



Meeting Minutes – August 12th, 2024, Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Attendees: Hannah Ancel, Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin, Sarah Braese, Jonathan Davis, Nick Lange, Judy Nommick, Kitty Toll

Guests: Caleb Grant, Liliias Ide, Alec Jones, Michael Moore, Doug Morton, Jeremy Whiting

Clerk: Krystina Forkey

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 9:04am by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin.
- 1. Public Comment
 - There were no public comments made.
- 2. Modifications to the Agenda
 - Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin explained that the Executive Director Evaluation was still going to take a little bit longer; some documents were not included in the overall evaluation so there may be a proposal to vote electronically versus in person.

Introductions

- Caleb Grant introduced Liliias Ide to the meeting at 9:45am.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- Kitty Toll made a motion to approve the Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from June 2024.
 - Nick Lange seconded the motion for approval.
 - All agreed.
- The June 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes were approved by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin at 9:06am.

Board Membership

1. Resignation of Carole O'Connell
 - There was discussion surrounding Carole O'Connell's reasoning(s) for resignation, the consensus is as follows:
 - Historically, board meetings were held in person at local diners, more recently, there has been a "lot of discussion, but not a lot of engagement with each other." Carole O'Connell was looking for a different way to engage with RCT and the board members and felt as a representative she was here to represent Newport City, but she felt her concerns were not fully addressed.
 - However, due to her influence, there may be future conversations with her on how to increase her and other members' satisfaction with contributions.
 - Possible next steps were discussed for future board meetings / membership expectations:
 - Conducting a board engagement survey to assess more broadly what member's viewpoints are on their engagement levels and to provide space if anyone has any input.
 - Looking at committee structures and "beef up" how the committees meet and how to keep engagement levels higher.
 - Ensure new members understand the current model and style of board meetings being conducted mostly through Zoom instead of more actively in person.
 - Having meaningful conversations around what each board member's role and expectations of said role are.
2. Vote to Accept the Resignation of Director O'Connell
 - The resignation of Carole O'Connell was verbally accepted by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin. Through discussion, Judy Nommick moved to ratify Justin's verbal acceptance of her resignation. Kitty Toll seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The motion was approved at 9:15am by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin.
3. Board Vacancies
 - It was declared that there is an opening in the role of At-Large Director for the board.
 - Sarah Braese has expressed interest in filling this vacancy.



- Aside from At-Large Director, the following roles are also vacant:
 - Alternate at-large.
 - A Municipal Representative
 - Essex County Representative
 - Until the Governance Committee can meet, Caleb Grant, Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin, Judy Nommick and Kitty Toll will be accepting any names of any interested or potential Board Members.
 - There was a suggestion to reach out to members of the VT Hunger/Food Co-Ops.
 - It was determined that the Governance Committee needs to establish who's on what committee and should have a committee meeting before the next Board meeting.
4. Vote to Move Sarah Braese from Alternate to Voting Member
- Judy Nommick moved to approve of moving Sarah Braese from an Alternate to a Voting Board Member, filling the At-Large Director vacancy.
 - Nick Lange seconded the motion.
 - All in favor.
 - The motion was approved at 9:18am by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin.

Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action – EEO RCT 2024.PDF

- Judy Nommick moved to approve the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy. Kitty Toll seconded the motion. All were in favor of approval.
 - The motion was approved by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin at 9:32am.
- Caleb Grant explained that thanks to VTrans providing funding to complete this process, Larry Lindquist [RCT's HR Representative] worked with a consultant from Steadman Hill to professionally develop this policy using local input and data. The policy is up for Board discussions and adoption.
 - There was some confusion on some of the wordings and expectations, such as:
 1. "Absent undue hardship" (Fourth [4th] paragraph into the document)
 - If accommodation cannot be reasonably supplied for the individual, it is an undue hardship.
 2. RCT relationship with federal funds (last paragraph of the document)
 - RCT is a subrecipient of funding VTrans receives. This paragraph outlines the status of VTrans as the recipient of funds, RCT as the subrecipient and that RCT is held to certain standards through contract each party holds.
 3. How does RCT measure improvements of any minority or protected statuses?
 - RCT has just recently crossed the threshold for different requirements of reporting. Previously, RCT had under 50 employees – now that there are over 50 employees the company is asking new questions and datapoints on applications, allowing RCT to begin to keep track of this, but there is only so much that can be acquired from an application.
 - Vermont has an affirmative action plan ensuring that the language used encourages a diverse workforce and a larger background of individuals to apply. With this plan, the measurement directly related to the reported is now included in the application process.
- Caleb Grant expressed that this document is a compliance, not a strategic, document. Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin suggested that maybe the Executive Committee could discuss this policy as well and bring it to the next meeting with newer members.

Discussion: Written Committee Reports and Updates

1. VTRANS - Jeremy Whiting
 - Jeremy Whiting explained that the Capital Awards are being processed now, and RCT is getting a few vehicles.



- RCT originally requested 17-18 vehicles but are only receiving two (2) due to the Vermont Transportation Agency directing focus on immediate funding priorities – hopefully more capital can be awarded after the state has its own budgetary process mid-year and VTrans is able to figure out what is left over and reassess.
 - Public Transportation funding goes through VTrans, but unfortunately, it was pulled to other agencies before it could be sent to the Public Transportation Agencies.
 1. Caleb Grant explained that the long-term implications for RCT will start to show in the replacement schedule of vehicles.
 - Under normal usage, vehicles would have to be maintenance and replaced around the same time; now RCT will have to make sure that the vehicles aren't put in for replacement at the same time.
 2. It was also expressed that non-vehicle capital items are impacted as well and things like the HVAC system and parking lot extension will need to be reviewed and prioritized.
 - Technology Standpoint:
 - SWIFTLY – a software company – has ordered tablets for all transportation companies in Vermont.
 1. RCT has all the tablets and will be testing them on buses – relaying real-time information to clients through the app. Jeremy Whiting has seen a 10-15% increase in on-time performance by just having the information relayed back to the driver.
 - There are still a few bugs that need to be worked out.
 2. Caleb Grant expressed that on-time for the US2 Commuter may have more to do with construction than drivers.
 - The Central VT assessment is ongoing – In the next couple of months, the board should be able to discuss the findings.
 - Jeremy Whiting extended thanks to RCT for their services and for being willing to consider regional changes that are being proposed.
2. FINANCE/FINANCE COMMITTEE – Michael Moore – RCT-Budget VS Actual June24.xlsx
- Michael Moore reported that finishing the Fiscal Year 2024: (“This is a draft, working with an auditor may have a few changes, but it should be on the revenue side”)
 - RCT made a gain of \$1.25 Million. – “purchasing vehicles looks good on our books but is not an operating profit though.”
 - Total loss of only \$135.00 throughout the five (5) programs total.
 - Caleb Grant added: “RCT spent \$5.6 Million on services and at the end of the year only lost \$135.00. At the end of January, we were projected to lose about \$500,000.00. Due to staffing changes, changes of rates, advocacy at VTrans and at the state house made it possible that we did not lose that much! This is really, *really* great news as RCT increased the total rides given by 20,000 as well!
3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Caleb Grant - Executive Director Report 8.24.docx
- RCT Rides Orleans (MicroTransit) is being launched in the next couple of weeks.
 - In-house trainings have been completed for over 40 agencies in the Newport area:
 - Tasha Green has been in the area 2-4 times a week preparing for the transition.
 - Orleans drivers have been driving RCT Rides (MicroTransit) Lamoille routes for training on their new process.
 - This route opens up facilities to individuals who previously did not have access to them on the shuttle route or with O&D/Medicaid eligibility, also helping to promote tourism to the area.
 - RCT will be receiving six (6) E-Transit vehicles this year from the electric cutaway transition. In the absence of RCT's own charging stations, we will have partnerships with “great people.”
 - Public charging is a problem due to availability of chargers; containerizing charging stations would allow the ability to provide battery backup chargers as well. (It would



be great if there were RCT appointed chargers as well as public chargers in public locations.)

- RCT was the first transportation agency in the nation to be awarded a planning grant. Caleb Grant had the first meeting with AACOM on Thursday, 08.08.2024, and he reports that “they were proposing good things.”
- Steadman Hill was contracted earlier in August to complete the Mobility and Innovation Grant, which is due in September.
- RCT is looking into decentralizing our operations strategies. There has been some discussion about co-owning some vehicles in the Barton area due to trips out of Barton (the majority of our outward-bound scheduled trips) having deadhead miles.
 - The warehouse transportation committee chose to expand their public transportation investments by \$300,000.00 and chose to include public transportation providers in their funding.
 - Caleb Grant said he is planning to apply to this funding to add RCT Rides (MicroTransit) Orleans to Barton and Island Pond to help decentralize locations.
- The Route 100 bus will run from Morrisville to Waterbury twice a day and is a new model of partnership RCT hopes to replicate throughout the system. Lilias Ide negotiated the SKIDA wrap and a promotional video with the CEO of SKIDA (Corrine) will be put together soon.
 - Corrine agreed to a video with RCT reaching out to other corporations on how to partner together and access state attractions.
 - SKIDA used the side of the bus to promote the VT State Parks – we’re going to be promoting how to access VT State Parks and public transportation.
 - SKIDA and VT State Parks are paying for this project and paying RCT; this project is bringing in money, promoting state relationships and state tourism.
 - SKIDA is also creating a custom pattern hat for RCT – they have commissioned an artist to make the custom print.

Community Relations Plan Presentation Lilias Ide, Lilias Ide Consulting

- LI RCT Community Relations Plan 8.1.2024.pdf
- Goals:
 - Identity – RCT has created a new brand, now we want to identify what RCT’s voice is; how is RCT going to communicate its message/identity?
 - Themes:
 - Community focused
 - Compassionate and Supportive
 - Accessible and Reliable
 - Innovative
 - Forward Thinking
 - Solutions Based and Resourceful
 - Rural public transportation authority
 - Raise awareness of RCT’s services
 - Increase pride in affiliation.
 - Increase advocacy.
 - Increase support.
 - Sponsors
 - Staff
 - Volunteers
- Identify the stakeholders – the audience:
 - “One size fits all” won’t work for different groups.
 - The target audience:
 - Staff and volunteers - Everyone is invested in the organization, but we need to make sure they know the mission of the organization.
 - Secondary audience:
 - Riders – Raising awareness of RCT’s services since riders are diverse.



- It is important to ensure that riders know and adhere to the code of conduct for safe behaviors.
- Community Partners:
 - They play an important role in educating riders in their service area.
- The Public:
 - Improve public perception of RCT.
 - The perception is generally positive of RCT, but the general public doesn't really understand the impact of public transportation.
 - Increasing the education of the impact RCT has on our communities will impact the public perception of RCT.
- Planners / Policy Makers / Donors:
 - Enhancing communications here will make transportation the solution, not a part of the problem or an afterthought.
- Community Outreach:
 - Communities need to feel seen, heard and supported *by* RCT in order *to* support RCT, so we need to reach the riders where they are located.
- Strategic Partnerships:
 - By forming values that promote partnerships that continue to showcase and highlight RCT's values and visions, we create the type of partnerships that are key to influencing public perceptions.
 - Sponsorship Dollars – Employers on commuter routes that RCT might want to partner with.
- Earned Media:
 - We want to nurture relationships with reporters on the state level and in service areas that RCT wants to reach and communicate with.
 - Examples of earned media include NPR, VT Digger and WCAX News.
- Digital Media:
 - This is where most people get most of their information these days.
 - These are assets for story telling and for reaching a broader audience that is very powerful.
 - Digital media includes social media and the RCT website.
 - Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin suggested having a draft drawn up of social media and marketing policies, stating that the “current one in use could use some modifications.”
- Policy and Planning:
 - RCT wants to be a part of the town planning discussions in our service areas to ensure transportation as a forethought instead of an afterthought.

Executive Director Review Executive Committee

- Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin reviewed the process of the Executive Director Performance Evaluation.
 - The domain areas were reviewed and changed –
 - Previous domains:
 - RCT People
 - Service Portfolio
 - Grant Management
 - Current / New domains:
 - Focus on our people.
 - Focus on our mission.
 - Focus on financial health.
 - Focus on leadership.



Executive Session

Determination of Need for Executive Session per 1 VSA 313(a)(1)* Executive Session if Need is Determined*

- It was determined there was a need to move into the Executive Session.
- Jonathan Davis moved to enter the executive session.
 - Kitty Toll approved the motion.
 - All were in favor.
- The motion was approved by Justin (Tin) Barton-Caplin, and the members moved to the executive session at 10:52am.

Next Meeting: 10/14/2024

Meeting Adjourned: