

SAUGEEN MOBILITY

and REGIONAL TRANSIT

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 24, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Boardroom, 603 Bruce Rd 19, Walkerton, ON

Board Members Present: Ed McGugan, Councillor Township of Huron-Kinloss, President
Doug Townsend, Councillor, West Grey, Vice-President
Warren Dickert, Deputy Mayor, Town of Hanover, Past President
Cheryl Grace, Councillor, Saugeen Shores
Councillor Kym Hutcheon, Councillor, Brockton
Doug Kennedy, Councillor, Kincardine
Scott Mackey, Mayor, Township of Chatsworth
Jennifer Christie-Shaw, Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie
Monica Singh-Soares, Councillor, Southgate

Board Members Absent: None

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

Guests: Kelsey Wepler, BDO Canada

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

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

None declared.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion #2023-016

Moved by Jennifer Christie-Shaw; Seconded by Kym Hutcheon

That the agenda for March 24, 2023 be amended to renumber item *7A. Audit Report* as *4*, renumber the subsequent agenda items accordingly, and add item *13. Other Business*, and that the agenda be accepted as so amended.

Carried

4. Audit Report

The President introduced Kelsey Wepler of BDO Canada who conducted the 2022 audit. Ms. Wepler noted that the financial statements which provide a clear opinion, had been previously distributed to Board members and are drafts until the Board approves the final version. She reviewed the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Operations, highlighting a \$100,000 increase in fees, as well as increases in fuel, payroll, user fees, office expenses, IT expenses, travel, mileage, and professional fees which includes audit and legal fees. It was suggested that the reserves should be in the \$700,000 range, and Ms. Wepler stated that the statements show them to be \$540,196. She agreed to clarify the amount.

Ms. Wepler reviewed the management letter which highlights three areas including EFT bill payments which had been a fraud risk until the approval process was changed in July of 2022. BDO tested all EFTs during the audit and found no issues. The bank reconciliation was out by a few dollars

Ms. Wepler thanked SMART for its cooperation in preparing the statements and indicated that she will send the final statements including the management letter to SMART and to the partner municipalities.

Motion #2023-017

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Monica Singh-Soares
That the draft 2022 Auditor's Report as presented by BDO Canada approved.

Carried

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting – February 3, 2023

Motion #2023-018

Moved by Cheryl Grace; Seconded by Jennifer Christie-Shaw
That the minutes of the February 24, 2023 General Board Meeting be amended to show that Arran-
Elderslie's wage increase was 2.0% and that the minutes be accepted as so amended.

Carried

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

A. Masks

Manager checked with 10 other transit services, two of which require masks, with eight not requiring masks. The Board may or may not want to impose a mask mandate, although he would not recommend it since it would be difficult for drivers to enforce. He proposed that the SMART policy on masks be changed and discussion ensued about placing signs in vehicles stating that the wearing of masks is a personal choice. It was noted that the Board had previously passed a motion stating "That masking for SMART drivers be optional not mandatory, and that masks be kept in vehicles to accommodate client requests that a driver wear a mask."

The Board provided direction to the Manager to create a masking policy for circulation to staff.

Motion #2023-019

Moved by Kym Hutcheon; Seconded by Cheryl Grace
That masking in SMART vehicles be optional, not mandatory.

Carried

B. Open Board Meetings Policy

Motion #2023-020

Moved by Scott Mackey; Seconded by Doug Townsend
That the draft policy be amended to specify that new information will be "as determined by the Manager and the President" and that the policy be approved as so amended.

Carried

8. New Business

A. Van Donation or Sale to Reach Centre Grey Bruce

Reach Centre Grey Bruce is located in Owen Sound and provides a "day away" program for people with cognitive disabilities. It does not receive government funds or grants. It asked if it could buy SMART's van once a new one is purchased. SMART would normally expect \$3,000 to \$4,000 for the vehicle. SMART has a capital asset disposal policy and since it has not donated vehicles in the past, this would set a precedent, and Reach Centre Grey Bruce is outside of SMART's service area. It was suggested that Reach officials could make a delegation to the SMART Board.

The Manager will come back with a recommendation regarding the van, either to sell it on govdeals.ca or to Reach.

B. Home & Community Support Services Transportation Agreement

The agreement covers situations where Home & Community Support Services (H&CCS) has no capacity for rides and relies on SMART. The agreement was previously ended by SMART and is now being reconsidered. SMART's level of service adjustments resulting in service reductions contributed to the termination of the agreement. When SMART provides rides to H&CCS clients, it charges H&CCS more than H&CCS charges its clients. The MOU with H&CCS provides that SMART would only provide rides to clients who are eligible under SMART's eligibility policy and concerns were raised that H&CCS receives provincial funding whereas SMART does not. However, H&CCS is not a transit service and therefore does not receive any gas tax funding. Due to the cost to of using SMART, H&CCS would only call upon SMART when necessary, and there is no risk of SMART's services being used for people who are not eligible. The Manager proposed that SMART should work with H&CCS to support people in need, and will contact H&CCS to obtain more information. It was pointed out that H&CCS is a very good organization serving people in need and SMART should work with them as long as it recovers its costs.

The Manager will bring a report to a future Board meeting about entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with H&CCS with cost recovery information and recommendations.

9. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

10. Reports and Recommendations

A. Report on February 2023 Operations

The Manager reviewed the report, noting the upward trend in ridership towards pre-pandemic levels.

Motion #2023-021

Moved by Jennifer Christie-Shaw; seconded by Doug Kennedy

That the Board approve Report SL2023-0321 February 2023 Operational report as presented.

Carried

B. Report on Wage Increases Across Municipalities

In response to a question, the Manager clarified that all drivers are paid the same based on years of experience, not on the class of driver's licence they hold. Three drivers are licensed to drive the large bus, which is the only SMART vehicle requiring a special licence.

Motion #2023-022

Moved by Scott Mackey; seconded by Cheryl Grace

That the board approve a 3% increase in SMART employee wages effective January 1, 2023.

Carried

11. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

12. Closed Session

There were no items for a closed session.

13. Other Business

With respect to the Board's strategic plan, it was suggested that one of the issues to address is whether SMART's fees cover its costs. For example, benefits could be 25% of wages and there has been no inflationary adjustment in fees in some time and it is counterproductive to face increased costs without increased fees. The idea of a menu of services was raised which would allow the municipal partners to choose the level of service they want to pay for, which would involve billing different municipalities for

different amounts. If adopted, this would only come into effect in 2024 at the earliest, and municipalities are not being asked for larger contributions for 2023.

The Manager will bring a report forward by the Board's May meeting with information on a menu of services and increasing rates as necessary. Board members are to email their ideas on these issues to the Manager with a c.c. to all Board members.

Board members were advised to ensure that they are not conducting Board business by email, although exchanging information and ideas does not constitute conducting business.

SMART offers a charter service during its hours of operation and there are groups in Kincardine which would like the opportunity to hire charters outside of the current hours of operation for specific upcoming events. Doug Kennedy agreed to forward dates for these events to the Manager and it was agreed that the Board could consider amending the policy on charters to allow them to operate outside of the current hours of operation.

The Board discussed its meeting minutes and it was agreed that they would be simplified to state the nature of the discussion and cover the main points.

A Strategic Planning Committee consisting of Board members Ed McGugan, Monica Singh-Soares, Doug Kennedy and Cheryl Grace was struck to review the existing strategic plan and will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at noon.

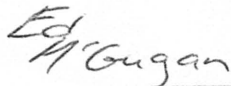
14. Adjournment & Upcoming Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Friday, April 28, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in the SMART boardroom.

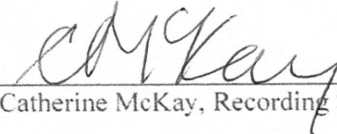
Motion

Moved by Monica Singh-Soares: Seconded by Cheryl Grace
That the Board of Directors of SMART adjourn at 4:00 p.m.

Carried



Ed McGugan, President



Catherine McKay, Recording Secretary