

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

January 23, 2020

4:00 P

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

William Elovirta, Becket; John Boyle, Dalton; William Cooke, Great Barrington; James Sullivan, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Celeb Mitchell, Peru, arrived during administrator's report; Brian O'Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Christine Hoyt, Adams; Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; Edmund St. John IV, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Cindy Bosley, Florida; Edward Lane, Lenox; Steve Weisz, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; William Hiller, Otis; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Rene Wood, Sheffield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; and Richard Grillon, Washington.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Bridget Keegan- BRTA staff; Eli Greiner and Rauley Caine- BTM/PMB staff; Patti Annechiarico; and Clete Kus- BRPC

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.16	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.05	1.05	
Cheshire	2.11	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.22	2.22	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	4.03	4.03	43.46 present
Hinsdale	1.30	1.30	44.46 during admin
Lanesborough	2.60	2.60	report
Lee	3.92	3.92	
Lenox	3.39	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
New Ashford	1.00	1.00	
North Adams	4.92	4.92	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	1.00	
Pittsfield	18.77	18.77	
Richmond	1.04	0.00	
Sheffield	1.08	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.77	0.00	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.65	2.65	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1) **ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2) **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2019 MEETING-VOTE**

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 19, 2019. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) **ADMINISTRATOR`S REPORT**

Mr. Malnati stated the BRTA signed the MOU with the State to receive additional funding incorporating ridership, customer service, asset management, and financial performance, as required by the Task Force. Mr. Malnati explained BRTA's matrix is submitted quarterly to MassDOT. There were positive trends and some that needed improvement. Those areas needing improvement are on-time performance and schedule adherence for fixed route and paratransit.

Mr. Malnati shared the evening pilot program is invoiced to the State on a monthly basis. BRTA has received some of the discretionary funds. There was no specific repayment timeline for these funds after submitting an invoice. BRTA has applied for an additional round of discretionary funds as part of this year's budget. BRTA would continue the evening service, with a few tweaks to the original evening service. BRTA changed some of the Great Barrington service and North Adams service at the end of September. Mr. Malnati added that the Route 34 in North Adams would be expanding to service Mohawk Forest, Brayton Hill, and Greylock apartments as part of the evening pilot. In South County, the Great Barrington Route 22 was created and is a circular loop, replacing the later evening run of the 21X. The Route 22 loop services Big-Y, Simons Rock, Housatonic, Price Chopper, and back to Main Street. The route 21X leaves the ITC, at 5:30 PM, and starts the route 22 loop at 6:30 PM, to later arrive back to the ITC in Pittsfield as the 21X at 9:55 PM. Mr. Malnati stated that there were some preliminary numbers for the newer service. As of January 22nd (yesterday) there were 85 customers that rode on the new Route 22, and the customer per service day was over 6, and per hour nearing 2. Mr. Malnati stated that as the run continues, he expects more ridership, as word gets out and Simons Rock is back in session.

Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA was notified in late October for the Triennial Review. This occurs every three years. The FTA hires a contractor to visit BRTA and go over policies and procedures. Mr. Malnati stated the review goes over 21 topics and BRTA had to electronically submit documentation in December. The site visit is scheduled for June 29-30, 2020.

Mr. Malnati stated that Berkshire Flyer Steering Committee has been meeting and has some new members, including Jay Green from Adams and Deanna Ruffer from Pittsfield. The committee meets bi-weekly. Mr. Malnati explained that in the literature from the Berkshire Flyer funding there was \$30,000 set aside for a project manager. The steering committee has hired a project manager and Mr. Malnati has applied for the funds through Mass DOT. BRTA has received a contract back but has not received the funds yet. Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA would retain \$3,000.00 from the allocation as an administrative fee.

Mr. Malnati shared BRTA has been a broker for the Human Service Transportation (HST) since 2005. HST put out a solicitation out at the end of November. BRTA has a deadline to put in a proposal to continue to be a broker for HST. Currently there are nine HST service areas across Massachusetts and they are looking to consolidate it to only three areas. He has drafted a letter to send to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Mr. Malnati stated that the providing a positive customer experience could be impacted by the solicitation. This solicitation would increase service area and would lose the local expertise and local hands on knowledge when dealing with riders. His letter would request the stop of the solicitation. One of the other transit authorities would be sending a letter to the Inspector General raising some big concerns such as requiring a 90-day cash flow. He will also be sending a letter to the Inspector General on behalf of BRTA, echoing the other transit authorities' letter of concerns. Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA submitted a letter of intent to bid before the December 23, 2019 deadline.

Mr. Malnati stated that he was invited to a BCC Transportation Forum in Great Barrington where he talked about the changes BRTA was going to be implementing in December. The forum went well, and he was invited to go to another forum at the end of March. BRTA participated in the third annual "Shop with a Cop" initiative on December 10. BRTA provides transportation and drivers as well as decorates the buses, to transport 16 children and local members of law enforcement. From BRTA staff, Julie Davine organized the event. In years past a pizza party was held here at the Intermodal Center, but this year it was held at Berkshire Bank in their board room. Mr. Malnati stated that on January 17th, he was in North Adams at the Poverty Summit as a speaker. They broke up into smaller groups at the event and discussed transportation, including some of the new routes starting July 1, 2020.

4) CASH REPORTS AUGUST-SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2019 VOTE

Ms. Lamb made a motion to accept the cash reports for August, September, October, November and December 2019. Mr. Gallant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati stated that the current budget presented is through December 2019. The fares line item was above budget, which was not the case last year during this time due to the work stoppage. The paratransit is below budget and added that it was due to ridership being below average. The non-transit revenue was over by \$9,000.00 due to some assets being sold and the interest income line item was also above budget. For local grants, this line item will usually always show as a negative number because the money received this year, is the reimbursement from the previous year. The state grants were over budget and fringe benefits were over budget due to a contribution for the BRTA's pension plans. Mr. Malnati stated that material expense was under budget and the purchase of upgrading computers was paid for from a grant. Utilities were under budget as well as insurance costs. HST was also under budget.

6) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati stated this year's ridership numbers were much higher than last years due to the work stoppage that occurred in December 2018. He thought with the evening hours

increasing, the ridership numbers would increase as well. Mr. Malnati stated that ADA trips were up by 1,200 compared to last year and it was an overall 3% increase in ridership from last year.

7) **OLD BUSINESS**

None discussed.

8) **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Malnati stated that he received a requested from Anteris, who is a business tenant in the BRTA building, for a temporary rent reduction. After reviewing this request, he approved it to avoid having a vacant space. Currently the tenant pays \$3,100 per month and in the new rent agreement, they will pay \$1,500 for a six-month period. Mr. Boyle asked where in the building Anteris is located, to which Mr. Malnati explained where they are located and previous tenants who used the space. Mr. McNally asked if Mr. Malnati believed that after the six-month period, the tenant will be back on track and making the full rent payments again. Mr. Gallant added the question asking if Mr. Malnati had a back up plan in-case they were not able to make the full payments after the six-month period. Mr. Malnati replied that an updated lease has been signed, and had added to the lease agreement that if rent was to not be paid, BRTA would possibly not pay Anteris for their IT services.

Mr. Malnati shared that he signed a MOU between Simons Rock College and BRTA. The agreement between BRTA and Simons Rock would allow faculty and student to ride the bus fare free by showing their ID and the college would pay BRTA on a daily rate basis. This agreement would start January 27th and run through June 30th. The daily rate agreed upon is \$75.00 per day until the end of May, and from June 1st-June 30th \$35.00 per day. Mr. Cooke asked where the buses would be stopping on campus, and inquired about bus signs being placed at the stops. Mr. Malnati said he would look into some signage.

Mr. Malnati explained that AECOM has been hired by MassDOT to do a 5-year comprehensive analysis of BRTA routes. AECOM may provide a presentation at a board meeting.

Mr. Malnati stated the Governor's budget came out with a line item for an increase in transit services. This would make the transit services line items a total of 94 million. BRTA will be starting to put their budget together in February.

Mr. Malnati stated that every year BRTA has a representative from the disabled committee with yearlong seat on the Advisory Board and are a voting member. Cheshire is the newest designee to have a representative on the board. He also received a letter from the Department of Labor about the Union choosing a rider representative with seat on BRTA's board. He stated that in years past this position has not been filled.

Mr. Malnati explained the net cost of service calculation and the yearly changes due to the services changes in the area. The member calculations in terms of weighted votes have changed. He provided a new list of each towns voting shares.

- 9) **NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**
March 26, 2020 at 4:00 pm.

10) **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Lamb made a motion to adjourn, was seconded by Mr. Boyle and approved by all.

FUNERAL