

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

October 27, 2022  
4:00 PM

**ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:**

William Elovirta, Becket; John Boyle, Dalton; Rob Reilly, Lanesborough; Sherry Youngkin, New Ashford; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; and Douglas McNally, Windsor. Andrea Wadsworth, Lee arrived during the Administrator's Report.

**Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:**

John Duval, Adams; Charles Ketchen, Alford; Michelle Francesconi, Cheshire; Jeff Levanos, Clarksburg; Melanie Torrico, Egremont; Cynthia Bosley, Florida; John Morrell, Great Barrington; Earl Peck, Hinsdale; Dave Roche, Lenox; Justin Makuc, Monterey; Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Brandi Page, Otis; James Welch, Peru; Roger Manzolini, Richmond; Andrew Provost, Savoy; Rene Wood, Sheffield; Kent Lew, Washington; Brian O'Grady, Williamstown; and Brian Morrison, Rider Representative.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, Barbara White, BRTA staff; Rauley Caine, BTM staff; Anuja Koirola, BRPC; and Patti Annechiarico.

	Voting Shares	Present
Adams	2.8124	0.00
Alford	1.00	0.00
Becket	1.00	1.00
Cheshire	2.70	0.00
Clarksburg	1.00	0.00
Dalton	2.78	2.78
Egremont	1.00	0.00
Florida	1.00	0.00
Great Barrington	3.33	0.00
Hinsdale	1.33	0.00
Lanesborough	2.36	2.36
Lee	3.42	3.42
Lenox	4.22	0.00
Monterey	1.00	0.00
Mt. Washington	1.00	0.00
New Ashford	1.14	1.14
North Adams	5.42	0.00
Otis	1.00	0.00
Peru	1.00	0.00
Pittsfield	19.25	19.25
Richmond	1.00	0.00
Savoy	1.00	0.00
Sheffield	1.03	0.00
Stockbridge	2.74	2.74
Washington	1.00	0.00
Williamstown	2.58	0.00
Windsor	1.00	1.00
Disability Community	1.00	0.00
Rider Representative	1.00	0.00
		34.75 needed for quorum
		33.69 present During Admin Report

1) **ROLL CALL**

S. Irvin called the Advisory Board meeting to order at 4:05 PM. A. Wadsworth, Lee, arrived during the Administrator's Report with 33.69 voting shares, not making the quorum requirement. All votable items will not be discussed until the Special Meeting.

2) **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**  
**COVID-19**

R. Malnati stated Berkshire County has reported an increase in COVID, Flu, and the stomach bug. BRTA still encourage masks to riders and are available at the Information Center Counter and on buses. The ITC Counter usually goes through a couple boxes a day. The actual fixed route ridership for September is up 11% from previous year and the YTD FY23 number is exceeding FY22 by 22%. September ridership for paratransit is up 23% and YTD FY23 ridership is exceeding FY22 by 29%.

**OPERATIONS**

R. Malnati said there was a recommendation from a bus driver to wear pink safety vests for the month of October supporting Breast Cancer Awareness month. This was a joint effort and purchase between BRTA, BTM, and Teamsters' Local Union 404. This team building effort was well received by operators, staff, and the union business agent. A press release was issued on October 1, 2022.

**MassDOT AUDIT**

R. Malnati indicated the MassDOT Audit was included in the Advisory Board packet. This Audit was presented by the Audit Committee at the MassDOT Finance and Audit Committee meeting on October 12, 2022. They issued their draft report, from their August 17, 2022 site visit, on Friday, October 7, 2022 with two concerns. One was a camera not functioning properly, which was corrected when the backordered camera was replaced on September 30, 2022 by the vendor. The second concern was the hard drive retention period of 30 days for all camera recordings. One hard drive is not large enough to retain 30 days of recordings. When it shows signs of failure it will be replaced, but all cameras in that deck might also need replacement as the new hard drive may not be compatible with the old camera system.

**GRANT APPLICATION**

R. Malnati remarked the 15 RTAs collectively applied for a MassDOT discretionary grant for a fare free event for the last Friday of November through the month of December. It was reviewed by MassDOT and are awaiting the status of the application. The funding level was based on the fare revenue reported from last December. It should increase ridership as December-January is a slow time for BRTA. The BRTA percentage is about \$89,000.

Discussion included the concept of reaching out to businesses in the community for marketing and press releases to let customers know not to buy a monthly pass.

**SOLICITATION EVALUATION**

R. Malnati mentioned the BRTA issued a solicitation for a Facility Condition Assessment last month. Responses will be received soon, and we are looking for volunteers from the Advisory Board to serve on the review committee. If Board Members are interested, let him know and information will be provided.

### **REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

R. Malnati stated last year a Board Member suggested a review of the bylaws. If Board Members are interested in volunteering, let him know.

### **CYBER SECURITY**

R. Malnati remarked October is Cyber Security month. Staff participate in trainings from Anteris, our IT company. They receive weekly training videos, quizzes, and email tests and everyone gets scored on how they are doing. The BRTA's average is 641 out of 800.

### **3) BUDGET YTD**

R. Malnati provided an overview of the BRTA budget through September. The fixed route fares are overbudget by \$33K and is a direct correlation to the increase in fixed route ridership. MassDOT is paying timely for the State Contract Assistance. The November payment will include the "true up" when the Governor's budget was passed and went from \$90.5M to \$94M in the RTA collective line item.

Discussion included the information of the BRTA reserve account for extraordinary purposes and to utilize this funding, BRTA must petition MassDOT to use.

### **4) RIDERSHIP YTD**

R. Malnati explained fixed route ridership document is through September and up over 22%. Paratransit and COA ridership is up as well. The COAs are providing a good service for their communities. Wheelchair transports are over 18% and the Route 34 in North Adams continues to be the number one route. Bike transports continue to increase, and this could be due to riders needing to extend their range for the last mile.

Discussion included the workforce shortage and micro-transit. As there is a national workforce shortage, BRTA is scheduled to continue to hold the CDL Permit classes in November and January. Bus Operators from these classes have been hired. As there is a bus operator shortage, the micro-transit pilot program has been put on hold. Any riders that used the Route 16 have been able to use the Route 5 or through a fixed route deviation.

### **5) TOPICS FOR FUTURE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

R. Malnati asked if the Board would like to add anything to the Agenda for the next Board meeting and if so, they can send him an email.

Discussion included the ability of the BRTA riders to have up to date service changes due to the workforce shortage. The BRTA updated the website to include a banner at the top alerting all service advisories.

### **6) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

R. Malnati discussed having a Special Meeting to vote on the agenda items from today's meeting, including the "Try Transit" grant. The meeting will be held on Monday, November 7, 2022 at 4 PM. An email to all Board Members will go out tomorrow. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 4 PM.

### **7) ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

**Meeting Materials:**

**BRTA Advisory Board Packet**  
**BRTA Public Notice and Agenda**  
**BRTA's MassDOT Audit Operations Report**

FINAL