

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Finance/Audit Committee Virtual Meeting

May 13, 2021 at 9:30 AM
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Finance/Audit Committee Members present:

Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Sandy Lamb, North Adams; and Doug McNally, Windsor
Also present: Robert Malnati and Sarah Vallieres.

1. **Approval of Minutes for April 15, 2021 -VOTE**

The Finance Committee members reviewed the minutes of April's meeting. D. McNally made the motion to accept the minutes, was seconded by S. Irvin, and approved by all. S. Lamb abstained.

2. **FY 22 Draft Budget Updates-Bob**

R. Malnati discussed the 3 major impacts to the FY 22 budget: what will the state funding level be; contract negotiations for fixed route and paratransit; and the HST contract. He shared Budget Scenario W. that showcased \$215K needed in additional Federal funds (CARES Act and 5307) to balance the budget. This scenario presents the end of the HST contract. There is a 2-month adjudication of the HST contract through August. Union negotiations are ongoing. This budget reflects a 10% increase in fixed route and a 15% increase in paratransit as the worst-case scenario. There is a reduction of customer service staff, as Bridget's last day is Friday. This position will not be replaced right away. The House passed unanimously two amendments: \$94M to the RTAs with no discretionary grants and the 2-year HST moratorium. The Senate will be voting on this the week of May 24.

D. McNally asked where Governor Baker falls if both pass? R. Malnati thinks the House and Senate are receptive to this idea and Sen. Hinds thought the budget would be signed by July 1.

R. Malnati explained the professional service line item (not included in Scenario W) is a data analyst position possibly in-house or contracted out. It is part of the Better BRTA design thinking process focusing on data driven decisions.

The RouteMatch portion of the budget is split between fixed route and paratransit, leaving out HST. There was a discussion on the HST moratorium/2-month extension, to which S. Lamb asked if we are fighting this. R. Malnati shared the first letter he sent was March of 2020.

R. Malnati presented Scenario B which has: HST continuing for 2 years; fixed route increase of 10% and paratransit increase of 15%; Federal spending (5307) decreased by \$216K; additional overhead for HST; \$35K for a data analyst; and the reduction of RM allocation- balance between HST, fixed route, and paratransit. The HST budget is unknown at this time and last year's boilerplate was used.

R. Malnati queried about the next Finance Committee meeting closer to the Board meeting. There will be more up to date information from the Senate. On May 27, the Finance Committee would vote on the W Scenario (worst case budget) and could make an amendment to the budget in July. There could be a July Board meeting for the budget only and make the adjustments then. According to MGL Chapter 161 B, the BRTA needs a balanced budget by the end of May. S. Lamb agreed and stated BRTA has always budgeted conservatively.

R. Malnati shared there would be a 2% cost of living increase for the staff and fuel was locked in back in March.

D. McNally supports the W budget and this support was unanimous.

3. **Review ridership**

R. Malnati detailed the ridership through April. Fixed route has increased and had 30,340 trips versus the 15,400 trips of last April. YTD is 68.6%, whereas last month was 63%. Paratransit's ridership was 1600 and 60% year-to-date.

4. **Old Business**

No Old Business.

5. **New Business**

No New Business.

6. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be May 27, 2021 at 9:30 AM.

FINAL