richards said Orono has a newsletter and she would be happy to include something in their newsletter.

Adjourn: Linda Johns made a motion to adjourn. Tom Spitz seconded the motion.