

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Finance/Audit Committee

January 30, 2025

In Person

BRTA Boardroom, 2nd Floor, 1 Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority Finance/Audit Committee Members present:

Doug McNally, Windsor and Brian O'Grady, Williamstown

Also present: Robert Malnati and Sarah Vallieres, BRTA

R. Malnati called the Finance/Audit Committee meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

1. **Approval of Minutes for September 26, 2024-VOTE**

The Finance Committee members reviewed the minutes of the September 26, 2024 meeting but could not be voted on. The Finance Committee needs 2 votes for a quorum. B. O'Grady was not present at the last meeting and did not have 2 members of the Finance Committee present. This will be brought forth at the next Finance Committee meeting as a voteable item.

2. **FY 25 Budget Amendments- VOTE**

R. Malnati provided an extensive overview of BRTA's FY 25 Adjusted Budget due to significant adjustments of funds. The 413 Connector Project (BRTA/FRTA/PVTA) will not be ready until June, at the earliest, due to bus readiness issues from MassDOT. This project has been removed from the budget, income (Fixed Route Fares) and expense (Operating Advances), with the exception of June funds. BRTA was awarded funding from the State for the Fare Free Program running January-September and all fare line items have decreased. The Auxiliary Transit Revenue decreased by \$10K, as the RFP and subsequent contract for Advertising Revenue was less for FY 25. The State Grants line increased and the Federal Grants line decreased. The Fare Free Program funds were added as well as the 5311 Rural funds were \$80K more than anticipated. The Federal line is a balancing point and with more State funding, this decreased the Federal portion. D. McNally shared Federal funds can roll over, whereas State funds must be spent at the end of the fiscal year. There was an increase in professional services, for website design and a decrease in insurance costs, as it was less than anticipated. Operating Advances decreased due to the removal of the 413 Connector Project. There is a net effect of the removal of \$449,483.85 out of the budget, including the below the line \$189,174 which pays for services up front and then are reimbursed through grants, including the sheriff's detail using State funds only. D. McNally made a motion to approve the FY 25 Budget Amendments and provide this recommendation to the BRTA Advisory Board. B. O'Grady seconded the motion, which unanimously passed.

3. **Pension Contribution- VOTE**

R. Malnati explained BRTA's FY 25 budget contribution for the BRTA pension is \$200K. This was the recommendation of the investment firm, with the caveat to wait until after the 2024 Presidential Election. The Pension Committee agrees with this amount and it will be invested in accordance with the Pension Committee's plan.

B. O'Grady made a motion to release \$200K for the BRTA Pension contribution. D. McNally seconded the motion, which unanimously passed.

4. **FY 26 RTA Funding Update**

R. Malnati shared that BRTA attended the Governor's announcement in Worcester for the \$8B investment in transportation over the next 10 years. A portion of these funds would make the MBTA fiscally sound and level funding the RTAs. The Governor's budget is \$94M for operations, which is the same as last year. \$110 from the Fair Share funding: \$66M operations, \$30M fare

free initiatives, \$10M connectivity initiatives, and \$4M for 5310 programs. The RTA's ask is \$204M: increasing \$94M to \$97M for operations (3% inflation increase) and \$103M operations with \$50M capital. The discretionary initiatives to be removed from the RTA budget. These funds should be from another DOT funding stream.

Discussion:

The concerns on equity and disproportionate funding with the focus on the MBTA.

Chapter 90 funds distribution reviews road miles, this is not the same for RTAs. BRTA does report this to NTD, but currently receives 3% of RTA funds.

The lack of an inflation increase is concerning as BRTA's labor will increase \$1M for FY 26 and has no Sunday service.

Propose a meeting with the Berkshire Legislative Delegation with the strategy of improving public transit at the RTA level and take care of local transit with a unified ask.

5. **Next Meeting**

March 27, 2025 at 3 PM

The Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 3:33 PM.

Meeting Materials

- **BRTA Finance/Audit Committee Agenda**
- **BRTA Finance/Audit Committee Packet**

Town	(1) Minutes of 9/26/24	3) FY 25 Budget Amendments	Pension Contribution
Williamstown	--	Yes	Yes
Windsor	--	Yes	Yes