

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

January 27, 2022
4:00 PM

ZOOM BOARD MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

Melanie Torrico, Egremont; Tate Coleman, Great Barrington; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Justin Makuc, Monterey; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Kent Lew, Washington; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; Douglas McNally, Windsor; and Brian Morrison, Rider Representative. William Elovirta, Becket and John Boyle, Dalton arrived during the Administrator’s Report.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Christine Hoyt, Adams; Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Alford; Jennifer Morse, Cheshire; Ronald Boucher, Clarksburg; Neil Olson, Florida; Richard Scialabba, Hinsdale; Gordon Hubbard, Lanesborough; Marybeth Mitts, Lenox; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; William Hiller, Otis; Caleb Mitchell, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Melanie Glynn, Savoy; and Rene Wood, Sheffield.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, Barbara White, BRTA staff; Rauley Caine and Accem Scott, BTM staff; Anuja Koirola, BRPC; and Brittany Polito, iBerkshires.

	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
Dalton	2.85	2.85
Egremont	1.00	1.00
Florida	1.00	0.00
Great Barrington	3.25	3.25
Hinsdale	1.33	0.00
Lanesborough	2.43	0.00
Lee	3.48	3.48
Lenox	4.23	0.00
Monterey	1.00	1.00
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00
New Ashford	1.14	1.14
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	1.00
Williamstown	2.67	2.67
Windsor	1.00	1.00
Disability Community	1.00	0.00
Rider Representative	1.00	1.00
		34.75 needed for quorum
		41.79 present via ZOOM at roll call
		45.64 present via ZOOM during Administrator’s Report

1) **ROLL CALL**

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

2) **MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 MEETING- VOTE**

D. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 23, 2021 meeting. A. Wadsworth seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Town	(2) Minutes	(6) Cash Reports August, September, October, November, December, 2021
Egremont	Yes	
Great Barrington	Yes	
Lee	Yes	
Monterey	Yes	
New Ashford	Yes	
North Adams	Yes	
Pittsfield	Yes	
Stockbridge	Yes	
Washington	Yes	
Williamstown	Yes	
Windsor	Yes	
Rider Representative	Yes	

3) **ADMINISTRATOR`S REPORT COVID-19**

R. Malnati shared that in December 2021, the TSA announced the extension of the mask mandate through March 18, 2022, with the possibility it could be extended further. The facilities and vehicles continue to be cleaned daily. There is continued PPE supplies for the operators and plenty of masks for customers. The Administrative staff continue to work remote periodically and the office remains staffed with two to five employees daily. Ridership has increased through November, with year to date 16% over the previous year equating to 22,000 customers. Year to date ridership through November is 71% of FY20, the first year of COVID. December numbers were recently received, and it is 74% higher than FY 20. Revenue has increased through November and have exceeded the FY 22 budget by \$15,000. Paratransit has increased by 3,600 trips from previous year, a 25% increase, and 60% increase from FY20 ridership levels through November.

STATE

R. Malnati stated the BRTA received \$1,355,372 in August for the State Contract Assistance which is the FY20 level. The House and Senate have both overridden the Governor's FY22 budget increasing it to \$94 million collectively statewide. Funding at the \$94M level provides a \$3.5M increase to the base and an additional \$3.5M for operations. The discretionary funding for the next fiscal year was eliminated. The

increase translates to roughly an additional \$218,500 for the BRTA equaling \$2,929,301 in State Contract Assistance. BRTA's pilot evening service was funded for this year but our FY23 budget does not have the funds. BRTA and BTM will be exploring some other options about the next fiscal year. The communities could be responsible for funding up to 50%. For the February Board Meeting, there will be different scenarios to be approved and then receive public comment. The Board will meet again in March to decide which way to go with funding and routes. This gives enough time operationally and with notification of the public for a July 1 start. MassDOT issued their final 120-page report on RTA's, which is included in the packet. Each RTA is measured against their own targets for each category (fixed route, demand response, and systemwide). R. Malnati gave an overview of the pages that reflect the BRTA. The BRTA was awarded, from the Community Transit Grant Program, five replacement vehicles: North Adams COA, Pittsfield COA, and three for Paratransit. The ongoing chip shortage may hinder the prompt delivery of these vehicles. The BRTA also received funding for the Travel Training Program.

FEDERAL

R. Malnati discussed the FTA Triennial Review. Deficiencies were found in two areas, Legal and Procurement. BRTA has submitted corrective information for the deficiencies along with a recent solicitation detailing the new sections for their review on December 21, 2021. Once FTA has reviewed the information, they will issue a letter stating all areas have been addressed. The BRTA also applied for two Federal discretionary grants, one for facilities preventive maintenance projects and one for enhanced mobility. He will keep the Board informed in the next couple months if the grants were successful.

OPERATING CONTRACT

R. Malnati shared the 3-year contract for Fixed Route and Paratransit was complete. BTM signed in October and PMB signed just before Christmas. Both contracts run from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024. Beginning January 1, 2022, PMB ceased operating as an individual sub corporation of First Transit and was folded into the Paratransit division of BTM. It is mostly paperwork and there weren't any interruptions in service or workers, only accounting adjustments.

SURVEY RESULTS

R. Malnati mentioned the online survey that R. Caine would be discussing later in this meeting.

ANNUAL REPORT

R. Malnati stated the BRTA FY21 Annual Report has been posted on the website, either as a slide show presentation or a PDF download. Due to COVID restrictions, it will not be printed. This was distributed to the Board, Legislative Delegation, Mayors, and community email lists.

4) BRTA SURVEY RESULTS

R. Caine shared the BRTA survey service planning results. The BRTA conducted an online survey for 45 days between December and January and sought input from customers and community members about current services, the perception of BRTA's services, and future vehicle fleets, and potential service types. There were a variety of questions and received great responses. The target was 300 and survey received 291 responses. R. Caine gave a presentation of the survey, providing an overview of the data points received.

D. McNally stated the survey results gave a loud and clear message, that the evening service is valued. Secondly, developing an on-demand micro-transit program would really become a Berkshire County Regional Transit Authority, representing small communities without fixed route access. R. Malnati agreed.

T. Coleman thanked R. Caine for doing this work and like highlighting the use the existing resources. The infrastructure for the Paratransit services could be used to potentially integrate future demand response service.

5) MASSDOT FINAL REPORT ON RTA'S

Mr. Malnati remarked the report is 115 pages long and if anyone has any questions, he would be glad to answer them individually.

6) CASH REPORTS AUGUST THROUGH DECEMBER 2021- VOTE

R. Malnati shared the cash reports for August, September, October, November, December 2021. D. McNally made a motion to accept the cash reports for August, September, October, November, and December 2021. T. Coleman seconded the motion. Towns were individually called, all stated aye, and the Cash Reports passed unanimously.

Town	(2) Minutes	(6) Cash Reports August, September, October, November, December 2021
Becket		Yes
Dalton		---
Egremont		Yes
Great Barrington		Yes
Lee		---
Monterey		---
New Ashford		Yes
North Adams		Yes
Pittsfield		Yes
Stockbridge		Yes
Washington		Yes
Williamstown		Yes
Windsor		Yes
Rider Representative		Yes

7) BUDGET YTD

R. Malnati provided an overview of the budget through December.

T. Coleman asked if there would be a possibility for another fare free event.

R. Malnati answered that would have to go to the board and could be considered. The reason for the free week was to help generate an interest in the BRTA.

8) RIDERSHIP YTD

Mr. Malnati discussed the ridership through November and is 16% higher from than the previous year. December was higher also. There have been some increases in

Paratransit ridership. The Route 34 is consistently the number one route for wheelchairs. The fixed route vehicles are carrying more bikes this year than last year.

9) **OLD BUSINESS**

None

10) **NEW BUSINESS**

None

11) **NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

R. Malnati scheduled the next meeting on February 24, 2022 at 4 PM.

12) **ADJOURNMENT**

D. McNally made a motion to adjourn the Zoom Advisory Board meeting. S. Youngkin seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

FINAL