



MINUTES of 3/17/2016 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Name

Representing

PRESENT

William Lehtola
John Ostrosky
Mark Binnall
Dennis Lipka
Jacob Sanders
Cheri Carty
Doug Belanger
Robert Spain

Spencer
Shrewsbury
Auburn
Holden
Worcester
Brookfield
Leicester
Millbury

ABSENT

Kelly Burke
Leon Gaumond Jr.
Kristen Las
Brian Palaia
Luz Vega
Michael Ward
Jarrett Conner
Christine Furno
Patrice Rousseau
Rudy Heller
Nancy Lucier
Timothy McInerney
Doug Willardson
Daniel Morgado
Michael Pantos
Ron San Angelo
David Schiller
Sharon Yager

Northborough
Sturbridge
Shrewsbury
Oxford
Regional Ridership
Clinton
Worcester
Douglas
Douglas
Brookfield
West Boylston
Grafton
Grafton
Shrewsbury
Rutland
Southbridge
Charlton
Shrewsbury

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 for February 18, 2016.
- **Motion: I move the board accept the minutes of February 18, 2016.** Mr. Belanger made the motion and Mr. Sanders seconded. All voted in favor and the motion was accepted.
- Mr. Spain entered the board meeting at 8:44 a.m.
- Ms. Carty left the board meeting at 9:45 a.m.

4. Business from the Public

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

5. Business from the Board

Mr. Ostrosky commented about the article in the Sunday T&G regarding conflict of interest requirements pertaining to town officials and board members. As some of the WRTA board members are not town officials they may not be aware of the conflict of interest requirement. Board members discussed the requirements as handled by their towns and the frequency of training needed. It was suggested that the WRTA, for record keeping purposes, should have a copy of the certificate for each advisory board member. Mr. Lehtola asked that Ms. Pokoly update the WRTA board member files by getting a copy from each member's respective town clerk. Mr. Lehtola also recommended that any board member not in an official town position also needs to comply.

Other – Audit & Finance Committee Meeting Schedule (taken out of order by chairperson)

The next Audit and Finance meeting will be set-up within the next three weeks and Ms. Pokoly will notify the committee members.

6. Administrator Report

FY17 Consolidated Budget Presentation

Mr. Coyne gave a brief presentation of the FY17 Draft Operating Budget. A copy of the presentation can be viewed at the following link: [March 17 Advisory Board FY17 Summary](#). Mr. Coyne explained the board's approval timing process. At the board's discretion, the draft budget will go to the Audit and Finance Committee for review of the individual budgets. The budget will be presented by the committee to the full board for approval at the April advisory board meeting. Mr. Coyne commented on how the FY17 budget did not include any fare

increases. Mr. Coyne stated that the last increase was January 2009. Board members discussed having the administration work on creating a fair and balanced future fare increase schedule for the long-term sustainability of the WRTA.

Board Members Discussion for the process of scheduling future fare increases

Mr. Lehtola informed the board that the MBTA raises fares under a particular schedule. Mr. Lehtola commented on the need for the WRTA to start working out their process for future fare increases. Mr. Lehtola reminded the board members over the prior year's budget sessions there was talk about moving forward on this issue. Board members discussed the "pros and cons" of the time lapses between the prior fare increases. Board members also discussed strategies for timing, ridership calculations, and how the "farebox recovery ratio" plays into specific leveling of increases. Board members agreed that fare increases are generally unpopular and how a longer term approach may be the better balance. Board members discussed how smaller increases generally assist the rider even given the slower revenue climb. Mr. Coyne commented that the fare increase in 2009 for ADA paratransit ridership was not double the fixed route fare as allowed by law. Mr. O'Day, Executive Director of SCM Elder Bus, commented on looking into slight increases in their out-of-town fares versus in town fixed travel. Mr. Lehtola asked Mr. O'Day to research the feasibility factor regarding fare increases for the non-ADA rider services.

Update on M&O Construction

Mr. Coyne informed the board members; regarding a question asked at last month's meeting that the transformers are not part of the project budget. He projected they will very likely be part of the monthly utility expense for the facility. Mr. Coyne commented on the roof's roughly three (3) acres size, and told the board it can support any future solar panel use. Mr. Coyne showed pictures of the underground storage tank installation and the further work on building's envelope. Mr. Coyne mentioned how the air will be exchanged six (6) times every hour and that the roof's drainage system has shown positive results keeping rain water off of Quinsigamond Ave. The next tour of the facility has been scheduled for May 19, 2016 at 9:30 AM after the monthly advisory board meeting. Board members agreed with the date and time of the next site tour.

Update on M&O Environmental Clean-up

Some of the twenty-six (26) thousand tons of stock piled coal tar has begun to be removed from the site. Additional funding is needed to remove the stock piled coal tar as well as to continue clearing the site. The timing of this process is linked to when the additional funds can be obtained through the State. We estimated about \$3.5 million but our present funding request is for \$4 million. The construction team has begun to develop a contingency plan should the additional funding not meet with the schedule of the general facility construction. Mr. Coyne will inform the board should any contingencies be implemented and their implications.

Small Bus vs. Large Bus

Mr. Carney gave a presentation “Small Bus vs. Large Bus” which was requested by the Chairperson. This presentation can be viewed at the following link: [Small Bus versus Large Bus 03-16-16](#). Mr. Carney explained how the factors of capacity, cost, and maintenance differ from small to large buses. The general overview did not favor small buses over large buses for the WRTA.

Mr. Coyne stated this was his last time in front of the board as the Interim Administrator. The board members thanked him for his service.

Report of Personnel Committee

Mr. Lipka gave an update from the Personnel Committee. At the last meeting, the board authorized us to offer the administrator’s position to Jonathan Church and to begin negotiations. Those negotiations have successfully concluded and this morning we will execute the contract as per the terms negotiated by the personnel committee. Starting salary is \$115,000 and all benefits are paid in accordance with the WRTA employee manual. Mr. Church will be given four (4) weeks’ vacation and the only interesting thing in the contract is that we will allow him to take a week vacation in April 2016. He would have earned this time as part of the contract term being the balance of the three (3) months in FY`16. The contract length is for three (3) months and three (3) years. There is an evaluation process that is consistent with the employee manual and will start each February and conclude by March. Mr. Spain and Mr. Belanger asked for a vote on the Contract’s acceptance by the full board.

Mr. Lehtola asked for a motion to ratify the contract for Jonathan Church and the terms of the agreement as negotiated.

Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to ratify the contract for Jonathan Church and the terms of the agreement as negotiated by the personnel committee.

Mr. Belanger motion to ratify the contract and Mr. Binnall seconded. All voted in favor and the motion was accepted.

April Advisory Board Meeting Date Change

The Administration requested changing the advisory board meeting date from April 21, 2016 to April 28, 2016. The change is due to the absence of the administrator and assistant administrator being unavailable on the April 21, 2016. Mr. Lehtola informed the board that the Administrator had a prior vacation commitment.

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 9:53 a.m.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next board meeting will be on April 28, 2016* at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor. *Note: This is a changed date for the month of April only.