

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Minutes of the Finance/Audit Committee

March 23, 2017 at 2 PM
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Finance/Audit Committee Members present:

Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Peter Gallant, Lanesborough; and Leonard Lipton, Pittsfield
Also present: Robert Malnati and Sarah Vallieres, BRTA staff

1. **Approval of Minutes for October 27, 2016 -VOTE**

Committee members reviewed the minutes of May's meeting. Ms. Lamb made the motion to accept the minutes, was seconded by Mr. Lipton, and approved by all.

2. **State Budget Update**

Mr. Malnati discussed the State budget, explaining the conference call with the collective RTAs. Governor Baker submitted a budget of \$80 million, but should be \$86.2 million for FY18. The consensus among the RTAs was to use \$82 million as a budget number. For FY 18, the House will vote in April and the Senate will vote in May on their versions of the State budget.

3. **FY 18 Draft Budget**

Mr. Malnati reviewed the FY 18 draft budget with the Finance Committee, explaining this is in the early draft stages. The State revenue is the same as last year, but the Federal apportionment showed a reduction. This should be level with last year. Fare revenue has decreased and will be reflected in this budget. There has been a decrease in ridership and is a national trend. Gas prices are low, the student census at BCC has decreased, and there is a decrease in mall activity as stores continue to leave. The Route 1 and 34 changes has helped increase ridership on these routes. BRTA will track the ridership.

Mr. Malnati asked the Finance Committee about fare increases. The base fare would remain the same, but the Charlie Card discount percentage would change from 20% to 11% or from \$1.40 to \$1.55. Ms. Vallieres created a RTA analysis showing the Charlie Card discount percentages among the RTAs. The questions were how much revenue would this generate and how many customers would be lost. Ms. Lamb stated that she would hate to see a fare increase, as this would be another economic hardship on constituents. Mr. Malnati also spoke about the actual Charlie Card and charging a \$1 fee for the card. People will then be more likely to recycle the Card. Ms. Lamb and Mr. Gallant agreed. Currently there is no minimum amount when the Charlie Card is purchased at the ITC. Mr. Gallant agreed with a \$5 minimum.

Mr. Malnati discussed the staff insurance rates will be increasing. The budget reflects a 15% increase. Currently RTA pays 85% and the employee pays 15%. BRTA may shift the RTA to 80% and the employee paying 20%. We will be working on the budget over the next month, will retool, and meet again in May.

4. **Old Business**

No old business.

5. **New Business**

No new business.

6. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be May 25, 2017 at 2:30 PM with the Board Meeting to follow at 4 PM.