



## MINUTES of 7/23/2015 SPECIAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

### ATTENDANCE

#### Name

#### Representing

#### PRESENT

William Lehtola  
Mark Binnall  
Kelly Burke  
Doug Belanger  
Dennis Lipka  
Jacob Sanders  
John Ostrosky  
Robert Spain  
Rudy Heller

Spencer  
Auburn  
Northborough  
Leicester  
Holden  
Worcester  
Shrewsbury  
Millbury  
Brookfield

#### ABSENT

Jarrett Conner  
Leon Gaumond Jr.  
Alyssa Graveson  
Nancy Lucier  
Timothy McInerney  
Kevin Mizikar  
Daniel Morgado  
Michael Pantos  
David Schiller  
Luz Vega  
Michael Ward  
Sharon Yager

Worcester  
Sturbridge  
Douglas  
West Boylston  
Grafton  
Grafton  
Shrewsbury  
Rutland  
Charlton  
Regional Ridership  
Clinton  
Shrewsbury

1. Chairman Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.
2. **Attendance**

### 3. Business from the Public

- Mr. Lehtola called for any business from the public and no one responded.

### 4. Business from the Board

- Mr. Lehtola called for any business from the board members and no one responded.

### 5. Meeting Purpose

- Mr. Lehtola stated the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the hiring of an interim administrator for the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. Mr. Lehtola opened the floor for discussion.
- Mr. Belanger commented on the history of the WRTA and their recent projects; specifically 42 Quinsigamond Ave. Mr. Belanger recommended Mr. Coyne as the interim administrator. Mr. Belanger expressed the need for someone with internal knowledge of the ongoing projects and an understanding of the WRTA's priorities. Mr. Belanger stated "Mr. Coyne is part of the system." His job responsibilities as assistant administrator included; budgeting, planning, FTA reporting, grant writing and the necessary financial work. Mr. Lipka commented that Mr. Coyne's has over 13 years of service to the WRTA. Mr. Spain commented that a stall could be costly in the long run if they went with an outside person. Board members agreed that keeping the momentum going and providing a seamless transition were their objectives. Mr. Lehtola stated that Mr. Coyne is at our weekly staff meetings and every board meeting. Mr. Lehtola remarked how Mr. Coyne works well with everybody which he considers an extremely important factor. Mr. Coyne works successfully with CMRPC as well as the people at Grove Street. Mr. Lehtola commented his ability to work well others is a big bonus for the board. Board members decided to offer the interim administrator's position to Mr. Coyne and then to discuss and negotiate the compensation in executive session. Mr. Belanger reviewed the timing protocol in regards to open meetings and executive sessions. Attorney Randazzo of Kopelman and Paige informed the board that Mr. Coyne could be requested to join and leave the executive session at any time. The board decided to make a motion to offer, and upon acceptance, go into executive session to discuss strategies and prepare for negotiations regarding compensation.
- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to offer Mr. Coyne the position of interim administrator and upon his acceptance appoint him.
- **Motion: I make a motion that the advisory board make an offer to Mr. Coyne for the position of interim administrator and upon his acceptance appoint him.**
- **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Binnall.**
- Mr. Lehtola opened the floor for discussion. Board members discussed the importance of finishing up the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project, as it will soon be into the building phase

of the work. Mr. Lipka commented on the fact that we have a clerk of the works and that they're doing a commendable job, but the oversight needed was done by Mr. O'Neil. The clerk of the works position is very interesting because although they are the owner's representative, they're also looking down the road for who they will work with a year from now. There is a delicate balance in representing our interests and their own interests. With that need, I recommend the board consider retaining Mr. O'Neil on a consultant basis to finish up the maintenance facility. Mr. Lipka stated he was not even sure if Mr. O'Neil would entertain being a consultant, but he is a person who knows the project from the WRTA's point of view. Mr. Lipka restated how the next phase is critical as it involves the actual detailed construction work.

- He explained that the WRTA's position needs to be continually articulated to the clerk of works. Mr. Lipka commented with the budget finished and the union contract settled this is actually a good time to be facing this transition. Board members were open to the suggestion of hiring Mr. O'Neil or another consultant to oversee the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project.
- Mr. Lipka expressed concern that the office staff has been reduced to two people; the assistant administrator (who may become the interim administrator) and the administrative assistant, Ms. Pokoly. Mr. Lehtola asked Ms. Pokoly when the staff accountant position became vacant and it was established in the spring of 2015. Mr. Spain suggested having a contracted service for a period of time to cover the staff accounting position until the new administrator has come on board. Mr. Belanger commented that the staff accountant position should be left wide open to allow the new administrator to build a team. Mr. Spain commented that hiring someone from a temporary agency to do the staff accounting position would be beneficial.
- Mr. Heller asked if there was money in the budget to hire a consultant and a temporary staff accountant. It was concluded that any needs should follow a revenue neutral model and the salaries of the absent employees are a factor in achieving that end. Mr. Heller asked the timeframe expected for hiring a new administrator. Mr. Lehtola stated three (3) to six (6) months but that depends on the search process and the responses. Mr. Sanders commented on how he favored Mr. Coyne as interim, but he would like to have a conversation with him as to his plans should he choose to take the position.
- Board members discussed the need for different objectives regarding the hiring of a new administrator. They agreed that when hiring Mr. O'Neil they were looking at capital elements which have now been completed. Board members concluded that the future goals and objectives for the next administrator's position may require a different skill set. Mr. Lipka, Chairperson for the committee, agreed to arrange a meeting of the personnel committee within the next couple of weeks. Board members ended their discussion and called in Mr. Coyne. Mr. Coyne entered the room and Mr. Lehtola thanked Mr. Coyne for coming. Mr. Belanger explained the board was under discussion from the motion to offer the interim administrator's position to him. Mr. Belanger stated that the board, in principle, wants to get some sense of his feelings about an offer. The board would like to know what he feels it would entail when it comes to all the pieces, and the various hats he

would need to wear. The board did not want to enter into negotiations now. Mr. Belanger clarified Mr. Coyne should be fully prepared for them to stop if the issue of compensation is brought up. Mr. Belanger explained after the motion, assuming everybody's agreeable, the board will go into executive session and have a discussion regarding compensation and then have Mr. Coyne return for that purpose. The board would like to talk now about the duties and how he would integrate them. Mr. Belanger stated "the board asks for your candor in this regard."

- Mr. Coyne stated he had thought about the position, and if offered, would take it. He was not interested in making the position permanent. In response to the staffing situation, Mr. Coyne laid out a plan to hire a consultant to do the grant and federal compliance aspect of his former position, as well as hire a temporary employee for the staff accountant position. He stated he has already trained Ms. Pokoly in the accounts payable aspect (operations side) and she has been working out well over the last two months. Mr. Lehtola asked if Ms. Pokoly's hours were expanded and Mr. Coyne replied she was moved from part-time to full-time as of July 1, 2015 and this falls within the FY16 budget figures. Mr. Lehtola commented on how Mr. Coyne has good ideas on how to distribute the work at this point in time. Mr. Belanger asked for Mr. Coyne's thoughts on managing the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project. Mr. Belanger summarized the board's concern to not lose the momentum and oversight that is so critical to the project's success. Mr. Lipka expressed the board's concerns regarding the need for both good finances and a sharp eye on the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project.
- Mr. Lipka stated "the board is looking to give your position the best tools for the job." Mr. Lipka commented that the complexity of the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project needs a specific due diligence. The board has discussed hiring a consultant to oversee the WRTA's interest. Mr. Lipka explained once a project gets "off the ground" the operation becomes multifaceted with numerous sub-contractors and a quicker construction schedule. Mr. Coyne interjected that unfortunately, the contractor that we have for electrical is known for change orders. Mr. Coyne stated he has been participating in meetings since the project began. He has been part of the Tuesday on-site visits with Mr. O'Neil in which they meet with the project manager, architect and construction manager. He has been involved in numerous conversations between the FTA and the local engineer going over the status step-by-step. In the meeting last week the preliminary GMP came back and they are expecting to have a final one on Friday. Mr. Coyne stated he would rely heavily on our project manager to keep the project within budget and on-time. The project so far has been on-time or ahead of schedule. Mr. Coyne informed the board that under the federal financing guidelines the WRTA cannot hire an outside consultant as the company acts as its own overseer. Mr. Belanger addressed the issue of a board liaison as done in the past regarding assistance with oversight issues. Mr. Lehtola stated "my area of expertise is not in construction and I would be more comfortable with Mr. Lipka being the board liaison." Mr. Coyne stated he would be happy to work with anyone the board appoints in this regard. Mr. Lipka commented on the numerous conversations he had with Mr. O'Neil on issues regarding 42 Quinsigamond Ave. He would be willing to be the point person for the board in regards to 42 Quinsigamond Ave and work with Mr. Coyne in that capacity. Mr. Lipka commented the decision for board's involvement was

not a reflection on Mr. Coyne's abilities but rather an additional tool given the magnitude of responsibilities at this time. Mr. Lipka explained to Mr. Coyne that the board will hold him up to the same high standards that were expected of Mr. O'Neil in regards to all aspects of the position.

- Mr. Lehtola asked if anybody else wanted to speak and no one responded. Mr. Lehtola moved on the motion's vote. All voted in favor, none were opposed, and the motion was carried.
- Mr. Belanger addressed the board on the need to pay out the appropriate accruals as the WRTA is legally required to do for Mr. O'Neil.
- **Motion: I move that the advisory board direct Mr. Coyne to pay Mr. O'Neil all his appropriate accruals, including the annual stipend he gets for not signing on to our health insurance and that should be a package.**
- **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Spain** all voted in favor and the motion was accepted.
- Board members discussed the importance of having Mr. O'Neil present full-time during this notice period as it would benefit the transition. Mr. Lehtola asked Ms. Pokoly to bring in Mr. O'Neil. Mr. Belanger told Mr. O'Neil the board has voted to pay out his appropriate accruals. Mr. Belanger asked Mr. O'Neil what his intentions were in regards to physically still being on the job during his notice period. Mr. Belanger explained that the board felt his assistance would be most beneficial. Mr. O'Neil stated it was his intention to be here but he will be in and out. Mr. O'Neil stated Mr. Coyne has been informed regarding all things. Mr. O'Neil stated "Mr. Coyne knows I am only a phone call away." Mr. O'Neil told the board that everything that was done was done collectively and he will continue to be involved when necessary and work with Mr. Coyne.

#### **6. Executive Session - The board went out of open meeting at 9:29 a.m.**

- In open session, the Board voted to go into executive session to conduct strategies in preparations for negotiations, and for discussions in relations to compensation for the interim administrator's position.
- **Motion: I move the Board meet in executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec 21(2). With the Board returning to open session with an announcement of the interim administrator and/or to vote. A roll call vote was taken to allow the executive session meeting.**
- **Mr. Belanger made the motion and Mr. Lipka seconded.** A roll call vote was taken to approve this action: 9:28 a.m.

Kelly Burke	yes
Rudy Heller	yes
John Ostrosky	yes
Bob Spain	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Jacob Sanders	yes
Doug Belanger	yes
Dennis Lipka	yes
William Lehtola	yes

- The Board Members went into open session meeting at 10:28 a.m.
- In open session, Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to accept Mr. Coyne as Interim Administrator.
- Motion: I move the Advisory Board appoint Mr. Coyne as Interim Administrator starting at the close of business on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2015. In recognition of the additional duties performed, Mr. Coyne will be paid an additional \$400.00 per week as Interim Administrator. Mr. Coyne will continue to have access to a WRTA vehicle and cellular phone, for use for WRTA purposes. The WRTA will cover the cost of the bond which he is statutorily required to obtain. Furthermore, provided that Mr. Coyne remains the Interim Administrator until a permanent Administrator commences employment, he will be awarded an additional two weeks of compensatory time, which must be used by June 30, 2016. If not used, he will be permitted to “cash out” the time, in accordance with existing WRTA policy governing vacation time. As discussed at the July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, as Interim Administrator, he will be expected to participate in monthly (or as otherwise scheduled) meetings with the WRTA Board Chairperson and the WRTA Advisory Board Personnel Committee Chairperson.
- **Mr. Belanger made the motion and Mr. Spain** seconded all voted in favor and the motion was accepted.
- Mr. Belanger made an announcement confirming the action taken by the WRTA Advisory Board at its July 23, 2015 meeting, to appoint Mr. Coyne as Interim Administrator starting at the close of business on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2015. In recognition of the additional duties performed, Mr. Coyne will be paid an additional \$400.00 per week as Interim Administrator. Mr. Coyne will continue to have access to a WRTA vehicle and cellular phone, for use for WRTA purposes. The WRTA will cover the cost of the bond which he is statutorily required to obtain. Furthermore, provided that Mr. Coyne remains the Interim Administrator until a permanent Administrator commences employment, he will be awarded an additional two weeks of compensatory time, which must be used by June 30, 2016. If not used, he will be permitted to “cash out” the time,

in accordance with existing WRTA policy governing vacation time. As discussed at the July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, as Interim Administrator, he will be expected to participate in monthly (or as otherwise scheduled) meetings with the WRTA Board Chairperson and the WRTA Advisory Board Personnel Committee Chairperson.

- Mr. Belanger stated an announcement of his appointment would be issued to the public.
- Mr. Coyne asked the board to sign a FTA Capital Grants Authorizing Resolution. This would give Mr. Coyne the ability to execute and file grant applications, FTA certifications and assurances, and grant and cooperative agreements.
- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to sign the letter so as to give authorization.
- **Motion: I move the board authorize the chairperson to sign the FTA Capital Grants Authorizing Resolution so as to allow Mr. Coyne under his position as interim administrator, to execute and file grant applications, FTA certifications and assurances, grant and cooperative agreements as of August 7, 2015.**
- **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Spain** all voted in favor and the motion was accepted.

## 7. Adjournment

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to adjourn.
- **Motion: I move the board adjourn. Mr. Spain motion to adjourn and Mr. Binnall seconded.** All voted in favor and the motion to adjourn was accepted. The meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

## 8. Next Meeting Date

- The next board meeting will be on August 20, 2015 at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.