

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority  
Finance/Audit Committee Virtual Meeting

May 27, 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 May 13, 2021 -VOTE**

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

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

R. Malnati presented the BRTA budget scenario W. This budget includes the HST contract ending on 7/1, with a 2-month management fee for some HST staff through August. Fixed route has a 10% increase and Paratransit has a 15% increase, due to current union negotiations. There is a reduction of customer service staff. 2 cost centers (fixed route and paratransit) are included not 3 (HST). There is a 2% increase to remaining staff: K. Hunkler, S. Vallieres, B. White, and J. Davine. This is a balanced budget and will change once more information is known. R. Malnati remarked there has been no Senate news about the HST contract yet and there are still 3 major unknowns: HST contract, labor negotiations, and State funding. The House's budget was \$94M for the RTAs collectively and no discretionary grants. BRTA's W budget is at the \$87M funding level. If awarded \$94M, BRTA's State funding will increase by \$200,000. D. McNally asked if R. Malnati was going to present the worse case scenario to the Advisory Board with updates; to which R. Malnati replied, yes. The statute says the BRTA must have a balanced budget by the end of May, which this budget presented is. This will be amended over time.

D. McNally asked if there was additional funding awarded to BRTA, what changes? R. Malnati said if the HST contract is awarded to the BRTA the budget will increase to approximately \$16M. If there is an increase in State funding, then Federal funding will decrease. There will be an increase in staffing levels.

3. **FY 22 Draft Budget - VOTE**

D. McNally made a motion for this approved budget to be presented at the Advisory Board this afternoon, was seconded by S. Lamb, and approved by all.

4. **Old Business**

R. Malnati mentioned that R. Caine will be discussing the proposed service changes at the Advisory Board meeting. There is a public comment period through the end of May and BRTA has received some comments. There was a flyer available at the ITC with a QR code link directing customers to the service changes proposal. There was a discussion of some of the comments. BRTA will proceed with the vote at the Board meeting, barring anything dramatic, to implement the changes. The new transfer policy will help increase ridership.

R. Malnati shared information about the Fare Free New Year event that will be presented at the Advisory Board meeting. This will be the week of July 12 for 6 days to help promote ridership and the BRTA. BRTA will be able to recoup this lost revenue over

the course of the year. April's revenue collected was \$46,000 or \$11,500 per week. There could be a loss of revenue that week of \$13,000 during this promotion, but will be recouped later in the year. D. McNally asked about masks on the mass transit, to which R. Malnati replied this is still a continued Federal policy. BRTA will be reopening the ITC on June 1 and Amtrack will be resuming 7 day/week service.

5. **New Business**

R. Malnati stated the BRTA is \$15,000 under budget for the COAs in FY 21 due to SBETC ending service and a couple of COAs that did not fully come on board yet. The BRTA would like to send checks to the COAs this week to use this funding or BRTA could remain underbudget. R. Malnati applauded the COAs and the work that they do and thought this would be a good use of resources. All Finance Committee members agreed. D. McNally made a motion to disperse the excess funds to the COAs, was seconded by S. Irvin, and approved by all. R. Malnati said the checks will be sent out today.

R. Malnati asked S. Lamb the most advantageous time to hold a COA Directors meeting, to which S. Lamb replied September or October as many COAs are reopening. R. Malnati shared this would be a discussion about reduced reporting and "sharing" customers.

R. Malnati mentioned his review usually occurs April 1. He has some information from MARTA for Administrators salaries across the Commonwealth that he could share as a reference point. D. McNally arranged for a meeting to discuss and asked R. Malnati to send this information by Tuesday.

6. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be July 27 at 9:30 AM to discuss the changes with the budget as the State funding and HST contract should be answered by that time.