

MAINE TRANSIT ASSOCIATION



Minutes of Wednesday, March 20, 2024 via Zoom

Members Present:

Tom Reinauer, YCCAC, President*
Erin Binghalib, KVCAP, Vice President*
Chad Heid, BSOOB Transit, Treasurer
Mike Tremblay, Greater Portland Metro, Clerk*
Terry Bickford, Downeast Community Partners
Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines
Jamie Parsons, Midcoast Connector
Maddie Jensen, BACTS
Marsha Bennett, WMTS
Andrew Clark, GPCOG
Stephanie Carver, SMPDC
Laurie Linscott, City of Bangor
Kirk Bellavance, KVCAP
Jack DeBeradinis, RTP

** Officers elected during Item #4 of this meeting*

Others Present: Ryan Neale, MaineDOT; Sam Hamilton, Eaton Peabody; Micah Desmond,

1. Call to Order/Introductions:

Vice President Tom Reinauer called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

This item was initially tabled until after Item #3 while quorum could be confirmed. With a quorum, minutes from the February 21, 2024 meeting were moved for approval by Chad Heid, seconded by Hank Berg, and approved unanimously of those present without additional discussion.

3. MaineDOT Updates

Ryan Neale provided the following updates:

Transit Bus Electrification: Meeting with all interested agencies on a combined Low-No Emissions grant. Also meeting with agencies about a possible combined grant for Bus and Bus Facilities (not related to electrification). Meeting with grants team later this morning (3/20/2024). Applications for both programs are due on April 25.

Question (Chad Heid): Does the state anticipate contributing match to the Bus and Bus Facilities grant, or just the Low-No grant?

Answer: This will be determined at a meeting later today or early tomorrow (3/21/2024). I anticipate there will be some, but uncertain as to the percentage.

Intercity Bus Pilot: Decision on preferred provider in the next couple of weeks. Expected launch in June.

GTFS Flex Consulting: Finalizing contract with AECOM.

Question (Tom Reinauer): What are the next steps for flex route providers?

Answer: Once we have the contract finalized, we'll do an internal kickoff, followed by individual agency meetings to introduce the consultant to each agency.

Workforce Transportation Pilot: Completed grant assignments for ARPA funds and fully distributed. Working on press release to announce final 5-6 grants

Public Transit Advisory Committee: Chad elected as Chair of PTAC; Josh Caldwell voted as vice-chair. Both meeting with MaineDOT to discuss roles and responsibilities of PTAC going forward.

Question (Hank Berg): Is anyone representing other modes aside from buses? Would be good to have representation from all modes.

Answer: NNEPRA is on, as required. Most providers are over-the-road bus providers. Some vacancies for discretionary seats for knowledgeable parties, which Casco Bay Lines would qualify for.

4. Election of Officers:

This item was initially tabled while quorum could be confirmed. A slate of officers (T. Reinauer for President, Erin Binghalib for Vice President, Chad Heid for Treasurer, and Mike Tremblay for Clerk) was recommended by the Executive Committee, and moved for approval by Hank Berg, seconded by Marsha Bennett, and approved unanimously of those present without additional discussion.

5. Expanding Association Capacity

Chad Heid working to finalize contract with Lexian. Focused on identifying near-term needs first, followed by long-term needs. Anticipates 10-15 hours per month. In the near term (4-6 months), tasks will include developing a website, membership messaging, taking over tasks previously done by officers, event management for 2025 Tri-State conference, and other tasks. Will look to approve contract in a future meeting, while also exploring possible options for other firms.

6. Funding and Grants

Tom Reinauer provided update on additional state transit funding. MaineDOT is reviewing other DOT's funding models. Goal will be to have signed letters out by July 1st. Commissioner would like to withhold about 40% of the additional funding for "special projects", which is not

what was expected of this funding, which was anticipated for operating costs. Will share any updates from MaineDOT at future meetings. Jack DeBeradinis notes that the additional state funding would be extremely helpful for RTP's urban transportation program. Chad Heid notes that MTA should clarify and stress MTA's expectations and needs for the timing and amounts of the additional funding. Erin Binghalib notes that the current formula is unknown, which makes it difficult to budget before state allocation letters are distributed. Chad Heid notes that Eaton Peabody should be able to help draft letter for review by MTA officers. Erin Binghalib will begin letter and send to Eaton Peabody for refinement. Tom Reinauer also notes that the grant cycle is unpredictable, so it is difficult to plan for NOFO's. Chad suggests providing MaineDOT a path for success.

7. Financial Update

Chad Heid notes that most member dues have been paid, so we are in good shape to proceed with an association management firm contract.

Current balance is \$38,841.17, programmed for contract with Eaton Peabody and association management firm contract. MTA is in a strong financial position. Chad Heid will be working to solidify MTA's 501(c)4 status.

8. 2025 Tri-State Transit Conference

Tom Reinauer and a sub-group is exploring potential venues and dates for 2025 conference. Subgroup will meet once per month for now. Reaching out to Vermont and New Hampshire staff to get an idea of attendance and cost.

9. Information Exchange

Chad Heid notes that PTAC will be meeting every other month, beginning in April.

Tom Reinauer notes that Penquis and Waldo county's petition hearings for Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) coverage is today (3/20/2024) and tomorrow. There is an appeal related to the equity in scoring the proposals.

Tom Reinauer shares that YCCAC's GTFS feed has been successfully added to Google, and offers support for agencies to get their feeds added.

10. Future Agenda Items

- 2024 Goals and Objectives
- Committee Assignments
- Legislative Priority Setting
- Fiscal Sponsorship/Banking Arrangement

11. Upcoming Membership Meeting:

April 17, 2024 via Zoom

Meeting Adjourned at 10:17am: No Motion needed