



Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting Minutes November 19, 2020

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

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present by teleconference: Barbara Connelly-Grafton, Hollie Lucht – Shrewsbury, Mark Binnall- Auburn, Gary Rosen-Worcester, Douglas Belanger-Leicester, Ron San Angelo- Rutland, Robert Spain-Millbury, Nancy Garr-Colzie-Worcester DP, Brian Pigeon-Worcester Alt. Adam Menard-Auburn Alt. and William Lehtola - Spencer. Arrived 8:35am Michael Ward-Clinton, 8:40am, 8:51am Michael Suprenant-Sturbridge.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes for September 17, 2020

By: Doug Belanger. 2nd: Barbara Connelly.

Vote by roll call: (7 in favor 2 abstained 0 opposed) vote passed.

Barbara Connelly	yes
Hollie Lucht	abstained
Mark Binnall	yes
Gary Rosen	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes
Ron San Angelo	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Nancy Garr-Colzie	abstained
William Lehtola	yes

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC - no submissions via email to admin@therta.com

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Request from Gary Rosen – Update Worcester Research Bureau Report.

Gary Rosen tabled discussion for the December board meeting. Gary Rosen informed the board of an upcoming forum by the Zero Fare Coalition on November 30, 2020. Gary Rosen requested that Elizabeth Pokoly forward the meeting information to the board members.

Mark Binnall reported on the new apartment complex being considered on the Auburn/Oxford line. Mark Binnall requested a bus shelter be considered for this development. Mr. Lipka stated he would reach out to Adam Menard for updates on the development process of this apartment complex. Gary Rosen commented on the proposed discontinuing of commuter rail line to and from Boston. Gary Rosen asked if this would affect the WRTA. Mr. Lipka acknowledged that planning for a more viable airport to union station service would be hindered but generally WRTA riders do not use the service for connecting to MBTA commuter rail. Mr. Lipka also noted that the WRTA has not been part of any discussion/decision with the MBTA regarding scheduling changes.

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	



Mr. Lipka commented that any new fare system would not be linked to the MBTA or its Charlie Card. Mr. Lipka informed the board that the MBTA has contracted with Scheidt & Bachmann but will be eliminating their Charlie Card.

Nancy Garr-Colzie thanked the board regarding her term in the position of Worcester Disabled Passenger. Nancy Garr-Colzie stated she would be retuning as Worcester’s Rider Community Population position (WRCP). At the time of the board meeting this is an unofficial announcement for the WRCP position. Gary Rosen thanked the administration, driver’s and staff for their excellent work keeping the WRTA operational during Covid-19.

Mr. Lipka asked that anyone requesting to present or speak about fare issues (at the December meeting) please send contact information and any documents to Elizabeth at admin@therta.com.

UPDATE ON AUDIT

Mr. Lipka reported that there were no findings to the annual audit. Mr. Lipka acknowledged the work done by Tom Coyne pertaining to the success of the audit. Chairperson Lehtola acknowledged that no Audit and Finance committee meeting would be needed. Mr. Lipka updated the board regarding MassDOT’s bi-annual audit now in progress. The Administration will send a copy of this audit report to the board upon request.

RFP FOR FARE COLLECTION SYSTEM

Mr. Lipka announced that an RFP for a new fare collection system will be released within the next couple of weeks. They are hoping to complete the entire process in the next calendar year. Mr. Lipka stated an executive summary would be sent to the board in December.

WRTA FARE POLICY ADOPTION

The purpose for adopting a formal fare policy is to meet the requirements of the MOU’s signed by all the RTA’s. The purpose of the fare policy is to establish process and procedures written for: regular and recurring fare reviews, and consideration of periodic fare adjustments. The policy details the current fare structure as of July 1, 2017 and listed timelines. Mr. Lipka informed the board that the implication of fares is under suspension due to the unique circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic. Ron San Angelo expressed concerns about the timelines in the policy. Mr. Lipka stated that timelines may need to be adjusted with a new fare system. Board members questioned having a policy adopted before a new fare system. Mr. Lipka stated that the policy would be under review before the new fare system was adopted. Mr. Lipka spoke about the board’s careful deliberations concerning fares and fiscal responsibility. Mr. Lipka informed the board that MassDOT needs this policy by December 31, 2020.

Gary Rosen asked if the administration would be reviewing all options including zero fares. Mr. Lipka stated that adoption of this policy does not exclude addressing zero fare or any other options. Gary Rosen stated he understands that the policy needs to be adopted but expressed concern about for how others may perceive it. Mr. Lipka stated that when the new fare system is in place the policy will be updated and that this policy offers no hinderance to any changes.

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Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board adopts the Fare Policy on behalf of the WRTA as presented by Administration to the board on November 19, 2020.

By: Douglas Belanger. 2nd: Robert Spain.

Vote by roll call: (9 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed.

Barbara Connelly	yes
Hollie Lucht	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Gary Rosen	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes
Ron San Angelo	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Nancy Garr-Colzie	yes
William Lehtola	yes

WRTA PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN (PTASP)

Mr. Nick Burnham gave a brief presentation on the WRTA Public Safety Plan. The plan was developed to comply with the new FTA regulation. The WRTA worked with Cambridge Systemics to create this document. The plan provides a comprehensive, collaborative approach to managing safety. The plan lists safety performance measures, roles and responsibilities for safety management policy, safety risk management process, monitoring and measurements as well as promotion and communication. Mr. Lipka asked that the board adopt the plan as presented. The plan is due to the FTA by December 31, 2020.

Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board adopts the public safety plan (PTASP) on behalf of the WRTA as presented by Administration to the board on November 19, 2020.

By: Douglas Belanger. 2nd: Mark Binnall.

Vote by roll call: (11 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed.

Barbara Connelly	yes
Hollie Lucht	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Gary Rosen	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes
Ron San Angelo	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Nancy Garr-Colzie	yes
Michael Suprenant	yes
Michael Ward	yes
William Lehtola	yes

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Douglas Belanger commented on how the adopted fare policy may give rise to confusion about the board’s intentions and suggested a motion to clarify.

Motion: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board hereby reaffirms the suspension of fares until the board formally acts in any other way.

By: Douglas Belanger. 2nd: Robert Spain.

Vote by roll call: (10 in favor 1 abstained 0 opposed) vote passed.

Barbara Connelly	yes
Hollie Lucht	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Gary Rosen	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes
Ron San Angelo	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Nancy Garr-Colzie	yes
Michael Suprenant	yes
Michael Ward	yes
William Lehtola	abstained

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:29 a.m.

By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Barbara Connelly

Vote: All in favor (11 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on December 17, 2020 at 8:30 a.m., via teleconference due to the Governor’s State of Emergency provisions for public meetings.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R Pokoly

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