

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

May 25, 2017
4:00 PM
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

William Cooke, Gt. Barrington; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Leonard Lipton, Pittsfield; and Douglas McNally, Windsor. Brian O'Grady, Williamstown arrived after the Administrators report, but was present for the agenda votes.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Jeff Snoonian, Adams; Timothy Drumm, Alford; William Elovirta, Becket; Paul Astorino, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Mary Cherry, Dalton; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Glenn Burdick, Florida; Laurel Schialabba, Hinsdale; Thomas Wickham, Lee; Channing Gibson, Lenox; Carol Edelman, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mount Washington; Roberta Sarnacki, Otis; Gary Stergis, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Andrew Peterson, Sheffield; Ernest Cardillo, Stockbridge; Mike Case, Washington; and Vacant Disability Representative.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Barbara White - BRTA staff; Kirk Dand - BTM; Jonathan Levine- Pittsfield Gazette; Patti Annechiarico and Stephen James Barrett.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.16	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.06	0.00	
Cheshire	2.11	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	31.75
Dalton	2.09	0.00	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.71	3.71	30.40 present
Hinsdale	1.33	0.00	33.08 after Admin's
Lanesborough	2.92	2.92	Report
Lee	3.80	0.00	
Lenox	3.19	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
North Adams	4.60	4.60	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	18.17	18.17	
Richmond	1.01	0.00	
Sheffield	1.01	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.67	0.00	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.68	2.68	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1) **ROLL CALL**

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2) **ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

TRIENNIAL REVIEW

Mr. Malnati explained the Triennial Review process has changed. A representative from Interactive Elements Inc. comes to the BRTA. An introductory conference call with BRTA staff, the reviewer, and Region 1 FTA staff begins the process. The representative performed her review of 17 categories, toured ITC, and the Downing facility. She looked at procurement files, maintenance records, federal drawdowns procedures and reimbursements, and looked at the transit management files. After the 2-day site visit, an exit interview with FTA, BRTA staff, and the reviewer provided an overview of any findings.

The representative found BRTA was deficient in 2 areas, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Program of Projects. BRTA created a draft response to FTA on the two deficient items and then submitted the corrective action plan. BRTA received a final report of the Triennial Review which is attached to the Administrators Report.

DRAFT BUDGET FY 18

The Governor's budget has a different funding level than the House and Senate budgets. BRTA is exploring all avenues to maintain the current service levels for our customers.

EARTH DAY AT BCC

Mr. Malnati stated BRTA staff have recently participated in some outreach programs promoting BRTA's services. Mr. Malnati gave a power point presentation to about 50 students and staff at BCC's Earth Day event on how to ride a bus, read a schedule, and included website links on how to see where their BRTA bus is in real time.

BRTA will be attending the incoming BCC's student orientation in the fall. The Charlie Card van will be there explaining how easy it is to get a card, how to use it, how to load a card, and the benefits of purchasing a semester pass. Also, BRTA staff will provide input on the BCC student handbook regarding the BRTA.

TRAVEL TRAINING

Ms. Davine went to the College Internship Program (CIP) in Lee, where they work with individuals with developmental disorders, to teach them how read a bus schedule, navigate riding the bus, and transferring to another bus to further their range. She also was part of an outreach at PHS, where the high school seniors participated in a "Game of Life" where students learned how to budget their earnings for living expenses including travel to and from work.

Ms. Parise attended the Baystate Bike Week event at BMC and explained what programs BRTA has. Ms. Davine went to Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSC) to train graduating seniors with disabilities. Ms. Vallieres and Ms. Davine attended the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition "You can get there from here" event. A family of four, who have been in North Adams for a few years did not know about the BRTA. They purchased a Charlie Card and rode the bus to Pittsfield and back so the family now can extend their boundaries.

Spectrum Health Systems, who moved from downtown Pittsfield to Merrill Road, has scheduled a meeting for next Thursday with a travel trainer and Charlie Card van.

GREYHOUND BUS

Greyhound bus lines has been operating here since March 8. They leave here at 7:30 AM and come back at 5:30PM, one trip a day. BRTA receives some revenue from Greyhound for a docking fee as well as ticket sales commission. Mr. Malnati received an email from the Greyhound contact stating they will be sending their first payment in the mail this week.

3) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati provided an overview of the ridership. In the board packet, ridership is through March and there are handouts for ridership through April. Fixed Route Ridership is down 8% through April. Paratransit chair car service is still declining, but ADA trips have increased. Wheelchair transports are down 28% and bike transports are down 2%. Council on Aging is down 4% and taxi is relatively flat. Both HST and Mass Rehab have increased from last year.

Mr. Gallant asked if we thought bicycles will go up as a lot of people are out of work right now. Jobs aren't plentiful. Mr. McNally stated it probably is the weather with all the rain. Mr. Malnati agreed.

4) MINUTES OF March 23, 2017- MEETING- VOTE

Mr. McNally made the motion to accept the minutes of the March 23, 2017 meeting. Mr. Gallant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5) FY 2018 BUDGET

Ms. Lamb stated the Finance committee met before the Board Meeting and Mr. Malnati gave highlights of the FY 18 Budget.

BRTA used the \$84.1 million level for the collective RTA funding for this budget. The Governor's budget has \$80 million and the House put in \$81 million. The Senate Ways and Means, earlier in the week, had \$83 million in their Budget. The funding level should be \$86.2 million for FY 18. BRTA is basing our budget on \$84.1 million. Last year, we received \$82 million.

Another assumption within the budget is level service within the communities, not adding service or taking away service. BRTA is not looking at fare increases. This budget includes a two percent staff salary, electric rate, and health insurance increases. BRTA has locked the fuel cost at \$1.75 a gallon. Mr. Gallant asked how long it was locked in for. Mr. Malnati replied one year.

For fixed route passenger fares, the projection for revenue is about \$700,000, which is a lot different than what was budgeted for previously. For paratransit revenue, BRTA is anticipating to come in at \$118,000 for year end. A 2% increase was added to this budget. There is some fluctuation between chair car premium trips and the ADA trips.

Advertising revenue is a contract that has incremental increase each year.

Miscellaneous income includes: the interest revenue; the reimbursement when BRTA is open later for Amtrak; rental income from this facility; commission on the vending machines; and Peter Pan Tickets. There is not a line item in the current budget for

reimbursement for maintenance of COA vehicles. Mr. Gallant asked if Peter Pan income has dropped because of Greyhound? Mr. Malnati replied no and explained the hours for both.

The Federal operating dollars includes: 5307 money which is the annual appropriation; some rural funding; and a little bit of New Freedom money left over to fund the route in Great Barrington.

Mr. Malnati spoke on a list of expenses including: payroll for administrative staff, professional services (legal), auditing services, office machines, professional consulting, materials and supplies, travel, dues and subscription, marketing, bank credit card fees, utilities, ADA expenses stipend for COA, interest expense, and fixed route expense.

Mr. McNally asked if we looked into solar panels. Mr. Malnati replied yes, a couple years ago and again in March of this year there was a presentation in Boston from a company that comes around to assess your site. He expressed an interest for here and Downing Parkway, so we are waiting for them to come and give us an estimate.

Mr. Gallant asked why we are in debt for \$29.60? Mr. Malnati replied we have to write things off especially if someone bounces a check.

FY 2018 BUDGET – VOTE

Mr. O'Grady made a motion to accept the FY 2018 Budget as presented. Mr. McNally seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the HST budget. BRTA still doesn't have the numbers for the HST budget so we took the current cost of their services and used them as a draft budget amount. At the next Board meeting, we will vote to amend and accept the HST budget.

HST DRAFT BUDGET – VOTE

Mr. McNally made the motion to accept the HST draft budget. Mr. O'Grady seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6) CASH REPORTS FOR MARCH-APRIL 2017 - VOTE

Mr. O'Grady made the motion to accept the cash reports from March-April 2017. Mr. Gallant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

7) ELECTION OF OFFICERS – VOTE

Mr. Lipton made the motion to nominate the officers that are currently have appointed; Ms. Lamb as Chairman and Mr. Gallant as Vice Chairman. Mr. McNally seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

8) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the Budget. According to projections, it looks like the revenue will be about \$700,000. The ridership is down so we will still have a deficit as far as fare box income. BRTA is still not having the activity we should with our chair car tickets and ADA tickets but we should start seeing an increase. Other income is above budget because of the non-budgeted reimbursement for maintenance. Interest income is a lot higher than what was budgeted. There are some additional miscellaneous income such as docking fees for Greyhound. There are some grant reimbursements that totals

on the expense side of over \$90,000 and the fixed route are over budget on the phone system, Wi-Fi and tablets. The total operating administrative expense is down \$139,811. The fringe benefit from the first month, add to the grant activity and startup cost, amounts to over \$141,000. HST income is over \$338,000 and the total expense is over \$338,000.

9) **OLD BUSINESS**

None discussed

10) **NEW BUSINESS**

None discussed

11) **NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

September 28, 2017 at 4 PM.

12) **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Lipton made the motion to adjourn and Mr. O'Grady seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.