

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

November 30, 2023
4:00 PM

ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Present:

Sarah Fontaine, Adams; William Elovirta, Becket; John Boyle, Dalton; Melanie Vicneire, Egremont; Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; and Douglas McNally, Windsor.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Members Absent:

Charles Ketchen, Alford; Ray Killeen, Cheshire; Jeff Levanos, Clarksburg; Cynthia Bosley, Florida; Benjamin Elliott, Great Barrington; Sherman Derby Sr, Hancock; Earl Peck, Hinsdale; Rob Reilly, Lanesborough; Andrea Wadsworth, Lee; Mindi Morin, Lenox; Frank Abbott, Monterey; Eric Mendelsohn, Mt. Washington; Sherri Youngkin, New Ashford; Tara White, New Marlborough; Sandra Lamb, North Adams; Brandi Page, Otis; James Welch, Peru; Alan Hanson, Richmond; Andrew Provost, Savoy; Nadine Hawver, Sheffield; Kent Lew, Washington; Andrew Potter, West Stockbridge; Brian O’Grady, Williamstown; and Brian Morrison, Rider Representative.

Also, present: Robert Malnati, Sarah Vallieres, and Gina King, BRTA; Rauley Caine, BTM; Patty Annechiarico; and Anuja Koirola, BRPC.

	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	2.6029	needed for
Egremont	1.0011	1.0011	quorum
Florida	1.0000	0.0000	
Great Barrington	3.5906	0.0000	
Hancock	1.0000	0.0000	30.3461 when
Hinsdale	1.2521	0.0000	called to order.
Lanesborough	2.4713	0.0000	No Quorum
Lee	4.1210	0.0000	
Lenox	5.1519	0.0000	
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	0.0000	
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	3.3046	
Washington	1.0000	0.0000	
West Stockbridge	1.0000	0.0000	
Williamstown	2.9023	0.0000	
Windsor	1.0011	1.0011	
Rider Representative	1.00	0.0000	
Disability Community	1.00	0.0000	

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. The quorum was not met, so no voting will take place.

2) **MINUTES OF OCTOBER 26, 2023 MEETING – VOTE: NO QUORUM**

3) **ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

R. Malnati shared BRTA is still waiting for the funding to arrive; an additional \$1.39M from the Fair Share and a true up from the budget. The amended state contract is now \$ 4.3M. He signed the contract and is looking for guidance from MassDOT on when to expect receipt. BRTA applied for and was awarded funding for the free fare event for both the fixed bus route and complementary ADA service that is currently on going until December 31st and for June-July 2024. Ridership is increasing and the lobby at the ITC has been full.

BRTA will be submitting a joint application to MassDOT with FRTA and PVTA for connection services:

Pittsfield via Routes 116, 112, 2 to Greenfield, servicing Savoy

Pittsfield via Routes 9 to Northampton, servicing Windsor

This would be an express service with limited designated stops. This is currently being worked on and if awarded would start July 1.

Discussion:

Questions about the fare for this new service, to which R. Malnati answered this is still being researched and other fare medium is being reviewed. There is another joint meeting on December 8th to continue progress for this grant application.

R. Malnati stated that we had 3 information sessions in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington and received over 70 comments about the proposed service. We are compiling this information, and most comments were receptive. There were some comments about the specifics of the name change from the route 21X and to not stop in Lee. We also had about 30 suggestions to consider The Clark in Williamstown to be changed to a regular stop instead of an on-demand stop.

R. Malnati discussed the FY 24 ridership continues to grow past FY 23 levels. Fixed route, through October, is 10.7% above FY 23 and paratransit is 11.5% above FY 23.

R. Malnati mentioned that the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) scheduled an exit interview Monday, Dec 11, 2023 and will keep the board apprised.

R. Malnati met with the Finance Committee to let them know his contract will be ending on March 31, 2024 and he is interested in extending his contract.

4) **NEW SERVICE - RECOMMENDATION – VOTE: NO QUORUM**

5) **CASH REPORTS OCTOBER 2023- VOTE: NO QUORUM**

S. Irvin asked R. Malnati for a little information to be given about reports. R. Malnati shared that nothing was out of the ordinary and provided a brief overview.

6) **BUDGET YTD**

R. Malnati provided an overview of the BRTA budget through October which is over budget in fare revenue but under budget in expenses.

7) RIDERSHIP YTD

R. Malnati stated ridership is 10.7% higher than FY23. Wheelchair ridership on Route 1 is close to 139 riders which shows that the bus is traveling where people need to go, when they need it and are using our services. There were also no route cancelations this week.

8) TOPICS FOR FUTURE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

S. Irvin discussed the Finance Committee is currently working on R. Malnati's contract and will be providing a recommendation for R. Malnati's salary that will need to be voted on at the January board meeting. If there was a quorum, J. Boyle would have called for a vote of confidence for Robert Malnati to continue to be the BRTA Administrator. It was surmised that he has done an outstanding job fiscally, ridership, and expansion of routes. It was explained that the Advisory Board would approve the continuation of R. Malnati as Administrator, the length of time for the contract, and his salary. The Finance Committee will research, review, and provide a recommendation to the Advisory Board.

There was also a discussion on workforce shortages of bus operators and some BRTA solutions, including hiring part-time drivers. There was also an idea of the Advisory Board members riding the bus for a better understanding of the services provided.

9) NEXT MEETING DATE/TIME

R. Malnati scheduled the next board meeting for January 11, 2024 at 4:00 PM. This will provide enough notice to our customers for new service. BRTA will send out a save the date email shortly. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 4:32 PM.

Meeting Materials:

BRTA Advisory Board Packet

BRTA Public Notice and Agenda

BRTA Proposed New Service FY24

BRTA Phased Service Change Implementation