

## Exeter Local Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes from Special Meeting on Wednesday June 30<sup>th</sup>

This meeting's focus was to discuss grant opportunities to improve and expand transportation service improvements within Exeter.

### Attendees,

Carol Gulla, TASC, Sylvia Von Aulock, Exeter Town planner, Christine Szostak, special invited guest, Deb Perou, RNMOV, Scott Bogle, RPC, Don Woodward, Chairman

June 30, 2010, 4:17p.m. at the Exeter town offices, Wheelwright Room, meeting began

The meeting opened with presentation by Christine displaying a large map of Exeter showing three proposed intra-town loop routes connecting outlying areas of the town to the transportation center/train station area on Lincoln St. Don provided an information packet describing a 12-passenger + 2 Wheelchair accessible Gasoline/Electric-Hybrid powered conversion bus. This would serve as a benchmark or reference point of innovative equipment currently available while addressing one of the key points in New Hampshire's Climate action plan. These items were "basic concept" items & terms for just for the purposes of discussion.

Scott noted that in his experience with the RPC, Exeter's proposal, due to its small size & scope, would be too small to be funded at the Federal level. He proposed adding Exeter's planning portion of it's proposal to other planning grant requests in the Rockingham, Southeast New Hampshire & Merrimac Valley (Ma.) Planning Commission areas. These are all planning grants for multi-modal transportation projects. They include the existing Newburyport Train Station area, the planned Plaistow Train Station area and the I-93 corridor. Those would all require separate Implementation grants that would dwarf anything Exeter might hope to accomplish. However, as a combined package, he feels it would receive serious attention at the Federal level as a larger scale regional inter-state project.

Broken down into three parts,  
A combined pre-application of fifty words or less, due in late July,  
A Final application with greater detail of Exeter's Local Expanded Transportation Planning Grant combined with the other regional proposals.  
The last step, when the planning study was complete, would be a separate application for 80% maximum D.O.T. funding combined with a minimum 20% local match that could include combined REGGI (a broad term to describe New Hampshire's Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Initiative) funding, Transportation provider match funding, Town funding or a combination of all 3.

To apply for CMAQ (recommended) or other D.O.T. funding a professional Transportation Planning Study would need to be submitted, which is Exeter's first step toward qualifying. Some of the outlay for planning study could be used for route area survey costs.

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During last spring's round of EECBG funding Don contacted Rad Nichols of Coast bus and got an estimate of \$22,000 just for professional route planning. EECBG funding is considered to be federal money & cannot be used by Exeter as matching contribution. At the next transportation committee meeting Coastbus may be able to provide more details regarding all other aspects and features needed in a planning grant. Any planned changes to Coast's Bus#7 route would have to be included to provide connection to a local in-town service. Timing the connection to the train station for passengers visiting the Exeter Area, a proposed East-West Bus Route along Route 101 connecting Portsmouth to Manchester's Airport & C&J's Route to Boston could be done by the committee to reduce the cost of the planning grant. An estimate for three years operating expenses would need to be done for a CMAQ application.

The next question before the committee was where a source of matching funds from the Town would be. Large cities use general revenue & establish a separate fund to provide for Transportation Service Improvements. Taking into consideration that the existing Local option fee fund is currently not providing enough revenue to cover the "wheels" or transportation cost of the Wheels-on-Meals program, let alone enough surpluses to fund any grant applications, corrections are needed. If the use of the current fund were reworded to include transportation service improvement grant matching funds with an increase from \$2.50 to the \$5.00 maximum allowed by law, eventually matching funds would be available.

A motion was made by Sylvia and seconded by Carol, *to have the transportation committee chairman request that the Selectmen increase the Local Option Fee from the current \$2.50 to \$5.00 per registration with the provision to fully fund the existing service providers, R.N.M.O.W., TASC & the Taxi Voucher program and allow for matching funds for transportation service improvement grants.*

This motion was voted on & unanimously approved. Having a this fund "on-the-books" would allow the town to qualify & apply for REGGI funds and other sources of non-federal funding to be combined and applied as matching funds from the town. Exeter grant applications would also score higher against competing grants due to having a dedicated source of funding for transportation service improvements.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting, Wednesday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 4:15 p.m. Wheelwright Room

Respectfully,  
Don Woodward, Chairman, 07/06/2010