

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

May 27, 2021  
4:00 PM  
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center  
One Columbus Avenue Pittsfield, MA 01201

**ZOOM BOARD MINUTES**

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

William Elovirta, Becket; John Boyle, Dalton; Bruce Bernstein, Egremont; Tate Coleman, Great Barrington; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; Douglas McNally, Windsor; and Brian Morrison, Rider Representative.

Came after roll call: Andrea Wadsworth, Lee.

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

Christine Hoyt, Adams; Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; 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; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; William Hiller, Otis; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; John Tynan, Savoy; Rene Wood, Sheffield; and Rose Borgins, Washington.

Also present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, Barbara White- BRTA staff; Rauley Caine BTM/PMB staff; Clete Kus-BRPC, and Josh Vallieres.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	2.30	0.00	
Alford	1.00	0.00	
Becket	1.00	1.00	
Cheshire	2.56	0.00	
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00	33.00
Dalton	2.85	2.85	needed for
Egremont	1.00	1.00	quorum
Florida	1.00	0.00	
Great Barrington	3.25	3.25	40.02 present via
Hinsdale	1.33	0.00	ZOOM at roll call
Lanesborough	2.43	0.00	
Lee	3.48	3.48	43.50 present via
Lenox	3.27	0.00	ZOOM after roll call
Monterey	1.00	0.00	
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00	
New Ashford	1.14	0.00	
North Adams	5.49	5.49	
Otis	1.00	0.00	
Peru	1.00	0.00	
Pittsfield	19.00	19.00	
Richmond	1.00	0.00	
Savoy	1.00	0.00	
Sheffield	1.01	0.00	
Stockbridge	2.76	2.76	
Washington	1.00	0.00	
Williamstown	2.67	2.67	
Windsor	1.00	1.00	
Disability Community	1.00	0.00	
Rider Representative	1.00	1.00	

1) **ROLL CALL**

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

2) **BRTA BOARD ORIENTATION**

R. Malnati explained the role of the BRTA Advisory Board. The Board must vote to hire the Administrator, approve the annual budget, approve service levels and fares, and approve the purchase of real estate.

3) **MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2021 MEETING-VOTE**

D. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2021 meeting. T. Coleman seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Town	(3) Minutes	(5) Proposed FY 2022 Budget	(6) Election of Officers	(7) Reopening New Year fare free event	(8) Cash Reports	(11) Proposed Service Changes, Transfer Policy
Becket	Yes					
Dalton	Yes					
Egremont	Yes					
Great Barrington	Yes					
Lee	Yes					
North Adams	Yes					
Pittsfield	Yes					
Stockbridge	Yes					
Williamstown	Yes					
Windsor	Yes					
Rider Representative	Yes					

4) **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Zoom Board Meeting**

R. Malnati remarked the state is reopening within the commonwealth. The state of emergency will be lifted on June 15, however, the legislation is looking to continue the zoom board meetings until September. Due to these virtual meetings, the BRTA has had better participation and maybe there could be a hybrid option.

**COVID-19**

R. Malnati discussed the State will be lifting restrictions on Saturday. BRTA staff continue to work from home until June 1 when the building will be opening back up, including all entryways. Amtrak will be providing 7 day a week service again. BRTA's ridership has gone up March and April. The year-to-date number is down 31%, at 68% of our pre covid numbers, increased the from previous month. BRTA is predicting an increase to 75%. BRTA is at 60% level for Paratransit and fare revenue has been increasing, collecting \$40,000 in March and \$46,000 in April.

**STATE**

R. Malnati remarked the House passed the RTA funding at \$94M without any funds for discretionary grants. The Senate may release their version this week. R. Malnati shared the legislative process of government.

### **HST**

R. Malnati is unsure if HST will be here July 1 and has made preparations not be, including a two-month contract with HST to complete the billing and submit for payment. This will allow two staff members to remain until August to complete this process. There was a discussion of what the Human Service Transportation program is.

### **FEDERAL**

R. Malnati stated the purchase of a new 35-foot Gillig replacement bus in June. There has been a delay a couple of replacement cutaway vehicle due to the shortage of electronic chips from the manufacturer.

### **DRAFT BUDGET FY 22**

R. Malnati mentioned the meeting with the Finance Committee today to discuss the Draft FY22 budget. Copies of the budget were sent to everyone. The proposed Draft FY22 Budget will need to be approved by the Advisory Board today.

## **5) PROPOSED FY2022 BUDGET – VOTE**

R. Malnati discussed meeting with the Finance Committee three times, including today, and provided an overview of Draft FY22 Budget. He discussed the process of creating this budget with 3 unknowns: Operations Contract Negotiations, HST Contract 2-year moratorium or not, and the State budget. This proposed budget is the worst-case scenario with an increase in fixed route and paratransit costs, the termination of the HST contract and State Contract Assistance at \$87M. This is a very conservative approach and presents a balanced budget.

B. Bernstein asked what the practical effect of not having the HST program is?

R. Malnati explained the reduction of staff and benefits. BRTA will still be utilizing the software programs as they are used in other applications.

Mr. McNally made a motion to accept the Proposed FY2022 Budget. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the FY2022 Proposed Budget was passed unanimously.

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Becket		Yes				
Dalton		Yes				
Egremont		Yes				
Great Barrington		Yes				
Lee		Yes				
North Adams		Yes				
Pittsfield		Yes				
Stockbridge		Yes				
Williamstown		Yes				
Windsor		Yes				
Rider Representative		Yes				

**6) ELECTION OF OFFICERS – VOTE**

B. Elovirta made a motion to accept the election of S. Irvin as Chair and D. McNally as Vice Chair. J. Boyle seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the Election of Officers passed unanimously.

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Becket			Yes			
Dalton			Yes			
Egremont			Yes			
Great Barrington			Yes			
Lee			Yes			
North Adams			Yes			
Pittsfield			Yes			
Stockbridge			Yes			
Williamstown			Yes			
Windsor			Yes			
Rider Representative			Yes			

**7) REOPENING NEW YEAR FARE FREE EVENT – VOTE**

R. Malnati discussed with the reopening of the commonwealth and the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, ways to help promote the BRTA. BRTA would like to have a

Fare Free Week during the week of July 12-17. This will help promote that the BRTA is open for business, to learn about the service changes, and the new transfer policy. The fares that will not be collected fares may amount to \$11,000 to \$13,000. \$11,500 was the average amount per week in April. This will generate more interest and increase ridership to flow through the rest of the year.

B. Bernstein thought this was a good idea. T. Coleman asked why was one week selected? R. Malnati responded that back years ago, the BRTA used to have fare free week for students and thought we would try it again. Mr. Coleman remarked if it goes successfully, we should look at it for longer periods of time.

T. Coleman made a motion to accept the Reopening New Year Fare Free Event. J. Boyle seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, the Reopening New Year Fare Free Event was passed unanimously.

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Becket				Yes		
Dalton				Yes		
Egremont				Yes		
Great Barrington				Yes		
Lee				Yes		
North Adams				Yes		
Pittsfield				Yes		
Stockbridge				Yes		
Williamstown				Yes		
Windsor				Yes		
Rider Representative				Yes		

**8) CASH REPORTS MARCH AND APRIL 2021-VOTE**

T. Coleman made a motion to accept the cash reports from March and April 2021. B. Elovirta seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the cash reports were passed unanimously.

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Becket					Yes	
Dalton					Yes	
Egremont					Yes	
Great Barrington					Yes	
Lee					Yes	
North Adams					Yes	
Pittsfield					Yes	
Stockbridge					Yes	
Williamstown					Yes	
Windsor					Yes	
Rider Representative					Yes	

**9) BUDGET YTD**

Mr. Malnati gave an overview of the year-to-date budget.

**10) RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Malnati discussed the ridership year to date. The Routes 1 and 34 are highest for wheelchair ridership.

**11) OLD BUSINESS**

R. Malnati stated after the last Board Meeting, BRTA created a survey on the website regarding potential service route changes. Flyers were created with a QR code and were distributed at the ITC. The public has until the May 31<sup>st</sup> to accept comments.

R. Caine presented a summary on the proposed service changes starting July 1. BRTA received 5 written comments and one voicemail. There was an audio announcement on the buses about the potential service changes as well as bilingual posters in all vehicles. The proposed service seems to be well received. T. Coleman asked what the transfer policy is and R. Caine provided a description of the transfer policy and service changes.

D. McNally made the motion to accept the Proposed Service Changes and Transfer Policy. B. O'Grady seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the Proposed Service Changes and Transfer Policy was passed unanimously.

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Becket						Yes
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Egremont						Yes
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Lee						Yes
North Adams						Yes
Pittsfield						Yes
Stockbridge						Yes
Williamstown						Yes
Windsor						Yes
Rider Representative						Yes

**12) NEW BUSINESS**

None

**13) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

R. Malnati proposed a tentative date of July 29, 2021. Hopefully, there will have more information regarding the budget, HST, and negotiations to amend the current passed budget to reflect a more accurate budget. Normally there is no meeting in the summer but could do a short Zoom meeting regarding the budget amendment.

**14) ADJOURNMENT**

B. Bernstein made a motion to adjourn the Zoom Advisory Board meeting. J. Boyle seconded the motion which passed unanimously.