



MUNICIPAL PARTNERS TRANSIT COMMITTEE

Council Chambers, Bangor City Hall

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Members:

Amy Rau, Maine DOT (via phone)
Kyle Drexler, Town of Orono
Karen Fussell, City of Brewer
Belle Ryder, City of Brewer
Linda Johns, City of Brewer
Jim Chandler, Town of Hampden
Tom Spitz, University of Maine

Community Connector Staff:

Laurie Linscott

BACTS Staff:

Rob Kenerson
Connie Reed
Cindy Meservey

Guests:

Lisa Feldman, Transportation for All
Darcy Cooke, Transportation for All
Marcia Larkin, Penquis
Jack McKay, Transportation for All

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Karen. Introductions were made.

Approval of May 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes: Linda made a motion to approve the May 1 meeting minutes as presented. Kyle seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Interlocal Service Agreements/Capital Reserve Contributions: The City of Bangor sent out updated service agreements for everyone to review and sign. Belle asked Laurie to set up a meeting to discuss the Black Bear Orono Express Shuttle. Karen stated that she is still reviewing the document and continues to have concerns about the capital reserve contributions. The agreement does not clearly describe how the capital reserve funds will be handled. The annual contribution amounts are calculated as though there are no grant funds available; however, there are grant funds available. The annual capital reserve contribution amount is onerous for the City of Brewer. Karen expressed her concern as Finance Director, and her responsibility to the citizens of Brewer, to ensure that there are proper mechanisms in place to keep track of Brewer's financial contributions and ensure they do not pay more than required to meet needs.

Laurie stated that beginning in FY20 the capital reserve funds paid by each municipality are going to be held in a community fund with the municipality's name. The Bangor City Council must vote to allow the reserve funds to be used. It would also be discussed at the Municipal Partners Transit Committee meeting. Laurie said from year to year federal funding availability is not certain, and even if grants are available, they are competitive, so there is no guarantee. The fleet can't be in disrepair. The fleet will be completely brand new this winter. Two more new buses are being delivered in July and five more in December. With the new buses and bus warranties, maintenance costs should decrease dramatically after December. In FY21, the decrease in maintenance costs should offset some of the cost of capital reserve.

Karen asked that Laurie include the itemized annual budget with the fiscal year projected local share letter, as well as sending an itemized budget to actual statement each quarter, so municipalities can see what the costs are. The group decided that it would be beneficial to add a regular agenda item for a financial report showing budget to actual revenues and expenses.

Karen commented the Agreement only addresses capital needs for buses, there are more capital needs than just buses that need to be addressed. This is a three-year agreement and should address all capital needs. Laurie stated that once the transit study is done, there will be a recommended implementation plan which includes a capital plan and should include other expenses such as technology and facilities. She will talk to Rich about adding language to include other expenses.

The agreement as drafted does not address how the capital reserve funds will be handled. Language should be included in the agreement that details the process, from determining annual reserve contribution amount to how funds are returned to a municipality.

Laurie said she is applying for a FY19 Bus and Bus Facilities grant, which is due June 21, to replace the waiting area at the parking garage that will be taken out with the Pickering Square construction. She is requesting funds to build a new transit center with waiting room and bathrooms. There was discussion about construction process requirements and restrictions placed on use of federal transportation funds.

Discussion about the other municipalities being able to have more opportunity to provide feedback and have say in decisions before they are made ensued. Linda asked if there had been any thought or discussion about forming a transit district or authority so that all the municipalities that have a financial stake in the transit system can have an equal vote in how it is running. There have been discussions, but there are many hurdles that the Community Connector would need to get past. Jim cautioned the group and explained that a district comes with administrative headaches. Connie stated that there are other possibilities to explore that fall between forming a Transit Authority and having no opportunity for input on decision making. This Committee is a good start to having those discussions and making changes.

FY20 Community Connector Budget: (*Attachment*) Laurie told the group she sent the budget out in table format to make it easier to read. All the information provided was part of the presentation to the Bangor City Council. The budget has been approved by Bangor City Council. The anticipated local share for fiscal year 2020 was sent to each municipality in May and was broken out by operating expense and capital reserve. Karen asked Laurie to include the budget with the quarterly payment letter.

Transit Study Update: Laurie has a conference call tomorrow with Stantec to discuss the routes. Stantec is winding down and should be sending a draft soon. Laurie will talk to Rich about getting the draft out to the Committee. Linda asked if there should be a special meeting to discuss the draft report. The Committee agreed that it would be a good idea. Laurie said Rich is the lead on the study, so he will reach out when it is ready.

Jack stated that he attended five meetings with Stantec when they were in town. There was great representation of businesses and public. One thing the consultants made clear is that Pickering Square is as good as it gets for the bus hub. Moving past the debate of the bus hub location, the focus can be put on the routes, stops and technology.

Rob noted that Stantec will provide recommendations, and some of those may be able to be implemented easily and quickly; but many of the recommendations will require discussions to take place

at the City Council, Government Ops Committee, this Committee, BACTS Policy Committee, and even potentially with FTA, prior to determining whether or not implementation is feasible. Any changes need to make sense and some trade-offs may need to be made.

Discussion ensued about publicizing changes when they happen and how Transportation for All can assist in getting messages out to the public.

5-Year NTD Performance Metrics: (*Attachment*) Connie told the Committee that in addition to the federally mandated performance measures MPOs are required to report on, MaineDOT has asked the MPOs to collect the most recent five years of data as reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) and track performance of Asset Management, System Efficiency, and Safety for the fixed route transit systems in their urbanized areas, and examine these measures at least once annually.

The 5-year NTD performance analysis for the Community Connector based on the reports from 2013-2017. Asset Management, or the percentage of fleet exceeding its useful life is not yet reported to the NTD. These statistics will be included with the 2018 NTD reports, as this is a federal requirement of the Transit Asset Management rule. Safety performance measures are also federally mandated as part of the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan, but do not impose any additional reporting requirements to the NTD.

The data shows that over the last five years, Community Connector's operating expenses have gone up, while revenues and ridership have gone down. The NTD 2017 National Transit Summary and Trends report indicates that this is also the trend nationwide, but at a lower rate than the Community Connector has experienced. In 2017, Community Connector reported a cost per revenue hour lower than the national average, and a fare recovery rate which is right in line with the national average. The operating expense funding source breakdown for Community Connector looks dramatically different than national average; however, this can be attributed to the Community Connector's eligibility as a recipient in a small UZA to use Section 5307 funds for operating assistance with no limitation. Recipients in large UZAs, are not able to use Section 5307 funds for operating assistance unless they are specifically identified by FTA as eligible, and even those deemed eligible to use Section 5307 funds for operating expenses have limitations on how much of the funding may be used for those expenses.

Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Rule: (*Attachment*) Connie gave a brief overview of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule, which is effective July 19, 2019. Transit providers must have a PTASP in place by July 20, 2020. This Plan goes hand-in-hand with the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan which was implemented in October 2018. The PTASP is the final of the performance-based planning rules to be implemented. The PTASP rule states that a state must draft and certify a safety plan on behalf of small transit providers, unless the provider decides to draft and certify their own plan. Laurie stated that the City of Bangor is leaning toward writing their own Plan. MaineDOT has asked that transit providers submit written notification of their intent. There are several components to the Plan, which must be reviewed and updated annually. The transit provider is also required to set initial safety performance targets addressing the safety performance measures in the National Public Transportation Safety Plan by July 20, 2020 and provide them to their MPO and State DOT with their PTASP. MPOs are required to set initial safety performance targets by January 20, 2021. As is the case with all of the national performance measures established under the performance-based planning and programming rule, MPOs must link investment priorities in the TIP to achieve performance targets. The rule requires BACTS to reference Community Connector's TAM and PTASP Plans and performance targets in the TIP and MTP; link investment priorities to the region's performance targets; provide a description of the performance measures and targets assessed; and provide a system performance report and updates

evaluating system performance, condition, and progress in Plans and Programs.

Community Connector Projects/Initiatives Update: Laurie reported that two new buses will be delivered in July.

The FTA triennial review information was submitted in May. The reviewers will be here October 8, 9, and 10.

A new morning dispatcher has been hired. The safety position is still vacant and bus drivers are needed.

Bus shelters are popping up. DHHS is moving July 15 and they have put up a shelter at their new location. The play park in Capehart has put up a shelter. Wayfair has put up a shelter. All these shelters will be privately maintained by the individual organizations.

The Veterans Clinic property renovations are complete, and the bus is now able to access it. Changes to the Mount Hope and Stillwater Avenue routes are going to be made to accommodate adding a new stop servicing the clinic effective July 15. Since the change will be increasing service, the Public Participation Plan does not require any public meetings. The change will be advertised on the website, newspaper and press release.

The bus shelter that is located at the former NexLinx site on the Black Bear Orono Express route will be removed. Belle asked Laurie to notify the Black Bear Inn that the shelter will be removed and the bus stop is being eliminated.

The Pickering Square Bus Depot is moving to the temporary space either June 10 or 17. Laurie requested that the move happen on a Monday so that trial runs can be done Sunday to ensure that buses can fit prior to runs starting. When the change happens, buses will be opposite to traffic.

Municipal Events/Projects/Developments Update: Linda announced that Brewer is having the Riverwalk grand opening celebration on Saturday (June 8). The ribbon cutting is at 1:00 p.m. Other events will be happening from 11 to 4 and include food, music, and a fun run. The trolley will be providing rides from the Auditorium to the Waterfront.

Jim said the Hampden Town Council is talking about adding bus service on Saturdays in the future. Looking at cost of adding additional service using the current formula for local share of operating expenses, it brought up an interesting wrinkle in the formula that increasing service in one community increased local share of costs in all other communities. Discussion ensued regarding looking forward to projected service hours, not backward to past service hours, if/when a change in service were to occur.

Maine DOT Update: Amy reported that the Mobility Management Team will be starting online meetings this month. There will be an Introduction to Mobility Management. Amy will send the announcement to Connie, and she will send it out to the group.

Other Business: Connie sent a list of proposed meeting dates for the rest of the year to work around the dates that fall on or near holidays. It was mentioned that October 2nd is the MMA Convention. Belle suggested holding the meetings on the odd months, but changing from first Wednesday of the month to second Wednesday. Everyone agreed.

Adjourn: 11:18 a.m.