

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 25, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Councillor Dave Cuyler, Municipality of Kincardine
Deputy Mayor Mark Davis, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie (for Doug Bell)
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: Councillor Doug Bell, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie
Councillor Warren Dickert, Town of Hanover
Councillor Beth Hamilton, Municipality of West Grey

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

In the absence of President Warren Dickert, the session was chaired by Mike Myatt. The meeting was called to order at 1:31 p.m..

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

None declared.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion #2021-37

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Dean Leifso

That the agenda for June 25, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

Carried

4. Minutes of the April 23, 2021 General Board Meeting

Motion #2021-38

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the Board approve and adopt the minutes of the April 23, 2021 General Board Meeting as circulated.

Carried

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair noted that the President had requested that the Manager update the Board on the Employee Assistance Program. Accordingly, the Manager stated that the program is up and running at a cost of \$6.00 per month per employee. No feedback has been received so far on the program.

The Manager advised the Board that letters were sent to Bruce County Mayors asking them to keep SMART in mind in the context of the County's Transportation Master Plan. No responses have yet been received. Letters and an information package were also sent to the five municipalities in Grey County which are not partners in SMART. The Manager has spoken to representatives of Owen Sound Transit which is undergoing a review, and outlined that SMART can deliver a service that is good value for the money. No response from the municipalities has been received so far. The Manager agreed to keep the Board informed on the matter.

6. Correspondence

A. Email from a Client

The Chair summarized the operational changes made over the last few months, noting that the Board has worked hard to review its level of service and manage costs. Ed McGugan asked if the changes to service were on SMART's web site and how they were communicated to clients. The Manager explained that the information was posted on the web site, and he will contact the web site administrators to see about making the information easier to find. He added that the client is visually impaired and would have received a notice about service changes with the invoice, but the notice may not have been read out loud. Also, during the pandemic, fewer invoices were sent, so some clients may not have received the notices. Dave Cuyler suggested that clients who are visually impaired should be called to inform them about such changes. The Manager noted that SMART will identify its visually impaired clients so as to be able to call them about service changes.

7. Manager's Reports and Recommendations

A. Report 2021-12 April 2021 Operational

The Manager presented the report noting that pre-COVID user fees were in the range of \$30,000 per month.

Motion #2021-39

Moved by Mark Davis; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That Report 2021-12 April 2021 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

B. Report 2021-13 May 2021 Operational

The Manager presented the report, noting that the average user fee increased due to longer rides. May of 2020 was the low point, when no one was travelling at all. Ed McGugan asked about the nine excursions, which the Manager explained were all in Hanover for trips to the grocery store from long-term care/retirement facilities, and none were for social purposes.

Motion #2021-40

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That Report 2021-13 2021 May 2021 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

C. 2021-14 Proposed Incident Reporting Policy

The Manager presented the policy which he and Ed McGugan worked on. Ed McGugan complimented the Manager on the good work he did in drafting the policy.

Mark Davis asked if there was a form to accompany the policy to ensure that all relevant information is collected in a consistent way. The Manager indicated that this could be done, with space included on the form for any diagram to explain the incident. Mike Myatt suggested adding that the report must be in writing, and Scott Mackey asked if "near misses", which can be learning opportunities and used to identify trends, were required to be reported. Dave Cuyler added that "near misses" can result in suggestions for improvements to municipal Councils or the province, and can identify places that cause difficulties such as bad intersections. Reporting "near misses" is intended to be helpful and not to judge a driver.

The Manager will revise the policy to include a form for reporting incidents including "near misses", a requirement that the report is to be in writing, and a section for outlining action taken by a driver such as calling police or EMS. The revised report will be submitted to the next Board meeting

Motion #2021-41

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by John Woodbury

That Report 2021-14 Proposed Incident Reporting Policy be deferred to the next Board meeting.

Carried

D. 2021-15 Surplus Vehicles

The Manager presented the report noting that funds from the sale of surplus vehicles will go into the gas tax account administered by the Town of Hanover. Scott Mackey stated that the policy is the way to move forward by dealing with surplus vehicles in an open and transparent way.

Motion #2021-42

Moved by Dean Leifso; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That the Board approve report 2021-15 Surplus Vehicles as presented and authorize the Manager to dispose of the vehicles mentioned through GovDeals.ca.

Carried

E. Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for Staff

The Manager presented the report adding that a recent case in Texas resulted in an employer terminating 150 employees who refused to be vaccinated, an action which was supported by a judge when taken to court.

Scott Mackey said that he supports vaccinations but does not support the motion, as it is not up to a small organization like SMART to take this step. He noted that 25% of long term care staff have not been vaccinated and those who do not agree to being vaccinated are provided with medical evidence about the benefits of vaccinations or training about vaccinations. He believes that it is up to the province to take the step of requiring staff to be vaccinated. He added that vaccinations as a health and safety issue is for the benefit of employees, not clients, and to advance vaccinations as a health and safety issue for the protection of staff, would require clients to provide proof of vaccination.

Mark Davis stated that getting vaccinated is the right thing to do, but questioned whether it is legal for an employer to require employees to get vaccinated.

Dean Leifso suggested contacting a specialist lawyer, as the issue can be very sensitive, possibly leading to threats of a law suit. He pointed out that hospitals are not making vaccinations mandatory and if they did so, they would likely face legal action. He added that changes may be coming in terms of what activities are permitted, and that travel, going to movies and hockey games for example, may soon be allowed. He added that he is reluctant to support mandatory vaccinations for staff at this point.

Ed McGugan noted that the Prime Minister said that vaccinations won't be forced on anyone, so SMART needs to be careful on this issue. Dave Cuyler agreed with the positions put forward, noting that people should want to do everything possible to keep themselves and others safe and save lives, and it is perplexing that some people do not want to be vaccinated. John Woodbury noted that it is questionable whether employers can ask employees if they have been vaccinated, and the practice at his previous employer was only to ask if the vaccine had been offered. Mike Myatt said that he discussed the report with Warren Dickert and commended the Manager for bringing the issue forward.

Motion #2021-43

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the Board authorize the Manager to require all SMART staff members to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 before September 30, 2021.

Defeated

F. 2021-17 Return of Dispatcher/Scheduler

The Manager presented the report, noting in response to a question that the Dispatcher/Scheduler has not worked all year, the Bookkeeper works four days a week and the Office Manager is full-time.

Scott Mackey asked whether April and May ride numbers justify a change to the staffing level. Mike Myatt asked if the return to work could be phased in and then re-examined in light of the July – August ridership numbers once they are known. He suggested possibly three days a week initially, then four in August and five in September. Ed McGugan noted that if June's rides are in the range of 1,500 and there are 2,000 in July, this would be an increase of 30%, an indication that rides are coming back in a strong way. The Manager noted that the height of the ride numbers is about 3,000 per month and he anticipates that by the end of August, they will increase to about 80% of that. Dave Cuyler suggested that the decision on staffing should be based on rides reaching a specific level and then increasing the hours of work.

The Board discussed the possible implications to an employee's Employment Insurance eligibility of returning to work. Dean Leifso was asked about the issue and suggested checking with an HR specialist and in response to a question from Mike Myatt, Catherine McKay advised checking with Town of Hanover payroll staff and/or Employment Insurance officials. Dave Cuyler said that SMART could ask the employee to return to work when needed, and hours worked would be provided to EI officials as part of the usual reporting. He said that it is possible for a person to work a certain amount and still collect EI benefits.

Scott Mackey said that if the employer does not have work for a person to do, it is hard to justify returning them to work on a full-time basis. Some flexibility should be demonstrated and consideration given to bringing employees back part-time. The Manager informed the Board that June ridership numbers will be available in mid-July and he will send them out to be considered at the July meeting. He confirmed that the Dispatcher/Scheduler is anxious to return to work.

Motion #2021-44

Moved by Dean Leifso; Seconded by John Woodbury

That the Board of Directors authorize the Manager to bring SMART's Dispatcher/Scheduler back to work full-time on Monday, July 19, 2021.

Motion #2021-45

Moved by Dean Leifso; Seconded by John Woodbury

That Motion #2021-44 be amended to bring the Dispatcher/Scheduler back to work three days per week on Monday, July 19, 2021.

Carried

8. Executive Committee Update

A. Notes from Committee Meetings – May 7 and June 4, 2021

The Chair explained that the notes are for information only. The Manager explained that the next step on the partnership agreement is to request the Board's lawyer, Peter Loucks, to draft a new agreement. Board members are to review the proposed changes and send any comments to Warren Dickert and the Manager within one week. If no comments are received, it will be assumed that Board members agree with the proposed changes.

9. Other Business

Ed McGugan informed the Board that he had read a detailed report from the Municipal Innovation Council containing a comment about SMART which could easily be misinterpreted and possibly presented in the media as negative, leading to the issue having to be managed by the President and the Manager. Mike Myatt noted that words matter and it is important to take care in choosing them,

particularly as the Board and the Manager have worked hard and have been able to reduce the municipal contribution to SMART.

10. Adjournment

Mike Myatt thanked Mark Davis for joining the meeting as an alternate for Doug Bell.

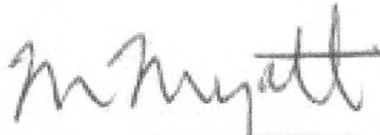
Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Ed McGugan
That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 2:32 p.m.

Carried


Recording Secretary Meeting Attendance

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

- April 9, 2021 (HR Committee)
- April 23, 2021
- June 25, 2021



Mike Myatt, Meeting Chair



Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary