

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

November 15, 2018

4:00 PM

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center

One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

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

Christine Hoyt, Adams; William Elovirta, Becket; Harvey Drosehn, Hinsdale; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Rene Wood, Sheffield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Brian O'Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

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

Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; John Boyle, Dalton; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Neil Olsen, Florida; William Cooke, Great Barrington; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Steve Moritz, Lee; Edward Lane, Lenox; Donald Coburn, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; William Hiller, Otis; Alan Hanson, Richmond; 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; Barbara Bizzi, West Side Neighborhood Initiative; Clete Kus, BRPC; Steven J. Barrett; Haven Orecchio, Berkshire Eagle; and Joel Williams, Berkshire Record.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.18	2.18	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.05	1.05	
Cheshire	2.12	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.12	0.00	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.82	0.00	33.09 present
Hinsdale	1.29	1.29	
Lanesborough	2.87	0.00	
Lee	3.82	0.00	
Lenox	3.21	0.00	
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
New Ashford	1.00	1.00	
North Adams	4.93	0.00	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	1.00	
Pittsfield	18.95	18.95	
Richmond	1.02	0.00	
Sheffield	1.02	1.02	
Stockbridge	2.72	2.72	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.88	2.88	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1) **ROLL CALL**

Meeting was called to order at 4:06 PM.

2) **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 MEETING- VOTE**

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 27, 2018 meeting. Mr. Drosehn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, with Ms. Wood and Mr. O'Grady abstaining from the vote.

3) **ADMINISTRATOR`S REPORT**

Mr. Malnati first addressed the letter that BRTA received from Paratransit Management of Berkshire (PMB) about a work stoppage on or about November 16, 2018. Mr. Malnati stated, as of this time he had no other information, but BRTA was planning for the worst but hoping for the best. Any new information received this evening would be posted on the BRTA's website and will be faxed and emailed out to members of the press. Mr. Malnati stated that he had received several phone calls from concerned customers about the potential strike.

The RTA task force has been meeting in Boston regularly and that he had been attending most meetings, missing only 2. Mr. Malnati stated that he was asked to speak about the McMahon Study at the last meeting, focusing on work transportation along a spinal route with micro-transit hubs. There was a discussion about the grant application due the end of this month for a slice of the \$4 million. Mr. Malnati explained the 4-page application with supporting data that each RTA has to submit and the money will be expended by the end of June 2020. Mr. Malnati mentioned the tight schedule: Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Program Preview due on November 15, 2018 and the grant application due on November 30, 2018. The CIP is a projection of capital needs for the next five years. The Program Preview is BRTA's 2 years of the previous financials and operations to present to MassDOT. BRTA will be putting in an application with a cover letter from the Chair of BRTA's Advisory Board.

Mr. Malnati shared at the end of October the Senate President Karen Spilka and Senator Adam Hinds met at the BRTA to discuss rural transportation issues. After the meeting, Mr. Malnati spoke directly to Senator Spilka and she understands Regional Transit Authorities. She was the force behind the creation of MetroWest Regional Transit Authority in Framingham.

Mr. Malnati discussed and presented a power point presentation from the November 2nd survey that was put on the website and distributed. The survey asked customers, if the BRTA was to receive additional funding, how would they like to see it be used? As of several hours ago, he had taken the data from the survey, and so far, had 130 responses. The first question asked, "if BRTA were to receive additional funding what would you like to be implemented first?" The choices were: increased hours, Sunday service, or more frequency of service. The breakdown showed that 71 responses said extended weekday service hours, 39 said more frequency, and 20 said Sunday service. The next question "if BRTA extended the hours, what specific route?" The most voted route was the 21 X, 11, 1, 2 and 12. The question "what specific hours would you like to see it be extended to 8,9,10 or 11PM?" The answers were scattered. The question for "Sunday service what route?", the route 1 had the most responses followed by the 21 X, 2, and 12. The question "what hours would you want Sunday service?" The most voted was 9AM-5PM. The next question was "for more frequent bus service which route would you like to see increased?" The route 1, 21 X, and 11 were the most voted. Mr. Malnati stated using this information he created a spreadsheet and this showed the route 11 to

BCC, at 9PM had a lot of responses. One of the options for the RTA Task Force grant application could be running the route 11 to BCC with later service hours. Mr. Malnati will contact BCC to ask how to promote the possible later evening service. This would cost an estimated \$17,000 to run this service from January to May. Mr. Malnati stated along with the idea of running the later BCC route 11 service, BRTA would hope to extend the 21 express service to service South County and route 1 to service North County. He is waiting for an estimated cost for those services. Mr. Malnati discussed a project through Representative Pignatelli about working with Peter Pan on a Monday through Friday creating a BRTA express service run during the week. Mr. Malnati mentioned that this idea may be the other application BRTA puts forward for the additional funding. Mr. McNally mentioned that running the later service to BCC was a good idea, but also raised question about services customers who work beyond the 9-5 window. He mentioned that BRTA should tie in transportation for services for people going to and from work during later evening hours and wanted that mentioned in the application. Mr. Malnati agreed that this would be a good idea to be mentioned in the application as it shows who BRTA would be serving. Ms. Irvin and Ms. Wood mentioned possible ideas of service people going to and from work as well. Mr. Malnati stated that he had attended a class last Tuesday which used Remix software showing census tracks and will show five years' worth of data showing where people commute to and from and where jobs are. Mr. Malnati stated that data used from this software would be included in the application for funding. Ms. Hoyt asked Mr. Malnati if he was planning to implement this BCC evening run for this coming January. Mr. Malnati stated that he was looking for input from the board, and also said BRTA had funding from last year that could potentially be used for extra BCC service this January. Mr. Drosehn asked if a motion was needed to move forward with the application.

Ms. Wood made a motion to authorize submitting one or two applications as discussed for the additional funding. Mr. Drosehn seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ms. Youngkin made mention about how important transportation is and even though we have other options such as senior centers and paratransit, we still need to be conscious of having hard data to support the applications.

**4) CASH REPORTS AUGUST 2018 AND SEPTEMBER 2018 VOTE**

Ms. Wood made a motion to accept the August 2018 and September 2018 cash reports. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**5) BUDGET YTD**

Mr. Malnati stated that this budget through September 2018 was off budget by almost 8 percent because of customer fares. Mr. Malnati also stated that there was a 6 percent drop in ridership through September which may have caused the fare to drop. Mr. Malnati stated that BCC numbers were down. Ms. Wood questioned what would cause a lower ridership to BCC, and Mr. Malnati explained it was due to lower enrollment. Mr. Malnati stated that with that State grants BRTA was ahead of budget. Mr. Malnati stated that we were under budget for fixed route by \$5,000 and paratransit was over budget by about \$3,500.

**6) RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Malnati stated that non-ADA trips were going down and ADA trips were going up, Council on Aging trips have increased. The number one route for carrying wheelchairs was the route 34. The HST brokerage trips for the first time have gone down by less than a percent. Mr. Malnati stated BRTA's website includes the performance of both

fixed route and paratransit. He mentioned that Mr. Caine from BTM/PMB had helped with creating paratransit performance on the website.

7) **OLD BUSINESS**

None discussed.

8) **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Malnati stated that annually BRTA performs a net cost service analysis with help from the auditor. This analysis shows how BRTA generates the weighted vote numbers for the Advisory Board. The report shows how much service is provided to each city and town by BRTA and these numbers can change each year based on service. Mr. Malnati gave an example that if the BCC runs has extended hours, it would then be providing more service within Pittsfield.

Mr. McNally raised question surrounding a contractual settlement. Mr. Malnati suggested it would be something to discuss at the finance committee before bringing it to the board members.

9) **NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 4:00 PM, to include report on strike.

10) **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Drosehn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion which passed unanimously.