

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

January 25, 2018

4:00 PM

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

William Elovirta, Becket; William Cooke, Gt. Barrington; Harvey Drosehn, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Douglas McNally, Windsor. Brian O'Grady, Williamstown arrived during the Administrator's Report, but was not present during the Minutes vote.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Erica Girgenti, Adams; Timothy Drumm, Alford; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Bill Drosehn, Dalton; Charles Ogden, Egremont; Neil Olsen, Florida; Channing Gibson, Lenox; Steve Moritz, Lee; Kenneth Basler, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mount Washington; William Hiller, Otis; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Nadine Hawver, Sheffield; Donald Chabon, Stockbridge ;and Richard Grillon, Washington.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Bridget Keegan - BRTA staff; Kirk Dand and Eli Grenier – BTM; Alyssa Costa, Pittsfield Working Cities; and Patti Annechiarico.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.13	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.04	1.04	
Cheshire	2.07	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	31.75
Dalton	2.08	0.00	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.71	3.71	32.87 present
Hinsdale	1.28	1.28	35.68 after minute's
Lanesborough	2.80	2.80	vote
Lee	3.71	0.00	
Lenox	3.13	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
North Adams	4.78	4.78	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	1.00	
Pittsfield	18.26	18.26	
Richmond	1.02	0.00	
Sheffield	1.02	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.66	0.00	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.81	2.81	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1.) ROLL CALL

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2.) MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 30, 2017 MEETING VOTE

Mrs. Irvin made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 30, 2017 meeting. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3.) ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Malnati received word that revenue has started to come in faster into the state. BRTA's additional portion from the legislative override of the Governor's line item budget for the RTA's is \$12,463.00 which is scheduled to be received in March 2018. Mr. Malnati stated they were also looking to add a supplemental bill of 1.6 million so that BRTA would become whole to what was received last year. BRTA was told by MassDOT for FY19, the Governor's budget will be \$80,400,000 for the RTA's collectively. This will be at the FY15 budget level and not to expect more.

Mr. Malnati stated that the BRTA's HST Compliance staff prepared for their annual audit and an on-site visit on October 17, 2017. The audit found one finding, which was taken care of, and had an overall good report.

Mr. Malnati gave everyone present a copy of the 2017 Annual Report. This year the format of the annual report was made larger in hopes that it would be easier to read. He stated that the annual report is a collection of demographics and ridership and includes why the BRTA carry bikes on the buses year-round

Mr. Malnati invited the Advisory Board Members to the BRTA on February 26, 2018 at 11 AM (tentatively) for the Legislative Delegation to discuss the Future of Transportation. This will be a discussion of past accomplishments, current projects, and future projections.

Mr. Malnati discussed the Governor's Council for the Transit Blueprint for years 2020-2040, which included a list of eighteen people who are going to be on his committee. The PVTA Administrator is the only person geographically close to Berkshire County on this committee. Ms. Irwin asked why there was no Berkshire County representation and how do we advocate to the Legislature? Mr. Malnati said it is made up of a lot of planners and the discussions will be about the sustainability of electric and autonomous vehicles. Mr. Drosehn asked about the viability of electric buses in Berkshire County and Mr. Gallant discussed the future of battery charging vehicles and the changes in technology.

Mr. Malnati said that BRTA received Small Urban 5339 funding for capital items through the Governor's office which was used for purchasing a full size Gillig bus and two minibuses arriving around June 2018. BRTA also purchased two used vehicles from Brockton Area Transit which should be on the routes around March 2018.

Mr. Malnati explained the Design Thinking Project is still meeting every other Monday at the BRTA. The whole design is to create an express bus service between North and South County with limited stops using park and ride locations. This would increase bus service to 7 days a week running from 6 AM to midnight. Ms. Irwin asked why those times, to which Mr. Malnati explained this would cover differing employment shifts. He

stated the group is also assembling a Transit Management Association (TMA), a group of stakeholders that will help govern policy and procedure for the first and last mile. Senator Hinds had pitched this idea to Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Pollack. She is interested in the answers to the first and last mile. Mr. Malnati suggested to the group using the \$74 Million Volkswagon mitigation settlement funds as a potential funding stream. The rules for using this money are: must be used throughout the Commonwealth; must be for congestion mitigation, and must be in Environmental Justice areas. This project would showcase all three. BRTA will be attending an information session on the Volkswagon mitigation funds in Holyoke.

Mr. Malnati spoke of the Berkshire Flyer; the train service from New York City via Albany to Pittsfield. BRTA is a member of this Working Group, a possible new project which is modeled after the Cape Flyer, offering weekend train service from NYC to Pittsfield. It would leave New York City Friday night arriving in Pittsfield around 6 PM and leaving on Sunday. This would be limited service. BRTA is working on the Design Thinking project for the last mile connection of customers.

4.) CASH REPORTS FOR OCTOBER 2017-NOVEMBER 2017-VOTE

Mr. Gallant made a motion to accept to cash reports for October 2017 through November 2017. Mr. Harvey Drosehn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5.) TOWN OF NEW ASHFORD-VOTE

Mr. Harvey Drosehn made a motion to accept the Town of New Ashford to become a member of the BRTA. Mr. McNally seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. With the vote Mr. Malnati handed out a new copy of the weighted voting shares, which now includes New Ashford. Mr. Harvey Drosehn asked how this is figured and Mr. Malnati explained that it is the amount of service a community receives.

6.) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the budget. The fixed route fares are down compared to last year. Mr. Malnati is going to be monitoring the fixed routes. Mr. Gallant asked about the ridership to the Berkshire Mall and Ms. Irwin inquired which routes are declining. Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA can run a report for this information. Paratransit fares were up 19% from last year. The audit fees were up from last year due to a new audit of the Paratransit program being added in.

7.) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the BRTA's ridership. He passed out a packet for the ridership through December 2017. Fixed route was down for December, but still higher from the previous year. January 2018 was a very cold month, so Mr. Malnati stated he anticipates low ridership for the month of January. Paratransit numbers were on the positive side from the previous year, as well as non-ADA. Taxi was down, as well as Council on Aging. Overall the total ridership is up. The Route 34 was the number one ridership of wheelchairs. Historically the Route 1 was the highest. Mass Health transports are up 36% from last year and bicycles were down 5%.

8.) OLD BUSINESS

None discussed.

9.) NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gallant brought up the idea of a defibrillator being used in the BRTA building in the case of an emergency. Mr. Elovirta mentioned that BRTA would need to train staff to use the defibrillator. Mr. Malnati said he would investigate.

Mr. Malnati explained the Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) project and how BRTA is looking for volunteers to manually count passengers. BRTA has reached out to BCC and was going to check with RSVP and North Adams Council on Aging. He asked the Board if anyone knew of anyone interested in participating.

Mr. Elovirta asked how the Greyhound bus service was running. Mr. Malnati replied that it runs every day and there is some ridership, but not a lot.

Mr. Malnati discussed the Great Barrington bus sign project BRTA is working on with Mr. Cooke. The goal is to increase ridership. Mr. Malnati showed the Board the bus sign that had been created and informed the group that new QR code signs were being made. Ms. Irwin asked if these will be in Pittsfield also? Mr. Malnati said yes, but needs to find the accuracy of where to place the signs.

10) NEXT MEETING DATE

March 29, 2018 at 4 PM

11) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Harvey Drosehn made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.