

MAINE TRANSIT ASSOCIATION



Minutes of Wednesday, February 21, 2024 Via ZOOM

Members Present:

Greg Jordan, GPMetro
Tom Reinauer, YCCAC
Chad Heid, BSOOB Transit
Marsha Bennett, WMTS
Stephanie Farrar, Tammy Tewhey, PenquisCAP
Laurie Linscott, Bangor Community Connector
Jack De Beradinis, RTP
Erin Binghalib, KVCAP
Larry Allen, AVCoG/ATRC
Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines
Madeline Jensen, BACTS
Donna Tippet, SPBS
Jaimie Parsons, WaldoCAP
Micah Desmond, ARTS
Terry Bickford, Downeast Community Partners

Others Present: Ryan Neale, Kelly Arata, Lori Brann, Karla Chase, MaineDOT; Bill Ferdinand, Sam Hamilton, Eaton Peabody

1. Call to Order/Introductions:

Clerk Erin Binghalib called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

2. Minutes:

MOTION by Chad Heid was made to accept the minutes of January 31, 2024. **SECONDED** by Larry Allen.
MOTION passed unanimously.

3. MaineDOT Report

Ryan Neale of MaineDOT gave an update on current initiatives at the agency. Highlights include letting MTA members know that FTA has approved the latest section 5311 grants, the L/A to Portland Bus Design Study (applications are due on Monday, February 26th with a start date of June 2024), and the upcoming PTAC meeting at the end of the month. He also said that MaineDOT is working internally to develop a new methodology for distributing state transit funds going forward and will work with MTA members to finalize the new approach. Further, agencies should be hearing back about FTA 5339 next week and that they do not yet have an answer on for us on the FTA 5310 allocations.

There was a robust conversation about the next round of the Low or No Emission Grant Program that was announced on February 8, 2024. As in 2023, MaineDOT intends to submit a combined application for agencies interested in the **Low/No** opportunity. MaineDOT is finalizing a contract for Hatch to work with MaineDOT and interested agencies on a combined application and will be ramping up that effort soon. Applications for both the Low No and Bus and Bus Facilities programs are due April 25, 2024. Once they have a contract signed with Hatch, they will do an internal kickoff with them and then sketch out a plan going forward. They will likely want to meet with all the interested agencies broadly for an initial discussion and conversation and then move on to individual meetings with each of the agencies.

Members had questions about this year's process – if it would be similar to last year's process, whether or not there would be support for agencies who apply to move their infrastructure processes forward, and if MaineDOT has a finalized a State match amount that will be available for entities applying for funding to use in their asks. Ryan said that he believes the process will be similar to the one from last year and that would be having internal conversations about funding availability as they work with interested agencies.

4. 2025 Tri-State Transit Conference Committee Volunteers:

The Tri-State conference happens every two years and the 2025 conference will be held in Maine. It is typically a joint effort between the MTA and MaineDOT, with MTA taking the lead. A location and exact time needs to be determined. It's usually held in summer or early fall.

MaineDOT is looking for volunteers from the MTA to work closely with MaineDOT staff to organize the conference. Tom Reinauer and Micah Desmond volunteered to join the committee.

Everyone agreed that the location of the conference should have public transit and there was a vote for it to be held in Bangor.

5. Financial Update

All members should have already received their invoices for the updated dues structure with a due date of the first week of March. Agencies were encouraged to submit payments before then if at all possible as we will be operating in a deficit until they are received.

Given what each member agency submitted as their budget year operational costs, we are anticipating between \$63,000 and \$63,000 as the total revenue that will come from membership dues this fiscal year. Our contract with Eaton Peabody is approximately \$18,000, which leaves the remainder for other activities like a part-time association management firm, hosting a website, and finalizing our 990s.

At this point it seems like we are in a solid foundation moving forward to consider the efforts and activities that we proposed in this fiscal year. We still have a determination to be made around the Member Directory – whether or not we are going to be printing hard copies or not.

Lori Brann pointed out that RTAP funds can be used to print the membership directory.

6. Advocacy/Legislative Update

The Maine Legislature is in a short session this year so there are not a lot of new bills. It's mostly just bills that were carried over from the last session.

The PTAC is the next best thing that the MTA can use to affect policy agendas to set us up for the next session.

7. Association Management Search Update

After an extensive search, Officers Chad and Tom met with an association management firm, Lexian Management, last week to gauge their interest and determine whether or not it would be a good fit for the MTA. The scope of their work aligns well with what the MTA is looking for.

MTA officers will be putting together a much more detailed scope of work to enter into contract negotiations (what we would like them to do vs what they have the capacity to do) before anything is signed. MTA needs to prioritize what's most important to us based on the increased funding we have available so there is still a little more work to do on this. Looking at about 30-40 hours per month at this point.

MTA Officers hope to have the scope of work ready for review and approval at the meeting in March.

8. Information Exchange:

There was a discussion about which agencies were interested in partnering with MaineDOT in a statewide Low/No grant application – BSOOB, KVCAP, YCCAC, Metro, ARTS, and the City of Bangor all said they are interested in participating in the process. The usage of propane for vehicles was brought up as a possible avenue for more rural transportation providers. There has been no discussion at MaineDOT on the Bus and Bus Facilities portion of the grant at this point.

Greg Jordan announced his resignation from Portland Metro, which means he will no longer be able to be the MTA President. It was recommended that MTA have a member meeting in March to vote for new Officers.

9. Future Agenda Items

- Association Management Scope of Work
- Election of MTA Officers
- PTAC Representation – MTA Representation

10. Upcoming Membership Meeting:

March 20, 2024 9:00-11:00

Meeting Adjourned at 10:03am: No Motion needed