



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

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Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting Minutes April 18, 2019

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

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

Present: Mark Binnall - Auburn, John Ostrosky – Shrewsbury, Barbara Connelly – Grafton, Michael Suprenant – Sturbridge, Brian Bullock - Holden, Jacob Sanders – Worcester, Robert Spain – Millbury, and William Lehtola - Spencer.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes for March 21, 2019 and executive minutes September 20, 2018 and October 18, 2018.

By: Jacob Sanders. 2nd: Mark Binnall. (John Ostrosky, Robert Spain abstained)

Vote: All In favor (6 in favor 0 opposed 2 abstention).

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

Public comment was made regarding updating the website to reflect how the on-time arrival numbers are qualified. Ms. Terry Kelly asked for the change machines to be brought back into the lobby. Mr. Parker explained that the machines were removed some time ago due to excessive maintenance costs and mechanical issues. Ms. Terry Kelly commented on issues regarding the WRTA Hub lobby bathrooms. Mr. Lipka informed the board that smoke detectors were being installed as well as hand dryers. Mr. Lipka spoke about long term solutions which involved major facility planning to extend the bathrooms for better public use. There was no confirmation of funding or timeline in this regard. A missed trip on Rt. 23 was reported and Mr. Parker will review. Comments were made about the needed upgrade to vans when substituted for non-working electric buses. Mr. Lipka informed the board that capital funds would need to be used to buy vans with the necessary IT upgrades and they are presently looking into this.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Board members discussed the upgrades to the fleet's electric buses. Mr. Lipka informed them the upgrades to the bus chargers will be covered by Proterra. The WRTA's commitment to alternative fuels remains a priority and will include reviewing other companies.

Communities Served:

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

AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Audit & Finance committee met on April 16, 2019 and reviewed the FY'20 budget items in detail with Administration. The committee recommended to the advisory board the FY'20 budget in the amount of \$26,980,054 as presented.

Ms. Shea presented the board with the FY'20 consolidated budget which included the FY'19 budgeted figures. Ms. Shea presented a FY'20 consolidated budget presentation detailing the budget allocations. Increases in health insurance are budgeted at 8%, 5% increase in Union wages is absorbed in this year, minimum wage adjustments throughout the company, 2% for applicable employees. Ms. Shea answered Ms. Kristen Las's questions regarding CMTM line item and explained FY'19 was narrowed and now the figure is back to normal operating needs.

Board member discussed the process of revenue anticipation notes. Ms. Shea stated that the notes are needed due to the allocation timing of RTA's funding sources. Board members discussed how savings on that interest could be achieved if funding sources allocated monies based upon the nature of the transit business. Jacob Sanders asked if this was brought up at MARTA. Mr. Lipka responded how MARTA is aware and all RTA's handle the timing of allocated monies based upon their needs. Board members discussed the reserve account's cap and the need to have the statute changed in the law to allow for an expansion in the cap.

Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority's Advisory Board accepts the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee to approve the FY'20 Budget in the amount of \$26,980,054. as presented on April 18, 2019.

By: Robert Spain 2nd: Mark Binnall.

Voted: All in favor (8 in favor 0 opposed)

BUDGET 2020

Mr. Lipka gave a brief summary of the projects and priorities for FY'20. Administration is looking into facility maintenance improvements, Tobacco Free campaign, increased safety and security with Worcester Police. Grant priorities are focused on solar lighting shelter(s), fleet buses and a cashless fare collection system. Administration is continuing to seek partnerships with healthcare facilities, Worcester institutions, and businesses to promote sustainable public transit access.

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE TASKFORCE

Mr. Lipka stated that the taskforce is wrapping up its sessions and has recommended in its draft report \$90.5 million for the RTA's.

UPDATE ON GRANTS AWARDED

MassDOT discretionary funding program for FY'19 was recapped by Ms. Shea. The WRTA was awarded two grants totaling \$346,200 broken down as capital \$131,000 and operating \$215,200. The Paratransit online trip reservation system will be implemented which includes a pilot for rural community service for next day trip reservations. Ms. Shea stated that the grant money can be spent over both FY'19 and FY'20 given the current timeframe of its release.

START OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH LOCAL 22 AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

The Contract negotiations are set for September 1, 2019. Due to time constraints this item was not discussed and no executive session was held.

RE-ROUTING PRESENTATION

Mr. Burnham gave a presentation outlining the proposed service modifications. Any changes after public hearings would be voted on by the Advisory Board and take effect June 2019.

Route 2, no longer serve Mower Street, on Sundays only would divert at Park Ave to service upper Chandler Street and end at Tatnuck Sq; Outbound: by request only Mower St – on all service days.

Route 7 on Sundays only would stay on Chandler St instead of serving Health Center which is closed on Sundays;

Route 11 – service hours on Sunday increased/extended;

Route 14, weekend service stopped, reduced summer schedule (June 22-August 24) to retain hourly coverage;

Route 16/31 Saturday service increased from the Saturday stopped on Rt 14;

Route 24 – re-routed to cover North Main Street to replace Route 40, extra 24A trips moved to regular Route 24;

Route 25 – restructured after Canterbury Street, turn right on Cambridge, to serve Price Chopper and EOL at Webster Square Plaza, no weekend service;

Route 26 – Saturday service increased;

Route 29 – eliminate portion of route in center of Charlton, extend route in downtown

Southbridge to EOL at Big Bunny Plaza;

Route 40 – replaced with Park Avenue Connector route running between Webster Sq Plaza and Greendale Mall.

Jacob Sanders commented on having route names as opposed to numbers for the buses.

Mr. Lipka stated that the presented service modifications were discussed internally at all levels and he will be going to any public hearings. Mr. Lipka stated that the purpose of the proposed modifications are consistent with WRTA's ongoing service planning process and are not a reduction in overall service. Mr. Lipka briefed the board on the importance of providing service where the people go or may desire to go. The budget is based upon \$88 million and these proposed service modifications keep the same level of service as was in FY'10 with no fare increases.

Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority's Advisory Board authorizes the administration to hold public hearings in regards to the service modifications as presented by administration to the Advisory Board on this day, April 18, 2019. By: Robert Spain 2nd: Brian Bullock.

Voted: All in favor (8 in favor 0 opposed)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:43a.m. By: Brian Bullock,

2nd: Michael Suprenant

Vote: All in favor (8 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on May 16, 2019 at 8:30 a.m., located at the Hub, 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R Pokoly