

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Minutes of the Finance/Audit Committee

March 28, 2019 at 2:30 PM
BRTA Intermodal Transportation Center
One Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Finance/Audit Committee Members present:

Peter Gallant, Lanesborough and Doug McNally, Windsor
Also present: Robert Malnati and Sarah Vallieres, BRTA staff

1. **Approval of Minutes for January 17, 2019 -VOTE**

Committee members reviewed the minutes of January's meeting. Mr. McNally made the motion to accept the minutes, was seconded by Mr. Gallant, and approved by all. Mr. Gallant asked if BRTA had opened a line of credit, to which Mr. Malnati replied, FTA reopened and BRTA was able to draw down operating funds. There was no need to go any further with the line of credit.

2. **Route 11N BCC-Tyler & East Street update**

Mr. Malnati explained the daily data collection process. April 26th was the highest day of ridership so far. In March, the customer/service hour was 3.22 whereas in February it was 2.65. Mr. McNally stated that time will help this grow. He said it was important to continue this route in the fall and speak to BCC in advance. BRTA needs to let the professors know about evening transportation and they may hold more evening classes. Mr. Gallant said this route will see an increase in ridership. Mr. Malnati discussed the \$361,000 grant BRTA received from MassDOT for the North/South evening pilot. On May 22, the 11N will end but transportation will continue for shopping and reallocate to another spot for summer demand. Maybe Hancock Shaker Village or Lanesborough. He is unsure the timing of the pilot, as he is waiting for a response from MassDOT. Mr. McNally mentioned that BCC has summer classes, but he is unsure of evening classes. Mr. Gallant asked about the ridership of Mildred Elley students. Mr. Malnati shared that Mildred Elley buys a lot of bus passes for their students.

3. **Taxi Ticket program- VOTE**

Mr. Malnati discussed the taxi ticket program and the decrease of riders every year. It costs BRTA \$0.13 to print each ticket for a 20% discount of CRT taxi riders, which costs BRTA \$0.33 per rider. Less than 2000 tickets were sold last year. Customers may be using alternatives now like the bus or paratransit system. Mr. McNally stated that if Uber/Lyft come in, that will kill this programs. Mr. Gallant asked if people would switch from the taxi to the bus. Mr. McNally recommended to the Advisory Board the discontinuation of the Taxi Ticket program for fiscal year 2020, but to honor tickets throughout fiscal year 2020. Mr. Gallant seconded this recommendation, and approved by all.

4. **Task Force Update**

Mr. Malnati described the Friday public meeting, which was well attended. Some of the Task Force members were present and there was an open mike for 2 hours. Mr. Malnati presented the draft report released \$90.5M with cost escalators, which will help plan for today *and* tomorrow. The report shows collaboration on the HST brokerages which increased 17% last year, while fixed route declines. Can these customers ride on the bus, which will then promote independence and decrease the cost of MassHealth? He included 2 articles that were in the Berkshire Eagle and discussed the missing graphs in

this version. The graphs showed the population transported by the MBTA (45%) and the RTAs (55%) and showed the fiscal disparity between the MBTA and RTAs. They will be accepting comments until tomorrow. Both Rene Wood from Sheffield and BRPC sent in comments. Once the report is final, the House and Senate will use this in their discussions. Currently the Governor has \$86M in his budget. Last year was \$88M, but \$2M was for RTAs with a deficit and \$4M was a discretionary grant. Mr. Malnati questioned how to read the \$86M.

5. **Old Business**

No old business.

6. **New Business**

Mr. Malnati showed the new bus schedules that have been created for some of the routes. BRTA has listened to customers and added the map back. Mr. Gallant mentioned that the black color for the Route 11N is not inviting.

7. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be May 9, 2019 at 10 AM for the budget review.