

**Public Transit Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2018 APPROVED with change**

Note: Decisions and commitments in ***bold italic***type.

Meeting was **called to order** at 9:10 by Mary Ann Hayes, at MaineDOT Headquarters, in Augusta.

**Attendance**

Members attending: Mary Ann Hayes (chair), Theresa Savoy, Tom Reinauer (phone), Rep. Bettyann Sheats, Carla Dickstein, Tom Meyers, Jessica Maurer, Marcia Larkin (phone), Chris Hall, Stephanie Carver, Jennifer Williams, Connie Reed, Alley Smith (phone).

Members absent: Deborah Deatrick, Rebecca Grover, Sen. Kim Rosen, Coretta Cooper, Patricia Quinn, Dana Knapp, Al Schutz, Jonathan LaBonté

Others attending: Amy Rau, Kelly Arata, Joan Foster (temporary clerk), Chris Mann, MaineDOT

Rich Rothe, MaineDOT consultant

Steve Roy, Maine DOL

Michael Hallundbaek & Steffanie Pyle, Mid-Coast Public Transportation

Perian Carpenter, Shuttlebus (phone),

Martin Chartrand & Dominick RIzzo, Transportation for All (phone)

**Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Rep. Sheats, seconded by Tom Meyers, the consent agenda containing the December 14 minutes and proposed bylaws was unanimously approved.

**Old Business Updates**

Veterans’ Transportation Study – The study has been scheduled for a briefing before the Committee on Transportation on March 13th at 1pm. Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs, Health and Human Services and Business, Research and Economic Development have been invited to attend. Following the briefing, Rep. Sheats will move to introduce a bill with funding, which does not have to go before the Legislative Council for approval. The briefing will not include a time for public comment. When the bill is scheduled for a hearing, that will be the time for supporters to attend or contact their legislators.

Transit Web Page— Amy Rau went through the improvements made since the December meeting. She demonstrated some of the high points, such as an interactive map that allows the public to locate providers in their area*.* Providers are listed by MaineDOT transit regions. This can be confusing because these regions differ from the tourist regions under the Explore ME tab, which also lists transit providers.  *NOTE: Rep Sheats mentioned that the web page was not coming up for her on her phone as it was shown on the screen.* ***Action item*: *Amy will send the link to members so they can review the site and share their comments. The phone display issue will be reported.***

Housing/Developer Connection Strategy – ***A meeting has been set for March 23 from 10:00-noon to discuss the linkage between housing and transportation at MaineHousing on Water Street in Augusta. Members planning to attend include Mary Ann, Jess, Jonathan, Carla, Chris and Stephanie Carver. Mary Ann will send an Outlook invite.***

Performance Measures – There is a lot of work to be done, and it is a very complicated process. State law requires that we set customer service level targets for varying conditions, like population density. Mary Ann is proposing that this work be combined with the Local Coordinated Plan effort to be undertaken in conjunction with MPO’s and providers during 2018. An agreement on how data will be shared and measures developed must be signed by transit providers, MPO’s and MaineDOT by May 27 for both FTA and FHWA. This work needs to start in March. The measures can be used to guide investments to meet intended targets. Tom Meyers pointed out that the *Strategic* *Transit Plan* contains a list of performance measures and customer service levels that may be helpful to consider. Tom Reinauer suggested that we look at NTD standards and requirements to maximize transferability of data and standards between MaineDOT and FTA.

**Volunteer Transportation Network Support**

Jess reported that there have been two meetings of interested parties and progress is being made. The focus of these meetings included looking at challenges and best practices. A number of possible services have been identified that might support volunteer networks, such as a list serve, resource library, best practices guide, ride-matching software, training, insurance, background checks and recruitment. There is a great deal of interest in building a strong network between volunteer groups and public transit. A Volunteer Network scoping session is scheduled for March 30 from 1:00-4:00. The target audience are representatives from existing pure volunteer transportation groups (as opposed to volunteer drivers managed by CAP agencies or those interested in starting a new group). Jess and Amy have combined outreach lists and Amy has incorporated info on 211. ***Action items: Jess and Amy will prepare the invitation and invite participants. Marcia at Penquis will put Jess in touch with their volunteer coordinator****.*

A “Moving Maine” symposium sponsored by GPCOG/PACTS, MaineDOT and others is being held on May 17 at the Governor Hill Mansion in Augusta to bring together all interested stakeholders to have a dialogue about overcoming transportation barriers and increasing mobility statewide**.**  While initially a regional wellness-based initiative, the decision was made to go statewide with the symposium. ***Action item: Martin Chartrand needs to be put on the mailing list for this symposium.***

**Locally coordinated transit plans (LCP)**

Rich outlined the approach that MaineDOT is proposing to link this outreach and coordination effort in each region with performance measure development, streamlining of data collection and incorporation of volunteer networks and innovative mobility management efforts. It’s an opportunity to celebrate innovation and assist with experimentation. Tom M asked if we had looked at what other states were doing. MaineDOT had hired a national consulting firm (RLS) to obtain this perspective but did not like the samples provided and decided a bottom-up approach would be more appropriate for Maine. It is possible other approaches are out there. New Hampshire does have a model for the MPO coordination that we will be looking at. There was broad agreement with the proposed approach and schedule to complete in 2018. Given the federal deadline for the MPO/provider/MaineDOT coordination agreement in May, those meetings will start first.

**Leveraging VW Settlement Funding**

Mary Ann reported that the beneficiary plan had been accepted by the trustee so Maine has been approved to administer the program. The Settlement fund includes $21 million for Maine. Approximately 15% of the money will be used for electric vehicle recharging stations; 25% will be allocated to MaineDEP for its diesel reduction program; 40% will be allocated to MaineDOT’s multi-modal program, and 25% will be made available on a competitive basis. Two of the larger fixed route providers (METRO and Shuttlebus) are interested in applying for FTA Low-No Emission grants for electric buses and infrastructure and has asked MaineDOT to be lead on an application and commit VW settlement funds as much of the match. Mary Ann asked how the PTAC felt about this use of a portion of the 40% that will be directed from within MaineDOT. While some encouraged moving forward with this opportunity, others expressed severe reservations and cautions due to untested technology, inefficiency in having multiple bus types in a fleet to house and maintain, unknown maintenance history, workforce training needs, and the opportunity cost of spending funds on fewer buses than might otherwise be purchased to upgrade the fleet to cleaner gas or diesel buses. Mary Ann appreciated the feedback.

Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention - Steve Roy from the Department of Labor was in attendance and he works on a program called Maine Hire-A-Vet, in which he matches veterans with jobs. He works with all school districts to get on the job training for veterans. The question was asked about reaching out to older and/or retired folks. They do reach out to elderly, however, it is difficult to find bus drivers because a lot of older people or retirees don’t want to work weekends and want to choose the hours they work. Low pay is another reason why bus drivers are hard to find and keep. Someone mentioned there are no real standards for public bus drivers, no real career path and it is hard to attract young people to these jobs. Steve said that the State does have training programs that can help. He mentioned Joan Dolan as a person to contact about these programs*.* Michael Hallundbaek shared that CTAA had certification and training programs for bus drivers so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The key limiting factor has been the ability of transit providers to afford higher wage and benefit packages. ***Carla Dickstein will contact Joan Dolan and pull something together on certification.***

**Recap & Next Steps**

PTAC Membership Recruitment – Giselle White from the VA was mentioned for the medical provider slot. It was felt that while Giselle would be a good PTAC member that it was important for this medical provider slot to be filled with someone broader than VA. ***The group approved Jess recruiting a member from the Maine Primary Care Association and to offer Giselle an optional seat.*** There was discussion about who to put in the slot for businesses who rely on public transit. It was noted that Deborah Deatrick would fill many roles as MaineHealth is a major employer as well as health care provider.  ***Carla reported that Deborah’s schedule is difficult but will encourage her to stay on the Council and get her the date of our next meeting.*** ***Chris will continue to think of other possible business members.***

Mary Ann shared that Sandy Buchanan of Western Maine Transportation Services was interested in serving to represent both rural and a stand-alone transportation provider and that Transportation for All in Bangor was interested in fielding a representative of transit users. ***Both of these additions were approved. Martin will confirm which person will be able to make the commitment with Mary Ann.*** While Coretta represents the visually impaired and Theresa is an expert on ADA compliance, it was felt that a direct representative of the physically challenged would be helpful. ***Jess has a meeting scheduled with ~~Elizabeth~~ Barbara Schneider of Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation and will see if she might be interested.*** ***It was agreed that someone should be recruited to represent the volunteer network community; it should be easy to identify someone from the March 30 gathering.***

Next Meeting – ***Thursday, June 7, 12:30-3:30, MaineDOT, Augusta, Main Conference Room.***

**Public Comment.** There was no comment offered.

**Roundtable**

Members all liked the format of the meeting and that the agenda times were followed. Several expressed having a greater understanding of their role than they had previously had. The video conferencing makes remote participation much better than teleconferencing so the effort to make that possible was appreciated. Mary Ann thanked Amy and Joan for supporting the meeting.

**Adjournment at 11:50 AM.**