

# **SAUGEEN MOBILITY**

## **and REGIONAL TRANSIT**

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### **GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, April 23, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Councillor Doug Bell, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie  
Councillor Dave Cuyler, Municipality of Kincardine  
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 (at 2:15 p.m.)  
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 Warren Dickert called the meeting to order at 1:28 p.m..

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

None declared.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

**Motion #2021-018**

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Dean Leifso  
That the agenda for April 23, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

**Carried**

**4. Minutes of the March 26, 2021 General Board Meeting**

**Motion #2021-019**

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by Dave Cuyler  
That the Board approve and adopt the minutes of the March 26, 2021 General Board Meeting as circulated.

**Carried**

**5. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**A. 9D – LHIN Funding Follow-up**

The President informed the Board that he and Dave Cuyler have worked on this issue and Dave Cuyler's alternate on the Board, Gerry Glover, is well connected with the LHIN, although he has recently been appointed Mayor of Kincardine. The pandemic has affected work at the LHIN and so this item will be deferred to a future point to see what funding might be available at that time.

**B. 7A – Letters to Clients**

The President reported that responses had been sent.

**C. 8D – Is EAP Now in Place**

The Manager reported that the EAP has not yet been implemented as it is with the benefits provider. He is expecting to receive welcome packages for staff once it is in place.

**D. 9F – Municipal Innovation Council**

The President addressed the issue in the absence of Mike Myatt and suggested that SMART should make a submission to Bruce County about how it would fit in given the County's Master Transportation Plan. Bruce County is taking comments on the Plan and so this would be a good time to make a submission. The Manager will work with the Executive Committee to develop a submission in the form of a business plan as to how SMART would work at the County level.

**6. Correspondence**

**A. Email from Bluewater Radio**

It was agreed that SMART would not spend funds on advertising and the President will respond to Bluewater Radio informing them of this decision.

**7. Manager's Reports and Recommendations**

**A. Report 2021-08 March 2021 Operational**

The Manager presented the report noting that business has been steady, with nothing unusual arising.

**Motion #2021-020**

Moved by Ed McGugan; Seconded by Doug Bell

That Report 2021-08 March 2021 Operational be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**B. Report 2021-09 2021 First Quarter Operational**

The Manager presented the report, noting that ridership was down 50.55% and that the gas tax revenue was received earlier this year than last year.

Beth Hamilton raised the question of sending the report to the partner municipalities, asking whether a semi-annual or annual report would be more appropriate. The Manager confirmed that there is no requirement in the partnership agreement for reports to be sent to member councils, and that it has been done as a courtesy. The Board agreed that an annual report would be sufficient given that the councils receive detailed minutes of Board meetings. Members of Councils can also get updates and reports from their representatives on the Board, rather than from reports, and the press often accesses reports that are sent to Councils focusing unduly on points that can be put into a negative light. The phrase "... and forward it to member councils" will not be included in the motion.

**Motion #2021-021**

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by John Woodbury

That Report 2021-09 2021 First Quarter Operational be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**C. 2021-10 5-Year Capital Expenditure Budget (2021 – 2025)**

Ed McGugan raised the issue of electric vehicles in the context of a CO2 reduction plan, noting that Huron Kinloss acquired an electric Zamboni when its ice resurfacing machine needed replacing, and the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority acquired two electric vehicles when their accounting staff highlighted the reduced operating costs. He asked if SMART is able to acquire such vehicles. The Manager responded that he is very supportive of acquiring electric vehicles but they are not available in the size SMART requires. It is possible to buy an electric bus chassis but it is very expensive (about \$500,000). Chrysler has a hybrid minivan but it cannot be adapted to SMART's requirements due to the room taken up by batteries. There is also the question of "range anxiety" and it would not be acceptable for SMART vehicles to be sidelined because they have run out of power. Furthermore, SMART vehicles travel all over the area, so it would not be practical to have a central charging location, and it would not be reasonable to expect drivers who take the vehicles home at night to charge them at their homes. All in all, the Manager said that electric vehicles are not viable for SMART at the moment. Ed McGugan thanked the Manager for his level of awareness

of the issue and added that economies have arrived for electric vehicles. It was agreed that SMART would monitor the situation regarding electric vehicles so as to be able to introduce them when feasible.

Scott Mackey referred to the addition of three 9-passenger vehicles, asking how many passengers these vehicles carry, given COVID-19, and raising the question of efficiencies and the justification for the larger vehicles. The Manager responded that there are load restrictions because of COVID and rides are reduced. Once COVID-19 is under control, the load restrictions will not apply and rides will increase. The larger wheelchairs used by many clients do not fit into a minivan and so the 9-passenger van is required. There are multiple factors at work, and if SMART were to operate at the County level, larger buses could be used which would provide more operational flexibility even though they use more fuel. As a general rule, the 9-passenger vehicles are not travelling long distances, e.g. to London, and generally stay in the area.

Scott Mackey also asked how many clients are carried in 9-passenger vans. The Manager responded that it varies but on average would be 2 – 3 depending on the ride, and it could be one if the person is in a large wheelchair, or it could be 4 or 5. The larger vehicles provide more flexibility to the system and there is nothing between a 9-passenger van and a minivan that would be appropriate for SMART. Ford has a Transit van, but it is narrower than the 9-passenger vehicle and so the lift is in the back which can be a problem when parking. It also has removable seats which have to be stored, versus seats which fold up in the 9-passenger van. All in all, the 9-passenger vans provide good operational flexibility although they may not be the most fuel efficient.

The President clarified that the capital budget was considered in November, but deferred until the Level of Service Committee completes its work.

**Motion #2021-022**

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Dean Leifso

That Report 2021-10 2021 5-Year Capital Expenditure Budget (2021 – 2025) be received for information and forwarded to the Level of Service Committee for implementation with its recommendations.

**Carried**

**D. 2021-11 Updated Pre-Trip Inspection Policy**

The Manager explained that he connected with the insurance broker. Board members discussed whether vehicles with defects should transport clients and whether the policy gives drivers too much leeway in determining whether a vehicle should move. Discussion occurred about other organization's practices where drivers are responsible for the vehicles and experience the consequences of taking a vehicle on the road when it should not be driven. The Manager is to amend the policy to provide that clients are not to be transported in a vehicle with defects. With respect to the requirement that vehicles be kept locked and keys secured, it was pointed out that the OPP in Huron Kinloss says that all the vehicles stolen recently had keys left in them.

**Motion #2021-023**

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the Vehicle Pre-Trip Inspection Policy be amended to add "No client shall be transported in a vehicle with an acknowledged defect" and that the policy be approved as so amended.

**Carried**

**8. HR Committee Update**

**A. Minutes of the February 5, 2021 Meeting**

The President noted that the HR Committee minutes are provided for the Board's information, and he highlighted that the Committee minutes show a cost of living increase of 1.7% whereas the Board

approved an increase of 1.8%, an insignificant difference. The discrepancy is not an indication of any disagreement between the HR Committee and the Board on the matter.

**B. New Policies**

**Driving and Scheduling Policy**

The Board discussed the question of the weekend beginning at 5 p.m. when business hours go to 6:00 p.m. The Manager explained that the provision was designed to clarify Friday evening rides, but the issue is moot at this point since weekend rides only take place on Saturday, and rides on Sunday are for dialysis only. It was agreed that in the third paragraph of the section entitled "Weekend Scheduling", "5:00 p.m." be changed to "6:00 p.m.".

**Motion #2021-0024**

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Mike Myatt

That the third paragraph on page 3 in the Driving and Scheduling policy be changed to read "The weekend begins at 6:00 p.m. on Friday." and that it be approved as so amended.

**Carried**

**Social Media Policy**

**Motion #2021-0025**

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Dean Leifso

That the Social Media policy be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**Use of Information Technology Policy**

The Manager was asked about checks and balances that are in place to ensure that SMART issued cell phones are used primarily for business purposes. The Manager said that phones are checked periodically, emails can be reviewed through SMART's server, and data usage of each phone is shown on the bill.

**Motion #2021-0026**

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That the Use of Information Technology policy be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**Update on Pay & Benefits Policy**

Catherine McKay noted that the Pay and Benefits policy requires further clarification as to the eligibility requirements for benefits. The Manager has received information from the benefits provider, and will request additional information from the insurance company. This information will be submitted to the HR Committee for its consideration once it is available.

**C. Annual Wage Review Policy**

As Chair of the HR Committee, Mike Myatt reviewed the status of this issue, noting the importance of having a written policy. It was agreed that Catherine McKay would draft a policy to cover the annual wage review.

**D. Performance Review**

As Chair of the HR Committee, Mike Myatt informed that Board that he was still receiving comments from Board members for the Manager's Performance Review. He has summarized comments received and sent them out. Once they have been incorporated into the performance review format, a date will be set for the Executive Committee to meet with the Manager regarding the review.

**9. Level of Service Committee Update**

**A. Minutes of the February 19, 2021 Meeting**

Beth Hamilton presented the meeting minutes and the Committee was commended for a job well done. Beth Hamilton noted that insurance has been discontinued on vehicles waiting for disposal, staff and mechanics now lock vehicles and store keys in a secure area, and hiring requests for new staff (not for staff replacements) are to be submitted to the Board for approval

**B. Grandfathering Out of Area LTC Homes**

The Manager referred to his report on fleet rationalization presented at the March 26, 2021 Board meeting which noted that the two long term care facilities grandfathered in accounted for more than 800 group excursion rides in 2019 and they pay a deadhead fee for vehicles to return empty. Concern was expressed that these rides not be subsidized, and it was explained that group rides are not significantly subsidized. It would not be prudent to stop providing rides to residents of these facilities in light of the possibility that SMART might move to the County level. These two facilities were grandfathered in years ago, and if other similar facilities were to ask for a similar service, the Board would decide that issue when it came up.

It was agreed that the Board should consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with these two facilities to document terms and conditions of service.

**10. Executive Committee Update**

**A. Contact with LHIN**

This item was covered above in item 5A. The President noted that the matter is on hold at the moment and he will continue to work on it.

**B. Partnership Agreement Review**

The Executive Committee met to review the agreement and the by-laws and expects to make a presentation to the June meeting of the Board. The Board can decide at that time if it wishes to obtain legal advice, which it may wish to do particularly if there are significant changes to the agreement. The Executive Committee will circulate proposed changes to Board members for review.

**11. Other Business**

Ed McGugan noted that he has discussed the issue of "accident versus incident" reporting with the Manager. If Board members have any comments, they were advised to provide them to Ed McGugan or to the Manager.


**12. Adjournment**

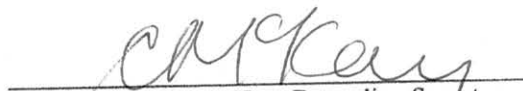
Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by Scott Mackey  
That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 3:05 p.m.  
**Carried**

**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

  
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Warren Dickert, President

  
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Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary