

# **Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc.**

## **Meeting of the Board of Directors**

### **March 25, 2021 | 4:00pm via Zoom**

#### ***Attendees***

Board Members: Bridgette Brady; Deborah Dawson; Jennifer Dotson; Dan Klein; Laura Lewis; Ducson Nguyen; Frank Proto; Gary Stewart; Denise Thompson

TCAT Staff: Rick Andrascik; Jillian Baldwin; Susan Brock; Tom Clavel; Gian Fountain; Raymond Lalley; Colleen Marsh; Curt Parrish; Patty Poist; Megan Pulver; Madlyn Schafer; Bob Sherman; Mike Smith; Phil Smith; Pamela Torelli; Scot Vanderpool; Nate Wells, Matt Yarrow

Public Attendees: Fred Schoeps

#### ***Call to Order***

Chair D. Klein called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

#### ***Board Member Items***

Frank Proto said in light of the GM's team reviewing the possibility of staying at 737 Willow Ave, he wanted to review and discuss the items that led the Board to supporting a move. He asked if this was the appropriate time to discuss it, or if we should wait for the Planning Committee update at the end of the meeting. General Manager Scot Vanderpool said it was appropriate to have the discussion during the Planning Committee update.

#### ***Public Comment***

Chairman D. Klein offered the floor to Fred Schoeps, a Board Member for the Downtown Ithaca Alliance in attendance tonight. Mr. Schoeps said he was not here to make a public comment, but rather to observe in order to get a sense of what TCAT and the Board of Directors is all about. He has heard a lot and knows several attendees and he views this as a chance to listen and learn more than anything else.

#### ***Approval of minutes***

A motion to approve minutes from the February 25, 2021 meeting made by D. Dawson, seconded by D. Thompson. The minutes were approved unanimously with a vote of 9-0-0.

#### ***Chair's Report***

##### **Shelter Dedication**

Chair Klein asked Mike Smith to talk. Smith said on April 13 TCAT will be dedicating the Caroline shelter out by the Town Hall to Dave Barber, lovingly known as "TCAT Dave" who passed a few years ago. He was a very avid rider of TCAT, knew most of the drivers, and was a helpful rider. He knew the system inside and out. The family has donated a sum of money to both TCAT and Gadabout as a remembrance. After checking to make sure we could legally use the funds to dedicate a shelter, we were in touch with the family and on April 13 at 3:30 we will install a plaque and dedicate our first shelter.

##### **Earth Day Grand Launch of Electric Buses**

Chair Klein asked Patty Poist, Director of Marketing and Communications, to speak. Poist said we have a request into the City to have our electric bus launch event from 10:30-11:30 on Thursday April 22. We still need City approval for pavilion use, but Poist is hopeful. We have many great ideas such as team T-shirts and other fun things. Please save the date now. Vanderpool spoke about the VIP invites that are

being prepared and thanked Board member Gary Stewart for reaching out to his contacts, both Federal and State. Charlie Kruzansky will reach out to Albany and NYSDOT to see if they can make an appearance.

### ***GM Report***

#### From the News Desk

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Applying for a Low/No Grant - due 4/12 - requesting 8 total buses, 4 large electric would arrive early to mid-2023, and 4 smaller buses in 2022. The local match would be 15% or 883,300, and we'll talk more about that when we get to the resolution.

#### Battery Electric Buses

All 7 are here; 3 have been wrapped, thank you to Graphic Artist on staff Jenn Jennings who came up with the design. We will wrap all 7, then ads can be wrapped over the top of the permanent wrap. Two have successfully passed NYS DOT inspections which allows us to start our training process. More on battery electric infrastructure, maintenance, and fire and rescue training in a few minutes.

#### Vaccination

We have been working the TCHD providing trips to the vaccination site. This week we had additional trips from Titus Towers to the mall, taking 28 additional residents to receive their shot. Next Wednesday we will be taking people from Juniper Manor, Cayuga Meadows, Conifer Village and Ellis Hollow Apartments to the vaccination site.

#### The American Rescue Plan

American airports and transit systems are receiving money from the American Rescue Plan. \$396M has been set aside for upstate Transit systems; per Senator Schumer's office, TCAT and Gadabout will be receiving \$7.1M which is currently listed on the Senator's website, <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/>; however, we are waiting for FTA to publish the regulations and officially publish this amount. We can't apply for funding until that happens, and there is no language that is related to any kind of time frame yet, and it looks like the funding can be used for both capital and operating expenses, and he will keep us updated as he learns more.

### **Systems Report**

#### Ridership

February 2020 we carried just over 415,000 riders, February of 2021, just over 111,000 riders, a decrease of 73%.

As a comparison, compare the last two weeks of January this year to the last 2 weeks of February this year. Both were times when school was in session. This showed an increase of about 110% - 57,796 in February compared to 27,561 in January. That's encouraging, however, look at October 2020 compared to February 2021 - it's not so encouraging. Ridership numbers are about the same, even though there are more students on campus this semester. For overall ridership there is a slight upward trend.

### **Operations & Maintenance**

#### Missed Trips

We missed 2 trips in February; both due to driver call-outs on Friday, Feb. 5.

#### PM and WP services

We are currently at 90%.

#### Road Calls

January 2021 – 14

February 2021 – 8

### Mid-Life Bus Rehab Update

1114 & 1116 have returned and are being prepped for the next available DOT inspection. 1110 is due back; they are running it through DOT inspection before it is sent back. Bus 1112 will be sent after 1110 returns.

### Total Cost of Parts Per Month

December 2020 - \$44,442.40

January 2021 - \$44,169.95

February 2021: \$24,319.35

## **Safety Department**

### Collisions

In February 2021 there were a total of 4 collisions, all 4 were deemed preventable, compared to February 2020 when we have 5 collisions with 5 being preventable. In January 2021, there were 6 collisions with 5 preventable.

The Safety Department has been busy preparing for Proterra Training; the First Responder Training is scheduled to be held at TCAT Thursday, March 25th and Friday, March 26th.

Bus Operator "Train the Trainer" Session was pushed out a week by Proterra, and is scheduled to be held at TCAT Tuesday, March 30th and Wednesday, March 31st.

Bus Operator training is scheduled to begin Monday, April 5th. Training will run Monday through Thursday each week until all operators are trained. Classes will be held each day Monday through Thursday between 7am-11am and 12pm - 4pm. Each class will have approximately 4 students per class.

We have been working with the City to address a few higher risk collision areas to see if we can adjust stop lines to make it easier and safer for our buses to turn at key intersections. More to come on that in the future.

We have installed Accident and Incident packets on each bus to help guide operators prior to a supervisor's arrival in the event they are involved in a collision.

## **Human Resources**

### Staffing Levels

As of the end of February, 2021 we have 76 Full-time bus operators with 8 on leave of absence; 7 part-time operators with 2 on leave. We have 11 Mechanics, 7 in Maintenance & Custodial; and 32 in Administration and Management.

### Human Resource Events

We had one bus operator and our payroll coordinator separate from TCAT in February 2021.

### Retention Rate Statistics

The annual retention rate for 2020 was 97%.

### Other Human Resources Activities

- Continued working with Paycom on HRIS system transition, which took up most of the month for our first successful payroll cycle during the week of March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Began interviews for Bus Operator positions (6 interviews total)
- Continued COVID-19 Absence Management, investigations, research and vaccinations
- Began interviewing Temporary Payroll Coordinator candidates through Express Temps

- Began planning and preparing for the File Room clean out with Accounting Dept.

## **Marketing and Communications**

- Issued four COVID potential exposure notifications and one press release on Wi-Fi.
- Converted schedule information into table format for display on website.
- Designed new poster with updated mask policy (shown at February meeting) and new poster for fleet on Wi-Fi notification capability.
- Continued to work with Data Analyst Tom Clavel on design and presentation of data dashboards.
- Designed 2 web ads for the Ithaca Times.
- Produced fliers to promote Tconnect.
- ADA paratransit coordination: 2 ADA applications reviewed.
- 5 half-fare applications processed.

## **Information Technology**

### Milestones

- Made it through the month with many extra hours.
- Patched a zero-day Exchange Server vulnerability within six hours.
- Invoked Cyber Insurance after finding Indications of Compromise (IOC).
- Worked with Security Firm over another long weekend on breach response.
- Deployed additional SentinelOne product to server.

### Current Projects

- Increasing security levels across TCAT.
- Adding “Continuity Package” to Mimecast systems for email redundancy.
- New Anti-Virus systems
- New Mimecast Browser Security
- Made application to join OTRB-ISAC – joint operations center for security.
- Accelerate plans to retire all older servers and workstations immediately.
- Preparing Avail and TSI Equipment for new buses.
- Continuous Maximo Support
- Testing Event/Emergency buttons on the Fleet
- Wiki content is being added by a small team from IT and Service Development.
- Technology Roadmap - gathering information and consolidating via the Wiki project.
- Staff laptop deployment continues with added “Mimecast Browser Security”.
- Gadabout computer deployments need to be completed.
- Backup Internet connection for emergency use is in progress – waiting on construction.
- Backups Systems – need restructuring for new computers and laptops.

### Future Projects

- New Database and reporting tools and technologies.
- Build internal programming and development resources via education.
- New Certificate server to replace old one that died in early 2017.
- Secondary Domain controller – have not had one since we retired 2003 server in 2017.
- Enterprise Wireless Infrastructure.
- Creation of new Infrastructure for Ridelogic Systems and Development environment.
- Better Remote work options, considering VDI for remote users.
- Explore bringing website hosting in house.

## **Action Items**

Resolution 2021-05, Local Match for Low or No Emission (Low/No) Program moved by Jennifer Dotson and seconded by D. Dawson. Resolution 2021-05 passed unanimously with a 9-0-0 vote as follows:

**RESOLUTION 2021 – 05**  
**LOCAL MATCH FOR LOW OR NO EMISSION (LOW-NO) PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, pursuant to contract, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc. (TCAT) provides public transit bus services throughout Tompkins County, New York, with the use of buses owned by Tompkins County and operated and maintained by TCAT, and

WHEREAS, TCAT supports Tompkins County's application to the 2021 Federal Transit Administration Low or No Emission (Low-No) Program for financial assistance in procuring battery electric (BE) buses and infrastructure to include four (4) forty ft (40') BE buses; four (4) micro-transit BE buses, and (4) chargers.

WHEREAS, TCAT supports local comprehensive plans that call for greenhouse gas emission reductions and sustainable transportation; in particular, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan which states that an overarching goal of the plan is to "minimize negative environmental impacts of transportation including: dependency on fossil fuel energy use, emissions, noise pollution and non-point source pollution," and

WHEREAS, TCAT and Tompkins County are looking to replace aging diesel buses that are expensive to maintain, have low fuel efficiency, and were manufactured prior to more recent emissions requirements, and

WHEREAS, TCAT and Tompkins County see electric bus technology as integral to moving to a sustainable transportation future, yet they cannot access the electric bus market outright due to high costs, and

WHEREAS, receipt of buses funded by the Low-No Program would help TCAT and Tompkins County continue to meet demand for fixed route public transit services and increase their ability to provide flexible on-demand transit services; TCAT's rides increased from fewer than 3 million in 2007 to 4.2 million in 2019, which rate of increase outpaced the total US bus ridership by 40% over that ten year period, and despite a decrease in ridership in 2020 due to the COVID Pandemic, Tompkins County is home to numerous large planned and under-construction housing projects in the City of Ithaca, in other Tompkins County municipalities, and on Cornell University's campus which underlie a continued community need for excellent public transit services into the future, and

WHEREAS, TCAT is required to identify local funding sources as a part of the Low-No Program application, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the TCAT Board of Directors authorizes an amount not to exceed Eight Hundred Eighty-Three Thousand and Three Hundred Dollars (\$883,300) derived from the NYS ATC and NYS MEP Program grants and from TCAT's capital program to include as a local match in Tompkins County's application to the 2021 Low-No Program.

Adopted by the TCAT Board of Directors on this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2021.

### ***Committee Reports***

- **Executive Committee** – The Executive Committee met March 17 and discussed November, December, January Bulk Fare Payments, MOU and Transit Agreement
- **Audit Committee** – The Audit Committee did not meet but reports the auditors are preparing to start the 2020 audit.
- **Budget Committee** – The Budget Committee did not meet, but received an email update regarding vehicle insurance renewal; revenue expenditure report, February 28, 2021; and a three-year projection.
- **Human Resource Committee** – The Human Resource Committee met March 18 and received updates regarding bus operator search; temporary payroll coordinator; Controller Search; NYSEDA Internship search; performance management program; and a Paycom roll-out update. Discussed expected 2021 Board items: review of the substance abuse policy; and continued work on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Planning Committee** – The Planning Committee did not meet, but received an email update regarding the Categorical Exclusions worksheet and receiving feedback from the FTA. F. Proto brought up his comment (first raised during Board Member Items) about the possibility of staying at 737 Willow Ave, and his request for the Board to discuss the items that led the Board to support a move. The Planning Committee will discuss this.
- **Transit Service Committee** – The Transit Service Committee met March 10 and received updates regarding Proterra buses; the IURA Grant; outstanding shelter grants/bus stop amenities planning approach; recent ridership; and an overview of 2 scenarios and next steps for the TDP. Items discussed included thoughts on microtransit/on-demand transit; the data dashboard and a conversation about future projections.

G. Stewart left the meeting at 5:02pm.

### ***Next Meeting***

The next regular Board meeting will be April 22, 2021.

### ***Executive Session***

Frank Proto made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations, which, if discussed in public, could compromise the position of TCAT; motion seconded by Deborah Dawson. The Board entered Executive Session at 5:20pm.

At 5:59pm, the Board came out of Executive Session with a motion by J. Dotson, seconded by L. Lewis.

A motion to adjourn open session made by L. Lewis, and seconded by D. Dawson.

### ***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Pamela Torelli, Recording Secretary, April 22, 2021.*