

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

October 1, 2015
4:00 p.m.
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

Mary Cherry, Dalton; William Cooke, Great Barrington; Jeanne Carmel, Hinsdale; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Leonard Lipton, Pittsfield; and Brian O'Grady, Williamstown.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Jeffrey Snoonian, Adams; Lucy Prashker, Alford; William Elovirta, Becket; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Glenn Burdick, Florida; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Marianne Somes, Disability Representative (Lanesborough); Ronald Giancola, Lee; Ed Lane, Lenox; Steven Weisz, Monterey; James Lovejoy, Mount Washington; Donald Hawley, Otis; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Nadine Hawver, Sheffield; Stephen Shatz, Stockbridge; Mike Case, Washington; and Doug McNally, Windsor.

Also present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Barbara White-BRTA staff; Kurt Dand and Doug Roelfs-BTM; Richard Green and Patti Annecharico.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.10	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.02	0.00	
Cheshire	2.02	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	30.50 shares
Dalton	2.06	2.06	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.68	3.68	31.88 present
Hinsdale	1.30	1.30	
Lanesborough	2.57	0.00	
Lee	3.77	0.00	
Lenox	3.04	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
North Adams	4.40	4.40	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	18.12	18.12	
Richmond	1.02	0.00	
Sheffield	1.02	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.55	0.00	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.32	2.32	
Windsor	1.01	0.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1) ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. Those present or absent are listed above. Ms. Lamb welcomed William Cooke the new Advisory Board member from Great Barrington.

2) FY 15 AUDIT RECOMMENDATION – AUDIT/FINANCE COMMITTEE- VOTE

Ms. Lamb stated the Finance Committee met last week with David Irwin, the Auditor, and went over each page of the draft audit. The Finance Committee made the recommendation that the Board accept the audit as it was presented. She also noted that we did get a great report.

Mr. Lipton made a motion to accept the FY 15 Audit. Ms. Carmel seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Malnati explained the reason the agenda is out of order was because of the deadline to get the financial statements to the State. By approving them now, Mr. Malnati will send a text to Mr. Irwin with the approval so he can finalize the documents, and send Ms. Hunkler an electronic copy. She will send it off to the State tonight and the rest will be mailed. Mr. Lipton asked are they still timely. Mr. Malnati remarked absolutely.

3) MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2015 MEETING- VOTE

Ms. Carmel made the motion to accept the minutes of the May 28, 2015 meeting. Mr. Lipton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4) ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Malnati clarified that the Audit and the Borrowing were two items that happened simultaneously. After the Auditor performs the Audit, BRTA then does the annual borrowing, short term (364 days) normally enough money to carry over until Federal or State funding is received. The Auditor helps present this and is then subsequently sent to Bond Counsel. The Audit was completed at the end of September. This year there was a new requirement, GASB 68, regarding the pension plans for state entities. In the past, there was a line item in the Financial Statement that explained the defined benefit pension plan that is available to the employees. Now it becomes part of the balance sheet and there is a whole new section in the Financial Statement. This was untimely because it was the first time we had to go through a GASB 68 review of the plan to become part of the Financial Statement. GASB 68 was done by another firm and was approved. The borrowing went out to Bloomberg. The results are sent to a company that tells us which one is the most advantageous to deal with. It was awarded to Eastern Bank. We received net interest of .732898 percent on \$4.3 million. The reason they had to bring out the decimal point that many places was

because 3 out of 4 bids were that close. We are good for another year. Next year we will be repaying the note of 4.3 million, maybe with a note of 3.9 or 4.2.

FEDERAL

Mr. Malnati mentioned the government was supposed to shut down October 1, 2015, but received some funding until December. The government is supposed to come up with more than a few months to appropriate funding for the transportation bill. They are looking for a six year plan, but they might settle for three years.

Mr. Malnati said the BRTA received a notice in the Federal register saying how much the BRTA is going to receive. For this apportionment, they said we can come in for our grants at 8/12th and then they would release 4/12th. The BRTA received an additional \$1,200. The final apportionment amount awarded to BRTA was \$1,685.909. Mr. Malnati was hopeful that in December, they can pass an appropriation bill that will fund for at least a few years.

STATE

Mr. Malnati stated with the override of Governor Baker's State Budget, the RTA's line item was funded at \$82 million instead of the original \$80 million. BRTA will receive an additional \$66,948 for FY 16. A couple of weeks ago there was the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authority conference in Lenox and members of the State were there. A few of the RTA's questioned when we will receive this funding. The response from the State was hopefully getting it to us before the end of the Fiscal year so we will have all year to spend it.

URS STUDY

Mr. Malnati pointed out the Executive Summary of the URS Regional Transit Study was included in the board packet. The legislature said to provide a formula and a plan of how the Transit Authority would spend the money if extra funding was available. The Summary describes what it would cost per route as far as additional funding and was a 4 phase approach. Mr. Malnati explained the phased approach. The final page is the total cost. It is a little less than 3 million annually to implement the recommendations that were in the plan and the BRTA would have to purchase another eight vehicles of different sizes.

My pitch at the meeting in Lenox was, if we could go on the books and ask for 3 cents gas tax that is pumped in the area and used locally, then why can't we do the same with sales tax generated in the area? Mr. Lipton remarked they haven't been receptive on that in the past. Mr. Malnati stated he doesn't believe so. We have talked about it for a long time. Mr. Cooke asked if that would that be dedicated to transportation? Mr. Malnati remarked that is what we would need.

5) CASH REPORTS FOR MAY-JULY 2015- VOTE

Ms. Carmel made the motion to accept the cash reports from May-July 2015. Ms. Cherry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously

6) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati apologized that we only have the July budget in the packet as Ms. Hunkler was focusing on the preparation of the Audit and Borrowing.

Mr. Malnati explained why BRTA is not getting advertising revenue and Ms. Hunkler said the advertising company was doing their year-end reconciliation. BRTA did receive funds, but not in July and will show up on the next statement.

BRTA has already received half our state operating income. The State will give us a quarterly payment in December and the next one in March. Federal hasn't started to be tapped yet but we have done some draw downs.

Administrative expenses are a little over. To conform to generally accepting accounting principles, we put a new line item in, Repairs and Maintenance, with grant next to it, for \$11,710. In years past, we use to accumulate work and progress and then at the end of the year the auditor would do a transition and swap things out.

HST budget is up 15% from last year.

7) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati announced a revised board packet with July and August data. Fixed route is up 4% for the two months. Paratransit ridership is down a little. The majority is coming from the Council on Aging trips. The Chair Car continues to be up and the ADA line item is up. Taxi is down. The total is about 2 ½% over last year's numbers for ridership. Wheelchair ridership is up during the summer months. PT-1 trips are off the chart, up 2,500 rides for 2 months. Also, BRTA is up 17% for two months for bicycles. The performance measures are available on the web site. There are a lot of minor issues with miles between breakdowns. Mr. Dand remarked for instance: fare boxes rebooted, flat tires, tablets rebooted, minor collisions, check engine lights, etc.

Ms. Cherry discussed the complaints for passengers' percent difference. She thinks it is a misleading statistic. Mr. Malnati said in place of the percentage difference, we will just do the difference.

8) OLD BUSINESS

None

9) NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Malnati stated since last year BRTA has been promoting a service called RideMatch. It is a regional directory of transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities, matching rider's needs to transportation providers. The website is RideMatch.org. Ms. Vallieres gave a video presentation and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Malnati remarked they will be here next

week training our employees. BRTA will help facilitate and maintain the website. Ms. Carmel remarked we need to go out and sell it and advertise it.

Mr. Malnati passed out a brochure for "Travel Training" that Ms. Vallieres created. BRTA has been involved for years in "Travel Training", but it is a little known fact that this service is offered. Graphics were put on a vehicle that was taken off the road, to go to different communities promoting the Charlie Card and Travel Training as an information vehicle. Regardless of ability or age, Travel Trainers show the individual how to ride a bus. BRTA has two staff that are Travel Trainers for groups or individuals and have an appointment at Rose Manor for 23 people to be travel trained. Also, Pittsfield Housing Authority has eleven facilities that they would like a Travel Trainer to go to. Ms. Carmel suggested we go to the Dalton Senior Center, Kimball Farms, and other senior centers. Mr. Lipton thinks it is something we should work on.

Mr. Malnati mentioned Lisa Parise will be at the Health Fair on Monday in Hinsdale.

Mr. Malnati referenced a color coated route map has been worked on and hope to have it completed by the next meeting.

Mr. Malnati noted the Town of Peru has requested information on becoming a member. Ms. Carmel questioned about Becket. Mr. Malnati pointed out that Becket was already a member.

10) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME

December 3, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

11) ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cherry made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Lamb seconded the motion.

Mr. Richard Green said he would like to raise a safety issue. Northbound buses exiting Richardson Street and making a right turn onto Route 8, Cheshire, crosses the center line while making the turn. It is very hazardous as there have been accidents there in the past. He suggested the bus loops around and comes out at the traffic light on Church Street and Route 8. This is the second time this year I am trying to draw attention to it. Mr. Malnati thanked Mr. Greene.