

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 28, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Boardroom, 603 Bruce Rd 19, Walkerton, ON & via Zoom

Board Members Present: Ed McGugan, Councillor, Huron-Kinloss, Chair
Warren Dickert, Deputy Mayor, Hanover, Past Chair
Cheryl Grace, Councillor, Saugeen Shores
Kym Hutcheon, Councillor, Brockton
Joel Loughhead, Councillor, Grey Highlands
Jennifer Shaw, Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie (via Phone & Zoom)
Monica Singh-Soares, Councillor, Southgate (via Zoom at 10:10 a.m.)

Board Members Absent: Doug Townsend, Councillor, West Grey, Vice Chair
Doug Kennedy, Councillor, Kincardine
Scott Mackey, Mayor, Chatsworth

Others Present: Stephan Labelle, SMART Manager
Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m..

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

None declared.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Kym Hutcheon

That the agenda be amended to add item *11. Manager Performance Review* and that the agenda be accepted as so amended.

Carried

4. Delegation

There were no delegations.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting – May 24, 2024

Motion Moved by Warren Dickert; Seconded by Cheryl Grace

That the minutes from May 24, 2024 be accepted as circulated.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. 30-Passenger Bus Charter

There have been no changes to the proposed rates for the 30 passenger bus of \$300/hour, and \$120/hour for the 9 passenger van. An insurer, Facility Association, has been found that can insure the 30 passenger bus operating as a charter, and as part of the usual SMART operation, for one year at \$10,292 and the 9 passenger bus for \$5,000. If the vehicles travel to the GTAHA the cost would increase to \$16,641 for the 30 passenger bus and \$7,290 for the 9 passenger van. This insurer will not cover only some vehicles, so all would have to be moved from Intact, the current insurer which does not cover charters. The current coverage with Intact costs \$23,000 so there could be a savings of \$15,000. It is not known whether charters will generate enough to cover the cost of insurance. The exact definition of "charter" was raised and it was noted that SMART's agreement with the province does not mention charters. The Manager expects to receive information from Intact about coverage for charters within about a week. There are no Board meetings scheduled until September 27, so if a decision is required following receipt of the information from Intact, a meeting could be held via Zoom.

Motion Moved by Joel Loughhead; Seconded by Kym Hutcheon

That the issue of rates for charters using the 30 passenger bus and the 9 passenger van be deferred to the next meeting.

Carried

B. Notifications Software

The software will cost \$10,000 plus \$5,800 in licensing fees. There is no requirement that it be kept for five years and if SMART decides it does not want it after one year, it can let it go. The purchase is contingent on SMART entering into a letter of agreement with the federal government. Implementation as of January 1, 2025 will allow savings to be achieved over a full year, rather than only for 6 months if acquired now, and will provide time to notify clients and allow them to become accustomed to and accept the new system.

Motion Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Monica Singh-Soares

That \$10,000 be expended from the SMART budget to install the notifications software so that operations can start January 1, 2025 and that \$5800 be included in the 2025 budget for annual licensing fees.

Carried

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

8. New Business

A. Hiring of Recording Secretary

The Manager is waiting for applications to come in.

B. 2024 Budget Update

The budget is well on track with a projected \$96,000 surplus and a year-end deficit of \$779,000. Five areas account for the surplus. Legal fees were budgeted at \$8,000 with \$3,000 committed which might not be spent. Some cell phones were eliminated resulting in \$18,000 in expenditures compared to the \$24,000 budgeted. Fuel expenses are \$30,000 less than budget and a minimum of \$20,000 in savings is expected in maintenance as a result of having eliminated three older and costlier vehicles, leaving SMART with a smaller, newer fleet requiring fewer repairs. Additional savings of about \$25,000 are expected from group benefits through a rebate from the benefit administrator. There is the potential for savings of about \$83,000 for 2024.

The financial statement shows a negative amount of \$4,800 in revenue for grants which relates to funds received for AED training, of which \$4,800 was not spent and had to be returned.

The Manager explained that the Revenue line noted as RBC Cash accounts is for payments in cash, by debit and e-transfer. These funds may not in fact be revenue since they have already been accounted for in User Fees and could result in revenue being overstated. It was suggested that these funds should be on the Balance Sheet as an asset rather than as revenue on the Statement of Operations. The Manager will contact SMART's auditor, BDO, to clarify the issue.

Motion Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Monica Singh-Soares

That the budget update be received for information.

Carried

C. SMART Get-Together

The event is scheduled for September 15, 2024 and the Manger indicated that he has donated \$500 towards the cost. A pair of Oakley sunglasses will be offered as a draw prize which hopefully will generate interest in staff attending. The cost of the event last year was \$496 and attendance was less than the year before. Since the introduction of the policy on personal use of SMART vehicles, drivers

would not be allowed to use a SMART vehicle to travel to the event. The Chair encouraged Board members to attend and it was agreed that family members would be welcome.

Sponsorships for the event from some of SMART's suppliers and possibly promotional items from the member municipalities were discussed and it was suggested that the Elmwood Chamber of Commerce could do a barbecue for the lunch rather than serving submarine sandwiches. It was decided that the Manager should pursue sponsorship opportunities and promotional items, and that the food should be left to the Manager's discretion.

Motion Moved by Kym Hutcheon; Seconded by Joel Loughead

That the Manager be authorized to spend up to a maximum of \$750 for the staff get together and that Board members attend on September 15, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at the Elmwood Community Centre.

Carried

Motion Moved by Kym Hutcheon; Seconded by Joel Loughead

That direction be provided to the Manager to pursue sponsorships for the staff get together.

Carried

9. Reports and Recommendations

A. Cancellation Fees

Cancellation fees are charged when there is a no-show situation or when a cancellation is made too late, hampering the ability to book alternative rides. Current cancellation fees are \$30 for short rides and \$50 for long rides to destinations such as London and Burlington. In 2023, there were 289 cancellations at the door leading to a loss of over \$18,000 in revenue. In the past, 20% of rides were cancelled and SMART has had no difficulty in collecting the cancellation fees. The policy is to provide for the Manager to use his discretion in applying the cancellation fee with examples such as illness, family emergencies, and cancellation of medical appointments amongst others. It was suggested that if a client repeatedly cancels due to illness, they could be asked for supporting medical documentation. The Manager explained that the fee has been waived in the past in 3% of cases at the most. The Manager will in future report to the Board on cancellation fees.

Motion Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Kym Hutcheon

That cancellation fees be increased to 50% of ride costs, with a minimum of \$30 for rides of less than 80 km round trip and a maximum of \$300 for longer trips to destinations such as London and Burlington, that the Cancellation Fee Policy be amended to provide for the Manager to use his discretion to waive fees, and that the amended policy be submitted to the Board for approval.

Carried

B. Report on May 2024 Operations

In May 2024, there were 2,512 rides, \$41,642.50 in sales and 38,495 billed kilometers an increase of 19% in rides, 30% in fees and 1% in billed kilometers compared to the same period last year. There were 36,438km driven in deadhead. Ridership continues to increase from the 2020 level, but has not yet reached the level experienced in 2019.

Motion Moved by Kym Hutcheon; seconded by Warren Dickert

That the report on May 2024 operations be accepted as presented.

Carried

C. Rural Transit Solutions Fund Project

The Manager circulated correspondence from SMART to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund Project to allow signing authority.

Motion Moved by Warren Dickert; seconded by Kym Hutcheon

That the Manager and the Board Chair be authorized to sign agreements, payment claims, cheques, reports and other documents related to the project on behalf of Saugeen Mobility, as the recipient of funds.

Carried

10. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

11. Manager Performance Review

In light of the Manager's upcoming second year anniversary, a date will be set for him to meet with the Board's Executive Committee to conduct his performance review.

There was some discussion of the process to be followed by committees of the Board, with it being noted that public notice of committee meetings must be provided and that quorum is a majority of committee members.

12. Closed Session

Motion Moved by Jennifer Shaw; Seconded by Cheryl Grace

That the Board convene in closed session at 11:10 a.m. to address matters pertaining to an ongoing investigation respecting the Board by the Ombudsman appointed under the Ombudsman Act.

Carried

The Board reconvened in open session at 11:34 a.m. and the Chair confirmed that the Board had gone in closed session and discussed matters pertaining to an ongoing investigation respecting the Board by the Ombudsman appointed under the Ombudsman Act, and no other matters were discussed.

13. Direction Coming Out of Closed Session

Motion Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Joel Loughead

That the SMART Board approve direction as provided in the closed session.

Carried

13. Adjournment & Upcoming Meeting Dates

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Friday, September 27, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Regular Monthly Board Meeting, SMART Office, 603 Bruce Rd 19, Walkerton, ON.

Motion Moved by Warren Dickert; Seconded by Jennifer Shaw

That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 11:45 a.m.

Carried



Ed McGugan, Chair

for 

Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary