

MINUTES of 5/16/2013 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Name

Representing

PRESENT

William Lehtola
David Schiller
Sharon Yager
Jarrett Conner

Spencer
Charlton
Shrewsbury
Worcester

ABSENT

Dennis Lipka
Doug Belanger
Robert Spain
Mark Binnall
Michael Ward
Rudy Heller
Alyssa Graveson
Timothy McInerney
Kevin Mizikar
Kelly Burke
Michael Pantos
Daniel Morgado
Leon Gaumont, Jr.
Michael O'Brien

Holden
Leicester
Millbury
Auburn
Clinton
Brookfield
Douglas
Grafton
Grafton
Northborough
Rutland
Shrewsbury
West Boylston
Worcester

1. Chairman Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. **Attendance**

3. Acceptance of Minutes

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes of May 9th 2013 with the amendment for budget materials. Ms. Yager made the motion and Mr. Schiller seconded. All voted in favor

4. Business from the Public

- Ms. Fuller, a member of the public, made mention of the existing construction going on within the community which included road construction, building construction, and bus changes. She stated that the new data system would benefit ridership by providing more direct information.
- Ms. Hart, a member of the public, asked whether charging the electric buses outside of the normal discharge cycle would affect the performance of its battery as it does with cell phones. Mr. Carney replied that the technology in the batteries were such that recharging at any point has no impact.

5. Administrator's Report

- Good morning Mr. Chairman the Senate came out yesterday with a \$33.9 billion dollar budget with \$80 million in forward funding for the RTA's. This figure moves the base for the RTA's up from the \$62 million to \$67.6 million. In the case of this RTA, even though we are budgeted for \$9.4 million in our state contract assistance, that would move us up to \$9.9 million. Over the next six (6) weeks, we will be keeping our eye on this budget's movement through the house and senate ways and means conference committee and then onto the Governor's desk. Jarrett asked if the increase would kick in this fiscal year as we are in the process of preparing to borrow and would that negate the need in any way. Mr. O'Neil explained that they will not know in time but that a conference call with our financial adviser has been set up for this week regarding options. Mr. Lehtola commented that instead of twelve (12) months shorter terms could be used as well as or in addition to no prepayment penalties. Mr. O'Neil then stated that was the intention of the call.
- Mr. O'Neil then continued with a summary of the hub project to date. He explained that we have received our full certificate occupancy certification by the fire department inspection services. Due to this fact we were able to move both the Administrative and PBSI offices to the hub on Friday, the 10th of May 2013. Our first full work day began on Monday, May 13th 2013 and I would personally like to thank everyone who worked extra to help with the move. Being on site before the building opens to the public allows us to address any last minute concerns with the contractor. The fence line will be pulled back for the opening on the 28th so that the public will be able to use the sidewalks around the facility; however on June 1st the fence will be taken down. Every day that goes by the overall site is looking much better. Dunkin Donuts is moving progressively forward, bringing equipment in every day and we are continuing to work on our security measures. I want to turn this over to Mr. Hamman because he's been doing a lot of work

and he has an overview to explain what's happening at the hub up to this point.

- Mr. Hamman presented a power point outline of the current changes internally and externally at the hub along with a forty (40) second time lapse video from Consigli of the building construction from ground breaking to present day.
- The following additions and/or completions have occurred.
 - a. All lobby and exterior signage
 - b. Two (2) bus location announcement system media centers located in the conference room 3rd floor and the lobby
 - c. Control system for monitoring all doorways in building
 - d. Benches in public waiting areas
 - e. Placement of our announcement board near the Dunkin Donuts space
 - f. Placement of one (1) additional screen in public seating area that can be used for advertising and cable fed programming (like sports, news PSA's other programming)
 - g. Installation of the three (3) ticket machines,
 - h. Twenty-five (25) ip cameras (building and platform)
 - i. Installation of bike pump near the bike rack
 - j. The eight (8) bus ports were shown with the electric charger at the 8th port
 - k. Ivy plantings with wall grid for controlled growth of plants on side of building
- Mr Lehtola asked if there were different arrival and departure signs. Mr. Hamman replied that one signed handled both. Mr. Hamman also mentioned that the additional screen would be controlled by the person in the ticket office. Mr. Lehtola asked who would be monitoring the security cameras. Mr. Hamman replied that Mr. Parker and Mr. Carney would be doing so in accordance with protocol. Mr. Schiller asked if the board members would need a badge to enter for board meetings. Mr. O'Neil stated that members would meet staff at specific locations and be taken into the building.
- Mr. Hamman then discussed the IT side of the project explaining not only physical structures but how they work within the system to foster better tracking as well as items that related to usability for the public specifically the disabled.
- Mr. Hamman explained the technology located at the eight (8) bus ports emphasizing the local monitoring data which is pulled every time the bus comes to a port (the system takes a snapshot). Mr. Hamman explained that the real-time passenger announcement system uses Wi-Fi driven location assessment and then coordinates that data with all of our other systems. So the information is being streamed as to where the bus is and where it is going so as to better keep with real time scheduling. . This will provide the "real time" tracking for use in the texting, QR codes not to mention data collection for system assessments on both operational and financial matters.
- Mr. Lehtola asked when the system was to be tested. Mr. Hamman responded this week. Mr. Conner asked if the signs would be able to inform the riders that a bus is out of service. He stated that it would be good public relations to do so. Mr. Hamman explained that there is a note section on the announcement signs and that voice

announcements could also be given to address this issue. Mr. Hamman also noted that the WRTA would be selling the surplus back to national grid from the solar powered panels on the bus port roofs.

- Mr. Hamman stated that working with the ADA the touched to speak option (which is specifically designed for the disabled visually impaired) is a tactile strip that leads you to the signs and it will read what is showing on the sign. He further explained, that the bus location system will automatically know which bay a bus has pulled in and which route it will be departing for along with providing the bay number and scheduled departure time for the passenger. Mr. Hamman spoke of the right guard smart systems crosswalk where there are bollards placed at the beginning and end of every crosswalk as you walk through them, it causes the LED's to light up on the ground making drivers even more aware that people are crossing.
- Noting the advancements in technology outlined in the presentation. Mr. Schiller suggested that new technology should be highlighted in all available media venues. Mr. O'Neil replied that the T&G would be covering the opening of the hub and a summary of its technical advances would be suggested for highlighting.
- Mr. O'Neil turned the meeting to Mr. Carney who talk about the schedule, for the electric buses. Mr. Carney stated that the first three (3) buses would be in by June 13, 2013 and the second three (3) will be in by August 23, 2013. Mr. Carney explained that the timing will allow for the system to be set up and test run before use by the public. This gives us the summer to work with the new buses and get our system set up. Mr. Carney stated that the target date was September for public use of the buses. In terms of battery charge, Mr. Carney believed that having a three (3) to four (4) minute charge as opposed to a ten (10) minute charge is better for the system overall. Mr. Carney also reminded the board that Proterra would have an electric bus available for the opening. Jarrett mentioned that obviously it's great PR for Proterra to have their buses here in New England. He suggested that inquiries be made regarding some type of advertising agreement with the WRTA. Mr. O'Neil replied that talks are already in motion regarding this issue.
- Mr. O'Neil stated that there is a lot of talk regarding what the Clever Device reporting will do as far as allowing real live data versus anecdotal data that we were collecting. With this live data that we get continuously can be used for our route planning and allows us to make adjustments also tie that back to our performance metrics and service standards. You also voted on the service standards and performance metrics and now it's up to us to show you how were measuring ourselves against those metrics and standards, but also will get to a point where we will be able to show how we are doing, against systems of similar size to measure ourselves against those. It's going to be real neat data and make us better transportation planners on the one hand, but also it's going to offer opportunities where we made the cut areas, but also where to cut to put back in would make some sense.
- To explain this point and others Ms. Blunt has a power point presentation which briefly highlights the RideCheck Plus Data for service planning and assessment. The

presentation included profiles that show specific data and analysis overall.

- Route Assessment Criteria
 - a. Average daily ridership
 - b. Population density
 - c. Route miles within a minority census tract
 - d. On-time performance
 - e. Total route miles by route
- Ms. Blunt explained that this data can be used to calculate cost per mile, average trip length and average passengers per revenue mile.
- Bus Stop Specific Data
 - a. By boarding and alightings
 - b. Daily average or total ridership to date
 - c. Specific period of times
 - d. Specific trip
 - e. Stops that are highest used
 - f. Land uses/locations that are helping to generate trips
- Route Specific Analysis
 - a. Average boardings and average boardings per trip
 - b. Highest boardings and top three (3) boardings and alighting stops
 - c. Further comments from staff analysis
- Ms. Blunt noted that factor's such as when a bus changes number as it continues the boarding and alightings may not match up or ridership variances in the summer which are two (2) variances and explained that they are in fact taken into consideration in the averaging process. Ms. Blunt went on to explain that we continually monitor our discard data and trace them back for explanation. Ms. Blunt also noted that glitches exist and they have not signed off yet on quality control, but we are confident that procedures in place and their overall understanding of how other programs feed and match up as a whole will produce very effective results. Ms. Blunt explained that the system is a very high-level sampling system so we are getting ninety-five (95%) confidence on it.
- Ms. Blunt related how the process for making changes is handled and by whom. A specific profile would be the document used to determine the process for concerns, and suggestions based on that data. The transit advisory committee which meets every two (2) weeks on a Thursday decides what needs to be tried and for how long. The reason for this committee is to establish accountability and all necessary implication. Before changes are made, the board meets with operations for review, concerns, and driver feedback. This would then return to the transit advisory group for further evaluation and a recommendation. Then one (1) or two (2) persons are assigned follow-through the full board would vote to cut a service or change.
- In summarizing Ms. Blunt stated that the data available and its specific nature allow the

RTA to make better decisions with more data than ever before. With the ability to do so on a daily basis because we can target specific time periods that are averaging due to the snapshots of time over time.

- Mr. Schiller asked if there would be any discussion on the operations center. Mr. O'Neil replied that a meeting was set up for this afternoon with the city manager to get some closure on this issue, so he will get back to the board when there is more to tell.
- Mr. O'Neil ended by reading a letter dated May 5, 2013 he received from Cindy Purcell of Rutland Ma regarding Elder bus services. The letter told of her car accident thirty-six (36) years ago that left her a quadriplegic and wheelchair user. She explained that the adapted van she used was in a car accident in July of 2011 and for five (5) months it was not usable. This incident caused her to lose her independence and made it difficult to get to work especially during the school months as her husband is a school teacher and was not able to drive her. Though the internet she found the Elder Bus and had a positive and caring experience with all levels of staff through the process of using the service. She stated that she was so grateful to be able to use the service and if she could help advocate for support she would do so. Mr. Schiller asked if the letter and its contents would be published on the website and Mr. O'Neil responded that it will be up on the website.

6. Business from the board

- There was no business from the board

7. Adjournment

- Chairman Lehtola asked for a motion to adjourn Ms. Yager made the motion and Mr. Schiller seconded. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:34a.m.

8. Next Meeting Date

- The next board meeting will be June 20th 2013 at the Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester MA 01608 3rd Floor.