

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

March 29, 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; Bill Drosehn, Dalton; Harvey Drosehn, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Erica Girgenti, Adams; Timothy Drumm, Alford; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Bruce Turner, Egremont; Neil Olsen, Florida; William Cooke, Great Barrington; Steve Moritz, Lee; Channing Gibson, Lenox; Kenneth Basler, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mount Washington; Jason Jayko, New Ashford; 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 Barbara White - BRTA staff; Kirk Dand and Eli Grenier – BTM; Patti Annechiarico; Devin O’Neil; Anuja Koirola, BRPC; Andrew Hogeland; and Steven Barrett

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.18	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.05	1.05	
Cheshire	2.12	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.12	2.12	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.82	0.00	35.09 present
Hinsdale	1.29	1.29	
Lanesborough	2.87	2.87	
Lee	3.82	0.00	
Lenox	3.21	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
New Ashford	1.00	0.00	
North Adams	4.93	4.93	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	18.95	18.95	
Richmond	1.02	0.00	
Sheffield	1.02	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.72	0.00	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.88	2.88	
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 JANUARY 25, 2018 MEETING- VOTE**

Ms. Irvin made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2018 meeting. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) **ADMINISTRATOR`S REPORT**

Mr. Malnati stated the operators, call takers and dispatchers for Paratransit Management of Berkshire signed and accepted the one-year contract, which ends June 30, 2018. Berkshire Transit Management has been in negotiations for the fixed route contract, which also ends June 30th. Once the fixed route is finalized, they will work on the new Paratransit three-year contract.

Mr. Malnati said that in March, BRTA received the additional \$12,463 from the legislative override of the Governor's FY18 budget, which was the difference between the \$80M and the \$80.4M for State contract assistance. We are currently looking to submit a supplemental bill for this current budget for an additional \$1.6M to make it to the \$82M disbursement.

BRTA has started the FY 19 budget process, with the directive from both the Governor's office and MassDOT, to create a budget on \$80.4M again. Each year this becomes more difficult because of additional costs like insurance, wages, and fuel which could mean a reduction in service and a fare increase. Other RTAs have been holding public meetings. Worcester has about a \$1M deficit for FY 19 and PVTA has a \$3M deficit. BRTA is at a \$384,000 deficit, but needs a balanced budget. This could mean a reduction in service and a fare increases. Mr. Malnati met with the Finance Committee earlier today to discuss this and wants to hold public meetings in April. This will provide BRTA input from the public and then meet with the Board on how to proceed.

Mr. Malnati spoke of meeting with the Legislative Delegation and members of the Advisory Board on February 26th and told the Delegation the directive that has been given by MassDOT and the Governor in creating the budget. There was a discussion about service cuts and Saturday bus eliminations. BRTA sent a template to the Board members asking them to mail to the Governor stating BRTA needs more funding. Mr. H. Drosehn, Mr. O'Grady, and Mr. McKinney had sent letters to Governor Baker. It is not just the BRTA stating needing service, it is the *communities* we serve that need the service.

Mr. Malnati said BRTA received a new Gillig bus to the replace the Gillig that was involved in a collision a couple of years ago. BRTA also received a Small Urban 5339 funding for two minibuses and a Gillig. BRTA purchased from Brockton Area Transit two used vehicles, which received a midlife overhaul. BRTA is waiting for the state inspector to come and inspect the buses before they can be put in service.

Mr. Malnati explained the BRTA continues to work with the Design Thinking group about how to create an express bus service between North and South County with limited stops, using park and ride locations, and how to get customers to those park and ride locations. This group is researching the process to assemble a Transportation

Management Association (TMA) to broaden the group membership that will help govern policy and procedure for the first and last mile.

Mr. Malnati stated the Legislature now has a copy of the Feasibility study that was due March 1. The Berkshire Flyer would provide weekend service; one train coming out of NYC on Friday and returning to NYC on Sunday as a pilot program starting between 2019-2020. Operated by Amtrak, the fares are estimated between \$65 and \$90 each way, with an estimated 2,600 one-way trips for the 20-week season. Mr. Drosehn and Ms. Irvin both remarked that Amtrak was expensive. Income would be about \$180,000 and there would be a deficit of a quarter million dollars. The next step is to find a local sponsor to cover the additional costs and figure out options for travelers to get to their final destination (for example, cab, rental cars, shuttle, etc.).

4) PUBLIC MEETING – VOTE

Mr. Malnati gave a presentation, based on the Governor's budget, the proposed reduction/eliminations of service and proposed fare increases. Schedules of public meetings for the proposed route eliminations, and fare increases will be posted. Mr. Malnati said he is in conversation with Williams about possibly contributing more to the runs. The proposed fare increase will provide \$31,156 in revenue, but to expect a 3% drop in ridership. There is a proposed reduction in paratransit services and with fixed route. BRTA looked at the routes that had a decreased number of riders and an increase cost of service. There are many different options for the Board to review after both input from the public and recommendations from BRTA. Mr. Malnati reiterated that this is a Board decision.

Mr. B. Drosehn asked if BRTA eliminated some service, would the revenue also go down. He spoke of reorganizing to increase ridership perhaps looking at a train with right of way for express service eliminating traffic congestion issues.

Mr. O'Grady asked is there is any other public funding, approaching BCC or the Lee Outlets to supplement.

Mr. McNally spoke of reducing runs and discontinuing service. Running 2 hours versus every hour is better than eliminating service. Reducing and discontinuing are very different. For fixed route on a Saturday, what time of day is the best to reduce service. He has asked BRTA to dig deeper into the data.

Ms. Irwin discussing the public looking at the choices/scenarios. BRTA also needs to look at first and last mile models. The bus services General Dynamics, BMC, and Williams. Does the private industry need to advocate for us and also to contribute to BRTA for bringing riders to their stops? Mr. O'Grady agreed and asked about a bus to Tanglewood and will help increase revenue. This is an economic justice issue; MBTA dollars versus BRTA dollars.

Mr. McNally made a motion to hold public meetings to gather public comments regarding the proposed scenarios. Mr. O'Grady seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5) CASH REPORTS FOR DECEMBER 2017 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2018 - VOTE

Mr. Gallant made a motion to accept the cash reports for December 2017 through February 2018. Mr. McNally seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the budget. Fixed route revenue is down 8.4%. If BRTA increases the fares, there will be additional revenue. There is an additional \$2,500 in stored value for the month. Non-transportation revenue line item, \$45,000, most of that

is from the sale of our assets. HST income is over \$600,000 and expenses over \$558,000. A lot of that has to do with increased activity, which means we are doing more trips.

7) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati provided an overview of BRTA's ridership and is higher than last year. Fixed routes and total ridership are up. Paratransit ridership is up almost 3%. The Route 34 is the number one ridership for wheelchairs. Ridership in North Adams is very good. Bicycles are down. DMA trips up 39%, which is why HST is up.

8) OLD BUSINESS

None discussed

9) NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Malnati announced that Ms. Lamb and Mr. Gallant, Chair and Vice Chairman of the Board, they will not run for office in the May election. They will remain on the Advisory Board and Finance Committee. If you are interested, please contact Mr. Malnati or Ms. Lamb, for nominations of both Chair and Vice Chairman for the May election.

10) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME

April 26, 2018 at 4:00 PM

11) ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Irvin made the motion to adjourn.