

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 22, 2021, 11:00 a.m.

Board Members Present: Councillor Dave Cuyler, Municipality of Kincardine
Councillor Doug Bell, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie (by teleconference)
Councillor Warren Dickert, Town of Hanover
Councillor Beth Hamilton, Municipality of West Grey
Councillor Dean Leifso, Municipality of Brockton
Mayor Scott Mackey, Township of Chatsworth
Councillor Ed McGugan, Township of Huron-Kinloss
Vice-Deputy Mayor Mike Myatt, Town of Saugeen Shores
Mayor John Woodbury, Township of Southgate

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Roger Cook, Manager
Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary

The meeting was conducted by videoconference in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Call to Order

President Mike Myatt called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m..

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion #2021-001

Moved by Warren Dickert; Seconded by Beth Hamilton
That the agenda for January 22, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

Carried

4. Minutes of the December 2, 2020 General Board Meeting

Motion #2021-002

Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by Scott Mackey
That the minutes of December 2, 2020 be amended to replace “noted” in the fourth sentence in the third paragraph of item 6 C with “speculated”, and that the Board approve and adopt the minutes of the December 2, 2020 Board Meeting as so amended.

Carried

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

6. Correspondence

A. Letter from the Township of Chatsworth

The Board noted the contents of the letter.

B. Email from the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

The Board noted the contents of the email.

C. Letter from Client

Dave Cuyler said that he knows the client and responded to him, explaining that COVID had disrupted service. The President emphasized the need to respond to all letters from clients and the Manager explained that when he receives such correspondence it is brought to the Board. He has not yet responded to this particular letter.

The President will draft a response to this client explaining the situation and thanking him for getting in touch. The draft will be sent to the Board for review.

Scott Mackey clarified that the measures that concern this client were for the long term stability of SMART, not as a result of COVID. The President agreed that SMART needs to find cost savings for its long term sustainability and added that he found the letter moving and genuine. Ed McGugan found the letter is heartbreaking and emphasized that decisions taken in the interests of the long term stability of the organization nevertheless affect people's lives. Dave Cuyler said that he would clarify with the client that the decisions affecting him were not only the result of COVID, but a need to ensure long term sustainability through cost savings.

Warren Dickert wanted to know how many such letters have been received. The Manager said that he would have to review past agendas to know how many, adding that such correspondence, whether by letter or email, is always placed on the Board agenda.

Motion #2021-003

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the letter from the Township of Chatsworth, the email from the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie and the letter from a client be received for information

Carried

7. Manager's Reports and Recommendations

A. Report 2020-57 November 2020 Operational

The Manager presented the report, noting that there were no significant changes from October. Compared to November 2019, ridership was down 47% for individual rides and 82% for excursions.

Motion #2021-004

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by Warren Dickert

That Report 2020-57 November 2020 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

B. Report 2021-01 December 2020 Operational

The Manager presented the report, noting that ridership was similar to November, although there were about 100 more rides than in November, and group rides were down 57% year over year.

Motion #2021-005

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Dean Leifso

That Report 2021-01 December 2020 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

C. Report 2021-02 2020 Annual

The Manager presented the report noting that 2020 was very different with a 54.7% overall decrease in ridership. He highlighted the gas tax reserve account and the purchase of new vehicles, adding that SMART provides a safe and dependable service with outstanding value.

Beth Hamilton suggested that the report could be co-written with the President to highlight the resilience demonstrated by SMART and what a great job was done during COVID. She suggested

highlighting issues such as the training and cleaning that was done to ensure uninterrupted service and the strong leadership shown by the Board and the Manager, as well as the changes in service, including the discontinuation of Sunday service and weekend dispatch. She suggested that the report should contain a forecast to March, so the member municipalities know what is coming. She referred to a misleading headline that had appeared in the Post suggesting that SMART was not managing well.

Scott Mackey supported a co-written report, adding that it was a busy year with a lot of changes and good work done through COVID, which should be documented since these changes were made to support the long term sustainability of SMART.

Ed McGugan supported the ideas put forward by Beth Hamilton. He referred to the plexiglass panels that were installed to separate passengers and drivers, and asked if there were any situations where anyone caught COVID on a SMART vehicle or anyone with COVID was transported. The Manager responded that no one caught COVID and no one with COVID was transported. He added there was one request for a trip to a COVID testing site and SMART decided not to transport the person who was able to travel for the test in a conventional taxi.

The President agreed that he and the Vice President will work with the Manager to rewrite the report.

Motion #2021-006

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That Report 2021-02 2020 Annual be modified to include SMART's accomplishments and the changes made to its operations in 2020.

Carried

8. New HR Policies

Catherine McKay highlighted for the Board the three policies: Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest, Leave of Absence and Vacation and the general implementation considerations as set out in her memorandum to the Board.

On the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy, the board agreed that tan and navy clothing would be introduced only as items wear out and that embroidery on tan clothing is to be black.

With respect to the Vacation policy, Scott Mackey stated that vacation pay should be paid out according to the Employment Standards Act. The Manager said that staff receive their vacation pay when they take their vacation and all vacation pay is paid out by the end of the year. The Manager has not calculated the cost of paying out recalculated vacation pay at 6% rather than 4% for those who passed their 5th anniversary but estimates that it would be a few thousand dollars. He proposed that vacation pay at 6% be paid out once an employee has passed their 4th anniversary and the Board agreed with this practice. Warren Dickert asked about staff receiving fewer unpaid vacation days than in the past, and it was explained that staff could still request unpaid days off in addition to their vacation days so as to receive the same total amount of time off as they had in the past. It was noted that unpaid time off should not be considered as vacation, since vacation is a statutory requirement.

Catherine McKay proposed that SMART policies should be in electronic form to avoid maintaining multiple hard copies of policies and make distribution and updating administratively easier. Warren Dickert stated that he is in favour of electronic policies and asked if a record is kept in training files confirming that staff have received and read the policies. The Manager stated that staff sign off on policies by email.

Motion #2021-007

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by John Woodbury

That the Board approve the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest, the Leave of Absence Policy and the Vacation Policy with the Manager and Catherine McKay to set implementation dates no later than April 1, 2021.

Carried

9. Review of Partnership Agreement

The President suggested that two Board members and the newly elected President form a committee to meet in the next few weeks to review the agreement which has not been updated in a long time. This issue will be left with the new President.

10. Election of Officers

The President noted that it has been an interesting eighteen months since he was elected President. He thanked his predecessor, John Woodbury, and noted that the Board has done a fabulous job, held meaningful discussions and is headed in the right direction. He added that Saugeen Shores Council has reappointed him to the SMART Board for another two years so he will be staying on as Past President.

The President called for nominations for President. Ed McGugan thanked the President for his contribution and nominated Warren Dickert. Scott Mackey seconded the nomination. Warren Dickert accepted the nomination and thanked Ed McGugan and Scott Mackey. The President called for nominations a second and third time and there were no further nominations. Scott Mackey moved that nominations be closed, seconded by Dean Leifso. Warren Dickert was declared President.

The President called for nominations for Vice President. On behalf of the Board, Scott Mackay thanked the President for his leadership and nominated Beth Hamilton. Ed McGugan seconded the nomination. Beth Hamilton accepted the nomination. The President called for nominations a second and third time and there were no further nominations. Dave Cuyler moved that nominations be closed, seconded by Warren Dickert. Beth Hamilton was declared Vice President. Mike Myatt acknowledged Beth Hamilton's contribution to the Board as well as the great work that she also does behind the scenes.

11. Other Business

Board Bylaws

The Past President raised the issue of the by-laws of the corporation which are outdated and need to be updated. He also suggested that SMART should have an Executive Committee of three Board members (the President, the Vice President and a Member at Large) to address critical issues that might arise such as in the area of staffing. He said that there should be three members to avoid tie votes. Dave Cuyler agreed, noting that his current commitments may not allow him to devote time to additional SMART duties, but he said it is important to have the third person. Scott Mackey agreed, noting that the Executive Committee should review the by-laws and he proposed that Dean Leifso would be an asset to the Committee. The Manager noted that in some organizations, there is the position of Past President which could be considered a member of the Executive Committee. Mike Myatt noted that he is the Chair of the HR Committee, and may not want to take on duties beyond that.

The Board arrived at a consensus to add a third member to the Executive Committee and the matter was left with the new President.

It was noted that Mike Myatt is the Chair of the HR Committee, with Committee members being Scott Mackey, Dave Cuyler and Warren Dickert. The election of a Chair for this committee will be done by the committee itself.

Accident Rates

Ed McGugan asked if it would be possible to publish accident rates such as the number and frequency of traffic accidents, and the number of accident free days so the public is aware of SMART's safety record. He also noted that this is information that the Board does not currently receive. The Manager explained that it would be necessary to define what an accident is, adding that the last collision was in 2012. Occasionally, drivers bump into things like light standards, which may not be considered an accident. Ed McGugan said that an accident could be defined as something occurring on a public road, and possibly with a client in the vehicle. This issue came to his attention when he came across a transit system in Michigan which noted the number of accident free days. He proposed that this issue be considered for future discussion.

Employee Assistance Program

Mike Myatt informed the Board that an employee assistance program would cost an additional \$2,500 per year in addition to the current benefits program. The Manager noted that he has information on both the basic and enhanced programs and the issue will be put on the agenda for the Board's March meeting.

Fleet Rationalization

Beth Hamilton advised the Board that she, Ed McGugan and Warren Dickert will work on a fleet rationalization report, assisted by the Manager. Scott Mackey noted that SMART has purchased three new 9-person vans and three more are scheduled for 2022, pointing out that the fleet rationalization report should address whether they are in fact needed.

12. Adjournment

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Dean Leifso
That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 12:35 p.m.
Carried

Recording Secretary Meeting Attendance

The Recording Secretary attended the following meetings in the first quarter of 2021:

- January 22, 2021



Warren Dickert, President



Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary