

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Finance/Audit Committee

April 25, 2022 at 1PM
Via Zoom

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 September 28, 2021 -VOTE**

The Finance Committee members reviewed the minutes of the September 28, 2021 meeting.

S. Irvin made the motion to accept the minutes, was seconded by D. McNally. A roll call was read and was approved by all.

2. **FY 23 Draft Budget Assumptions- Bob**

R. Malnati shared the budget has been worked on since February. The Federal apportionment for FY 23 has increased to \$2,869,888 from the \$2.1M this year. He discussed how the grant application process works. The Governor's budget is \$90.5M and \$3.5M in discretionary funds. It is currently in the House with an amendment of \$94M and the discretionary funding portion is unknown. The House doesn't want the discretionary funding to come out of the Operations line. The BRTA receives 3.12% of the collective funding. R. Malnati discussed the MA budget process, and the final determination may be in a couple of months. BRTA is always on the conservative side while working on the annual budget. Ridership is at 90% of pre-COVID numbers. The evening fixed route discretionary funding will be ending on June 30, 2022. The rental income may decrease as there is uncertainty of Anteris remaining a tenant. For expenses, fuel will be higher as there is no contract. Fuel was delivered on Friday from the contracted price of \$3.06. FY 23 will be the 2nd year of BTM's labor contract and there has been a \$100K increase for workforce negotiations. The BRTA Administrative staff will see a 4% increase, instead of the usual 2-3% which factors in inflation. Interest rates will increase this year for the annual borrowing. Medical insurance premiums may rise up 10-15%. The pension contribution will be sizable due to the loss of the HST staff. This number will be known in August after the Financials have been complete. Travel expenses will increase this year to ensure J. Davine's certifications are up to date. D. McNally asked when the Finance Committee adopts the draft budget, to which R. Malnati answered mid-May, as the budget needs to be approved before June 1, 2022.

3. **COA Allocations- VOTE**

R. Malnati stated two COAs have not received/accepted their vehicles yet and the stipend amount allocated of \$6,255 remains in the budget. There are two options, either finish the year under-budget in this line item or equally share the amount amongst the other COAs.

S. Lamb made the motion to share the amount with the other COAs, was seconded by S. Irvin. A roll call was read and was approved by all. K. Hunkler will cut the checks for this additional funding shortly.

4. **FY 23 Proposed Service Changes-VOTE**

R. Malnati reviewed the highlights from the Proposed Service Changes that were included in the Advisory Board packet. There were changes made from the initial

document after public comments were received and meeting with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Highlighted were:

- Allendale serves as a transfer point for 4 bus routes.
- Berkshire Mall is a requested stop, but will revisit this if the mall is resurrected.
- RT 4 has a departure change of 6:25 AM. The Franklin loop is a bi-directional EJ area. Only 0.19 miles of that EJ area will not be covered. Riders in this area would walk the 0.19 miles to Main St. to board/alight the bus.
- RT 5A is the current route and RT 5B will travel by BMC, upper North St., and Crane Ave. Oak Hill is a request stop every other hour.
- RT 14 is no longer proposing a route change and will continue to transport by the Innovation Center, but some time points will change.
- For the discontinuation of RT 16, the Route 5B will serve the North Street side and 4 bus routes transfer at the Allendale side.
- R. Caine has been reaching out to businesses along bus routes to put bus stop signage up.
- The GB Senior Center will receive hourly service.
- RT 21X will have an extra evening run starting at 5:30.
- RT 22 will be discontinued as there is no additional funding for this.
- RT 34 will include Ocean State Job Lots.
- Micro-transit, with input from Operations and BRPC, may run along Crane Ave and to BMC for medical or employment trips and will serve the EJ area. Fare may be between \$3-4 based upon BRPC's recommendation.

S. Irvin asked about the turnout of the public meetings, to which R. Malnati answered 6-7 people on Zoom and 3-4 people in person. Included in the Advisory Board packet is the public response. D. McNally asked if BRPC supports this. R. Malnati explained that it doesn't agree or disagree, their letter stated comments. He has a meeting scheduled on May 19 to present the proposed service changes to BRPC. A BRPC representative will be at the BRTA Advisory Board meeting this month. D. McNally said that the BRTA has listened and made modifications to the proposed service changes.

D. McNally made the motion for the Finance Committee to endorse the amended changes to the Proposed Service Changes, was seconded by S. Lamb. A roll call was read and was approved by all.

5. **Old Business**

None

6. **New Business**

None

7. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be May 23, 2022 at 1 PM with the primary focus of reviewing the draft budget.