**Public Transit Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2019**

Note: Decisions and commitments in ***bold italic*** type.

Members Present: Mary Ann Hayes (chair), Sandy Buchanan, Rebecca Grover, Duane Scott, Chris Hall, Richard Taylor, Zoe Miller. Attending by phone: Jennifer Williams, Tom Reinauer, Casey Gilbert, Marcia Larkin, Sen. Brad Farrin, Chris Chop, Connie Reed, Casey Gilbert, Barbara Schneider, Deidre Wadsworth.

Non-Members Present: Lori Brann (clerk), Amy Rau, Barbie Lord, Rick McCarthy, Theresa Savoy, Jennifer Brickett, Steve Cole. Present by phone: Ken Murchison, Kristen Maynard.

Members Absent: Jessica Maurer, Kalie Hess, Dennis McCartney, Dana Knapp, Rep. Bettyann Sheats, Patricia Quinn, Greg Jordan, Lisa Feldman, Jonathan LaBonte, Al Schutz, Giselle White, William Shane.

Meeting called to order at 12:32 pm by Mary Ann. Quick overview of agenda.

**January minutes**: ***Casey motioned to approve, seconded by Richard. Unanimous.***

Report to Governor and Legislature. Review of draft that was distributed previous Friday. Mary Ann reviewed the statutory requirements for the report and described the steps taken to develop the draft. Mary Ann outlined the state funding scenario as it exists now

Group discussion: Sandy: concern with amount of money requested based on status quo instead of expanded service. WMTS costs have increased 15% in the last year. Answer: half of funding for existing service, half for new services

Chris Chop: Solid methodology. Makes sense to compare to other states. Advocates for a robust prioritization process to screen applications. Virginia is a good example (smart scale to prioritize projects) very transparent. Will send link to Mary Ann.

Sen Farrin: Hearings last week on transportation infrastructure and transit. Feels testimony shows an awareness that there is a need. Real needs identified in this report will be crucial for funding recommendations. Justification important and transportation committee is committed to funding from all sources. Content in report very important. Work sessions are next. Blue Ribbon Commission needs to address public transit not just infrastructure. Can bring to the table.

Tom Reinauer: Comparison to peer states should be included (from Strategic Plan). AASHTO summary helpful, but peer states more similar. Should reference Strategic Plan – contains good data, including funding sources.

Chris Hall: Testified on bills. There is support for public transportation. Open to funding increases for transit. Skeptical that any funding increases will happen this budget, but optimistic for next year. New revenue streams important.

Barbara: Should the local sales tax option be moved up in priority? If people are making choices about where they live, transportation needs to be included. Local sales taxes are controversial but important topic.

Zoe: GPCOG supports local sales tax discussions. Public Transportation high priority in recent regional meetings both urban and rural. Be clear that 25% increase only meets 20% of the need. Make point that problem can’t be solved overnight. Page 8: Explore GoMaine Trip Planner – expand to meet passengers need. Add shorter term solutions. Change to be inclusive of other ideas.

Mary Ann: Is group comfortable with this report and adding these ideas? Maine Transit Association has bill for funding in process. Report will go to Governor and Legislature. Report due “early April”. May be submitted to Legislature on Wednesday.

Deidra: Add footnote to recognize concerns but okay for the short term.

DOT not staffed to help volunteer networks. Okay to leave recommendation on volunteer coordinator? Probable consultant to help. No discussion.

Any major items missing?

Chris Hall: Need vision of end state. Maybe not this document, but something else. Value of public transportation. Maybe in transmittal letter.

Theresa: Funding to increase transit also helps to employ people, not just to give rides.

Difficult to provide exact outcomes of how the funding will be used. Important to develop partnerships.

Marcia: Cite survey results on customer needs. Good data to have/heartwarming. Have some testimonials on hand – seniors, low income. Will supply some of these.

Mary Ann: Do any voting members of the Council want to testify on behalf of this report? Sen. Farrin will request that it be a presentation to the committee. Volunteers: Chris Hall, Sandy Buchanan, Casey Gilbert, Marcia Larkin. Chris Chop: needs a one-pager with highlights and funding needs. Tom: agreed. Make a fast point and will assist. Farrin – sooner is better to submit to committee. Chris Chop and Tom to assist Mary Ann create a one-page summary.

Locally Coordinated Plan: Thanks to everyone for their comments. Most were easy to accommodate. Jay Kamm requested that the problem of unfunded deadhead miles be mentioned somewhere. Rural states struggle with this the most. Some volunteers can’t afford to donate their vehicle expenses, just their time. Good feedback from FTA.

Other:

Municipal and Aging Task force: Recent meetings to discuss aging in place and transportation.

Medical Group: Chris Chop to share lessons learned. Kalie can’t lead the effort to co-schedule appointments for ease of transportation.

Closing announcements: Duane: Age Friendly communities volunteer program challenging to sustain, moving to regional instead of municipal. April 23-10 am Cohen Center discussion on transportation and volunteer driver network for area. Richard: Like recommendations. Will be putting together survey on Maine housing to include transportation questions. Rebecca: May attend listening session to legislature transportation committee. Zoe: exciting to have both LCP and report to Legislature. GPCOG received funding for piloting service for food shopping and inclusive transportation planning work in PACTS. Deidra: Will review report and get back with comments. Connie: LCP outstanding. Brad Farrin: Thanks for the hard work and is happy to be a part of the group. Rick: Thanks for the good information. Pending Rep. Sheats bill to provide more funding for transit.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58 pm.