



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

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WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING APRIL 26, 2018 MINUTES

WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairperson Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Board Member present: Mark Binnall-Auburn, John Ostrosky – Shrewsbury, Brian Bullock – Holden, Anita Scheipers – West Boylston, Rudy Heller – Brookfield, Jacob Sanders - Worcester, Robert Spain – Millbury, Doug Belanger – Leicester, Harry Brooks – Leicester, William Lehtola – Spencer. *Stacy Barr & Mary Brodeur – Oxford entered 8:38am, Ron San Angelo – Southbridge entered 9:20am.*

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes for March 15, 2018. On motion by Doug Belanger, seconded by Mark Binnall (Rudy Heller, Anita Scheipers, John Ostrosky, Robert Spain abstained) the vote was carried and the Advisory Board accepted the minutes of March 15, 2018.

Chairperson Lehtola announced Mary Brodeur as a new board member for Oxford. Stacy Barr introduced Mary Brodeur. Doug Belanger introduced Harry Brooks as an appointed alternate board member for the town of Leicester.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ms. Terry Kelly questioned the low percentage of direct ridership revenue and suggested that no fares should be charged for service. Ms. Terry Kelly argued that having no fares would mean more ridership and this would benefit grant funding chances for the WRTA. Ms. Terry Kelly stated that things need to change because cutting services and raising fares is too much of a loss for everyone. Ms. Terry Kelly suggested that the administration and board write to President Trump for money regarding the WRTA's needs.

Board members discussed how state funding is used for operations and federal funding is used for capital purchases. There was no specific discussion or vote by the board members regarding the proposed service changes at this time.

Communities Served:

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

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

John Ostrosky asked for the specific timeframe regarding on-time performance measures. Mr. Trabucco responded that 5 minutes was the window in this regard. John Ostrosky commented on the riders using route 15 having issue with being late on Thursday mornings. Mr. Parker stated he would look into the matter and address the problem. Mark Binnall asked which bus serviced Salem Street in Worcester. It was confirmed that Route 40 covers that area.

DISSCUSSION OF POTENTIAL NEW REVENUE STREAM FOR THE WRTA

Doug Belanger addressed the board regarding a potential new revenue stream for WRTA. Doug Belanger explained how considering alternative sources of funding is vital to the long term viability of the RTA's. Ridership revenue (about 13%) plays a less than sufficient role in the overall operations budget while State funding remains unpredictable from year to year.

Doug Belanger recommended a one cent earmark off the gas tax. Board members discussed the effectiveness of earmarking money as a partial supplement. Bob Spain commented on the difference between complete funding and supplemental funding. Bob Spain believed that earmarked supplemental funding may cause a decline in other state sources of money. Doug Belanger suggested the earmarked supplemental funding be for a specific allocation within the budget of the WRTA. Doug Belanger expressed this may help to avoid declines going forward. Jacob Sanders inquired if MARTA had reviewed this option. Mr. Church indicated that MARTA has not reviewed this potential new revenue stream. Board members discussed the importance of having the support of legislators as well as MassDOT.

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion in regards to having Administration talk with MARTA and other affiliates.

Motion: I move that: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to direct the Administration to discuss with MARTA and other affiliates the possibility of earmarking one cent from the gas tax.

On motion by Doug Belanger, seconded by Robert Spain, and carried unanimously, the Advisory Board voted to direct the Administration to discuss with MARTA and other affiliates.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

REPORTS

- a. *Update on Public Meetings held to date Potential Service Modification Scenarios based on Governor's FY'19 Budget*

Mr. Church reviewed the highlights from the public meeting report emailed to the board members. Mr. Church stated that all the meetings were well attended and the general consensus was not to cut any services. The survey will continue to gather public comments until a board vote has been taken.

b. *Update on House Budget Released in early April*

The House budget figure was released for all the RTA's at \$80 million dollars. Mr. Church informed the board members that the house is presently working on an amendment for funding the full \$88.0 million dollars for the RTA's.

c. *Update on talks with City of Worcester for Police Substation at Union Station*

The WRTA will contribute \$15,000 dollars in FY'19 towards the City of Worcester's Police Substation at Union Station. Mr. Church informed the board members that the contribution will come out of the money allocated for Hub security.

FINANCIAL

d. *Presentation and FY 2019 WRTA Budget*

Mr. Coyne acknowledged the current House figure of \$80.0 million for the RTA's and stated that the House may still change this figure to the \$80.4 million given for FY'18. The WRTA FY'19 budget will be \$25,454,969 dollars. WRTA, PBSTM and Elderbus Services were level funded for FY'19 but CMTM will need to reduce operations by \$558,000. This needed reduction would mean operations will not be funded at the current level for the entire year of FY'19. The deficit total on an \$80.0 million funding level totals about \$670,000. The WRTA will use \$112,000 in federal funds and realized decreases in estimated costs on health insurance and diesel fuel to assist with the offset of funding.

Board members discussed the many variables attached to the present process of having to approve a balanced budget for the WRTA before the state funding is officially finalized. Mr. Coyne detailed the following funding options based on the total amount given to the RTA's.

- \$88.0 million - fully funded for FY'19
- \$82.0 million - 2% more over last year and would require some service cuts or changes
- \$80.4 million - deficit at \$670,000 and the Advisory Board will need to make cuts

Mr. Coyne explained how adjustments to this budget (once approved) will be necessary depending upon the final funding levels from the Commonwealth.

The chairperson asked for a motion to approve the presented balanced budget for the WRTA Fiscal Year 2019.

Motion: I move that: The WRTA Advisory Board moves to approve the Fiscal Year 2019 Operating Budget in the amount of \$25,454,969.

On motion by Robert Spain, seconded by Doug Belanger, and carried unanimously, the Advisory Board voted to approve the Fiscal Year 2019 Operating Budget in the amount of \$25,454,969.

MARKETING/EVENTS

e. Annual Report

The 2017 WRTA Annual Report has been posted to the WRTA website.

f. Marketing update-new clients

St Vincent Hospital purchased two bus wraps for six months to promote their 25 Anniversary. Department of Public Health is running ads in May.

g. Buck-Bus

The Worcester Railers will be on site April 30, 2018. The Buck- Bus promotion is a one-day-only game show which selects passengers aboard the WRTA buses to win cash and prizes by correctly answering local trivia questions. Congressman McGovern will be in attendance and participate. Tom “Tuesday” Matthews from the Worcester Railers will host the event. Video of the Buck-Bus will be shared on all social media channels including WRTA, Worcester Regional Research Bureau, and the Railers.

h. MCPHS Health Fair & RAC Meeting update

The WRTA attended the MCPHS Health Fair. A list of actionable items is being reviewed for the RAC to comply with.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Church announced that Mr. Coyne would be leaving the WRTA. His last day of employment is May 11, 2018. Chairperson Lehtola thanked Mr. Coyne for his solid and confident work over his 16 years of service to the WRTA. Board members commented on his due diligence in regards to the budgeting and how this has assisted them. Jacob Sanders stated how Mr. Coyne’s leaving is a huge loss for the WRTA and on behalf of the City of Worcester he will be missed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to adjourn. On motion by Doug Belanger, seconded by Mark Binnall and carried unanimously, the Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on May 17, 2018 at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.