

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT MEETING
RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Friday, June 12, 2026
91 N. Main Street, Middletown CT and via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Strauss called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. In attendance included:

Leslie Strauss, Charlie Norz, Tim Griswold, DG Fitton, Joan Gay, (ZOOM), Kathryn Russell, John Hall (ZOOM), Mike Pelton (ZOOM), Beverly Lawrence, (ZOOM), David Cox (ZOOM), Michelle Benivegna, Rob McGarry, Bob Yamartino, and Christine Marquess.

Staff: Chris Denison (ZOOM), Brendan Geraghty, Joe Comerford, Lisa Gibson (ZOOM), Nick Kulakowski, Laurie McElwee

Guest: Brendan Rea

VISITOR'S COMMENTS – None

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING – no comments on the proposed budget were received by the Public.

NEW BUSINESS

Adoption of FY26/27 Budget

On a motion made and duly seconded, the FY26/27 was unanimously adopted as presented.

Vehicle Maintenance Contract Extension

Kathryn Russell made a motion that the Executive Director Joseph Comerford hereby is authorized on behalf of the Estuary Transit District to negotiate and execute all necessary contract documents with Mal's Auto and Truck Repair in an amount not to exceed \$230,000.00. John Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Purchasing Policy Revisions

Joe Comerford provided an overview of the purchasing policy revisions that include updates to the Code of Ethics. Verbiage will be added to the document/chart clarifying that "and", not "or" is a requirement of approval.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the revised purchasing Policy was unanimously approved as discussed.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – copies of the various meeting minutes were included in the Board's packet.

On a motion made and duly seconded the minutes of the 4/10/26 Expansion Committee Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 4/10/26 Board Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 4/20/26 Special Board Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 5/13/26 Finance Committee Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 5/15/26 Special Board Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 6/9/26 Transit Advisory Committee Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 6/9/26 Facilities Committee Meeting were unanimously accepted as presented.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the 6/10/26 Finance Committee Meeting were unanimously accepted as amended.

Note: the Committee voted to present the Finance Committee report to the entire Board of Directors.

COMMUNICATIONS – None.

TREASURER’S REPORT – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities

The minutes of the Facilities Committee were included in the Board packet. Highlights of the meeting include:

- Middletown Maintenance Facility – work to get an easement with the RR has been challenging. The issue will be elevated to the Commissioner level to resolve delays.
- Terminal – conceptual designs are completed. Cost estimates have been received. Follow-up meetings with the City and stakeholders will be scheduled.
- Shoreline Facility – No significant historical issues that would require further NEPA investigation were found during the archeological feasibility study.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Facilities Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Finance Committee were included in the Board packet. The Committee has reviewed all financial documents and no issues were reported.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Finance Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Marketing initiatives were screen shared, including newspaper articles, Events Magazine articles, social media postings, email newsletters etc. Leslie and Joe provided an overview of these initiatives and were available to address questions/comments posed by board members.

RVT received good feedback from a recent survey. The District has a strong social media presence and use of the app continues to grow.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Marketing Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

A copy of the February Legislative Committee meeting minutes was included in the Board's packet. Joan Gay reported on the status of various bills. The Microtransit funding was included in the budget, and the program was extended.

District riders provided many comments to the Legislature on the various bills. Joe Comerford was commended for his testimony and leadership on the various bills related to transit.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Legislative Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Transit Advisory Meeting were included in the Board packet. Tim Griswold provided an update on the initiatives of the Committee including:

- Bus Stop/Bus Signage Project
- A Wesleyan student will be interning with Brendan this summer to help identify potential bus stop amenities.
- Microtransit Pilot Program – the program has been renewed for one year.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Transit Advisory Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – None.

COG UPDATE – Brendan reported on COG initiatives as follows:

- The Safe Street Plan is now available.
 - Identifies streets and roads where serious pedestrian injuries have occurred.
- The COG is working on Housing Laws with the towns.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the COG Update was unanimously accepted as presented.

EXPANSION COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Expansion Committee meeting were included in the Board's packet.

Items discussed include:

- East Haddam passed their budget. The budget includes funding for membership into the District.
 - If additional services are requested, prices for same will be discussed.
- Madison may be interested in joining the District.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Expansion Committee Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joe reported on initiatives including:

- Update on the parameters of the Federal Transportation bill that expires on Sept. 30, 2026. It is anticipated that it will be extended.
- The Triennial Review went well. One minor deficiency has been addressed.
- Work is on-going to develop and implement a unified fare statewide, including options for flexibility on payment methods/fare boxes.
 - The Board discussed the eventual cashless fare system.

Joe was available to address questions/comments posed by Board members.

On a motion made and duly seconded the Executive Director's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

REGIONAL MOBILITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Laurie McElwee reported on the following initiatives:

- Requests for presentations/expos/classes.
- CT Transit Magazine will interview Laurie about her work and programs.
- Use of Social Media to promote her services.

On a motion made and duly seconded the Regional Mobility Manager's Report was unanimously accepted as presented.

TRANSIT PLANNER REPORT

Brendan provided the following information:

- An overview on the recent ridership expansion rollout (presentation screenshared)
- The Clinton Trolley is up and running for the season.
 - Brief discussion on the possibility of a Portland Trolley.
- Request for expansion on the 581 and 582 routes.
 - Will be explored if/when funding is available.

Brenden was available to address questions/comments posed by board members.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Transit Planner's Report was unanimously approved as presented.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Copies of the financial reports (Budget vs. Actual, Cash Flow) were included in the Board's packet and screenshared. The Finance Committee has reviewed the documents. No issues reported; note that TOD funds have not yet been released.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Finance Director Report was unanimously approved as presented.

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ridership figures were included in the Board's packet and screenshared. Highlights of the report include:

- Dispatch software project is moving forward.
- An Operations Manager for Middletown has been hired.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Operations Director's Report was unanimously approved as presented.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Maintenance Director's report was included in the Board's packet. Highlights of the report include:

- Aging buses are being replaced. This should result in less maintenance costs.
 - The aging buses are running well, and some are being used to run Pilot programs.
- As previously reported the electric buses have been recalled and are being sent to Canada for repair.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the Maintenance Director's Report was unanimously approved as presented.

OLD BUSINESS – None.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Leslie encouraged Board members to distribute bus passes throughout their respective towns.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

NEXT MEETING – 8/14/26

ADJOURNMENT – 11:00

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk