



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

Union Station Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester, MA 01608

508.453.3403 Fax: 508.752.1676 therta.com

Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting Minutes August 15, 2019

Chairperson Lehtola called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

Present: Mark Binnall - Auburn, Kristen Las – Shrewsbury, Barbara Connelly – Grafton, Harry Brooks – Leicester, Adam Menard - Auburn, Jacob Sanders – Worcester, Robert Spain – Millbury, and William Lehtola - Spencer. Candria Gray – Worcester Ridership entered at 8:48am and left the executive session 9:32am.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes for June 20, 2019

By: Robert Spain. 2nd: Mark Binnall.

Vote: All In favor (7 in favor 0 opposed).

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

A representative for Worcester Community Connections (WCC) spoke to the board about their efforts and their support for the WRTA to eliminate fares. A summary of the Worcester Regional Research Bureau’s report was passed out to the board by the WCC Representative. Chairperson Lehtola asked how other fare free systems supplement their budgets. Responses implied that local businesses, community based organizations, colleges, government grants, and advertising revenue were used however no specific funding strategies were presented or explained. Mr. Steve McClure of Tasks for Transit spoke in favor of a fare free system and how it benefits those most in need. Board members discussed the concept of a fare free system and the need for further study on all levels acknowledging that sustainable long term funding would be extremely important to consider moving forward.

Mr. Lipka explained how the present fare boxes are ineffective and costly to maintain as well as technologically outdated. Mr. Lipka informed the board that the present fare box contract is up for renewal and the WRTA is researching alternatives that will offer better collections, phone app payments, and more pricing flexibility. Mr. Lipka spoke about the State government’s requirements for count data reporting and the importance that those reporting requirements continue regardless of the fare system chosen.

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

Mr. Lipka clarified that any changes to routes and services need to have Union approval and these approvals are contracted for specific times throughout the year. Furthermore, the Administrator has no authority to override this agreement.

Mr. Lipka stated that moving forward they would be continuing to research the best fare collection systems. Jacob Sanders proposed that the WRTA study the feasibility of a Fare Free system. Jacob Sanders stated Mr. Lipka's fare system analyst and a Fare Free feasibility study could be reviewed within the same timeframe. Jacob Sanders proposed a motion for a Fare Free feasibility study. Mr. Lipka suggested that the Audit and Finance Committee review any studies and make their recommendation to the board.

Motion: The WRTA Advisory board directs the Administration to conduct a study on fare collection systems which will include the feasibility of Free Fare Systems.

By: Jacob Sanders 2nd: Robert Spain.

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

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Mark Binnall asked about new or expanded service for the Edgemere Drive-in property. Kristen Las, Shrewsbury board representative commented on the mixed use of the property and how they would be looking into any possibilities. Jacob Sanders asked if the WRTA's homepage could have an announcement prompt for ease of access on current topics. Mr. Lipka stated that the website despite its comprehensiveness is not "quick access" friendly. Mr. Lipka stated that Ms. Lyver would look into what changes may be done. Chairperson Lehtola asked for reports on the ridership numbers to be sent to the board members. Mr. Lipka response that CMRPC would be working on providing the necessary reports on the 2019 ridership data.

AUGUST SERVICE CHANGES

Mr. Lipka gave a brief presentation of the proposed service modifications. An acceptable solution was found for the Millbury modifications between Millbury's board representative Robert Spain and CMTM Operations. There was no further discussion regarding the service modifications.

Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority's Advisory Board votes to approve the service modifications, on August 15, 2019 and giving administration authority for the minor adjustments for implementation of the service modifications as of August 24, 2019.

By: Robert Spain 2nd: Mark Binnall.

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

FY2020 BUDGET

Mr. Lipka informed the board that this year's increase in funding over FY19 is 3.2% or a total of \$379,000. Mr. Lipka presented the board members with copies of the signed MOU for review. Chairperson Lehtola informed the board about the fee and interest payment that was occurred by the WRTA due to the late payment of the State's contract assistance monies. Chairperson Lehtola commented how that cost lowers the increase funding amount they received with no direct purpose to the company's operations. Mr. Lipka stated that an amended budget will be presented to the board at the September meeting reflecting the final figures.

GRANT OPPORTUNITITES

Mr. Lipka briefed the board pertaining to the additional State Contract Assistance monies which total \$3.5 million. Mr. Lipka informed the board that MassDOT has not specified the guidelines for distribution or any other specific specifications as of this meeting.

LABOR CONTRACT NEGOTIATION WITH LOCAL 22 AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

Chairperson Lehtola requested that the Advisory Board go into executive to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining.

Motion: I move that the Advisory Board votes to meet in executive session to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and if the chair so declares, pursuant, to G.L. c.30A, sec 21(3). With the Advisory Board returning to Open Session for the sole purpose to adjourn.

On Motion by Robert Spain, seconded Kristen Las, and carried unanimously, the Chairperson and Advisory Board members took a roll call vote to approve this action at 9:30 a.m.

Mark Binnall	Yes
Kristen Las	Yes
Barbara Connelly	Yes
Candria Gray	Yes
Harry Brooks	Yes
Jacob Sanders	Yes
Robert Spain	Yes
William Lehtola	Yes

Executive Session – The Advisory Board went out of open meeting at 9:30 a.m.

The Advisory Board went into open session meeting at 9:55 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:57a.m.
By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Kristen Las
Vote: All in favor (7 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on September 19, 2019 at 8:30 a.m., located at the Hub, 60 Foster Street, Worcester, MA 01608 3rd floor.