



**MUNICIPAL PARTNERS TRANSIT COMMITTEE**

**Code Room, Brewer City Hall**

**Wednesday, May 2, 2018**

**9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Michael Crooker, City of Bangor  
Jeremy Caron, City of Brewer  
Ron Harriman, City of Old Town  
Linda Johns, City of Brewer  
Belle Ryder, Town of Orono  
Jeremy Clay, Community Connector

Karen Fussell, City of Brewer  
Laurie Linscott, Community Connector  
Sherri Clark, Community Connector  
Tom Spitz, University of Maine  
Sean Carrier, Town of Hampden  
Mary Ann Hayes, Maine DOT

**Staff Present:**

Connie Reed, BACTS  
Cindy Meservey, BACTS

**Guests Present:**

Martin Chartrand, Transportation for All  
Lisa Feldman, Transportation for All  
Jack McKay, Transportation for All

Jennifer DeGross, Transportation for All  
Jane Cutter, ATA Outdoor Marketing  
MaryAnne Carpenter, ATA Outdoor Marketing

**Call to Order:** Michael Crooker called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Introductions were made.

**Approval of April 4, 2018 meeting minutes:** Laurie Linscott made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Linda Johns seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

**ATA Outdoor Marketing Presentation:** MaryAnne Carpenter and Jane Cutter from ATA Outdoor Marketing gave a presentation. ATA has been helping the Community Connector with advertising for the past 19 years. The company provides advertising on billboards, transit buses and shelters. In the future, they are looking at installing digital advertising in shelters. It is still expensive at this point, but will hopefully become less expensive eventually.

Maine and Vermont are non-billboard states, so another option may be digital kiosks running six to eight videos about 8 seconds long each. The kiosks could also be used for Amber Alerts or route problems. The kiosks are two-sided and weather protected. The monthly electrical cost is low. In order to use the kiosks, several need to be done at a time at \$20,000 per unit and advertising needs to bring in \$150 to \$200 per

month per ad. ATA indicated that In order for advertisers to be persuaded to purchase digital advertising on these types of kiosks, they look for assurance of reaching 1,000 eyes per day.

When looking at what types of companies are buying transit advertising, 20% are national agencies like US Cellular or Dunkin Donuts. Regional companies make up 50%, which include organizations such as Delta Dental and Catholic Charities. Local advertisers such as Hollywood Slots or Eastern Maine Medical Center, make up 30%. ATA is working on tapping into the State's non-profit agencies marketing needs to expand the list of local transit advertisers. ATA is phasing out the availability of free advertising for non-profits.

For 12 years US Cellular dominated transit advertising markets, and was the largest of Community Connector's advertisers.. Last July, the new President at US Cellular made the decision discontinue transit advertising, moving the majority of marketing resources to digital platforms rather than print billboards and transit. Jane is meeting with them in June, but she assumes the money is not coming back. To fill the gaps, ATA will target local companies as well as regional and national companies. Bangor will be included in any proposal for advertising in Maine.

ATA is relying on the municipal partners to increase local awareness of the available options and process for advertising on the Community Connector buses. Jane provided the group with rate sheets to share with interested parties. Buying options range from four weeks to annually. The individual advertiser enters into a contract with ATA Outdoor Marketing, not Community Connector. Community Connector contracts ATA Outdoor Marketing. If local business need information, they can contact Laurie Linscott. MaryAnne will work with local advertisers to figure out options within their budgets. Advertisers can provide their own artwork or ATA can assist in graphic design services for \$65 - \$75 per hour. For the full bus wraps, artwork is required 30 days prior and for bus signs artwork is required two weeks prior to the contract start date. The ad dollars go directly to Community Connector and are spread across the system.

**FY19 Community Connector Budget Presentation:** Michael Crooker shared the Community Connector budget presentation given to the Bangor City Council. The presentation consisted of current year accomplishments, significant challenges and major goals and objectives. Two new buses were acquired during FY2018, and the goal is to purchase three new buses in FY2019, two in October and one in April. Another accomplishment listed was the award of a \$1.9 million grant that will fund an additional five new buses. Michael noted that they are working on finalizing the proposal to acquire technology on buses to allow for better data collection and real-time bus tracking for riders. .

The budget summary showed the budgeted expenses and revenues for each municipality for FY2017, FY2018, and proposed for FY2019. The increases in expenses are due to maintenance, overhead, fuel, payroll and health insurance. This is the first year in the new building, so the costs of heat, lights and insurance are unknown at this time. The actual cost of motor pool employee time to perform fleet maintenance is \$65/hour; however, they are currently billing Community Connector \$45/hour. The City of Bangor will be increasing the hourly rate annually to capture actual cost. FY19 fleet maintenance labor will be billed to Community Connector at \$50/hour.

Also included in budget packet was expenses and revenues for Bangor for the past three years. Michael told the members present that Laurie sent all the partners information on what their budgeted fiscal year 2019 share of the local cost will be. Ron Harriman asked Laurie to send Old Town's information to him. The FY 19 budget was compiled using the same manner of cost allocation used in previous years. However,

the City of Bangor and BACTS have been working together on developing a more simplified, transparent, and less time consuming approach to allocating costs based on the system as a whole. The City of Bangor will discontinue recording Community Connector revenues and expenses as four separate departments (each municipality has been considered a separate department within Community Connector) beginning with the new fiscal year on July 1. The Black Bear Orono Express will continue to be recorded as a separate entity because the funding and operations of the shuttle is billed 100 percent independently by the Town of Orono and the University and is not included in any federal, state and local cost sharing.

Connie compiled data on FY17 reported hours, miles, rides and number of buses by each municipality and met with Debbie Cyr to develop a proposed streamlined cost allocation formula that is premised on the bus system being a truly regional system running as one individual entity, rather than four separate entities. This change will alleviate administrative burdens placed on Laurie and free up a significant amount of her time to focus on operational issues and tasks. Connie distributed tables showing percentage of total system hours, miles, rides and buses, as well as a combined average percentage of all four factors by each municipality. Keeping in mind the goals of minimizing administrative burden for Community Connector staff and developing a process that is as equitable and straightforward as possible for all partners, Connie and Debbie decided to propose an allocation formula that uses the average percentage of all four factors applied consistently to all revenues, expenditures and grant allocations.

Linda Johns suggested that using a formula that correlates ridership to revenues could be an incentive for municipalities to implement strategies to increase ridership. An increase in riders should mean more benefit to the community. Linda asked if more detail showing the actual numbers for ridership, miles and hours and how the calculations affect budget numbers (rather than showing only a percent of total) could be provided for the committee to review and discuss. Connie will prepare the data and bring it to the next meeting for discussion. The Committee suggested Community Connector develop a similar process/formula to assess capital costs and discuss at the next meeting as well.

Belle Ryder and Tom Spitz asked Laurie to provide them with detail on the Black Bear Orono Express revenue and expenses for FY 19 as well so they can provide the information to the Orono Town Council and University in order to complete their budgeting process.

The City of Bangor does not currently allocate indirect costs to Community Connector operations because their Indirect Cost Allocation Plan is outdated and does not have approval from their cognizant agency. FTA has indicated no indirect costs can be applied to their federal funding because of this. However, these expenses are still incurred by the City of Bangor. Debbie Cyr is working on calculating the amount of indirect costs associated with Community Connector operations, and will be assessing a representative share of those costs in each local municipal share.

The requested additional data and figures will be provided at the next meeting for Committee discussion, review and consensus on the manner in which to allocate local costs to each municipal partner in operating the Community Connector bus system.

**Transportation for All Survey Results Presentation:** Martin Chartrand, TfA Organizer; Jack McKay, Director of Food and Medicine; and Lisa Feldman, TfA Committee member and Orono resident presented the findings of Transportation for All's survey on Community Connector Bus Service Improvements. The goal of the survey was to collect feedback on the level of interest in expanding bus service hours. TfA believes the

survey results demonstrate the interest and need for expanding service hours, and recognize there will be investments required by the municipalities in order to meet the needs for implementing service upgrades. Respondents were asked to provide feedback on what kind of impact adding evening service would have on their lives and to identify which routes would be of most significance to them. Respondents were also asked about other improvements that would eliminate obstacles in using the bus for their regular transportation needs.

The four main commentaries by respondents for improving service and making the bus an attractive option for riders are:

- Expand service hours in the evenings and on Sunday
- Make it easier to understand and ride the bus
  - Designate stops
  - Provide real-time tracking
- Prioritize needs and include riders/users of the bus and operators/drivers in the decision making process
- The current service schedule does not meet the needs of residents and makes it difficult to choose the bus

TfA asked the Committee to consider the bus as an agent of economic development and social connection and raise the priority of extending service in the evening and on Sunday. The current service schedule was listed most often by respondents as a barrier to using the bus. The current schedule and route system were set in the 1970s. This was before there was evening work and shopping hours. Demographics are changing and the population is aging. There are more elderly wanting to get out at night for shopping or activities.

Some respondents felt the system is hard to use. One manager of senior housing indicated he had no idea how to advise residents on how to use the bus. Adding easier methods of fare payment and making the system easier to use would increase ridership.

Transportation for All encouraged the municipalities to use BACTS staff's expertise and work together to put a plan in place that addresses the needs of their residents including those who ride and those who drive the buses.

Martin expressed TfA's concerns about but proposed \$100,000 to fund a transit hub study included in the City of Bangor's FY19 budget. TfA's position is that there are other immediate needs in the bus system that need to be addressed and that money would be put to better use toward tasks to meet and achieving those goals, such as designating stops, bus maintenance, and addressing the shortage of drivers. The focus of the proposed study is unclear, there has not been any stakeholder involvement in the discussions and the cost and impact on operations is concerning. A transit hub alternative study completed in 2014 by Crikelair Associates included some route change recommendations that have not yet been implemented. TfA is urging municipal leaders to harness the social capital within the bus drivers and riders by providing an official and formalized forum for drivers and riders to be involved in discussions addressing concerns and policy decisions.

Martin Chartrand let everyone know he will be moving on from his position as TfA Organizer and Jack McKay will be taking over this role going forward.

**Community Connector Projects/Initiatives Update:** The City of Bangor received one bid in response to the ADA Complementary Paratransit Service RFP from Penquis. The procurement process requires a review of the submission for quality prior to looking at the price/cost proposals. City of Bangor staff have looked at the proposal and will be meeting with Penquis staff to go through it together. The current agreement with Penquis for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service has been extended through the end of the fiscal year. Michael is hoping to finalize the plan for service by the end of May.

Adding technology to the buses is the next step. The City of Bangor is still working on finalizing the RFP, and expects approval to post the RFP by the end of June. Implementation is expected to occur in phases. The first step of equipping buses with tablets for data collection is anticipated to be implemented in September or October. The second phase will be to equip buses with ADA compliant enunciation equipment. The scope of the RFP is broad and encompassing to allow the City of Bangor to prioritize features based on needs and available resources.

Sherri Clark told the group that Community Connector is required to have an ADA Complementary Paratransit eligibility process which includes a mechanism for appealing decisions. The Community Connector ADA Eligibility Appeals Committee has not met since April, 2017. Sherri would like to set up a meeting for informational and operational overview. She asked Connie if she would be willing to take Don Cooper's place on the committee. Connie agreed to participate.

**Municipal Events/Projects/Developments Update:** A detour plan is in place for Orono Rangeley Road closures during construction of the roundabout. The plan is on the University website. All bus shelters will have laminated maps showing the alternate routes. Old Town will be the most affected due to service being only one way.

Laurie reminded everyone that it is helpful to provide Community Connector with advance notice of any projects or events in the community that will affect traffic along the bus routes so they can make adequate plans and provide notice to the riders of any changes to services times and location that will result.

**MaineDOT Update:** MaryAnn Hayes indicated DOT is in the process of working out the details of the funds that will be made available for transit in the state from the Volkswagen settlement. MaineDOT is currently evaluating the state of good repair of the fleets. All transit providers will be contacted once MaineDOT clarifies what types of projects will be acceptable to submit for funding requests. The monies will be allocated to MaineDOT sub-recipients first. MaineDOT is currently working with southern Maine bus systems on an FTA Lo-No Grant to purchase electric buses and infrastructure, with the intent to leverage the grant by proposing to use settlement monies to subsidize the required local share.

MaryAnn reported that MaineDOT has hired a consultant to update the mandated Locally Coordinated Plans that are completed every five years. DHHS has assigned a transportation liaison and will be meeting with MaineDOT on May 14. These efforts are all supported by the Maine Transit Advisory Council's efforts to upgrade interagency relationships.

Maine is on the Move Mobility conference is scheduled for May 17 in Augusta. The goal of the conference is to increase awareness of the needs and resources in order to facilitate better coordination of transportation services. MaineDOT has developed an RFP for a consultant to provide network support for volunteer networks including the potential for cooperative projects/purchasing.

MaryAnn reiterated that the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Agreement between the State, MPO and transportation providers that details mutual responsibilities for the metropolitan planning process and sharing of performance data in order to meet performance-based planning management and measurement requirements of the FAST Act must be signed by May 27 or no federal transportation projects can proceed in the BACTS area. As part of the Locally Coordinated Planning process, MaineDOT will be developing level of service standards and agreements with each transit agency in addition to the federally required performance measures.

**Other Business/Future Agenda Items:** The next meeting would be on July 4. It was decided that the next meeting will be the first Wednesday in June, which is the 6<sup>th</sup>. Connie will send out a notice.

**Adjourn:** 11:56 a.m.