

Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc.

Meeting of the Board of Directors

July 22, 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; Julie Ellis-Grove; Gian Fountain; Raymond Lalley; Colleen Marsh; Curt Parrish; Patty Poist; Megan Pulver; Mike Smith; Pamela Torelli; Scot Vanderpool; Matt Yarrow

Public Attendees: Mike Hall; Jean McPheeters

Call to Order

Chair D. Klein called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. There were no Board Member items to discuss.

Chair Klein announced the Director of Tompkins County Airport, Mike Hall, and Jean McPheeters will join the meeting to talk about the airport grant, giving us a quick summary of his thoughts surrounding how TCAT might fit in.

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of June 24, 2021 made by D. Thompson, seconded by L. Lewis. The minutes were approved unanimously with a vote of 9-0.

Chair's Report

Next month's BOD meeting will be hybrid - available to attend in person at TCAT HQ or via zoom.

GM Report

From the News Desk

Grant Update

We were not awarded the Low-No Grant; it went to Broome County. Since the award was established in 2016, it has gone to a different agency each year; TCAT received the award in 2018.

The RAISE grant was submitted on July 12 for four 40-foot electric buses and four smaller GreenPower electric buses and fast-charging units, plus we added grant fast-charging units for TC3 and establishing a park-and-ride there. TC3 is very excited about this opportunity.

We are also applying for an electric mobility grant that is part of the NYSEDA Prize Grant; it would be an on-demand service to the flats and the West Hill area. We have worked with the DIA on this; Gary Ferguson calls it a "multi-dimensional electric-based mobility system" which includes an all-electric on-demand system in the area. More to come on this as we move forward.

No word on the RTAP Grant yet. Our concept would utilize TCAT and Gadabout to bring people from Newfield to the library due to the lack of Wi-Fi connectivity there. One of our goals is to get people to tele-medicine and mental health appointments.

Internal Wiki

This is the internal website project that involves better structure, organization, communication for our team and provides tools and support, expectations, direction and standard operating procedures. We are working on something that will allow Board members to log in and view our Notion internal website. Board members will be able to view TCAT Updates and information, and be able to see what each department is currently working on. There will be explanations of Federal funding and Grant opportunities, and the deadlines for applying for them. These items will be helpful for all, including Board members.

The City of Ithaca and the IURA have awarded TCAT just over \$17,000 for solar lighting for twelve bus stops in the city. More information on that to come; thanks to Megan Pulver for her work on that and her continuing efforts to try to upgrade bus shelters throughout the city and county.

IT has been working on updating visual and sound capabilities in the Large Conference Room, and we've been assured our August Board meeting will be available for a hybrid meeting, hosting both in-person and Zoom attendees.

Mike Hall and Jean McPheeters joined the meeting. S. Vanderpool introduced them and invited them to speak about the airport grant opportunity in more detail.

M. Hall thanked the GM and the Board for the opportunity, and began by taking us back a couple of years when we began the extensive process of looking at what the future location of TCAT would look like. Pre-pandemic we had reached an agreement that we could find a way to work something out for the airport that would include a transportation campus. It seemed like the biggest impediment at the time was the 50-plus million dollars needed to make the campus. Now that we're through the pandemic, there's a lot of money out there for infrastructure improvements. Hall said he understands TCAT's concern as a multi-partner organization that ridership post-pandemic has not revealed itself yet, and this is not the best time to make a bold move. To reconcile those two conflicting points of view, Jean, Scot and he met, and it seems like what we want to do is to take advantage of one of the funding opportunities, the NYS Airport Innovation Grant offered by Gov. Cuomo. This time it is 250 million dollars to spend on upstate airports; Ithaca is qualified as an applicant, and the purpose of that money is to improve the customer experience, the efficiency of travel, and there are particularly two themes the Governor's office is very interested in that relate to the project we have in Ithaca and the discussions we've had over the last few years. One of those themes is sustainability, and that basically brings you back to electricity from a sustainable source, which in our case seems most likely to be solar. The second theme is multi-mode transportation, which brings us back to the discussion at TCAT and the idea that we can fuse in the center of Tompkins County multiple different forms of transportation: automobiles, rental cars, buses, aircraft, all that can be put together in a synergistic manner. So, how does TCAT fit that at this point?

M. Hall and J. McPheeters are preparing a proposal to the UAA competition, and it seems the best move is opened-ended architecture and a docking station for electric buses so the airport could be a sub-node. The UAA also has some interesting opportunities involving education and training for the production of CDL-qualified individuals, and there is an emerging market for mechanics with the ability to work with electric transportation issues. The idea is a modest terminal, which would be similar to the Green Street facility where people can drive to the parking lot or come in on a bus or any other number of considerations, and they could have a weather shelter to wait in for their connecting transportation. There could also be electric charging infrastructure for public use.

Hall continued, "So, nothing committal; certainly we need your counsel and advice to be able to design a proposal that is open in architecture so that we wouldn't get to a point several years in the future perhaps where you say "Yeah, we really need to get off the waterfront and open this up for development" but it's too bad because if we'd thought about this three years ago at the airport, the site would have been better prepared."

Hall said another issue that plays at the nexus of these two concepts of sustainability and multi-modal transportation, is the availability of electrical power to recharge electric vehicles, including electric buses as they become more heavily represented throughout the TCAT fleet. "That's an infrastructure issue that is going to have to be addressed; you can't just suddenly start plugging in lots of high-draw vehicles to get them recharged without having provisions for that. Already there is a moratorium on natural gas hook-ups; we took the airport off natural gas and put it on electricity with ground-source heat pumps to free up some gap-space with natural gas, but the same problem is going to occur with regard to electrical power if we don't start working ahead and thinking ahead... Jean do you want to add anything? Then we can take questions that the assembled group has for us."

J. McPheeters added, "I would say that the last time we put a grant application in, we put in a part about the DOT relocating up towards the airport. It was extremely helpful in doing that because the DOT was funded, not through the grant application that we submitted, but it got people's attention - the concept of having all these things in one location, and they got that grant. So, that's why we would also want to include this in the grant we're applying for. We don't expect to necessarily be funded through the Upstate Aviation Capital grant, but I think it would give you the opportunity that people in the State DOT would then latch on to... and the funding could come in a different fashion. On the other hand it might come the way we are proposing, but we would need your permission to include it in the grant, and we very much hope that would happen. It would also then add to this idea of having a micro-grid or some way of having a real emergency operation in that area, where for instance those batteries that would power buses could also perhaps be linked into a micro grid that would power the airport and the health department and the sheriff's office in case of a major crisis on our electric grid, such as an ice storm."

Dan thanked Jean and Mike and asked if there were any questions.

S. Vanderpool said he has a comment – "There's a real intriguing piece that lies with education and training. Mike Hall mentioned CDL drivers training and mechanic training, but there is a connection to law enforcement and medical emergency services; there's all this new technology that people are unfamiliar with as technology for transit in itself just changes from day to day and week to week, so that's critical, to have a place to allow people to better evolve with all this training, and then there's the CDL training and testing that we've been talking about for quite a long time. I think it's a good opportunity and I really appreciate the input from Mike and Jean on this and really hope the Board can support this. I know they think this is a good option, and part of this really for me is just a contingency plan for TCAT. It's another way, that if we do happen to get out of this rut we're in, there's a place where we can have redundancy in charging and bring some buses up to get charged if we need to do that. So, a lot of great things here and I think this is just the first step, like Mike said."

D. Dawson offered her thanks to Mike and Jean, adding, "I was wondering if you could clarify your statement - are you saying that including the transit piece in the grant application makes it more likely the grant will be awarded, but not necessarily the cost of the transit piece itself would be included in this grant?"

Hall responded, "I think what's going to happen is the same thing that happened the last time - we're going to put in a proposal and there's going to be a lot of back and forth with the Governor's office." He

explained that NYSDOT has a tremendous amount of money saved to award for electric charging infrastructure and added, "To answer your question, what I would envision is that we put in this proposal, and we know the DOT and the Governor's office are very interested in multimodal transportation, therefore, we can very well get this done within the Governor's award in this particular program, or ... they might say, 'Look, we'll do this, this and this, but you need to walk over to NYSDOT for that.'" Hall then talked about what could happen if there is a new Governor: "The money has already been set aside, so the next Governor would be in concert with the legislature, compelled to spend this money for the purpose that it was advertised for. So I think it's very open-ended ... we want a lot on conversation on that journey; we still haven't decided exactly how many apples fit in the bag. We've got to go through an engineering analysis, and it may turn out that this is a 500 million dollar idea, and if it is, obviously it's not going to go. Or, it might turn out that what we're talking about doing, with some provisioning, fits very nicely within an expected award. Which is, if you go back to the last time, the expected awards were 40 million dollars, and it said we got 36; they just drew out the funds for DOT. So that's kind of the way I see the process. Does that answer your question for you?" Dawson responded it did.

L. Lewis offered her thanks and said her question was similar, "So Jean, you mentioned that in the last grant application it was the synergy that was very helpful in moving that application to a successful conclusion, so it does sound like that same synergy could benefit the airport and benefit TCAT? I just wanted a little more information because I'm not familiar with this specific grant, and wondered if you could provide us with a link to more of the details regarding this grant. It sounds like it's not very firmly defined yet, but whatever information you have and could share, I think would be helpful. And I think that you said the application for the grant is September?"

J. McPheeters responded, "It's due in September, yes. I can send you a link to the announcement from the Governor for what the grant is for, and as soon as Mike looks at the latest version of what I've written as a narrative, I can send that out to you as well." Lewis said that would be very helpful and thanked McPheeters again.

M. Hall offered, "Let me just add to this, this is not a normal RFP process. This is a "Governor-made-an-announcement process", ... DOT is just now beginning to develop scoring criteria for it. I don't know if it's going to get to a point where they put out a more formal RFP document, that lays out the scoring criteria or not, but we've got an inside lead on that right now. It has to do with innovation, sustainability, customer experience, those kinds of things, but ... we don't have any extra time to pull all this together, and I'm sure that whatever we put in on September 15 is going to be subject to considerable discussion and negotiation going forward."

J. Dotson said, "I really love the co-location, and any efficiencies we can get from that. ...I think we should be really, really clear-eyed about how we phrase this, ... I would urge the writing, the narrative, to be just really clear about how that fits with our other local transportation."

Chair Klein asked, "You would like some kind of letter of support or a vote of confidence from TCAT? Is that correct?"

M. Hall responded, "Absolutely correct, but not today. We are on a journey, there needs to be considerable work done over the next month, but as part of the application, we would hope to get to a point where you are enthusiastically supportive, and willing to share that enthusiasm with the Governor's office."

Chair Klein thanked Mike and Jean again and invited them to attend the next Board meeting on August 26, noting it's the last meeting before the grant is due and added, "to the degree that you can get us something in advance so that we can digest it and kick it around internally, that would be helpful."

Hall agreed, saying County administration and the FAA are also requesting information, so they will be pulling this together and give everybody an opportunity to weigh in with their edits and hopefully their buy-in.

Chair Klein reminded the Board that throughout this process, one of the things we looked at was the idea of satellite facilities. Some internal research showed very few transit agencies in the country have satellite facilities. Of the ones found, there were two themes - a satellite facility that had a clearly different function or a separate purpose than the main facility; the other reason that came up is long-term transition to a larger facility. Since this grant is focusing on electric charging, it seems there is a nice clear distinction. "If we were to think of this as a satellite facility, or if that is a move we're making one day, the electric infrastructure would all be there, and what's left of the diesel infrastructure and other parts of TCAT's operations could be down Willow Avenue. So that's just one thought, and the other is that if someday we follow through on an earlier idea of moving up to the airport, this seems to me like a good transition, baby step, one stop on the way."

Chair Klein thanked Hall and McPheeters again. Hall and McPheeters left the meeting.

GM Vanderpool continued with the Systems Report.

Systems Report

Ridership

Service change in June: Route 22 weekday service began on June 25th.

June of this year we carried 74,846 riders

June of 2019 we had 184,394 riders

That's a decrease of 59%

Again, TCAT 2021 ridership is compared to 2019, which represents the pre-pandemic normal.

Year to Date in 2019 we'd carried 2,137,345 passengers; in 2021 we only carried 623,482 passengers and that's a decrease of 71% Last month our YTD decrease was 72%.

A little bit of good news about Ridership by Route Category - when you compare last month's chart to this month, the total percent change year-to-date has gone down. Hopefully we will see bigger changes in the near future.

Road Calls

In June we had 7; in May we had 8.

Road Calls per 100K miles for June was 6.11

Road calls are down substantially in recent months. This appears to be largely due to a practice of swapping buses rather than sending mechanics out. This is a more efficient use of resources as we have had more buses and drivers available, and fewer mechanic hours available.

Missed Trips

We did not miss any trips in June.

PM Service

PM Services are still at 100%, as are Brake Pulls for the month of June.

Cost of Parts

Total Cost of Parts for June was \$56,022, about the same as last month.

Collisions and Incidents

We had 3 collisions in June 2021; in May we had 3 collisions and 1 incident; in April 2021 we had 4 collisions and 0 incidents.

Compared to last year at this time - last year we had 17 collisions and 2 incidents through June of 2020 - this year in 2021, we have had 22 collisions and 2 incidents. This year, a total of 15 of those were preventable, the same as last year.

Safety Department work has included:

- The Safety Department is gearing up for a new Bus Operator class.
- Phil has been coordinating with Jon Nicastro, the Director of the NYSDOT Public Transportation Safety Board to host a Bus Accident Investigation Training for Identifying Safety Hazards (BAITFISH) course. Transit agencies from around the state will be invited to attend this course at the Marriott on the Commons September 27-29.

Human Resources

Through May of 2021 – we were sitting at 73 FT operators; in June we are down to 69 FT operators

Overall, at the end of May – we had 127 total employees; at the end of June we were down to 118.

HR action items for the month of June

- 5 Hires
- 8 separations including 6 operators
- One employee, Dameon Allen, was promoted from Dispatcher to Transit Service Supervisor.

Other things HR has been working on include:

- Continued Bus Operator recruiting efforts for July 12th
- Held “Meet the Employer” Virtual Meeting in collaboration with Tompkins Workforce NY
- Employee Leave Management - Increased need for medical leaves in recent weeks requiring communication, education and coordination with Pinnacle HR to start leaves.
- Planning for July 30th Employee Recognition Celebration
- Telecommuting/Remote Work Policy roll out in preparation for re-opening TCAT, Inc.
- Revisited “Return to Work Action Plan” in response to changes in NYS & CDC masks/social distancing policies.

Implemented TCAT Milestone Challenge – a challenge for all employees to voluntarily provide vaccination updates → over 66% are fully vaccinated.

Marketing and Communications

Continuation of Transit Development Plan Phase II outreach

- Participated in five focus groups for TDP draft redesign review
- Helped coordinate, participate with service development/ ambassadors outreach events on the Commons (June 15,& 17); Schwartz Center for Performing Arts (June 16); McGraw House (June 21); and West Village (June 23)

- Continued updating TDP webpages

Press releases:

- Rt. 22 weekly service (began June 28)
- Gov.'s free-rides-if-you-get-a-first vaccine program

Graphic Arts:

- Designed poster to notify riders of TDP virtual focus groups
- Designed Tconnect decals for branding of Gadabout vehicles
- Designed 2 ads for Tompkins Weekly
- Created poster showing service to Mimi's attic

ADA paratransit coordination:

- 12 ADA applications reviewed
- 4 half-fare applications processed

Information Technology

Milestones:

- Put up an in house Windows Server 2016 to be utilized as a data warehouse
- Continue to transfer RideLogic servers from ICS to our own AWS location
- Configure DNS properly on the Domain Controller
- Push DNS settings across the network
- Push updates on all of the Servers
- Ordered RAM and Hard Drives to upgrade the Hyper-V Machine
- Setup OpenManage on all Dell Servers for more efficient monitoring
- Worked on sound issues for our TSI Equipment (Bus Camera System)
- Ordered new Camera System for Green Street Hub
- Setup 6 designated laptops for training purposes
- Prepared 32 computers for recycling – HDDs and RAM removed
- Fixed internal Maximo Issues
- Setup LDAP for Maximo Production server
- Onboarded two employees with Tech Equipment and accounts
- Put up 3 Servers on AWS that will be used as our RideLogic Database
- Laptop Repairs

Current Projects:

- Increasing computer security across TCAT.
- Documentation of IT resources on internal Wiki continuing
- Expanding our Hyper-V environment to allow more virtual servers
- Technology Roadmap – consolidating previous plans, updating documentation
- Avail, RideLogic, TSI, and Maximo Support
- Review current backups and ensure everything is set correctly
- Continuing to train new IT Help – John Greer
- Setup new Camera System at Green Street
- Setup the LCR as a Hybrid Meeting Room
- Fix the HDMI Connection to the projector in the LCR
- Recycle old Technology Equipment – Computers and Printers
- Put up a second Domain Controller and DNS
- Continue to document everything and create SOPs

Future Projects:

- Need to restructure backup systems for new computers and laptops
- New database and reporting tools and technologies
- Build internal programming and development resources
- New certificate server to replace the one that died in early 2017
- Enterprise Wireless Infrastructure
- Better remote work options; considering VDI for remote users
- Explore bringing website hosting in house

Action Items

Resolution 2021-09 – File Room Office Conversion - moved by D. Dawson, seconded by D. Nguyen; Resolution 2021-09 was approved 9-0-0 as follows:

**RESOLUTION 2021 – 09
FILE ROOM OFFICE CONVERSION**

WHEREAS, TCAT, Inc. (TCAT) has a need for additional administrative space to support operations, and

WHEREAS, the file room space needs are being reduced by IT solutions, within payroll and accounting, and remaining files destroyed or relocated, and

WHEREAS, on May 12, 2021, TCAT issued an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for File Room Office Conversion, and TCAT received responses on June 29, 2021 from LeChase Construction Services, LLC, Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC, and McPherson Builders, Inc., and

WHEREAS, on opening bid on June 29, 2021, the lowest bidder is Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC, and

WHEREAS, TCAT has reviewed the bid with Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC to ensure bid meets as specification of the bid package as prepared by TCAT and Hunt Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors & Landscape Architect, DPC firms, and

WHEREAS, TCAT recommends the award of this project to Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the TCAT Board of Directors selects Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC as the contractor to provide all materials and labor in converting current file room space to administrative space, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the TCAT Board of Directors authorizes the Chairperson of the Board and the General Manager to execute a contract with Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC. for the File Room Office Conversion, as described in the IFB (which include Hunt Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors & Landscape Architect, DPC firms specifications), Addendum 1 to the IFB (dated June 7, 2021), Addendum 2 (dated June 16, 2021), Clarification email (dated June 11, 2021), and Marchuska Brothers Construction, LLC June 29, 2021 response to IFB in an amount not to exceed Thirty-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$39,300) subject to the approval of TCAT's attorney.

Adopted by the TCAT Board of Directors on this the 22nd day of July, 2021.

Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee** – The Executive Committee did not meet. Next meeting: 8/18.
- **Audit Committee** – The Audit Committee did not meet. The auditors said they should have a draft copy of the audit report completed around July 19.
- **Budget Committee** – The Budget Committee met on July 20 and discussed Revenue Expenditure Report June 2021; 2022 Operating Budget and 2021 Capital Budget. Next meeting: 8/17.
- **Human Resource Committee** – The Human Resources Committee met on June 19 and discussed recruitment, including the July 12th new hire class and preparation for an August 30th class; the new Temp IT Support Assistant and the Payroll Coordinator searches; Leave Management; July 30th Employee Service Recognition Celebration. Next meeting: 8/19.
- **Planning Committee** – The Planning Committee did not meet but received an email update and notice of an upcoming doodle poll to determine the best time to have Luis Aguirre-Torres, Director of Sustainability for the City of Ithaca, to come speak to the Board Members. Next meeting: 8/12.
- **Transit Service Committee** – The Transit Service Committee did not meet but received an email update regarding Fall Service; the TDP; Tconnect, and Planning and Grants. Next meeting: 8/11.

Executive Session

A closed session to seek advice of counsel was requested. Moved by D. Dawson, seconded by J. Dotson, with a vote of 9-0 the Board moved to a closed session at 5:26pm. No actions were taken.

At 5:35 the Board went back into open session upon motion by D. Dawson, seconded by B. Brady, with a vote of 9-0-0.

Chair Klein moved a resolution, seconded by D. Dawson, which was approved 9-0 as follows:

RESOLUTION 2021-10 Decision on a Single Advertising Request

TCAT has received a request for an advertisement inside buses that the Board considers defamatory, and therefore at this time we are choosing not to accept it.

Adopted by the TCAT Board of Directors on this the 22nd day of July, 2021.

At 5:42 pm, a motion by F. Proto and seconded by B. Brady with a vote of 9-0 to go into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person, and a contract negotiation or dispute which, if discussed in public, could compromise the position of TCAT.

The Board arose from executive session at 6:31 pm with a motion by D. Dawson, seconded by F. Proto, and a vote of 9-0.

The Board approved the resolution extending the Cornell bus fare MOU through June 30, 2022 (motion by D. Dawson, seconded by F. Proto, with a vote of 9-0). Chair Klein thanked the MOU negotiating team for its work. D. Nguyen thanked B. Brady for her work on General Manager Scot Vanderpool's performance review.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021- 11
EXTEND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR
CORNELL UNIVERSITY BUS PASS PROGRAM THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022

WHEREAS, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc. (TCAT) and Cornell University (Cornell) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Cornell University Bus Pass Program dated June 22, 2017, with effective dates from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021, and

WHEREAS, the MOU states both parties agree to negotiate an agreement to cover Cornell's fare payments after Cornell's fiscal year ends on June 30, 2021, and

WHEREAS, prior to June 30, 2021, the parties extended the MOU through July 31, 2021 on the same terms and conditions while they continued negotiations on a longer term agreement, and

WHEREAS, while negotiations continue on a new MOU, the parties wish to extend the MOU through June 30, 2022, with TCAT providing service necessary to meet demand, Cornell's payments increasing by 3% payment, and all other terms and conditions remaining the same,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED, that the TCAT Board authorizes the Chairperson of the Board and the General Manager to sign an extension of the Memorandum of Understanding Between Cornell University and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit for the Cornell University Bus Pass Program through June 30, 2022 on the terms described above, with said extension of Memorandum of Understanding subject to the approval of TCAT's attorney.

Adopted by the TCAT Board of Directors on this the 22nd day of July, 2021.

Next Meeting

The next regular Board meeting will be August 26, 2021.

Adjournment

Chair Klein adjourned the open meeting at 6:34pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Pamela Torelli, Recording Secretary, August 26, 2021.