



MINUTES of 10/17/2013 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Name

Representing

PRESENT

William Lehtola
Jarrett Conner
Doug Belanger
Mark Binnall
Kelly Burke
Leon Gaumond Jr.
Dennis Lipka
John Ostrosky
Robert Spain

Spencer
Worcester
Leicester
Auburn
Northborough
West Boylston
Holden
Shrewsbury
Millbury

ABSENT

David Schiller
Alyssa Graveson
Rudy Heller
Timothy McInerney
Kevin Mizikar
Daniel Morgado
Michael O'Brien
Michael Pantos
Michael Ward

Charlton
Douglas
Brookfield
Grafton
Grafton
Shrewsbury
Worcester
Rutland
Clinton

1. Chairman Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.
2. **Attendance**

3. Acceptance of Minutes

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes of September 19, 2013. **Mr. Binnall made the motion and Mr. Spain seconded. Mr. Ostrosky abstained.** All other board members voted in favor. The motion was accepted.

4. Administrator Report

- Mr. O'Neil stated the administration and the board will be talking about the FY `14 budget and the FY`13 audit when the auditor arrives. Mr. O'Neil made mention that we have once again balanced our prior year budget despite funding in arrears. This will be our last year of funding in arrears. Mr. O'Neil summarized that his report today will cover the new buses, expanded town services, route time point changes and an update on solar software.
- Mr. O'Neil stated that we have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new buses, particularly the Gillig buses to help out with some of those shortcomings experienced with parts of the afternoon route services. As of today, nine (9) Gillig buses are being worked on by Mr. Hamman, Mr. Carney and Clever Devices to have the necessary installation of all the equipment and technology needed on the buses. We are looking to have one (1) out today and the rest out within seven (7) to ten (10) days. Mr. O'Neil responded the reason for added time is due to the installation of Clever Devices equipment and the software air cards required to make the new technologies operational. Mr. Lehtola commented there have been days in this week where we have not had enough buses to put out on the road and also where relief buses have broken down. Mr. Carney stated that he is very aware of the chairman's concern in regards to these matters and is working to get the new buses out as quickly as possible.
- Mr. Lehtola asked about the electric buses in service and stated he was not particularly happy with the reports coming in as to their service and maintenance. Mr. Carney replied there are times when three (3) of the electric buses are in service. However, he indicated there are other times when one (1) or two (2) of the three (3) were out of service particularly owed to the lack of charge. Mr. Carney explained that they have straighten out the charger line up issue by placing ground striping to facilitate ease of proper placement of the bus under the charging unit. Mr. Carney informed that board that an additional fully trained and full time maintenance person is now available with the ability to cover weekends.
- Mr. Lehtola pressed the point they were told the electric buses would give twenty-nine (29) miles per gallon equivalency, but commented that if they're not on the road they really don't help that much. Mr. O'Neil stated that the chairman's points are well taken and the additional considerations of brake lights and windshields while minor have been rectified. As for the technical problems with the charger, Proterra is committed to fixing any problems. Mr. O'Neil noted that he and Mr. Carney were going to the Proterra factory in early November and would discuss concerns with the president of Proterra.

- Mr. Binnall asked if the electric buses would be able to be used in the wintertime and run with the same efficiency. Mr. O'Neil replied for all intensive purposes there is no reason why the buses would not perform as expected. As part of our four (4) million dollar grant we are the test case for their use in New England so the company has a vested interest in our success.
- Mr. O'Neil gave the board an update on the 40 Quinsigamond Avenue project. Mr. O'Neil explained we are purchasing approximately eleven (11) acres of land for the new maintenance and operations facility. The purchase and sale agreement should be signed by NSTAR today and that will trigger STV, our architectural engineering firm, to start conducting additional testing, most notably on the perimeter to determine the limits of offsite migration. That information can be included as part of the covenant not to sue application that was asked for by the board. We are looking at an end of calendar year for the agreement on the covenant not to sue.
- Mr. O'Neil summarized the two (2) public meetings held on the subject of the 40 Quinsigamond Ave. project stating that both the Canal District and the Green Island Neighborhood Center meetings were productive and positive. Preliminary Site plans were shown and questions fielded on traffic management, overall site development and numerous on-site issues. These issues involved environmental cleanup, water retaining and our maintenance bays. District Councilor Sarai Rivera spoke favorably of the project at the Green Island Neighborhood Center meeting.
- Mr. O'Neil further explained that the 39 million dollars received is intact and is going to be used for the building itself. The environmental cleanup is approximately 14 million dollars and will be paid for by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, most notably two parties. One would be the State Executive Office of Environmental Affairs at about 2.1 million dollars and the difference from MassDOT.
- Mr. O'Neil went on to explain that by way of a timeline STV will work on environmental cleanup from February to about the end of July. Early lead packages will be started in June or July and from that point a twenty-two (22) month build out is expected bringing us to 2016.
- As with the building of the hub, we are going to bring on a construction manager who will work with the architect at 30% design phase so that we can keep the project within budget. Mr. O'Neil asked the board to approve the submitting of an application for this construction methodology to the Inspector General's office.
- Mr. Belanger asked for clarification as to what exactly is the benefit of using this methodology. Mr. O'Neil explained that basically you are hiring a contractor and that contractor is coming on board early in the process. The contractor offers some ideas on keeping costs down. The contractor is also going to sign off on an agreement between the WRTA indicating that this is going to be the construction cost for the project. So anything that is over and above that agreement is then going to be borne by that

contractor.

- Mr. Lehtola read the request of motion. The advisory board authorizes the administration to file a construction manager at risk application to the states Office of Inspector General for the construction of the new maintenance and operations facility at 40 Quinsigamond Ave. **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Binnall.** All voted and the motion as accepted.
- Mr. O'Neil introduced the topic of new town service to start December 1, 2013 involving the towns of Grafton, Northbridge, Paxton and Westborough. Mr. O'Neil then spoke briefly about the process of how they evaluated the need for service and surveys taken. Mr O'Neil also explained the service funding comes from each town's MBTA assessments not the WRTA, but noted that the additional van's being purchased are capital expenditures for the WRTA. While CMTM would handle the drivers and scheduling, (except for Paxton as they are hiring their own driver) each specific service was based upon the level of funding for each town. Mr. O'Neil acknowledged that scheduling for each town was achieved with the assistance and planning of CMTM, CMRPC, and town officials. Mr. O'Neil stated that the growth and level of participation will be monitored, reported and reviewed. He also reminded the board that these are not fixed routes and the approach from all parties is to be flexible as we are reaching into new territories and practical participation is an unknown at this time.
- Ms. Blunt then summarized the new service routes for each individual town and the logistics of stops, scheduling, decision for routing and how much funding is allocated for each town. Pricing for the routes will be the same as the WRTA fixed route fares. Cash will be accepted and collected by the driver via a money box. For those transferring to our fixed route lines another fixed route fare would apply. [\(Please see attached power point file "Community Shuttle Services Presentation for Adv Brd 10.17.13.pptx" for all the details.\)](#)

Grafton-Northbridge - Two proposed routes:

- A. Service weekdays between 6:15 a.m.-7:45 p.m.
- B. Service weekdays between 9:15 a.m. – 4:15 a.m.

Route A would run from Linwood in Northbridge through Northbridge center and Grafton to the Grafton Commuter Rail Station, picking up Grafton Center during the mid-day. Route B would run from Wal-Mart in west Northbridge through Northbridge center into Fisherville in Grafton and on to the Blackstone Valley Shoppes via Route 122A.

Connections to the WRTA: Routes 4 and 22 at Blackstone Valley Shoppes

Cost: FY 2013 MBTA Assessments Grafton- \$111,704; Northbridge- \$102,157

Paxton

Route: Wednesdays and Fridays 3 hrs a.m. – 4 hrs p.m. (6-9am and 3-7pm)

Locations: Anna Maria College via Paxton Center (Pleasant St. to city line) Tatnuck Square Union Station, Worcester

Connections to the WRTA: Routes 2 & 6 and Union Station

Cost: FY 2013 MBTA Assessments Paxton - \$31,193

Westborough

Route: Weekdays 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Locations: Westborough Commuter Rail Station to Westborough Office Park peak hours and Main Street Westborough Downtown Flex route between Route 30 McDonalds and High School mid-day.

Cost: FY 2013 MBTA Assessments Westborough \$117,430

- Ms. Blunt noted that passenger counts will be completed by drivers and marketing of service will be done prior to start date of December 1, 2013. Mr. Lehtola asked the administration if the new town(s) are aware that they can sit at this board. Mr. O'Neil replied that to those towns not represented already, they will be sending representatives as soon as the board votes to accept the expansion of services to those towns
- Mr. Binnall asked if Paxton would be fully served by PBSI with the expanded service. Ms. Blunt responded that Paxton operates on a limited basis. They will operate as a deviated service so therefore they don't fall under the same guidelines that fixed route services do for PBSI. The board members discussed Paxton's limited service due to the funding level and if there was any potential for over expectations from town officials. Ms. Blunt explained that Paxton will be working with the college to look at possible expansion/funding and that they were very realistic about service expectations.
- Board members discussed options for the potential growth on the Westborough line and the need to be flexible due to the unpredictable nature of commuter train schedules. Mr. Lipka asked that the administration incorporate within a three (3) to five (5) year plan how this expansion and any adjustments to it in the meantime would affect the overall picture of the WRTA. Mr. O'Neil replied the WRTA will participate with other RTA's in a comprehensive service analysis of all its routes. Mr. Connor asked if the vans would carry the WRTA Logo and Mr. O'Neil replied they would and that the administration has cast a wide net regarding this expansion and will keep the board informed as the services start to take hold.
- Mr. Lipka brought forth a conversation among the board members about the possible need for a state Route 9 bus service to the plaza on the Westborough/Northborough line. Ms. Blunt stated that funding for this project would be different than that of the expanded services as MBTA assessment monies would not be available for this type of service. Ms. Blunt informed the board that the one thing about this type of service would be that it would be a slow growing service. This means that the immediate ridership and numbers used normally for benchmarks to keep the service might not be there. The board agreed that it would be a nice convenience even if in the future. Ms. Blunt stated Metro West RTA would love to connect with us and that they actually have a service that comes closest to us. Ms. Blunt noted that the idea is on the table but state, town/city as well as private monies would be needed.

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to authorize the administrator to initiate service to the towns as presented to the board in this presentation. **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Connor.** All voted the motion was accepted.
- Mr. O'Neil explained the overall importance of changing 14 out of the 26 routes time points during peak hours. Mr. O'Neil stated there is a historical precedent for adjusting the timing and time points on a route. As we are able to refine our data in regards to exact running time we have used this information to determine how to adjust the time points during peak hours allowing us to meet the standards we have set for ourselves. Due to this change out of the 1113 trips we schedule daily we will be eliminating 1.5 % so people may see one or two trips lost in that route. Mr. O'Neil said Jim Parker did a lot of work on the scheduling and that these changes are cost neutral to us. Mr. O'Neil introduced Ms Blunt who went through the details.
- Ms.Blunt updated the board on regarding the on-time performance measures of January/June/September. Ms. Blunt reported that late trips were down from June and almost level with January figures while on-time trips were almost to par with January's numbers. Ms. Blunt reviewed the late percentages for Routes 19 and 33 as being at or below January 2013 markers while Route 30 is lower than June but not as near the January numbers. Ms. Blunt summarized to the board the need to adjust the time points during peak hours as a measure to decrease delays.
- Those 14 routes will be: 2,3,6,7,14,19,22,23,25,26,30,31,33,and route 26 on Sunday. The changes would take effect November 9, 2013. Most of the adjustments will be between the hours of 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. [Please see the attached power point file "WRTA Data Slides for 10.17.13 Advisory Board meeting.pptx" regarding the Fixed-Route Service Changes for November 9th 2013 and the on-time performance review for this month.](#)

Route 2

- Running times from 30 to 35 minutes between 2:45 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Outbound trips for Mower Street will be By Request during the changed times

Route 3

- Trips between 3:00 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. will change by 10 minutes and the outbound Hub times will be 3:50 p.m. 4:50 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.

Route 6

- Trips between 3:00 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. will change by 10 minutes and the outbound Hub times will be 3:15 p.m. 4:20 p.m. 5:25 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m. 8:25 p.m.
- Runs per day to 29

Route 7

- Running times from 30 to 35 minutes between 12:45 p.m. and 6:35 p.m.
- The 6:35 p.m. and 7:05 p.m. will run on 30 minute headway while the 7:35 p.m. and 11:35 p.m. will return to 25 minutes
- Runs per day to 61

Route 14

- Time point changed from “Burncoat and Clark” to Burncoat High School

Route 19

- Running time from 30 to 35 minutes between 2:30 p.m. and 6:50 p.m.
- Runs per day to 73
- Trips to Goddard Memorial and Coppage Drives will be By Request.

Route 22

- First trip of the day will start 10 minutes earlier to coordinate connection with the MBTA commuter rail at the Hub.

Route 23

- Trips from 3:30 p.m. to 12:05 a.m. will change by 10 minutes and the outbound Hub times will be 3:40 p.m. 4:10 p.m. 4:40 p.m. 5:10 p.m. 5:50 p.m. 6:20 p.m. 6:50 p.m. 7:20 p.m. 8:20 p.m.8:50 p.m. 9:05 p.m. 10:05 p.m. 11:05 p.m.11:35 p.m.
- New 11:05 p.m. will short-turn at Brittan Square
- Runs per day to 62

Route 25

- Trips from 11:30 a.m. to 8:50 p.m. outbound Hub times will be 11:30 a.m. 12:35 p.m. 1:40 p.m. 2:45 p.m. 3:50 p.m. 4:55 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:05 p.m. 8:00 p.m.

Route 26

- New inbound run times from the Great Brook Valley Community Center are: 8:35 p.m. 9:35 p.m. 10:35 p.m.
- An additional late night inbound trip will start at Brittan Square at 11:15 p.m.

Route 30

- Running time from 35 to 40 minutes between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- Running time for 6:55 p.m. will be 35 minutes while between 7:20 p.m. and 9:10 p.m. run times will be 30 minutes each way.
- Runs per day to 67
- Span of service from 5:40 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Route 31

- Running times from 35 to 40 minutes between 10:50 a.m. to 6:50 p.m.
- Between 6:50 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. will be 35
- Runs per day to 29
- Service will end 50 minutes at 8:00 p.m.

Route 33

- First three (3) trips start ten minutes earlier
- Running times between 11:00 a.m. and 5:10 p.m. to Spencer DPW will be 60 minutes each way.
- Runs per day to 28
- Span of service is 4:50 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.

Route 26 – Sunday

- Running times will begin 30 minutes earlier

[For more information a summary is attached on the Route Changes](#)

- Ms. Blunt explained further that the on-time performance was a lot better at the hub and the end of the route than it was along the route. Ms. Blunt stated that we would basically be giving the same time to go through the majority of the route most of the time; we just

needed to adjust timing along the route, although in some cases, more time needed to be added overall in the afternoon peaks. This change would directly help the rider because the schedule would be adhering to the actual running of the route itself.

- Mr. Connor made the suggestion for the coloring of the scheduled peak times. While the board members discussed the need for effectively communicating the changes, pros and cons of continually changing the schedule and the need for a balance between compliance and the needs of the ridership. Mr. O'Neil replied that the information to the public will be put out about 10 to 14 days before the actual change and it will go in all media outlets, busses and next week on our website.
- Mr. Lehtola asked that instead of going through all this detail here, line by line is it possible that we the board all get a copy of said recommendations before the board meeting. This would allow for ample time to review and prepare any questions in regards to any changes or recommendations.
- Mr. Lehtola then stated the advisory board authorizes the administration to implement the service changes presented at today's board meeting. **The Motion was made by Mr. Lipka and seconded by Mr. Gaumont Jr.** all voted and the motion was accepted.
- Mr. O'Neil introduced Mr. Hamman briefly reviewed the solar panel software and the information it provides. Mr. Hamman noted that so far the savings has been in the thousands of dollars and it can be viewed on the company website. Mr. Lehtola asked for a report periodically on this in the near future and any dollars that we might be saving. Mr. O'Neil replied that the administration would provide one.

5. Business from the Board - None

6. Business from the Public

- Ms. Fuller asked if the board could look into having bus 30 (at peak times) go down Main and then down Foster Street as this would take considerable minutes off the tie up at the Front Street lights. Mr. Lehtola replied that they could look into that request.

7. Adjournment

- **Mr. Spain motion to adjourn and Mr. Lipka seconded. All voted in favor and the motion to adjourn accepted** the meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

8. Next Meeting Date

- The next board meeting will be on November 21, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. located at the Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester MA 01608 3rd floor.

