



## MINUTES of 12/19/2013 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

### ATTENDANCE

#### Name

#### Representing

#### PRESENT

William Lehtola  
Jarrett Conner  
Doug Belanger  
Mark Binnall  
Rudy Heller  
Dennis Lipka  
John Ostrosky  
David Schiller  
Robert Spain

Spencer  
Worcester  
Leicester  
Auburn  
Brookfield  
Holden  
Shrewsbury  
Charlton  
Millbury

#### ABSENT

Kelly Burke  
Leon Gaumond Jr.  
Alyssa Graveson  
Timothy McInerney  
Kevin Mizikar  
Daniel Morgado  
Michael O'Brien  
Michael Pantos  
Michael Ward

Northborough  
West Boylston  
Douglas  
Grafton  
Grafton  
Shrewsbury  
Worcester  
Rutland  
Clinton

1. Chairman Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.
2. **Attendance**

### 3. Acceptance of Minutes

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes of November 21, 2013. **Mr. Heller made the motion and Mr. Ostrosky seconded.** All other board members voted in favor. The motion was accepted.

Mr. Lehtola opened with the presentation of a plaque on behalf of the WRTA Advisory Board which expressed appreciation to City Manager Mr. Michael V. O'Brien. Mr. Connor accepted the plaque on behalf of Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Connor advised the board that Mr. O'Brien could not attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

### 4. Administrator Report

- Mr. O'Neil made a comment regarding Mr. O'Brien stating, that despite the fact that he was not in attendance for all of our meetings, his representative, Mr. Connor, was more than an adequate. Mr. O'Neil explained that Mr. O'Brien worked behind the scenes supporting the goals of the WRTA including the new hub as well as with the state getting additional dollars lined up specifically for the 40 Quinsigamond Ave project. He will be missed and we hope that Mr. Conner will continue on with us.
- On a lighter note, Mr. O'Neil thanked Ms. Pokoly for the Christmas e-cards that you all received. Mr. O'Neil expressed this was a nice touch and creative way of getting the message out for the holiday season to everyone. Mr. Lehtola also thanked Ms. Pokoly.
- Mr. O'Neil's report for December to the board covered scheduling and performance standard monthly updates, bus fleet, overview of the covenant not to sue process and the close out of Clever Devices.
- Mr. O'Neil stated that he would like to introduce Mark Reich the attorney for the WRTA so he can give an update on the covenant not to sue. Mr. O'Neil explained that they continue to move forward with the covenant not to sue while working towards a 30% design. The next proceeding step will be to hire a construction manager. So with the board's approval these pieces can come together with the intention of meeting our present timelines, which for the most part are on schedule.
- Mr. Reich explained we are working closely with all parties involved including the Attorney General's office and the DEP. He also noted that the Providence & Worcester Railroad, MassDOT and city of Worcester have some past easements and real estate issues and they are being addressed. Mr. Reich pointed out that at this point there are no outstanding claims and no evidence of any conditions that would give rise to a claim. Mr. Reich stated that the process entails public notices which have been fully complied with. Mr. Reich reminded the board that any future claims regarding the site must adhere to the definition of the covenant not to sue specifications.
- The board's discussion about 40 Quinsigamond Ave and specifically the contamination on the site and liabilities regarding it were addressed by Attorney Reich. He explained

the WRTA has a very broad covenant not to sue as the Attorney General's Office saw no need to narrow its scope. He explained the WRTA is acquiring the property with no prior ownership, lease or general involvement with the site and this is to your (board's) favor. Concerns about contamination while the site is under construction will be the responsibility of the construction manager.

- Mr. Reich reviewed the final process which is to have the DEP and the Attorney General's Office sign off on the document. He explained this recordable document will protect the WRTA once the property is acquired. Mr. Reich suggested the advisory board vote to approve the finalization of a covenant not to sue in the best interest of the WRTA with the final document to be finalized by the WRTA counsel and executed by the administrator.

Mr. O'Neil gave an overview of the construction timeline.

- a. January/early February - recordable covenant not to sue, property purchase, hire construction manager.
  - b. February/March/April clean up and pilings for building 40% to 50% building footprint
  - c. Build out to be twenty-two (22) to twenty-four (24) months
- Mr. O'Neil briefly described the \$12 million in funding for the clean-up came from the state. To make certain this money stays intact, Mr. O'Neil is working with MASSDOT to memorialize an agreement between the two entities. Mr. O'Neil told the board that we are awaiting the letter. Mr. O'Neil reminded the board the FTA funding is secure and the continued drawing down of the funds is on schedule.
  - Mr. Lehtola asked if there was a motion in regards to the recommendation. **The motion was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Conner. All voted in favor and the motion was accepted.**
  - Mr. Belanger stated that with the vote taken today we are authorizing our administrator to do due diligence in regards to protecting the WRTA and to move forward with this project and its funding use. Mr. Belanger respectively asked through the chair that Mr. O'Neil take the experience of building the hub as a dry run in so far as the things we and he didn't anticipate and apply them when dealing with 40 Quinsigamond. Mr. O'Neil replied that he will keep the board advised as we move forward.
  - Mr. O'Neil introduced Mr. Carney who gave an overview of the bus fleet. Mr. Carney explained the six (6) new Gillig buses are on-site and four (4) will be out on the road Friday, 20th of December 2013, while the remaining two (2) should be out by the end of January. Mr. Carney explained the WRTA decommissioned the older buses as they put out the new ones and three (3) RTS buses will be retained and used as spares should an

accident occur or if a replacement is necessary.

- Mr. Carney confirmed there are seventeen (17) hybrid buses and sixteen (16) of them are now on the road while the last one is due in the spring of 2014. Mr. Carney gave an overview of the electric buses, stating there was no significant difference in running the electric bus during the snowstorms. Operations is looking to upgrade and swap out the remaining three (3) buses to Proterra for adjustments and all six (6) buses should be running in January 2014. Mr. Carney also noted that they are continuing to monitor the charging unit, compressor and the ABS system program (software) which was all part of the recent improvements and upgrades. Mr. Carney stated that we are the largest electric bus fleet in the country and that the issues are not that unusual, but the officials from Proterra are being extremely proactive.
- Mr. O'Neil followed up a prior request for the addition of sound to accompany the electric buses. Mr. O'Neil informed the board the sound chosen would be under the driver's control and be similar to the beeping made when a truck backs up.
- Mr. O'Neil spoke briefly about Proterra's additional private investment which brings them up to \$75 million in assets. Mr. O'Neil further related that the CEO of Proterra informed him that a potential buy from Canada of one hundred and fifty (150) buses was in the works while a regional transit authority in Kentucky signed on for fifteen (15) electric buses. Mr. O'Neil felt that Proterra was becoming a viable entity in the transportation business.
- Mr. O'Neil introduced Mr. Hamman who spoke briefly about the close out of the Clever Device contract and assured that board that the WRTA received their monies worth in regards to product, service and upgrades for the software despite some setbacks.
- Mr. Hamman stated that overall the process was amazing given from where they started. He commented on the importance of all vested parties working together to make it happen and that includes the data behind the system. Mentioned were operations for training, CMRPC for data and scheduling and administration for putting it all into play. Mr. Hamman stated that announcement system on the bus platform is running behind the scenes right now and is scheduled for total immersion in February 2014.
- Mr. Hamman explained that for the last three months the Saturday testing has run at 100% and its overall average has been at 96%. The 4% loss is attributed to four (4) older RTS buses that are being retired this week.
- Board members commented on the overall process leading up to the numerous advances and implementation of technology. Members noted that, despite the initial setbacks with the new technology, the information and data available will enhance the performance and operations of the WRTA going forward.
- Mr. O'Neil noted that the backside of the technology which was spearheaded by CMRPC gives the administration and operations more flexibility and factual measurements for

improving and complying with our service standards and performance metrics. Mr. O'Neil specifically mentioned Mr. Parker's phenomenal job working behind the scenes to implement all the changes.

Mr. O'Neil reflected upon the numerous time and route changes and their connection to the monthly reporting and standards going forward. The changes in August and in November and those we will make going forward are allowing us to fine tune the system right now and to make us better, especially with on-time performance. So, together with the new assets that we have on the street, we have solved many problems we were confronted with when opening this facility in June. Mr. O'Neil stated that some of our routes are performing better now than they did prior to the new hub being built. The new hub is working as expected.

- Mr. O'Neil introduced Mr. Church who then gave an overview of the CMRPC report titled, [WRTA Data Memorandum 12-16-2013.pdf](#). The report reviewed all route on time performance, late buses by time period and rt. 19, 30 & 33. [The November 2013 WRTA monthly report.pdf](#) reviewed fare box revenue, ridership missed trips/set-back and customer service call/visits. For more details on these reports, please click on the report names or view them on our website [therta.com](http://therta.com) under public notices and the specific report name.
- Mr. Church discussed the monthly report memorandum charts comparing numbers between January, June, September and November 2013 for all routes. Mr. Church stated that all WRTA routes on-time performance showed improvement. Late buses decreased from 31.5% to 24.6% using the five-minute standard for lateness. Currently, the data shows all routes being 65.3% on time. When looking at all WRTA routes by time period, buses continue to show improvement overall, however, the p.m. peak time still remains the most challenging. With the November service changes, late trips during the p.m. peak period decreased by 14.6%. Routes 19, 30 and 33 have shown remarkable improvements in their on-time performance as Route 19 decreased its number of late trips by 8.9%, Route 30 by 11.6%, and Route 33 by 29.1%.
- Mr. O'Neil interjected that with the proposed January 25, 2014 time changes we are expecting to continue to increase our on time performance. Now that we have such specific data we can see where those problems are in our system and be able to go after those one at a time.
- Mr. Church continued with the November 2013 WRTA Monthly Report.
  - ❖ Passenger Revenue was down 9.40% compared to last year
  - ❖ Fare box revenue is lower than last year by 17.8% while passes sold increased by 63.54% compared to last year.
  - ❖ Year to date the revenue is up by 3.07%
  - ❖ Ridership is up 5.2% for the month of November compared to last year
  - ❖ Missed trips are the same as last November at 36
  - ❖ Set-backs are lower at 39 down from October's 45

- Call volume was down 24% from last month. Further, there was a decline in complaints from forty (40) to nineteen (19) and two (2) of which were PBSI related. Window service increased 8% over October. Mr. Carney stated the ticket vending machine from Grove Street will eventually be moved to the hub and all machines will be programmed to sell one day passes. They are looking to implement this change in the spring of 2014.
- The board discussed weather related issues as they are an additional factor for on time performance and if scheduling for such events would prove beneficial. Mr. Church explained that individual route scheduling is not adjusted for weather-related conditions as these factors are temporary, even though they may have a higher impact at the time the event occurs. Mr. O'Neil commented that timely communication was a key factor when dealing with weather-related concerns. He went on to state the major construction and specific corridors travelled would and are getting consideration.
- The board discusses how the true value would be measured when the passes/Charlie Cards continue to increase and how they would have that reported to them. This prompted Mr. Lehtola to request the administration give him a monthly report by passenger and fare box/revenue. Mr. O'Neil replied that the report could be revised and re-issued to the Board.

## **5. Business from the Board**

- Mr. Ostrosky mentioned the sidewalks around the city center/hub area need to be addressed. Mr. Connor commented the city is doing a follow up with this issue. Mr. Ostrosky noted that Bus Tracker is having lag problems and posting issues. Mr. Hamman stated that recently the upgrades necessary have been causing some problems, but this is known and being worked out.
- Mark Binnall asked if the board would be replacing the vice chair now that Mr. O'Brien is resigning. Mr. Lehtola stated that Mr. O'Neil and he will be meeting with Mr. Augustus in regards to that matter.
- Mr. Belanger asked about the newly formed College Student Association and its stated goals to connect with the city and others. Mr. O'Neil replied that he will be meeting with them in January 2014.

## **6. Business from the Public**

- Mr. Provost commented that the federal government should change the mandate on the new multi level buses as to the placement of the pull chains on the buses. Mr. Provost stated that they are difficult to reach in the front due to the height and thanked the WRTA for following up on his request for information.

- Ms. Hart asked if the Swanson Road Accident is still in litigation and Mr. O'Neil replied that it still is.

Mr. Lehtola stated that Mr. O'Brien contributions were appreciated by the board and wished the board a happy holiday season.

## **7. Adjournment**

- **Mr. Connor motion to adjourn and Mr. Belanger seconded. All voted in favor and the motion to adjourn accepted** the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

## **8. Next Meeting Date**

- The next board meeting will be on January 16, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. located at the Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester MA 01608 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.