

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

November 30, 2017

4:00 PM

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

William Elovirta, Becket; Bill Drosehn, Dalton; William Cooke, Gt. Barrington; Harvey Drosehn, Hinsdale; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor. Erica Girgenti, Adams and Caleb Mitchell, Peru arrived during the Administrator’s Report. They were not present during the Minutes vote.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Timothy Drumm, Alford; Mark Webber, Cheshire; Carl McKinney, Clarksburg; Charles Ogden, Egremont; Neil Olsen, Florida; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Channing Gibson, Lenox; Steve Moritz, Lee; Kenneth Basler, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mount Washington; William Hiller, Otis; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Nadine Hawver, Sheffield; Donald Chabon, Stockbridge; Richard Grillon, Washington.

Also, present: Lance Fyfe; BHS; Barbara Bizzi; Linda Kelley; Terry Moore; Libby Boissy; Alisa Costa; Patti Annechiarico; Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Barbara White - BRTA staff; Kirk Dand and Eli Grenier – BTM.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.16	2.16	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.06	1.06	
Cheshire	2.11	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	31.75
Dalton	2.09	2.09	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.71	3.71	34.64 present
Hinsdale	1.33	1.33	37.80 after minute's
Lanesborough	2.92	0.00	vote
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	1.00	
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. Ms. Lamb introduced new board member Mr. Bill Drosehn, representing the town of Dalton.

2) **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 MEETING- VOTE**

Ms. Irvin made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 28, 2017 meeting. Mr. Elovirta seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Malnati stated BRTA successfully submitted the FY17 Audited Financial Statements to the required list of state recipients. Each chief elected official of the BRTA member communities also received a copy of the statements via email.

BRTA has been working with TSM Design to update the annual report which will be distributed to the Board, Town Halls, Chambers of Commerce, Legislative Delegation, and agencies we have contact with. There have been formatting edits as this report evolves, but it remains a means to inform readers what BRTA does within the communities we serve, not only driving the bus. It also includes projects like the book house in the lobby promoting literacy for children. This report will be distributed at the next Board Meeting.

Mr. Malnati and Ms. Vallieres attended the APTA Expo in Atlanta, GA from October 9 – 11. This event is held every 3 years and had over 800 vendors with everything from bus washers, buses, software, hardware, actual train cars, and camera systems. Mr. Malnati spoke of the content and making contacts was important. BRTA attended with a focus of looking for a cutaway vehicle, either electric or hybrid. Mr. Malnati spoke with a manufacturer from California who said they don't make them yet but the first quarter of next year you might see prototypes come out. In California, they are running service trucks which are electric. BRTA met with current vendors and possible future vendors discussing what was new to the industry and how this technology could improve our customer's experiences at BRTA. When exiting the Expo hall, Mr. Malnati overheard someone say, "there were so many things in there I didn't even know we needed." This trip was well worth the expense to attend.

Mr. Malnati and Ms. Vallieres were invited to the Design Thinking project in North Adams by Senator Hinds. The group focused on the transportation needs of the county. BRTA was paired with people from 1Berkshire to create an "outside the box" system that ran from 6 AM to midnight covering 7 different main streets (North Adams, Williamstown, Adams, Pittsfield, Lenox, Lee, and Stockbridge) with limited stops along the way. BRTA provided an update to this group after meeting in Springfield with PVTA and PVPC using their Remix software to create mapping scenarios. The projected cost to implement this pilot project for 3 months was \$720,000. Additional cost factors would be required as our current supervisory and maintenance staff are scheduled only until 10 PM. A recommendation will be made from this group to Senator Hinds in the near future. Should this service recommendation gain traction, this project should begin the process of implementing later evening fixed route service for our customers.

BRTA has been working with MassDOT and Senator Adams Hinds, as a member of the Berkshire Flyer working group to analyze the possibility of establishing weekend train

service from New York City to Pittsfield. They are trying to replicate the Cape Flyer, which provides limited weekend rail service from Boston to the Cape. This group has met in Lenox at the MassDOT office to discuss the possible train route from Penn Station to the ITC using the existing Amtrak line from New York City connecting to Albany and then the Berkshires. It would leave NYC early Friday afternoon and arrive approximately 6PM. BRTA is promoting the transit piece; how do customers reach their final destination in the Berkshires? This was mandated by an executive order and a report has to go back to the Governor in March of what the findings are. Mr. Drosehn asked if there had been any further thought of increasing the number of trips from Rochester to Boston. "If I want to go to Boston I have to wait 2 days and that is a problem for a business man." Mr. Malnati agreed it is a problem and stated Jay Green from Amtrak was at the meeting and he suggested we go visit Albany as there are 26 trains that go from Albany to NYC on weekdays. They come from Vermont, Montreal, and the West. Mr. Green stated they might be able to increase it to just a spur from Albany to here.

BRTA held three public meetings in November throughout the county to discuss the after hours, shared ride, employment based transportation concept. BRTA and McMahon Associates presented a PowerPoint slideshow in North Adams, Great Barrington, and Pittsfield, to members of the general public, business owners, politicians, and fixed route customers. Mr. Malnati discussed the study and explained the information board display charts on the wall. This is a concept and no operating dollars are attached to the study. BRTA has received a draft report back from McMahon Associates and will be sending it to MassDOT. To get the buy in from the community, more information is needed on where the customers live and their destinations. Once the draft document and a finalized copy of the report is sent to MassDOT, there might be funding available for a next step. BRTA received public comments at all three sessions, which is included in the study results.

4) CASH REPORTS FOR AUGUST 2017, SEPTEMBER 2017- VOTE

Mr. Cooke made a motion to accept the cash reports for August, 2017 and September, 2017. Mr. McNally seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview on the budget. The report through September is on the positive side for fixed route fares. Last year there was 6% drop in ridership which was probably due Berkshire County's economy. At MassDOT on Tuesday, there was discussion about ridership. The rest of the state has had a decrease in ridership this year. BRTA received approximately \$40,000 in revenue for excess vehicles that were sold, which will be put back into operations. Local grants reimbursement always will be a negative as this is from a previous year. BRTA hasn't drawn down all of the federal funds yet. The revenue from the state has been positive as there might be an override coming forward for additional funds. Mr. Malnati stated, "I'm not counting on it, but, if it does, great." Health insurance was higher this year than anticipated. BRTA's operating company has a new AGM on board.

6) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati passed out the October 2017 ridership and provided a summary. Fixed route ridership is up through October by 1%. Paratransit numbers have increased by 3%. Most of that is attributed to the ADA service, as BRTA is up 1100 customers. BRTA is up

270 customers for the Non- ADA service. Wheelchair ridership has increased on the fixed route with 853 customers. The HST brokerage has increased 37% from last year. Bicycle transports down. In Boston on Tuesday, MassDOT suggested surveying the bike riders to find out where they are going.

7) OLD BUSINESS

None discussed

8) NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Malnati distributed the BRTA weighted voting share handout. Each community is assessed a cost for the services they receive within their community. There are communities that have both fixed route and Paratransit and other communities have just Paratransit. BRTA performs a cost exercise spreadsheet which goes to DOR and is taken off the town's cherry sheet. These weighted votes decide each community's voting share for the quorum and will be used at the next board meeting.

BRTA purchased a kiosk to be installed on the main concourse for customers to have access to BRTA's website, Amtrak, Ridematch, and other transportation web sites. When there is a customer service survey, customers can use the new kiosk. This should be installed by the end of this calendar year. Ms. Irwin asked if the bus schedules could be accessed here and Mr. Malnati replied yes.

BRTA applied for funding last year for new vehicles. In a few months, we should be getting a new 35 foot Gillig, to replace the one that was in an accident a few years ago. Graphics will need to be installed and a state inspection performed before it is put into service. Two cutaways should arrive in a few months. In May, another 35 foot Gillig should be arriving. These three vehicles will be paid for by a small urban area grant that BRTA can utilize every three years. BRTA also applied in August for a discretionary grant for two Gillig buses and are waiting for the results.

Ms. Lamb welcomed new board member Ms. Girgenti, representing the town of Adams.

Mr. Bill Drosehn mentioned an issue that has been brought to his attention. Presently, a small bus for Dalton is being used for 6:00 AM, 2:10 PM, and 4:10 PM runs. The customers using that bus are having trouble getting into the bus because of the height of the step. Mr. Bill Drosehn suggested using extra steps that extend. The passengers on that bus like the kneeling bus. Mr. Malnati replied that it has been brought to his attention numerous times.

9) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME

January 25, 2018 at 4:00 PM

10) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McNally made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Cooke seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.