

**BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD**

October 2, 2014  
4:00 p.m.  
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center  
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

**MINUTES**

**Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:**

Jeffrey Snoonian, Adams; William Elovirta, Becket; Mary Cherry, Dalton; Sean Stanton, Great Barrington; Jeanne Carmel, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Scott Laugenour, Lenox; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Leonard Lipton, Pittsfield; Rene Wood, Sheffield; and Craig Berger, Stockbridge

**Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:**

Lucy Prashker, Alford; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carol McKinney, Clarksburg; Bruce Turner, Egremont; Neil Oleson, Florida; Ronald Giancola, Lee; Wayne Burkhart, Monterey; James Lovejoy, Mount Washington; Donald Hawley, Otis; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Mike Case, Washington; Brian O'Grady, Williamstown; Leslie Bird, Windsor.

Also present: Gary Shepard, Robert Mainati, Barbara White, Sarah Vallieres, Kaylyn Hunkler, BRTA staff; Kirk Dand, - BTM, Toby Casey, Anteris; Vin Ronghi, and Jonathan Levine, Pittsfield Gazette

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.14	2.14	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.00	1.00	
Cheshire	2.03	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	30.00 shares
Dalton	2.12	2.12	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.73	3.73	41.78 present
Hinsdale	1.29	1.29	
Lanesborough	2.46	2.46	
Lee	3.79	0.00	
Lenox	3.10	3.10	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
North Adams	4.49	4.49	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	17.87	17.87	
Richmond	1.01	0.00	
Sheffield	1.01	1.01	
Stockbridge	2.57	2.57	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.38	0.00	
Windsor	1.01	0.00	

**1) ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM. Those present or absent are listed above.

Ms. Lamb welcomed a new representative from Adams, Jeffrey Snoonian.

**2) MINUTES OF MAY 29, 2014 MEETING- VOTE**

Mr. Laugenour made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 29, 2014 meeting. Ms. Wood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

Mr. Shepard introduced two new staff members, Kaylyn Hunkler and Kirk Dand. Kaylyn is BRTA's new CFO. She started in July, has a lot of financial background from Marland Mold, and replaces Katrina Kratka. Kirk Dand is the new GM, started in June and at one time was GM on Cape Cod but most recently worked at RouteMatch. He has a lot of experience in Paratransit, Fixed Route Management, and also Call Centers. Both have done a terrific job since joining the BRTA.

Mr. Shepard reviewed the information contained in the Administrator's report, the FY'14 Audit, Borrowing, and Triennial Review. The Audit went very smoothly and no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies found. A copy of the audit was distributed to all in attendance.

Mr. Malnati stated copies are also going to be e-mailed tonight.

Mr. Shepard stated the Audit/Finance Committee met a few weeks ago and reviewed the draft document with our auditor, David Irwin. There is a recommendation for a vote later in the agenda. I am pleased to announce it is a very good audit and thank the staff who worked on it.

BRTA completed our annual borrowing exercise. Eastern Bank Capital Markets was awarded the bid.

The Triennial Review, which is done every three years, was completed in September. FTA reviewers perform a desk audit and a 2 day site visit where they come in and review our operation. I am pleased to announce that there were no major findings identified and all findings have been responded to. My thanks go to Kaylyn, Bob, First Transit, Kirk, and his staff for all their hard work to achieve a good Triennial Review.

The One Call/One Click Center project is moving along thanks to Sarah and her good work. Sarah is our point person, working with Kirk, Soldier On, and our consultants. The Center will be manned by Veterans from Soldier On. It will serve Veterans and their families, not only from Berkshire County, but probably throughout the rest of the country. We just awarded the construction contract for the center downstairs that will open sometime in January.

Vin, Kirk, and Toby will be presenting a demonstration on the type of capabilities we have with Route Match.

BRTA awarded a new transit advertising contract to Go Graphix for three years. They will bring a different dimension to our advertising. They plan on offering potential advertisers the ability to target ads to BRTA customers through the use of GPA locations off their cell phones.

BRTA has given a Notice to Proceed letter to thingtech, for a Transit Asset Management System. It is a new program the Federal Government will be reviewing when we apply for future grants. Thingtech provided our committee, Kirk, Dave, Bob, and Toby, with additional requested information and an award recommendation is expected next week. With this program, BRTA will be able to keep track of all our assets, vehicles, and equipment while providing statistical information on useful life, maintenance costs, and general condition.

BRTA had a meeting with our representatives from Sheffield and Great Barrington regarding some trial runs. Using Federal monies, a new express will run from Great Barrington to Pittsfield with connections to Sheffield. We hope to finalize other runs in the near future.

#### **4) CASH REPORTS FOR APRIL-AUGUST 2014-VOTE**

Mr. Lipton made the motion to accept the cash reports for April to August. Ms. Wood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **5) BUDGET YTD**

Mr. Shepard stated the borrowing was awarded to Eastern Bank. Last year we borrowed 5.2 million and received an interest rate of .427 percent. This year we borrowed 4.7 million with an interest rate of .436 percent. We have been able to reduce our borrowing every year for the last three years by \$500,000.

The Fixed Route fare box income is down \$6800 to budget, but that is the actual cash we received. The stored value on the Charlie Card is \$39,370. We could never record stored value with the old pass but with the Charlie Card we can.

Mr. Laugenour asked if the \$39,000 is anywhere in these reports.

Mr. Shepard stated no but he has the backup data to show.

Ms. Cherry asked if the \$39,000 was purchased here. Potentially there would be additional cash coming in from anyone purchasing their Charlie Card elsewhere.

Mr. Shepard agreed.

#### **6) RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Shepard stated ridership is slightly down and there are a few reasons why. July's numbers were down as the hottest part of the summer occurred in the

second and third weeks of July. In August 2013, there were 22 weekdays and 5 Saturdays and this year was 21 weekdays and 5 Saturdays, so we lost one day of ridership. Route 7 started in August last year and it started in September this year. Also with the closing of North Adams Hospital, we have seen a decline in ridership. We are down about one percent. HST is up 17 percent from last year.

Mr. Laugenour remarked that in Lenox, he observed since the Charlie Card was introduced more people are riding and using the Charlie Card. Also the fare went down for Lenox to Pittsfield as it is no longer a two zone ride. The ridership decline is really puzzling because a lot of effort was placed in crafting the convenience of the fare structure.

Mr. Shepard stated he would recommend introducing Sunday service in the near future. He is receiving feedback from students regarding the use of a monthly pass vs a semester pass, although some are using the college Pell grants to pay for their pass. He also mentioned BRTA has not had a fare increase in five years.

Mr. Gallant stated the decline could be the mild summer we had and people decided to walk compared to last year when it rained every day.

Mr. Shepard agreed and also pointed out the major increase of bike transports.

Mr. Shepard stated he is disappointed in the involvement of the students using the semester pass.

Ms. Cherry asked has there been any further discussion with BCC and the other colleges regarding the automatic student activity fee as would really make a difference.

Mr. Snoonian wanted to know more about the automatic student activity fee.

Ms. Cherry stated that students wouldn't have to make the decision if they wanted a bus pass or how they want to pay for the bus. With the automatic fee, their bus pass is paid up front with their tuition and other fees.

Mr. Shepard mentioned that the automatic fee can be used anywhere in the system, anytime, as long as it was bought during that semester period.

Mr. Shepard stated he has not heard anything negative about the Charlie Card. It has all been positive.

**7) FY'14 AUDIT RECOMMENDATION – AUDIT/FINANCE COMMITTEE - VOTE**

Ms. Lamb stated the Finance Committee met with David Irwin, the Auditor, and last week and went over the draft audit. The Finance Committee made the recommendation for the Board to accept the Audit as presented.

Ms. Wood made the motion to accept the audit. Ms. Cherry seconded the motion passed, with the following members abstaining: Mr. Laugenour, Mr. Berger, and Mr. Snoonian.

**8) CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS – KIRK DAND GM**

Mr. Dand gave a presentation on the survey of BRTA riders conducted in July; a copy of the survey was included in the Board packet. BRTA will be conducting another survey in January.

Mr. Gallant asked how many people were surveyed.

Mr. Shepard stated 162 responded. That was not on all the routes as we rotate the routes each time we do the surveys.

Mr. Dand remarked this January's survey was cancelled because that is when the Charlie Card was implemented. The survey prior to that 170 responded.

**9) ROUTE MATCH PRESENTATION – Toby, Vin & Kirk**

BRTA, with its paratransit vendor, County Ambulance "went live" on July 1 in deploying the RouteMatch Paratransit Module.

Vin, Kirk, and Toby gave a presentation on what the program entails, how efficient and cost effective it is, and the type of capabilities BRTA has with RouteMatch.

**10) OLD BUSINESS**

None

**11) NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Laugenour announced he notified the Select board that he is resigning from this Board.

Ms. Lamb thanked him for his service and wished Mr. Laugenour well from the Board.

Ms. Lamb made the announcement that Mr. Shepard has resigned from the BRTA. She speaks for the board stating they appreciate everything he has done over the last six years, all the improvements he made, and wished him the best. She stated all good things must come to an end and we are sorry to see him go.

Mr. Shepard stated it has been a pleasure and appreciates the support he has received from this board and a great staff. He is leaving knowing BRTA has a lot of good things will be happening in the future.

Mr. Berger asked what steps are being taken for Mr. Shepard's successor.

Ms. Lamb stated the vacancy was advertised in late September with the deadline to submit a response is Monday at 1 PM. Mr. Malnati was asked and has agreed to act as Interim Administrator throughout the search process.

Mr. Berger asked Gary if he will be available for the interview process.

Mr. Shepard stated he will be available in any way he can help.

Ms. Lamb stated they would like one more member on the Interview Committee and asked if anyone is interested. Craig Berger volunteered to be on the search committee.

**12) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

November 20, 2014

**13) ADJOURNMENT**