



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

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**WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 16, 2017
MINUTES**

WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

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

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Board Member present: Mark Binnall-Auburn, John Ostrosky – Shrewsbury, Brian Bullock – Holden, Anita Scheipers – West Boylston, Jarrett Conner-Worcester, Robert Spain – Millbury, William Lehtola – Spencer.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes for October 19, 2017. On motion by Mark Binnall, seconded by Jarrett Conner (John Ostrosky and Robert Spain abstained) the vote carried with the remaining members, the Advisory Board accepted the minutes of October 19, 2017.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chairperson asked if there was any business from the public and no one responded.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Mark Binnall asked about any pending adjustments to the WRTA fixed route schedule due to the recent change in the MBTA commuter rail schedule. Mr. Church informed the board that no fixed route adjustments would be made. Mr. Church stated that the Grafton commuter shuttle would be adjusted. Bill Lehtola commented on the difficulty with continually matching routes in regards to the MBTA's changes. The MBTA makes changes based on their specific goals and the WRTA works to meet ridership needs as much as possible.

John Ostrosky commented on the inquiries he had received regarding the removal of the change machine from the WRTA Hub lobby. Mr. Church explained that it was an operational issue to maintain and refill the machine. The machine had a continual non-rider high volume and was continually breaking down. Also, Mr. Church confirmed that no revenue was made by the WRTA regarding providing a change machine. Mr. Church stated the removal of the change machine was not tied to the recently implemented fare increases.

Board members discussed the recent fare increases in terms of ridership numbers. Board members also discussed the best ways to compare the numbers from one fiscal year to another fiscal year.

Communities Served:

Auburn	Brimfield	Douglas	Grafton	Millbury	North	Paxton	Southbridge	Ware	West Boylston
Barre	Brookfield	Dudley	Holden	New Braintree	Brookfield	Princeton	Spencer	Warren	West
Berlin	Chariton	East	Holland	Northborough	Oakham	Rutland	Sturbridge	Webster	Brookfield
Boylston	Clinton	Brookfield	Leicester	Northbridge	Oxford	Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	Worcester

Mr. Church stated he will report back to the board when all the numbers are available. Mr. Church informed the board members that the FY'19 Budget is in process. The board should expect to see those recommendations in the Spring of 2018.

Anita Scheipers and Brian Bullock requested a copy of the FY'17 Annual Audit Report via email. Mr. Church responded that the information would be sent to them.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

ADMINISTRATIVE

a. FTA notice of upcoming FY'18 Comprehensive Review

Mr. Church announced that the FTA triennial (now Comprehensive) Review is set to happen in FY'18. Mr. Church explained how the WRTA has been addressing the recommendations from the last review in FY'15. Mr. Church is confident in their review process and announced that Ms. Shea will be managing the upcoming review. A site visit is expected in late May in regards to the comprehensive review.

b. Upcoming November 17th meeting with MassDOT Rail and Transit Division for WRTA Program Preview.

The upcoming meeting with MassDOT has been changed to December 6, 2017. Mr. Church stated that Mr. Coyne will also attend this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to answer a list of questions regarding our financial and operation information over the last two years.

CAPITAL

c. Submission of WRTA FY'19 Capital Plan to MassDOT Rail and Transit Division

Mr. Church informed the board that the Administration will meet the October 31, 2017 deadline for submission of their Capital Plan. The plan will encompass FY'19 to FY'23 and this span of time falls within the 2020 bus procurement push. The year 2020 is the first year of the fixed-route fleet's 12 year life timeline. Board members discussed all-electric and clean diesel bus procurements. Mr. Church gave a breakdown of the average costs relating to a clean diesel buses (\$500,000) vs. an all-electric bus (\$600,000 - \$900,000). All-electric buses have seen specific advances in charging technology which would require the WRTA to update its charging stations as well. Mr. Church explained how the industry is favoring overnight charging stations while the WRTA uses a fast charge system for its buses. Board members suggested being ahead of the curve regarding procurement needs and seeking out incentives for lowering costs overall. Board members discussed the importance of a balanced procurement approach and the recent standing budgetary constraints.

Mr. Church stated that a wide view would be taken in regards to procurements. Mr. Church suggested a wait and see approach as the all-electric bus technology is continually changing. Mark Binnall asked if bus parts are saved for future use. Mr. Parker commented on how the practice of saving parts goes with a fleet's maturity schedule and that they do save parts.

FINANCE

d. Update on WRTA Verizon Contract

Mr. Church credited Nicole Rohan and Kathy Jacques for saving the WRTA thirty-six thousand dollars (\$36,000.00). Their efforts to readjust the data plan to actual needs of usage resulted in the savings. Mark Binnall asked if the WRTA had a duplicate phone system as a backup should there be an outage. Mr. Church stated the WRTA does not have a duplicate phone system.

e. Update on Commonwealth Budget for FY'18 – Status of Overrides for Transit

Mr. Church informed the board that the Senate voted to override the veto. The final budget figure for all the RTA's in FY'18 is \$80.4 million. This final figure presents the WRTA with a two hundred and eighty thousand (\$280,000) dollar deficit from the original budget voted in May 2017. Mr. Church updated the board on MARTA's efforts to lobby for the \$1.6 million shortfall in January. Mr. Church stated he will keep the board posted should these efforts prove successful. Upcoming budgeting for FY'19 is being estimated at \$80 million and the Administration is working out projections to handle the impact this decrease will have on the WRTA.

f. ACTION ITEM: FY'17 Annual Audit Approval (recommendation from Audit & Finance Committee meeting on October 19, 2017)

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to approve the Audit and Finance Committee recommendation for acceptance of the FY'17 Annual Audit Report.

Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board approves the recommendation by the Audit and Finance Committee to accept the FY'17 Annual Audit Report as presented by the Administration.

On motion by Robert Spain, seconded Mark Binnall, and carried unanimously, the Advisory Board approves the FY'17 Annual Audit Report as presented by the Administration.

MARKETING/EVENTS

g. Update on plan to promote the Ambubus among local police and fire agencies

Ms. Lyver is working with Ms. Dixon from CMED to complete the necessary information package regarding the use of the Ambubus. Ms. Lyver informed the board that a viewing of the Ambubus was requested by a doctor from UMass Medical Center. The purpose was to show the bus to a visiting doctor from Japan. Mr. Church attended the viewing with Ms. Lyver and details will be in the upcoming newsletter.

h. Update on the potential Stuff-a-bus campaign/update on recent attended events

The negotiations for the campaign with the Rainers fell through. The WRTA has decided to change the location of the food drive to the Hub. The campaign is scheduled to kick off on December 1, 2017 and will conclude on December 20, 2017. Ms. Lyver is in the process of determining which local food bank or organization will receive the donations. Ms. Lyver will include the board members in the upcoming announcement.

i. Update on advertising and potential new clients

There are three pending contracts for December 2017. Ms. Lyver stated the use of vinyl signage and digital display monitors are being reviewed. Mark Binnall suggested contacting the new football team in Worcester for advertising.

j. Newsletter

Mid-December's newsletter will report on the results of the Stuff-a-Bus Campaign and contacts are continuing to be obtained for the mailing list.

k. Plan to update the website

The layout for some of the website pages are being changed in this first step of the redesigning phase.

OTHER

l. First Transit, - Update on Fare boxes and One-Day Passes

Mr. Parker briefed the board members on the recent software updates to the Scheidt & Bachmann fare boxes. These updates were needed to comply with the July 1, 2017 changes and fare increases. Mr. Parker acknowledged problems with day pass into October and very early November 2017. Mr. Parker stated that the day passes are now fully integrated with the 8 rides per day and a 45 minute use again status. The WRTA experienced a higher rate of failures during this period of adjustments. Mr. Parker stated that fare box issues have always been a challenge with this company.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to adjourn. On motion by Robert Spain, seconded by Mark Binnall and carried unanimously, the Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on January 18, 2018 at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.