



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

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WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MAY 17, 2018 MINUTES

WRTA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairperson Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Board Member present: Mark Binnall-Auburn, John Ostrosky – Shrewsbury, Barbara Connelly – Grafton, Mary Brodeur – Oxford, Brian Bullock – Holden, Leon Gaumond – Sturbridge, Ron San Angelo – Southbridge, Robert Spain – Millbury, Jacob Sanders -Worcester, William Lehtola – Spencer. *John Ostrosky left 9:50am.*

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chairperson Lehtola asked for a motion to accept the minutes for April 26, 2018. On motion by Robert Spain, seconded by Mark Binnall the vote was carried unanimously the Advisory Board accepted the minutes of April 26, 2018.

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 for details about PBSTM’s scheduling system break down last week. Mr. Church informed the board members that the server went down on May 10th in the morning and was fixed later in the day. Mr. Parker explained how both the main server and back-up server had crashed. They were able to input the prior days back-up to assist and now the system/ servers have been fixed and/or replaced. Board members discussed the importance of consistent back-ups. Mr. Church commended Ms. Kosterski and her team for their handling of the situation.

Mark Binnall requested that the announcement system includes the bus route number.

Ron San Angelo asked if WRTA drivers were trained in safety. Mr. Parker stated that all new drivers are trained and periodically the driver’s training is appropriately updated. Ron San Angelo spoke about the use and availability of Narcan and questioned whether it is a service the drivers should participate in. Mr. Lehtola asked the Administration to bring the subject up at the next MARTA meeting. Mr. Church will report back to the board regarding research on this issue.

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

Jacob Sanders commented on the need for a better designed system map. Mr. Church replied he is working with Ms. Lyver as well as a graphic design team in this regard. Jacob Sanders asked if Bus Tracker was an application for mobile devices. Mr. Church explained that Bus Tracker was not an application for mobile devices but he is in talks with several companies as to that possibility. Jacob Sanders suggested putting a Charlie Card picture (sticker) over the orange card reader on the fare boxes.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

REPORTS

a. Update on approved FY'19 House Budget and release of Senate FY'19 Budget

The House budget figure was released for all the RTA's at \$82 million dollars but \$2 million of that is in the form of a competitive grant. The RTA's formula budget would actually be at \$80 million which would leave the WRTA with a deficit of \$670,000. The Senate Budget was released last week with a figure of \$88 million, however \$4 million of that is in the form of a competitive grant. So the base figures as released; House base budget is \$80 million and the Senate is \$84 million. Both bills now go to the House Conference Committee to work out the differences and a decision is expected in June 2018.

Board members asked about the grant and the prospect that the WRTA could secure this money. Mr. Church explained that the grant portion would be issued to various RTA's that meets the specific MassDOT requirements and sign a MOV related to system performance. It is a one-time grant to help with achieving compliance with MassDOT's reporting recommendations. Mr. Church informed the board that the WRTA (as of this date) has met MassDOT's requirements and therefore would not be a candidate for the grant. Board members discussed the low base budgeting number from the House and acknowledged the Senate's higher figure. There were concerns expressed regarding future funding trends given how no formula change was made for this fiscal year. Mr. Lehtola commented on how it feels as if the RTA's are being punished by the proportioning of this year's funding. Mr. Lehtola indicated that State money is used for operational expenses and those expenses change year to year. Mr. Lehtola expressed his disappointment in the inability to sustain or grow service under this form of appropriation by MassDOT. Board members agreed that the funding levels coming from the State are not providing the necessary assistance for the regional ridership. Board members discussed their growing concern for service changes and cuts looming into future fiscal years if changes at the State level do not happen.

b. Update on discussion with MARTA on potential new revenue stream for RTA's

The member RTA's voiced concerns about jeopardizing existing state funding should they lobby for a gas tax percentage under a new revenue stream. Members did agree to research other local tax options and other incentives. A report will be issued regarding possible revenue streams. Mr. Church will follow-up with the Board.

c. *Update on FTA Comprehensive Review Site Visit*

The site visit is set for May 21st and 22nd and Administration has been preparing under the direction of Ms. Diane Shea. The FTA Comprehensive Review is done every three (3) years and looks at the Authority's financial/program compliance. Mr. Church will follow-up with the Board when the report has been issued.

MARKETING/EVENTS

d. *Buck-Bus- Potential Worcester Railers partnership*

The Buck-Bus promotion was considered a success and the Worcester Railers are planning to make this an annual event. Ms. Lyver informed the board that talks are in the works for future partnerships but no details have been worked out yet.

e. *St. Vincent Hospital wrap reveal*

St Vincent Hospital purchased two bus wraps for six months to promote their 25th Anniversary. The wraps are now on the buses and feature an on the window display format. Ms. Lyver stated that the company is very happy with the look of the wraps and acknowledged the work of the operations crew in this regard.

f. *Rider Advisory Committee Requests – Adopt-A-Stop and Flyers in the Lobby and on the Buses*

The Rider Advisory Committee members are working on the details for rolling out an Adopt-A-Stop campaign. There is also a recommendation for having Charlie Card savings flyers be placed on the buses and in the Hub lobby. All WRTA buses presently have Charlie Card savings interior ad cards on public view.

g. *Youth Pass for Summer Recreation Program*

The regularly budgeted free youth pass program will begin on June 18, 2018 and run until August 18, 2018. There are 1,000 youth passes to be distributed to low income individuals who are attending the Summer Recreation Program.

WRTA SYSTEM ORIENTATION FOR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Church gave a brief presentation of the WRTA systems orientation slide show used by the WRTA Travel Trainer. The presentation outlined the WRTA services, fares, paratransit services, and general use of the facility and buses.

Jacob Sanders asked for a report on the average wait time at the Hub. Mr. Church stated he would look into this. Jacob Sanders questioned the trip planner aspect of the WRTA Website. Mr. Church explained that both Google Transit and under Bus Tracker (Clever Devices) there is the ability to plan a trip. Mr. Sanders stated that one simple and identifiable approach may be better.

The WRTA is working on improvements at bus stops which includes shelter replacements and additional QR Code signage at stops.

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 10:03 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on June 21, 2018 at 8:30 a.m., located at the hub 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.