

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

May 28, 2020

4:00 PM

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

TELCON BOARD MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

Christine Hoyt, Adams; John Boyle, Dalton; William Cooke, Great Barrington; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; William Elovirta, Becket; Edmund St. John IV, Cheshire; Rebecca Stone, Clarksburg; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Cindy Bosley, Florida; James Sullivan, Hinsdale; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; Edward Lane, Lenox; Steve Weisz, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; 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; Rauley Caine–BTM/PMB staff; and Clete Kus-BRPC.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.20	2.20	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.00	0.00	
Cheshire	2.08	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.20	2.20	needed for
Egremont	1.00	0.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	4.10	4.10	43.44 present via
Hinsdale	1.27	0.00	Telcom
Lanesborough	2.89	0.00	
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	4.49	
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 March 26, 2020 MEETING-VOTE

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 26, 2020 meeting. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye with one abstention, the minutes were passed.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Draft FY 21 Budget	6) Administrator's Contract	7) Election of Officers
Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dalton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gt. Barrington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Adams	Abstained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3) ADMINISTRATOR`S REPORT

TELCON BOARD MEETING

Mr. Malnati thanked everyone for agreeing to the Telcom board meeting. He remarked that by the next meeting he hopes to set up a Zoom account, as it would be a lot easier to share our computer screen to review documents. Ms. Wadsworth said she is willing to assist in facilitating this.

COVID-19

Mr. Malnati stated that we are in Phase 1 of reemerging from COVID-19. BRTA received and distributed PPE for both fixed route and paratransit operators and BRTA staff. Plexiglass barriers were installed in all vehicles to protect both operators and customers. Fares are still being collected on the bus. Other parts of the state are using rear boarding, bypassing the fare box, because they do not have barriers installed. BRTA transitioned from highly recommended to required face coverings, with signage on all vehicles. BRTA operators are wearing face coverings and we are giving away bandanas to customers that do not have a face covering. The buses and facility are cleaned every day and hand washing instructions are posted in the terminal. Starting Monday, June 1, BRTA will reinstate the hourly service to Route 1, Route 2, and Route 21 and full Administrative staff level will resume. BRTA anticipates more ridership on the buses and paratransit as more businesses reopen.

Part of the Governor's Phase 1 is business self-certification of social distancing and informing employees/customers BRTA's policy. This is posted at all entrances.

BTM/PMB also signed off on this and have sent me a copy.

Ridership has dropped in April to 36% of last April's ridership. May has gone up a little to almost 40% for the three weeks of May. On May 6th, BRTA posted to the website a survey regarding the public's opinion on emerging from COVID-19. 35% of the responses felt the state was ready to reopen. On a scale of 1-5, 79% of the responses rated BRTA as favorable (3-5) on how well they thought the BRTA kept the customers informed. 88% felt they were safe. 63% were still riding. 88% felt the BRTA handled the COVID-19 situation well. There were 111 responses as of today. Bus schedule changes are still the number one concern of respondents. BRTA provided this data to the State.

STATE

Mr. Malnati reviewed the quarterly Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) data that was submitted to the state. The fixed route was under the target goal in only down one category, ridership. A big impact was on March 16th when all the businesses shut down. Paratransit ridership was also down again this quarter. On time performance increased to barely below what our goal is for the rest of the year.

FEDERAL

Mr. Malnati discussed a Berkshire Eagle article from Senator Warren that BRTA was a recipient of \$5.6 million in the Cares Act funding. The BRTA submitted and executed the Small Urban 5307 Cares Act grant for \$5,678,543. This grant will cover operating expenses and the BRTA's response to COVID-19. This was fast tracked and only took 3 days for approval. BRTA will use it for operational costs, how we reacted to COVID-19, the purchase of PPE, and purchase of cleaning supplies. There is a 10-point list of how BRTA can use this funding. BRTA was able to start allocating funds as of January 20, 2020 for COVID-19 related expenses. We will finish off the month of January with our regular federal funds and then for February through the end of June we will utilize Cares Act money. BRTA was also the recipient of \$908,620 in Rural 5311 Cares Act funding. It was the Governor's allocation of \$12,619,719 which will be distributed through MassDOT to the four rural RTA's. Ten percent goes to the DOT for overhead, 15% to fund the intercity bus program (Peter Pan and Greyhound), and 75% remainder to the four RTA's. Ms. Vallieres submitted another competitive grant to FTA for Mobility on Demand for the first and last mile solutions, as we know that the face of transit is going to be changing post COVID-19. This will help fund our plans moving forward.

DRAFT BUDGET FY 21

Mr. Malnati and staff have been working on the draft budget FY 21 since January, which the Finance Committee approved prior to today's Advisory Board meeting.

MCMAHON STUDY

Mr. Malnati discussed the BRTA Zero Emission Bus Transit study. The final report was issued in April regarding use of electric vehicles/charging infrastructure at the BRTA. The summary and conclusion from this study is BRTA's current routes are too long to properly use battery technology, electric small bus technology is still emerging, and capital and operational costs are higher than traditional service costs.

4) CASH REPORTS FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2020 - VOTE

Mr. O'Grady made a motion to accept the cash reports for March and April. Ms. Youngkin seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the cash reports for March and April 2020 were passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Draft FY 21 Budget	6) Administrator's Contract	7) Election of Officers
Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dalton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gt. Barrington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

5) DRAFT FY 2021 BUDGET – VOTE

Mr. McNally stated to look at the revised budget and not the original one in the packet. Mr. Malnati remarked it was the one sent in a separate email on Tuesday that had the yellow highlighted cells. Mr. McNally remarked we have the additional federal Cares Act funding which will allow us to continue to be liquid, financially operational, despite the drop in revenue. The Finance Committee reviewed the budget as revised and voted to recommend the board approve the budget as revised.

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the revised FY 2021 Draft Budget. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the FY 2021 Draft Budget was passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) Cash Reports	5) Draft FY 21 Budget	6) Administrator's Contract	7) Election of Officers
Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dalton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gt. Barrington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6) ADMINISTRATOR'S CONTRACT – VOTE

Ms. Irvin remarked that the contract has been updated. Mr. Malnati stated that in reviewing the current contract, there were some items that needed to be updated to mirror the benefits for BRTA employees and other outdated items. Mr. McNally stated

this is the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Mr. McNally also remarked the Finance Committee two years ago spoke to Mr. Malnati about getting creative and looking at ways to get service to people that were not previously serviced, like evening service. He responded by using data to make decisions and the Finance Committee feels that he met the performance indicated that we wished him to address. He needs be recognized with a raise of 2% this year.

Mr. O’Grady made a motion to accept the Administrator’s Contract. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the Administrators Contract was accepted unanimously.

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Gt. Barrington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7) ELECTION OF OFFICERS – VOTE

Ms. Irvin remarked that she as Chair and Mr. McNally as Vice Chair, have agreed to seek reelection and will accept any nominations from the floor. Mr. Boyle made a motion to accept the election of Ms. Irvin as Chair and Mr. McNally as Vice Chair. Ms. Youngkin seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the Election of Officers were passed unanimously.

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Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dalton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gt. Barrington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Ashford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Adams	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stockbridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

8) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the budget through the end of March. Fixed route revenue was over budget by almost \$43,000. Paratransit is under budget which has a lot to do with usage of wheelchairs on buses. Local grants are the local reimbursements and money received this year, which reimburses us for last year. So far this year BRTA has received \$693,000. Our state money, we are over budget, has to do with the RTA capitol money reimbursement. Our federal grants which we have not drawn down on a quarterly basis, are under budget. Administrative expenses are mostly under budget by \$80,000. A lot of that is the professional services line item. When we did our original budget with Routematch, which is our software company, we were able to allocate those costs from one line item to cost centers where they belong. Fixed route expenses are over budget by \$37,000. Paratransit expenses are over \$18,000. Our total expenses were \$24,000 under budget, add in the \$17,500 for reimbursable depreciation, making us under budget by \$41,600.

9) **RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Malnati stated ridership is down 20,000 through April due to limiting passengers to essential services. Paratransit is down mainly because most of the COA's are closed. There were 363 trips for COA transports, whereas last year it was over 4,000. Most of the Paratransit regular rides were dialysis patients. The Route 34 is the number one route for wheelchairs and in April it was only 16, year to date is 467. Human Service transportation is off with DMA trips down 4%.

10) **OLD BUSINESS**

None discussed.

11) **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA has slightly updated some of the bus routes with the effective date of July 1st to be more efficient with the schedules, making them easier to read. He provided an overview of each route, amending timetables to include: new bus stops; new bus stop names; efficient departure times; and addition of the evening service. Mr. McNally thanked Mr. Malnati for looking at the data to tweak the routes and is sure the public realizes that the BRTA is making every attempt to accommodate their needs.

12) **NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

Mr. Malnati tentatively set a date for July 23rd dependent on the State budget. The house is planning on having a budget sent out by July 1st. If not, the meeting will probably be in September.

13) **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Boyle made a motion to adjourn.