

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

October 26, 2023  
4:00 PM

**ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

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

Sarah Fontaine, Adams; William Elovirta, Becket; Rob Reilly, Lanesborough; Mindi Morin, Lenox; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Andrew Potter, West Stockbridge; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; Douglas McNally, Windsor; and Brian Morrison, Rider Representative.

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

Charles Ketchen, Alford; Ray Killeen, Cheshire; Jeff Levanos, Clarksburg; John Boyle, Dalton; Melanie Vicneire, Egremont; Cynthia Bosley, Florida; Benjamin Elliott, Great Barrington; Sherman Derby Sr, Hancock; Earl Peck, Hinsdale; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Frank Abbott, Monterey; Eric Mendelsohn, Mt. Washington; Sherri Youngkin, New Ashford; Tara White, New Marlborough; Brandi Page, Otis; James Welch, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Andrew Provost, Savoy; Nadine Hawver, Sheffield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; and Kent Lew, Washington;.

**Also, present:** Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Barbara White, BRTA; Rauley Caine, BTM; Patty Annechiarico, Anuja Koirola, BRPC; and two members of the public.

	Voting Shares	Present	
Adams	3.0138	3.0138	
Alford	1.0000	0.0000	
Becket	1.0000	1.0000	
Cheshire	3.7143	0.0000	
Clarksburg	1.0087	0.0000	38.50
Dalton	2.6029	0.0000	needed for
Egremont	1.0011	0.0000	quorum
Florida	1.0000	0.0000	
Great Barrington	3.5906	0.0000	
Hancock	1.0000	0.0000	42.2004 quorum when
Hinsdale	1.2521	0.0000	meeting was called to order
Lanesborough	2.4713	2.4713	
Lee	4.1210	0.0000	
Lenox	5.1519	5.1519	
Monterey	1.0000	0.0000	
Mt. Washington	1.0000	0.0000	
New Ashford	1.1160	0.0000	
New Marlborough	1.0000	0.0000	
North Adams	6.2374	6.2374	
Otis	1.0000	0.0000	
Peru	1.0136	0.0000	
Pittsfield	18.4226	18.4226	
Richmond	1.0000	0.0000	
Savoy	1.0000	0.0000	
Sheffield	1.0748	0.0000	
Stockbridge	3.3046	0.0000	
Washington	1.0000	0.0000	
West Stockbridge	1.0000	1.0000	
Williamstown	2.9023	2.9023	
Windsor	1.0011	1.0011	
Disability Community	1.00	0.0000	
Rider Representative	1.00	1.0000	

1) **ROLL CALL**

S. Irvin called the Advisory Board meeting to order at 4:00 PM stating this meeting will be recorded for purposes of the notes of the Board Minutes.

2) **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 MEETING – VOTE**

D. McNally made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 28, 2023 meeting. S. Lamb seconded the motion. B. O’Grady and A. Potter abstained. The Minutes of the September 28, 2023 Advisory Board meeting were passed.

Town	(2) Minutes of the September 28, 2023 meeting	(4) Fare Free Event	(5) New Service-Public Comment	(6) Cash Reports September 2023	(11) Adjournment	
Adams	Yes					
Becket	Yes					
Lanesborough	Yes					
Lenox	Yes					
North Adams	Yes					
Pittsfield	Yes					
West Stockbridge	Abstained					
Williamstown	Abstained					
Windsor	Yes					
Rider Representative	Yes					

3) **ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

**STATE**

R. Malnati signed the contract for BRTA’s Fair Share funding and is waiting for it to be executed. Funding should be received in November but is unsure on if the funding will need to be expended by June 30. Most of the RTAs submitted a grant application to DOT for this year’s Try Transit event. For this program last year, BRTA created a thermometer poster with a ridership goal. The same will be done this year. We applied for funding to offset fare revenue to replicate that 6-week program from the Friday after Thanksgiving until the end of the calendar year. The application was sent in today and included a fare free period of June and July. Mr. McNally asked if it was statewide. Mr. Malnati remarked it is statewide but only during the holiday season. The Try Transit Event and the options for the Fair Share Funding will be discussed regarding extending service until about 9:30 PM. These are voteable items at this meeting.

**OPERATIONS**

Recently the BRTA participated in a Select Board meeting in Adams in a discussion about new bus stop signs. Also, BRTA discussed the services that the BRTA offers at the Lanesboro Select Board. Both meetings were successful and led to more people learning about the BRTA. Ridership, so far, for this quarter is 12% over the previous year for Fixed Route and Paratransit is closer to 10%.

**APTA EXPO 2023**

R. Malnati and S. Vallieres went to the APTA Expo in Florida. This is a once in a three-year event with a multitude of transit vendors for vehicles and services. BRTA spoke with many vendors and attended training sessions including hydrogen systems. R. Malnati gave a brief description of hydrogen and fuel cell vehicle options.

**PILOT BERKSHIRE FLYER 23 SEASON CONCLUDES**

R. Malnati stated the Berkshire Flyer ended on October 8<sup>th</sup> for the season. There were approximately 1,227 riders for the extended season from Memorial Day to Columbus Day weekend. DOT, Amtrak, and CSX will have a meeting next month to discuss the outcome from this season, what improvements are needed, and expectations for the 2024 season. There was a discussion on specifics of the train and that BRTA is part of the Flyer Steering Committee.

**4) FARE FREE EVENT – VOTE**

R. Malnati stated the BRTA Advisory Board will vote for the Fare Free Event for the Holiday 2023 season and June-July 2024 to submit the grant application, which includes marketing funds. R. Reilly made a motion to accept the Fare Free Event and D. McNally seconded the motion. All stated aye and the Fare Free Event was unanimously passed.

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Lanesborough		Yes				
Lenox		Yes				
North Adams		Yes				
Pittsfield		Yes				
West Stockbridge		Yes				
Williamstown		Yes				
Windsor		Yes				
Rider Representative		Yes				

**5) NEW SERVICE-PUBLIC COMMENT – VOTE**

R. Malnati proposed adding new evening service to weekday and Saturday service using the Fair Share Funding when it is available. The Proposed Service material was handed out at the meeting and R. Malnati went through the proposal. BRTA would like a vote to proceed with a public comment period to gather customer feedback on the proposed additional service. BRTA annually evaluates the performance of its bus routes and hours and provides service change options. There are two options we will present to the public. The first option is all routes extending evening service at a cost of \$276,000 from February 1 to June 30, but would need to hire 3 new operators. If we cannot hire new people, the second option costs \$168,000 by extending workdays for a couple routes. BRTA would like to go to public comment issuing a press release and holding meetings to discuss with the community. The Advisory Board can reconvene on November 30<sup>th</sup> to provide the information gathered and a decision.

There was a discussion on the positive possibility of moving forward, the driver’s training program, and driver’s overtime. There was also a question of sustainability beyond the initial funding. R. Malnati is looking for more information on funding and different funding mechanisms.

D. McNally made a motion to proceed with the New Service-Public Comment period and A. Potter seconded the motion. All stated aye and the New Service-Public Comment was unanimously passed.

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Lanesborough			Yes			
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North Adams			Yes			
Pittsfield			Yes			
West Stockbridge			Yes			
Williamstown			Yes			
Windsor			Yes			
Rider Representative			Yes			

**6) CASH REPORTS SEPTEMBER 2023 – VOTE**

R. Malnati shared the Cash Reports for September 2023.

A. Potter made a motion to accept the Cash Reports for September 2023 and S. Lamb seconded the motion. All stated aye and the Cash Reports for September 2023 was unanimously passed.

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Lanesborough				Yes		
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Pittsfield				Yes		
West Stockbridge				Yes		
Williamstown				Yes		
Windsor				Yes		
Rider Representative				Yes		

**7) BUDGET YTD**

Mr. Malnati provided an overview of the BRTA budget for September 2023. We are above budget for Paratransit and Fixed Route fares while under budget in expenses. At the next Board Meeting we will be making a budget amendment, to include additional state funds, and less federal funds.

**8) RIDERSHIP YTD**

Mr. Malnati stated that Ridership for fixed route for September is 9% over last year’s amount. This is the first month we fell below a double-digit increase. Paratransit is also 9% over last year’s number. COA and ADA are up about 500 more trips. Wheelchair ridership, Route 1, is close to what the 34 was for the month. This proves the bus goes where customers want, when they want to go there and is more economical than the Paratransit.

Ms. Fontaine asked if this was duplicated or unduplicated riders? Mr. Malnati remarked duplicated. Bicycle transports are up one hundred and a half from last year. The final page of our performance measures posted to the website shows Route 1 has the number one ridership for the period, 34 is the second highest, followed close by the Route 2. Routes 11 and 14 went down, primarily impacted by driver shortages.

**9) TOPICS FOR FUTURE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

None

**10) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME**

R. Malnati scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 4 PM. The next Finance Committee meeting will be Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 10 AM.

**11)ADJOURNMENT**

M. Morin made a motion to adjourn and B. O’Grady seconded the motion. All state aye and the motion to adjourn was passed unanimously.

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Pittsfield					Yes	
West Stockbridge					Yes	
Williamstown					Yes	
Windsor					Yes	
Rider Representative					Yes	

**Meeting Materials:**

- BRTA Advisory Board Packet**
- BRTA Public Notice and Agenda**
- BRTA New Service Packet**
- BRTA Ridership Report**