

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

November 19, 2020

4:00 PM

BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center

One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

ZOOM BOARD MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

John Boyle, Dalton; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Tate Coleman, Great Barrington; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Rose Borgins, Washington; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Christine Hoyt, Adams; Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; William Elovirta, Becket; Edmund St. John IV, Cheshire; Ronald Boucher, Clarksburg; Neil Olson, Florida; James Sullivan, Hinsdale; Gordon Hubbard, Lanesborough; Marybeth Mitts, Lenox; Don Coburn, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; William Hiller, Otis; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; and Rene Wood, Sheffield.

Also present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Bridget Keegan, BRTA staff; Rauley Caine and Ron Andronaco, BTM/PMB staff; and Francesca Paris, Berkshire Eagle.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.20	0.00	
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	1.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	4.10	4.10	43.24 present via
Hinsdale	1.27	0.00	ZOOM
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	1.00	
Williamstown	2.31	2.31	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	

1) **ROLL CALL**

Ms. Irvin called the ZOOM meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Ms. Vallieres performed a roll call of the Advisory Board Members who were present on ZOOM.

2) **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 24th MEETING-VOTE**

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2020 meeting. Mr. O’Grady seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) BRTA Safety Plan	5) BRTA Committee	6) Town of Savoy	7.) Cash Reports
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Dalton	Yes				
Egremont	Yes				
Great Barrington	Yes				
Lee	Yes				
New Ashford	Yes				
North Adams	Yes				
Pittsfield	Yes				
Stockbridge	Yes				
Washington	Yes				
Williamstown	Yes				
Windsor	Yes				

3) **ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

ZOOM Board Meeting

Mr. Malnati stated that importance of RSVPing to meeting invites, so that board members and other attendees are sent the ZOOM link in a timely manner.

COVID-19

Mr. Malnati shared BRTA’s new video “Riding Safely on the BRTA” and can be found on BRTA’s homepage, YouTube, and Facebook page. The English version had 208 views and the Spanish version had 117. Some BRTA staff are still working remotely. The BRTA has tested working from home for the HST Call Center over the last several weeks in preparation in case of another shut down.

Mr. Malnati stated that ridership on fixed route is steadily trending upward. BRTA is still 62% down from pre-COVID ridership numbers. Paratransit ridership is still trending below 50% prior to pre-COVID.

STATE

Mr. Malnati said the BRTA received the first monthly payment of the State Contract Assistance at the FY20 level for October last week. The House Ways and Means are planning to open debate on the FY21 budget this week. The budget for FY21 would be 87 Million based on the percentage that was distributed this year. Once it’s finalized and passed by The House, it would head to the Senate. After both branches pass their

version, a single budget plan would be sent to the Governor. The Governor has stated he would like a final budget by Thanksgiving.

FEDERAL

Mr. Malnati presented the BRTA submitted a grant to FTA for 100% federal funding, as opposed to other grants which are split federal and state. This grant is the Public Transportation COVID-19 Research Demonstration Grant Program. Mr. Malnati shared his screen to show the executive summary of the grant. This would replace the current farebox system that BRTA currently uses, with a cloud based, touchless system where customers have their own account to load money on, without physical contact with a driver or BRTA employee.

Mr. Malnati stated that BRTA received notification last year, pre COVID that BRTA would have a triannual review at the end of last fiscal year. The BRTA submitted all the requested documents. COVID-19 put a hold on this process and BRTA received a letter in October requesting more documentation with a deadline of December 15, 2020.

Mr. Malnati explained that FTA came out with a policy in 2018 for agencies that receive urbanized formula grants, like the BRTA, must compile a Safety Plan. The deadline for completion of the safety plan had been pushed back because of COVID. The BRTA was contracting with MassDOT to have the plan put together. The plan would need to be reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board. If approved Mr. Malnati would sign it and submit it to FTA. This is a document that gets reviewed annually. Ms. Youngkin asked if the FTA gave more time to have the safety plan altered to include COVID guidelines. Mr. Malnati stated that this plan was a general safety plan to deal with safety issues unrelated to COVID.

Mr. Malnati said this year's Annual Report would be virtual. He hopes to have the final product by the end of the calendar year. He will email the annual report to members, as well as post it to the BRTA website, but would not be printing hard copies this year.

4) BRTA SAFETY PLAN – VOTE

Mr. Malnati provided an overview and purpose of the BRTA Safety Plan. The Advisory Board needs a formal vote to accept the BRTA Safety Plan as described. Mr. O'Grady made a motion to approve the BRTA Safety Plan. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all state aye, and the BRTA Safety Plan was passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) BRTA Safety Plan	5) BRTA Committee	6) Town of Savoy	7.) Cash Reports
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Dalton		Yes			
Great Barrington		Yes			
Egremont		Yes			
Lee		Yes			
New Ashford		Yes			
North Adams		Yes			
Pittsfield		Yes			
Stockbridge		Yes			
Washington		Yes			
Williamstown		Yes			
Windsor		Yes			

5) BRTA COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS – VOTE

Due to the unfortunate passing of Peter Gallant, a long-time Advisory Board Member, Pension Committee Member, and Finance Committee Member, the Pension and Finance Committee need new membership. The BRTA has asked for volunteers for both and has chosen Andrea Wadsworth, Lee for the Pension Committee and Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield for the Finance Committee. The Advisory Board needs a formal vote prior to approval.

Mr. McNally made a motion to approve Andrea Wadsworth, Lee to the Pension Committee. Ms. Youngkin seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and Ms. Wadsworth was approved to be a member of the Pension Committee.

Mr. McNally made a motion to approve Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield to the Finance Committee. Mr. O’Grady seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and Ms. Irvin was approved to be a member of the Finance Committee.

Town	2) Minutes	4) BRTA Safety Plan	5) BRTA Committee Pension-Andrea Wadsworth	5) BRTA Committee Finance-Sheila Irvin	6) Town of Savoy	7.) Cash Reports
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Dalton			Yes	Yes		
Great Barrington			Yes	Yes		
Egremont			Yes	Yes		
Lee			Yes	Yes		
New Ashford			Yes	Yes		
North Adams			Yes	Yes		
Pittsfield			Yes	Yes		
Stockbridge			Yes	Yes		
Washington			Yes	Yes		
Williamstown			Yes	Yes		
Windsor			Yes	Yes		

6) TOWN OF SAVOY MEMBERSHIP INTO BRTA – VOTE

Mr. Boyle made a motion to accept the Town of Savoy becoming a member of the BRTA Community. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the Town of Savoy membership passed unanimously.

Town	2) Minutes	4) BRTA Safety Plan	5) BRTA Committee	6) Town of Savoy	7.) Cash Reports
Dalton				Yes	
Egremont				Yes	
Great Barrington				Yes	
Lee				Yes	
New Ashford				Yes	
North Adams				Yes	
Pittsfield				Yes	
Stockbridge				Yes	
Washington				Yes	
Williamstown				Yes	
Windsor				Yes	

7) CASH REPORTS FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2020-VOTE

Ms. Lamb made a motion to accept the cash reports for August and September 2020. Ms. Youngkin seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the cash reports for August and September 2020 passed unanimously.

Town	2.) Minutes	4.) BRTA Safety Plan	5.) BRTA Committee	6.) Town of Savoy	7.) Cash Reports
Dalton					Yes
Egremont					Yes
Great Barrington					Yes
Lee					Yes
New Ashford					Yes
North Adams					Yes
Pittsfield					Yes
Stockbridge					Yes
Washington					Yes
Williamstown					Yes
Windsor					Yes

8) BUDGET YTD

Mr. Malnati stated that this was budget through September. The fixed route was above budget by \$1700.00 and below budget by about \$6,000.00 for paratransit which was due to low ridership. Most customers who use paratransit are at high-risk for COVID. The benefits were below budget and the interest expense would be below budget all year

because the borrowing rate was below what was budgeted for. Total expenses were under budget by \$36,000.00.

9) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati said that the ridership numbers are through September. Fixed route was down 53,000 from the previous year. Paratransit was down below the 50% mark from the previous year. Wheelchair transports were down compared to last year and the route 34 was now the route carrying the most wheelchairs. The HST MassHealth rides were down 28% and DDS was down 95%.

10) GREAT BARRINGTON PROPOSAL OF 9/22/20

Mr. Malnati requested Mr. Coleman from Great Barrington speak about his proposal. Mr. Coleman stated that his proposal had to do with the Route 22 bus picking up at Simon's Rock which currently transports students and faculty for free. There has been high ridership on this route. He was concerned about increased ridership, leaving no room for social distancing, as the usual bus on the route was a minibus. Mr. Coleman suggested a larger bus being put on the route or increases the service to allow for more trips. Mr. McNally asked if this issue was mostly occurring on Saturday or if it was occurring during weekdays as well. Mr. Coleman responded that it was mostly a Saturday problem. Mr. Malnati stated that the current agreement with Simon's Rock which allows students and faculty to ride for free would be ending on November 20th. The current Route 22 runs uses grant monies which would not be guaranteed for the next fiscal year. Ms. Irvin suggested re-visiting this topic at the January meeting because we would have more information about the budget and the state of the pandemic.

11) OLD BUSINESS

None discussed.

12) NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Malnati mentioned that he wanted to ask the board if they would be willing to help serve on solicitation reviews. He mentioned that BRTA has several solicitations coming up for review.

13) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME

Mr. Malnati set a date for the next board meeting for January 21st, 2021 at 4 PM.

14) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boyle made a motion to adjourn the ZOOM Advisory Board meeting. Mr. Bernstein seconded the motion which passed unanimously.