

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

March 26, 2020  
4:00 PM  
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center  
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

TELECONFERENCE BOARD MINUTES DUE TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

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

William Elovirta, Becket; James Sullivan, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; 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; Rebecca Stone, Clarksburg; John Boyle, Dalton; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Cindy Bosley, Florida; William Cooke, Great Barrington; Edward Lane, Lenox; Steve Weisz, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; William Hiller, Otis; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Rene Wood, Sheffield; and Richard Grillon, Washington.

Also present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Barbara White- BRTA staff.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.20	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.00	1.00	
Cheshire	2.08	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.20	0.00	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	4.10	0.00	35.61 present via
Hinsdale	1.27	1.27	Telcom
Lanesborough	2.89	2.89	
Lee	3.71	3.71	
Lenox	3.27	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
New Ashford	1.12	1.12	
North Adams	4.49	0.00	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	19.49	19.49	
Richmond	1.00	0.00	
Sheffield	1.04	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.82	2.82	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.31	2.31	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

**1) ROLL CALL**

Each attending member stated their name and the community they represented. After some ground rules for the teleconference by Ms. Irvin, the meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

**2) MINUTES OF JANUARY 23, 2020 MEETING-VOTE**

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting. Mr. O’Grady seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the minutes were passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Title VI/LEP	9) New Business Covid-19 Service
Becket	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hinsdale	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lanesborough	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**3) ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

**TELCON BOARD MEETING**

Mr. Malnati thanked everyone for agreeing to the first teleconference board meeting.

**COVID-19**

Mr. Malnati started by saying COVID-19 is impacting everyone’s life. So far, no one at the BRTA has called out sick, but we have been inundated with calls, conference calls, and emails on the safety protocol we are taking. We have been following guidelines from CDC, MEMA, Mass.gov and FTA.

BRTA has fogging equipment, which is a 48-hour disinfectant, and maintenance uses at the facility here every night and the buses are receiving the same treatment. BRTA has been practicing social distancing by closing one entrance of the building, removing the tables from the terminal and spreading out the chairs.

BRTA’s ridership this week has really dropped. The first 3 days of this week were down 60% - 68%. Last week, we were off 34% from the same week period last year. We have been sending out weekly press releases to media, listserv, the legislative delegation, and the mayors to keep the public informed.

We are also doing scenario planning for the future if an employee tests positive for the COVID-19.

**STATE**

Mr. Malnati shared that AECOM has been working on a comprehensive service analysis for all the RTAs. They were going to come here for some hands-on surveys with our customers. Due to Covid-19 and the Commonwealth’s protocols, this will be delayed. We are waiting to see if DOT will extend the final report deadline.

**FEDERAL**

Mr. Malnati stated we will be submitting a federal grant for discretionary funds through the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities programs for a few projects including: the replacement of minibuses, boiler replacements at both facilities, and parking lot improvements at Downing Parkway. We are looking for letters of support from the delegation and the mayors.

**DRAFT BUDGET FY 21**

Mr. Malnati explained the draft budget for FY21 has begun but is on hold while dealing with COVID-19. The Governor originally submitted his budget in January for \$94M for the RTAs collectively, which would mean a base funding at \$90.5M with \$3.5M for discretionary grants. Out of the \$90.5M statewide, would translate to \$2.8M for BRTA. There must be an approved budget by the end of May. MBTA has asked for an extension for submitting their budget.

**MCMAHON STUDY**

Mr. Malnati remarked this study is currently underway about all of the variables of BRTA utilizing electric vehicles: what routes can we run an electric bus on, what kind of infrastructure we need, what utility work would need upgrading, and could we do a charging station at Downing Park right away.

Mr. McNally asked if we have three phase electric at Downing for charging. Mr. Malnati stated he wasn’t sure but said that the study would help us identify that.

**4) CASH REPORTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2020 - VOTE**

Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the cash reports for January and February 2020 were passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Title VI/LEP	9) New Business Covid-19 Service
Becket	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hinsdale	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lanesborough	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**5) TITLE VI POLICY AND LEP PLAN – VOTE**

Ms. Vallieres explained the Title VI and LEP Plan is done every 3 years. It is part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These are required documents for the BRTA to receive federal funds. These need to be voted on and approved by the Advisory Board. They will then be put on the BRTA and federal grant websites. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the Title VI Policy and LEP Plan passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Title VI/LEP	9) New Business Covid-19 Service
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Becket	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hinsdale	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lanesborough	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**6) BUDGET YTD**

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the budget through January, pre COVID-19. On the revenue side, by January, fixed route fares we were over budget by \$36,000. People are riding less on Paratransit. Non transportation revenue is our interest from the money market account which is paying a higher interest rate. Reimbursement for maintenance is over budget as we get reimbursed from the COAs for work on their vehicles. Local grants will always be a negative because the money we received this year reimburses us for last year's allocation. We are over in state contract assistance because the state paid us in advance for the March payment. For expenses, we are under budget for unemployment expense. Fringe benefits are over because we made an additional contribution to the pension plan. Professional services are under budget for administrative and over for fixed route, Paratransit and HST because we could allocate expenses to the correct cost center. Material and supplies are under budget. Utilities are under budget.

**7) RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Malnati discussed ridership through January, which showed a 16,000 rider increase on the fixed route. Paratransit has decreased and most of it is COAs providing less trips. ADA trips have increased. Ridership was up 4% through January. Wheelchair transports are up and bikes are down. Evening service might have an impact on this as people are using the bus more.

**8) OLD BUSINESS**

None discussed.

**9) NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Malnati shared BRTA received a letter from Department of Labor for a representative rider to the Board. As soon as the paperwork is complete, the person will be on board.

Based on recommendations from Operations, we have been working on three different scenarios. Scenario A would minimize some of the routes that are not being utilized that much, such as Route 3S to Williamstown and the circulator Route 22 in Great Barrington, which was set up mostly for Simons Rock students. I can present the scenarios, via email, to the Board and possibly do a teleconference to enact any service changes. The BRTA is trying to provide as much service as we can to our customers, but the service could be impacted if an operator becomes sick or quarantined. We will then be forced to make decisions and service cuts. We are trying to be proactive. Scenario B is to change some routes, mostly Route 1 and Route 2, from one hour to every two hours. This would free up approximately 7 spare drivers. Scenario C is a modified Saturday schedule for all week. That would give us between 15 and 17 spare drivers. I need a vote from the Board to make service changes as needed based upon which scenario the Board prefers or I could present the scenarios to the board via teleconference to make service changes with a vote.

Mr. McNally stated Mr. Malnati must be nimble. It is problematic to get a quorum when we have long advance notification. I suggest to the board that we vote to authorize Mr. Malnati to make such modifications as necessary due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Mr. McNally made a motion that the Board authorize Mr. Malnati to make such modifications as necessary due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all state aye, the motion to enact service modifications passed unanimously.

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Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**10) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

May 28, 2020 at 4:00 pm.

**11) ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. O'Grady made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Minacci seconded the motion.