

**ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT  
MEETING  
JULY 31, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Estuary Transit District Legislative Committee was called to order by Chairman Joan Gay at 9:37 a.m. at the Estuary Transit Offices, Centerbrook, Connecticut.

**ROLL CALL**

Those in attendance included: Joan Gay, Virginia Zawoy

Staff: Joseph Comerford and Chris Denison

Guests: Ralph Eno, John Forbis

**PLEDGE**

Joan Gay led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Joe reported that the special session has ended.

The District has not heard from DOT regarding the budget for next year.

The State's bus operations budget is \$3million over last year's budget; it is unclear if Fast Track is included.

Joe stated that the Fast Track is doing well; plans for a Fast Track East are being considered.

Joe reported that the Governor has announced plans for a 5-Year Transportation Ramp Up Plan. The \$2.8 billion plan builds upon the \$3.8 billion baseline plan for the DOT. Projects include expansion in the I-95 and I-84 corridors, additional investments in the rail system, including stations, track, fleet and parking expansion, as well as transit expansion, including a centralized paratransit system, and investments in a state-wide real time information system (AVL). It is unclear if the AVL system includes the District.

Joe also reported that the MORE (Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies) Regional Entities Subcommittee met with DOT Commissioner Redeker earlier in the month to discuss the expansion of bus service throughout the state, as well as

streamlining service. At this meeting Commissioner Redeker presented his preference for rebranding and centralizing all transit authorities under the CT Transit system. This system would run under contract to the State with all existing service contracts cancelled and then be put out to bid.

Ralph Eno noted that one of the goals of the MORE Commission is to make regions throughout the State larger. He fears that individual towns will lose management of projects that are meaningful to them.

Joe reported that the Rt. 81 CMAQ (Congestion, Mitigation, Air Quality) Grant which would provide funding for the Rt. 81 project for 3 years the grant is under consideration; the DOT review committee has requested additional information, including budget modification. It is uncertain if the State will match the funds.

### **DISCUSSION OF REBRANDING OF TRANSIT DISTRICTS**

Joe reported that the State would like to take control of all transit districts within the state and rebrand them under one name. He indicated that the State association is meeting with the Commissioner on September 2 to discuss the issue.

The Committee and other Board members present expressed their concerns of what rebranding would mean for the District in terms of losing local power, DAR service and funding.

The Committee unanimously agreed on the following items:

- Present a Resolution to the Board opposing the rebranding of transit districts. Joe and Ralph will draft the Resolution for review by the Legislative Committee.
- Send a letter to area Representatives and Senators indicating the Sept. 2 meeting the State to discuss rebranding. The purpose of the letter is to keep our legislative contacts informed of the possibility of rebranding.

Ralph Eno suggested inviting all area representatives to attend the October Board meeting where the rebranding discussion results of the Sept 2 meeting will be presented as well as the results of the next Legislative Committee meeting.

A discussion was held about forming a coalition with other small transit districts to oppose rebranding.

### **FEDERAL FUNDING**

Joe presented the possibility of the 9 Town Transit to pursue becoming a direct recipient of federal funding. This will require approval from the Governor and the support of CT DOT. This will be discussed in further detail at future meetings. Currently, our focus is on the rebranding issue.

**UPDATE ON LUNCHEON WITH LEGISLATORS**

The event will be scheduled after the September 2 meeting with the DOT Commissioner.

**DISCUSSION OF ITEMS FOR AUGUST 21, 2015 REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Resolution regarding rebranding

**ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina Denison  
Administrative Secretary

Joan Gay  
Chairman