

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

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

### **March 23, 2023 | 4:00pm via Zoom**

#### ***Attendees***

Board Members: Denise Thompson; Kelley Cooper; Deborah Dawson; Jennifer Dotson; Lisa Holmes; Laura Lewis; Frank Proto

Absent: Ducson Nguyen; Gary Stewart

TCAT Staff: Erik Amos; Susan Brock; Erinn Brainard; Gian Fountain; Julie Ellis-Grove; Taylor Hessler; Doug Jensen; Anthony McCabe; Curt Parrish; Patty Poist; Gina Lord; Mike Smith; Scot Vanderpool; Chris Westling; Dameon Allen

Public Attendees: Frank Doldo; Jimmy Jordan

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

Chair D. Thompson called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

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

There were no Board Member items presented for discussion.

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

Chair Thompson relayed a comment from community member, Monica Mole, who had a suggestion to add a TCAT park-and-ride to the Shops at Ithaca Mall. She suggested a possible storefront inside the mall where riders could buy a parking pass, bus pass and maybe even coffee/donuts while waiting for the bus.

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

Firstly, P. Poist noted the next Rider's Advisory Committee meeting would be April 10 at 4:30pm, where they will discuss the February systems reports, as well as ideas for Summer and Fall Service. F. Proto will give future updates from the ITCTC as the first Planning and Policy committee meetings will be in May. Chair Thompson then thanked S. Vanderpool and the TCAT team for their diligence on moving forward with the Farebox system replacement.

#### ***GM Report***

S. Vanderpool first introduced Frank Doldo to the Board as Dwight Mengel's successor at the County. F. Doldo will be working in the County's Department of Planning and Sustainability. He also introduced the newly hired Fleet Maintenance Manager, Anthony McCabe.

S. Vanderpool delivered the February Systems report. February 2023 ridership is down 18% over February 2022. L. Holmes raised the question whether the decrease had an influence from the recent service reductions, or from farebox data loss. E. Amos stated it is predominantly from the service levels, and TCAT continues to gather its ridership data through Automatic Passenger Counts that are from the buses, not the fareboxes. The numbers are also attributed to the lower number of available buses, which will hopefully be remedied with the recent hiring of more mechanics. This month E. Amos also

provided a chart that demonstrated the variance of data being lost due to the failing fareboxes and the estimated fare revenue lost. Collisions and incidents: there were 4 in February 2023, and 8 in 2022.

The HR report reflected the 11 mechanics (budget is for 12), and only 62 Full-time operators. Lots of transfers/promotions on the administrative side: K. Franklin from Dispatch to Trainer; E. Brainard from Payroll to HR Generalist; P. Naughton from Operator to Transit Service Supervisor; newly hired Stephanie Freese as the IETA Project Manager; Carlos Perez as Accounting Specialist. The February class of Operators had 4, three of which are in Revenue service training, and one is working on obtaining their CDL. There are 2 more operators that started in March. D. Jensen noted there is still a nationwide shortage of Operators, and average of 28% vacancy rate among transit systems.

Marketing and Communications had been aiding with recruitment via media and the TCAT websites. Lastly IT continues with evolving upgrades, firewall upgrades, network upgrades and added security access points.

### **Committee Reports**

- **Executive Committee** – The Executive Committee met March 15, where a Special Board Meeting was also conducted. At the Special Board Meeting, a resolution was passed to increase the scope and the cost of the Farebox replacement project. The additions will extend the original warranty by 2 years, include more fare media, and upgraded modems for bus Wi-Fi capabilities. They also discussed plans for service recovery depending on the Operator situation. S. Vanderpool gave an update about the Triennial Review and how TCAT is working with the Milligan Group to help resolve the findings. The Executive Committee also discussed the 2023 Low-No Grant application and the maintenance situation.
- **Budget Committee** – The Budget Committee met on March 21. J. Ellis-Grove explained that TCAT's operating funds are currently under review by the FTA, and Capital funds are completely on hold until the County's Triennial review findings are cleared. The Budget Committee is looking into other revenue streams, such as NYS funds, from which to pull down.
- **Planning; Audit; Human Resource; Transit Service** Committees did not meet in March.

### ***Next Meeting***

The next regular meeting will be April 27, 2023.

### ***Executive Session***

F. Proto made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations; motion seconded by L. Lewis, vote 7-0-0. The Board entered Executive Session at 5:06pm.

At 6 pm, the Board left Executive Session and went back into open session (motion by D. Dawson, second by K. Cooper, 7-0-0 vote).

### ***Adjournment***

The Board meeting adjourned at 6 pm (motion by D. Dawson, second by J. Dotson, 7-0-0 vote).

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Taylor Hessler, Recording Secretary, January 25, 2024.*