

MINUTES of 11/19/2015 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

ATTENDANCE

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
<u>PRESENT</u>	
William Lehtola	Spencer
Mark Binnall	Auburn
Rudy Heller	Brookfield
Dennis Lipka	Holden
John Ostrosky	Shrewsbury
Jacob Sanders	Worcester
Robert Spain	Millbury
<u>ABSENT</u>	
Doug Belanger	Leicester
Kelly Burke	Northborough
Jarrett Conner	Worcester
Alyssa Graveson	Douglas
Leon Gaumond Jr.	Sturbridge
Nancy Lucier	West Boylston
Timothy McInerney	Grafton
Kevin Mizikar	Grafton
Daniel Morgado	Shrewsbury
Brian Palaia	Oxford
Michael Pantos	Rutland
David Schiller	Charlton
Luz Vega	Regional Ridership
Michael Ward	Clinton
Sharon Yager	Shrewsbury

1. Chairman Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

2. **Attendance**

3. Acceptance of Minutes

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes for October 15, 2015.
- Mr. Lipka entered the board meeting at 8:37 a.m.
- Mr. Spain entered the board meeting at 8:37 a.m.
- **Motion: I move the board accept the minutes of October 15, 2015.** Mr. Heller made the motion and Mr. Binnall seconded. All voted in favor and the motion was accepted.

4. Business from the Public

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

5. Business from the Board

- Mr. Lehtola spoke about the steady increase in ridership at the WRTA. He cited last September and October the figures were 46,000 while this year for the same two months ridership is at 50,000. Mr. Lehtola added how the Main Street corridor had an increase of over 8,000 riders. Representatives from CMRPC and the CMTM explained the various factors involved when calculating ridership numbers but agreed that the trend continues to move upward. They discussed how specific spikes are reflective of weather patterns, the settling in from the transitional move to the Hub, and the improvements in service. There was general agreement that the ridership on the WRTA continues to improve and further efforts to move riders to passes and the Charlie Card would continue. Mr. Carney informed the board they are working on the adapting to the new credit card “chip” technology. A brief discussion occurred about the communication interruptions with the MBTA system regarding fareboxes and purchases. It was concluded that CMTM cannot control the MBTA’s inconsistencies but will continue to work within these factors.
- Mr. Lipka updated the board members on the personnel committee’s progress regarding the search for a new administrator. Mr. Lipka informed the board that the Collins Center continues to work on the Administrator’s profile and he would be keeping the board informed as things move forward.
- Mr. Binnall asked that a copy of the ridership/revenue by route report be sent to him prior to each board meeting. The request was acknowledged by Mr. Carney and granted through Mr. Coyne.

6. Administrator Report

- Mr. Coyne addressed the board regarding the Transportation Reauthorization Bill which passed both the House and Senate. The bill in its present state would eliminate section 5340 High Density States Program. The WRTA would lose \$4 million or 42% of the estimated \$9.8 million it receives in Federal Funding. There are seven (7) states affected by this change and presently legislators are working to postpone the cuts for a few years. The bill is now working through the conference committee and updates will be brought to the board. Mr. Coyne stated that Congressman McGovern has signed on to support keeping the funding. Mr. Coyne sent him a letter of thanks for the due diligence bestowed on behalf of the WRTA. The seven (7) states affected by the bill are; Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Long Island, and Delaware. Mr. Coyne indicated the long term prospects for continual funding under this program are not favorable. This is due to the 43 other states that are not benefiting from the funding.
- Mr. Coyne gave an update regarding the Maintenance and Operations facility. On October 22, 2015 the approval was given by the Secretary of Transportation for the \$16.5 million bond. The approval came with the caveat that we would not be able to run any cost associated with the bond through our net cost of service. The caveat is not a factor for the WRTA however we will not have the full faith and credit from the Commonwealth. The WRTA will not be able to competitively bid and has therefore pursued a bond through Bank of America. The interest rate will be about 2.75% and by mid-December the bond issue should be settled. Due to the non-competitive bid status, Mr. Coyne went last week to get approval from the State Financing and Governance Board. Board members questioned the reasoning behind the terms. Mr. Coyne explained that fiscal prudence seemed to be behind the reasoning and that the WRTA was not singled out specifically.
- The WRTA received an RTACAP contract for July, August, and September at about \$2.6 million from the State. The funding was received on November 17, 2015 thereby allowing for further invoice payments to the M&O contractor, Skanska. The remaining \$3.4 million is being worked on. There is no new deadline for October's invoices and all federal portions of the invoices are being paid. There has been no occurrence of penalties or late fees in regards to the invoices. Last month the additional coal tar found cost \$700,000 to remove. It is anticipated that additional environmental cleanup costs are potentially at \$3 million. Upon the board's recommendation a meeting was held at the Hub with Senator Moore, Representative Campanale, Representative Donahue, MassDOT and the WRTA's attorney. The purpose was to explain the project and ask for their assistance in obtaining additional funding resources. It was recommended that the WRTA Administration speak directly with the Governor's office. The WRTA

Administration is continuing to seek an audience with the Lt. Governor's office. The total cost of the coal tar removal has not been determined. As construction continues on the site, any coal tar found will be stock piled on the north side so as to gain a complete figure for its removal.

- Mr. Coyne updated the board on the DEP's NOR sent to Eversource. Senator Moore and Representative Donahue issued a letter to the DEP asking them to expedite the notice of responsibility to Eversource. The DEP responded by issuing the letter to Eversource within a week of the letter. The WRTA attorneys began the process laid out in 21 E requesting by letter, how Eversource plans to proceed. The WRTA will continue to file necessary quarterly and annual reports to the DEP. Mr. Coyne acknowledged Senator Moore and Representative Donahue for the letter they wrote on behalf of the WRTA. Mr. Coyne reminded the board members that any course of litigation would be a slow process.
- The WRTA Hub facility will not change to a non-smoking facility at this time. The administration has decided to increase its vigilance with security and has added more necessary signage. Announcements by inspectors/starters of our smoking policy still remain in effect. The question of automating our smoking policy over the PA system would involve a cost. Board members agreed if present measures are working then no additional action is needed. Mr. Sanders stated he would submit to the board the city's current no smoking ordinance for review.
- The "super clean" was completed to remove the gum and other stains on the WRTA Property. The WRTA will continue twice yearly to have hot water power washes as part of their preventative maintenance program. The Hub outside windows are slated for cleaning in the Spring of 2016.
- The Proterra bus sent for repairs regarding the upper control steering is back in service. The replacement bus from the fire at the factory is still about eleven (11) months away from delivery.
- The monthly advisory board minutes will now be a summary of each agenda topic as opposed to the very detailed format previously used. It was felt the time taken to transcribe and edit content was entirely too long. The WRTA Advisory Board minutes are posted with all appropriate documents. Board members discussed how the minutes were presently presented and the new process was agreed upon. Mr. Spain acknowledged that very few boards do what we do which leaves us much more detailed than others.

- Ms. Pokoly will schedule with the Audit and Finance Committee members a meeting for the week of December 7, 2015. The purpose is to go over the FY`15 Annual Audit Report and the First Quarter FY`16 Financial Results for the WRTA.
- Mr. Coyne introduced Mr. Lamacchia from the Federal Transit Administration who will be assisting the WRTA with the 42 Quinsigamond Ave project.
- Mr. Coyne invited the members to a tour of the maintenance and operations center to be given after the brief Q1 2016 Board Report.
- Mr. Spiliotis gave a brief summary of the first quarter performance report 2016. The entire presentation can be viewed at the following link: [WRTA Quarterly Summary July-Sept 2015](#). Below a brief summary has been provided.
- Ridership in general is moving upward as the year-to-date total was 1,036,548 up 34,000. Farebox revenue shows slight monthly increases over the quarter however the fiscal year difference is due to the school reimbursement payment coming in August instead of September. Passengers per Revenue Hour and by Mile are also slightly up by month. Setbacks are lower than last year's first quarter due to less manpower. Route 10 has been adjusted for timing which will stop the slight hike in September's missed trip numbers from continuing.
- Mr. Sanders commented on the increase in FY`16 numbers for July compared to last July FY`15. It was determined that July FY`16 had an additional service weekday and a holiday in the month. Mr. Spiliotis stated the increase is an overall reflection of the upward trend in ridership and how this is above any other considerations. Ms. Blunt then informed the board that the monthly passes increased in October, and use of the Charlie Card is gradually increasing as well. Members agreed an upward trend was taken hold in ridership.

7. Adjournment

- Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to adjourn.
- **Motion: I move the board adjourn. Mr. Spain motion to adjourn and Mr. Lipka seconded.** All voted in favor and the motion to adjourn was accepted. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

8. Next Meeting Date

- The next board meeting will be on December 17, 2015 at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.