

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 26 2021, 1:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: 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
Mayor John Woodbury, Township of Southgate

Board Members Absent: Councillor Doug Bell, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

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 1:30 p.m..

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

None declared.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion #2021-008

Moved by Mike Myatt; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the agenda for March 26, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

Carried

4. Auditor Report

Troy Nieuwenhoff of BDO Canada and his colleague Kelsey Wepler joined the meeting. Mr. Nieuwenhoff reviewed the Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 2020 noting that:

- The statements were prepared using the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) standards and that a clean opinion of the statements is provided on page 2.
- On page 4, payroll accrual, accounts payable and accrued liabilities decreased from the previous year, and the purchase of vehicles and computers is shown on page 11.
- Mr. Nieuwenhoff was asked if the timing of the gas tax could be changed to avoid using the line of credit. He responded that in order to receive gas tax funding, SMART has to provide support, so it is “after the fact” funding, thus requiring use of the line of credit.
- There were reductions in revenue on page 5, as well as reductions in some expense categories.
- In response to questions, the Manager confirmed the municipal contribution for 2020 at \$ 750,000, an increase from 2019, and the auditor confirmed that repairs were \$ 120,000.
- There were no changes from the 2019 information on pages 8 – 9.
- Note 8 refers to buses on order for \$ 278,000 to be delivered in April, with the cost fully funded.
- Mr. Nieuwenhoff referred to the Letter to the Board and the Management Letter, noting that page 3 of the Management Letter explains that year end adjusting journal entries were required, a payroll error was caught and corrected and measures implemented to prevent it in the future, and that he made recommendations for control mechanisms to be added for electronic bill payments.
- In response to a question about cash, Mr. Nieuwenhoff explained that only a small amount of cash is received as very few clients pay cash. The Manager added that the cash received warrants a bank

These minutes are considered to be in draft form until signed by the President and the Recording Secretary.

deposit only about once a month. Mr. Nieuwenhoff believes that there are adequate measures in place, along with segregation of duties, to ensure no cash losses.

- A further question was asked about whether SMART's systems are typical and Mr. Nieuwenhoff noted that it can be hard to desegregate duties with a small staff, but SMART's systems are similar to those of similar sized organizations.
- A question was asked about whether being a registered charity adds complexity. Mr. Nieuwenhoff responded that BDO looks at the donation receipts and provides the numbers for the charity tax return prepared by the Manager.
- Mr. Nieuwenhoff thanked the Board, Manager Roger Cook, and Office Administrator Teresa Weber for their cooperation in preparing the financial statements. The President thanked Mr. Nieuwenhoff for his presentation who indicated that he would send the statements to the Manager to be finalized.

Motion #2021-009

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by John Woodbury

That the draft 2020 Auditor's Report as presented by be approved.

Carried

5. Minutes of the January 22, 2021 General Board Meeting

Motion #2021-010

Moved by Dave Cuyler; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the Board approve and adopt the minutes of the January 22, 2021 General Board Meeting as circulated.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. Executive Committee

Mike Myatt presented this item, noting that from time to time issues arise which could benefit from a review by an Executive Committee which would meet a few times a year to make recommendations to the Board. The Board discussed the composition of such a Committee and noted that it could be a helpful resource to the Manager between Board meetings.

Motion #2021-011

Moved by Mike Myatt; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That the SMART Board approve the creation of an Executive Committee for the purpose of addressing critical issues that might arise from time to time and need to be dealt with between general Board meetings; and further that the Executive Committee be comprised of the Board President, Vice-President and the immediate Past President; and further that a Member at Large be appointed to the Executive Committee but only in the absence of an immediate Past President; and further that any decision made by the Executive Committee be on an interim basis and require full Board approval at the earliest opportunity; and further that this committee also serve as a review committee for items that arise and require vetting prior to the General Board meeting.

Carried

B. Review of the Partnership Agreement & By-laws

The President suggested that the Executive Committee review the agreement and bylaws, focusing initially only on critical issues pending the possible move of SMART to the County level. The number of Board members should be addressed as it is currently nine, rather than five as stated in the agreement, and SMART should ensure that it is in compliance with the by-laws.

Motion #2021-012

Moved by Mike Myatt; Seconded by Ed McGugan

That the Partnership Agreement and By-laws be referred to the Executive Committee for review of

critical issues pending the move of SMART to the County level.

Carried

7. Correspondence

A. Emails from Client

The Board discussed the emails from clients, noting the unfortunate impacts as a result of level of service decisions. It was agreed that feedback from clients should be monitored and the Board should hold to the path that it has set out. Discussion arose about whether clients who can afford to pay should be able to pay for service that is not available to those who cannot afford to pay. It was felt that a two-tier system is not desirable and the numbers do not support it financially, especially given the three hour call in, and a two-tier system would require a means test. The Board agreed that it is hard to hear these reactions from clients, but it is an issue of sustainability, and a decision had been made not to implement a cost recovery model. The possibility of increasing charitable donations was noted.

With regard to the second email, it was noted that the client may have misunderstood since all rides stop at 6:00 p.m., not just rides for social purposes. SMART does not assess the purpose of rides and there is no assessment made of the purpose of a ride, which some systems do. The Executive Committee will respond to the two client emails and the President noted that it is important to respond to such client feedback.

Discussion occurred about whether taxi services could provide rides in cases such as these. In some areas, there are no taxis or transit. There is a bus on Highway 10, but a client has to get on at specific stops, and has to first get to the stop. The situation of a person who loses their driver's licence, for example, is very difficult as there are virtually no options if they cannot drive or use SMART. However, it is not practical to increase the service based on feedback from two clients.

It was suggested that the smaller municipalities in the SMART partnership are not using the service a lot which may result from a lack of awareness. Past approaches may be preferable to not having transportation for those with mobility issues, and while SMART is not perfect, it would probably still not be perfect for everyone if it had four times the budget. SMART's service should be scaled to what is reasonable given its financial resources.

A Board member noted that he had been approached by a potential client who wanted to know if SMART could take him out for a drive around his land. It was suggested that he register with SMART and see if this would be possible. This was cited as an example of people who are restricted in their ability to get out, but may not be able to access SMART services for their desired transportation needs.

8. Manager's Reports and Recommendations

A. Report 2021-03 January 2021 Operational

The Manager presented the report and in response to a question noted that no drivers were laid off, but many had only five hours of work/week. The most senior drivers work 35 hours per week and how much drivers work depends on seniority and demand. Some days, 12 or so would be working.

Motion #2021-013

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That Report 2021-03 January 2021 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

B. Report 2021-04 February 2021 Operational

The Manager presented the report, noting that ridership was similar to January and capacity was 50%.

Motion #2021-014

Moved by Mike Myatt; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That Report 2021-04 February 2021 Operational be approved as presented.

Carried

C. 2021-05 Fleet Rationalization

Beth Hamilton presented the report which was completed with the Manager and the Level of Service Committee. She said that there had been two meetings and that the Manager had done a good job putting the report together, the goal being to help the Board decide on the right size of the fleet for effective and efficient service delivery. The minutes from the two meetings are to be circulated. The major considerations arising out of the report include: how to meet demand for service given the current approach of trying to provide service in response to every call; how to handle group excursions; developing a capital replacement policy; determining the optimal number of spare vehicles; and whether GPS should be installed on vehicles. It was noted that there are two long term care facilities outside of the member municipalities' boundaries, but which have been "grandfathered" in. It was agreed that this item is to be on the next Board agenda.

D. 2021-06 Employee Assistance Program

The Manager presented the report and noted that he supports such a program. In response to questions he said he was told that the utilization rate in other organizations is 70%, and added that SMART should support its employees if it can. Board members expressed support for such a program, noting that it appears to be good value and not too expensive. One of the member municipalities has this same EAP provider which is spoken highly of, is broad based with good uptake, and could be good for the organization, particularly if it prevents staff from being off work due to illness.

Motion #2021-015

Moved by John Woodbury; Seconded by Scott Mackey

That the Board accept Report 2021-06 Employee Assistance Program and that the Manager be directed to implement the program, report back to the Board when this is done and provide a report in one year's time on usage and how beneficial the program has been.

Carried

E. 2021-07 Updated Pre-Trip Inspection Policy

The Manager introduced the policy and Board members suggested adding the effective date of the update. The question of what "serious" means and whether a definition should be added arose. Discussion ensued about how to define "serious" and authorities that could be referred to for a definition, such as the list that commercial vehicles are required to carry specifying whether a vehicle can be moved if it has a problem. The Manager noted that only two of SMART's vehicles are commercial vehicles that carry this list. Given that there were differing opinions as to the meaning of "serious", and SMART transports clients, it was suggested that the matter be looked into further.

The President stated that it should be referred to the Manager for further investigation, including contact with SMART's insurance company. Even though the original purpose of reviewing this policy was to add a requirement that vehicles be locked and keys secured when they are unattended, the President said that when other issues arise, they should be looked into.

9. Other Business

A. Cost of Living Adjustment

Mike Myatt, Chair of the Human Resources Committee, informed the Board that the Committee had met and looked at the increases provided by other municipalities which ranged from 1.5 – 2.2%.

The Committee felt that the midpoint of this range, 1.8%, would be appropriate and that discussion

of an effective date is required. Board members agreed with the recommendation of the HR Committee, and it was noted that most municipalities have January 1 as the effective date of salary increases. The Manager indicated that it is administratively easier to calculate retroactive pay to the first pay period of 2021, rather than to January 1, 2021.

It was proposed that SMART should have a policy on cost of living increases which specifies the basis for the increase and the effective date. The basis for the increase could, for example, be the Consumer Price Index or the average of increases awarded by member municipalities. It was agreed that the Human Resources Committee should develop a cost of living policy.

Motion #2021-016

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Mike Myatt

That the Board approve a cost of living adjustment of 1.8% effective the first full pay period of 2021.

Carried

B. Manager Performance Review

Mike Myatt noted that since the performance review form had been circulated and comments received from Board members, the system was ready to be implemented. The Board discussed whether the entire Board or the Executive Committee should conduct the review. Since the process should be interactive, positive and open to discussion to develop a workplan, it would be difficult if it were done by the entire Board. Mike Myatt agreed to request that Board members submit comments to him on the Manager's performance within one week.

Motion #2021-0017

Moved by Mike Myatt; Seconded by Dave Cuyler

That the performance review system for the Manager be implemented as circulated.

Carried

C. Accident Reporting

Ed McGugan presented the Accident Free Reporting Discussion, a proposal which he had submitted for Board consideration. He noted that reporting on accidents should be done in the interests of employees, shareholders and the public to make clear that SMART is a very safe service. He noted that "collision" is the preferred term, to differentiate between client accidents and vehicle collisions. He does not want to create more work for staff, but SMART should be able to report on its accident rate. John Woodbury noted that the Toronto Fire Service referred to "incidents", either "personal" or "vehicle", and that reporting to employees could create an opportunity for lessons learned to reduce incidents in the future. The President suggested that Board members send their comments on the issue to Ed McGugan. It was agreed to place this item on the next agenda for a decision as to implementation.

D. Ontario Health Team

President Warren Dickert said that he had reached out to the Ontario Health Team which although still in its infancy, was receptive and suggested checking back in six months. A question was asked if anyone had reached out to the LHIN for funding, given that the Ontario Health Team is a ways off and keeping in mind that the LHIN funds many of SMART's clients. The Health Team will replace the LHIN, but funding is currently with the LHIN and the Ontario Health Team's application was sent back for more work. Since there is no governance for the OHT, the LHIN is the organization in place now. Dave Cuyler said that his Council colleague and Board alternate, Gerry Glover, is well versed on the OHT, as is Dana Howes, CEO of the Hanover and District Hospital. The President agreed to reach out to the LHIN, and the Manager said that he had spoken to LHIN officials in the fall of 2019, at which time they were in a state of flux and were not in a position to provide any funding. Since there are 9 municipalities from Grey Bruce involved in SMART, perhaps they

should each pass a resolution to be sent to the LHIN, given that some services get funding and others do not. It was suggested that the Board should do some research and strategize on a presentation to the LHIN. Dave Cuyler said that Gerry Glover would be a valuable resource for such a presentation and it was agreed that he would attend the next meeting.

E. Out of Core Hours Medical Rides

The Manager explained that staff ask clients when they book whether the ride is for medical purposes and there are very few requests for out of core hours medical rides. MRIs are done 24 hours/day, so clients may need to go to appointments outside of core hours. Home and Community Support Services will try to provide these rides, but their resources are very limited.

Medical rides should be connected to the LHIN since Home and Community Support Services gets LHIN funding. It was suggested that SMART should stick to doing rides within regular hours and Home & Community Support Services should do the medical rides outside of core hours. SMART would never leave a client stranded if their medical appointment extended past core hours.

F. Other

The President noted that the Board has accomplished a lot as noted in an annual report he presented to Hanover Council at its last meeting, after which a Councillor asked him to thank the Board for its hard work.

Mike Myatt said that he has spent time arranging a meeting with Grey and Bruce County transportation officials and the Municipal Innovation Council has approved facilitation of the meeting. An invitation is to go out in two weeks with the meeting to be held in mid to late April. It will be a fact finding initiative to explore the potential of a Grey Bruce transportation system. This system would be door-to-door and a conventional transit service provided on a schedule. The Bruce County Master Transportation plan is taking a very broad approach looking at everything involved in moving people. COVID is causing issues with transit systems, noting that there are various initiatives going on, including systems along Highways 26, 6, 10 and 4, but these corridor routes may not work for everyone. It was agreed that Warren Dickert, Mike Myatt, Dave Cuyler and Roger Cook will attend the virtual meeting with County officials. Mike Myatt is to report back at the next meeting.

10. Adjournment

Moved by Beth Hamilton; Seconded by Dave Cuyler
That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 3:38 p.m.
Carried

Recording Secretary Meeting Attendance

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

- January 22, 2021
- February 5, 2021 (HR Committee)
- March 26, 2021



Warren Dickert, President



Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary