

Approved 3/21/19

Pursuant to written notice sent to Board Members and pursuant to notice posted at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting, copies of said notice having been sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, William F. Galvin and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Michael Heffernan, the meeting of the Advisory Board of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on May 17, 2018 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following Advisory Board Members and/or Member Designees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland	2.07
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	6.32
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	25.77
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00
Jeff Singleton	Montague	12.91
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67
Edward Gibson	Southampton	1.92
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54
Jonathan von Ranson	Wendell	1.29
Richard Tillberg	Whately	2.36
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	<u>1.00</u>
	Total	58.85

Also present were:

Tina M. Cote; FRTA Administrator, Michael Perreault; FRTA Assistant Administrator, Ed Sanborn, FRTA Bookkeeper, Molly Morin; FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine; FTM Assistant General Manager, George Touloumtzis; FRTA Transit Advisory Committee Chairman, and members of the public Elizabeth Quirk, and John Parks.

Chairman Lance Fritz called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was** present to hold a meeting. Lance Fritz asked if anyone would object to moving Agenda Item #13 (Review and Vote on Proposed By-Law Updates) ahead of Agenda Item #11 (Nomination/Election of Clerk for FY19-21). Without objection those agenda items were moved.

2. REVIEW AND VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES FROM MARCH 15, 2018 MEETING:

Peter Otten made a **motion** to accept the meeting minutes from the March 15, 2018 meeting. Robert J. Decker III seconded, the vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

John Parks commented that FRTA should eliminate the Route 23 4:10pm trip but keep the 6:10pm trip. Keeping the 6:10pm trip would be better for people that are working in the Amherst area living in Millers Falls, Turners Falls, and Greenfield.

Elizabeth Quirk commented that FRTA should survey riders to get a more completed picture of what riders want.

Jeff Singleton commented that the Town of Montague should have a more in-depth conversation with FRTA regarding transportation priorities.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

5. REVIEW AND VOTE ON PROPOSED FIXED ROUTE FARE CHANGES:

See attached PowerPoint presentation. Fixed Route fares were proposed to be \$1.50 for full fare and \$0.75 for reduced fare riders. In addition, the unlimited monthly pass was proposed to be \$40 for full fare and \$25 for reduced fare riders. Peter Otten made a **motion** to accept the fixed route fare changes as proposed effective July 1, 2018. Robert J. Decker III seconded and discussion followed. John Parks stated that he is on a fixed income and fare increases will hurt his personal budget. Elizabeth Quirk stated that she also is on a fixed income but that FRTA should assess the best means for people to pay bus fares and setting fare rates. Ruth Preston asked if riders are aware of the different reduced fare options. Tina M. Cote explained that information about our reduced fare and different qualifications is found on FRTA's website, applications, and brochures, as well as discussed at public outreach sessions. Jonathan von Ranson asked if there was any FRTA could have a sliding scale for fixed route fares or other concessions for low income riders. Tina M. Cote stated that it would be difficult to adopt and implement sliding scale fares. Lance Fritz suggested that if board members are not happy with the proposed fare changes they could make an amendment to the motion.

Eric Twarog made an amendment to the **motion** to reduce the proposed reduced fare unlimited monthly pass from \$25 to \$20. Tracy Rogers seconded, and discussion continued. Eric Twarog explained his rationale for the amendment would make the unlimited monthly pass increases for both full fare and reduced fare proportional to each other. Richard Tillberg asked what the financial impact of the amended motion would be on service delivery. Tina M. Cote explained that she didn't know the immediate impact and would need to review data from current purchase patterns to help determine. Robert J. Decker III suggested that FRTA review the impact on the fare changes in January 2019 and report back to the Advisory Board at the following meeting. There was some additional discussion that PVRTA had recently increased their full fare monthly use passes from \$45 to \$54 and their reduced fare monthly use passes from \$22 to \$26. Jeff Singleton reiterated that while he is on a fixed income the FRTA has a tremendous list of unmet needs including weekend service and evening service and that charging people more money for the service is justifiable. The vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland	2.07	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	6.32	No
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	25.77	Yes
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00	No
Jeff Singleton	Montague	12.91	No
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67	Yes
Edward Gibson	Southampton	1.92	No
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54	No
Jonathan von Ranson	Wendell	1.29	No
Richard Tillberg	Whately	2.36	Yes
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	1.00	Yes
		<u>Total</u>	
		58.85	

Yes – 32.87
No – 25.98

The vote passed and the amendment to the **motion** carried.

Peter Otten commented that there was discussion at the last Finance and Audit Committee meeting which suggested that FRTA and the Advisory Board work to create a schedule for implementation of regular, incremental fare increases moving forward.

The **motion** was now amended to accept the fixed route fares changes effective July 1, 2018 as \$1.50 for full fare; \$0.75 for reduced fare; \$40 for the full fare unlimited monthly pass; and \$20 for the reduced fare unlimited monthly pass. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

6. REVIEW AND VOTE ON PROPOSED DEMAND RESPONSE FARE CHANGES:

FRTA proposed that the fares for demand response transportation be \$1.75 for trips within the same town, \$2.25 for trips to an adjacent town, and \$2.75 for trips beyond an adjacent town for towns serviced by Franklin Transit Management (FTM). For all other towns the proposed fare will be \$1.25 for trips within the same town, \$1.75 for trips to an adjacent town, and \$2.25 for trips beyond an adjacent town. Escorts/PCAs travelling with a demand response consumer will be charged \$0.75. Peter made a **motion** to accept the demand response fare changes as proposed. Robert J. Decker III seconded and discussion followed. Tracy Rogers asked about the differences between fares from FTM-operated service and service for the other towns. Tina M. Cote explained that FTM employs union drivers, mainly full-time positions, which includes higher pay and benefits versus the services operated by COAs and other providers. Jeff Singleton requested to hold a discussion at the next Advisory Board meeting on ride sharing and the fare structure. Richard Tillberg suggested that the fares seem low and asked if there was an interim solution to a long-term plan. Tina M. Cote explained that there hasn't been a fare increase for demand response transportation since 2009 and that FRTA has requested capital funding to do a service analysis study on the demand response services similar to the study on the fixed route services from 2015. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

FRTA proposed fares for the Med-Ride program increase to \$0.40 per mile. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to accept the Med-Ride fare changes as proposed. Peter Otten seconded, and discussion followed. Jonathan von Ranson asked how the drivers were reimbursed through the Med-Ride program. Tina M. Cote explained that this program is supported by volunteer drivers utilizing their own personal vehicles to provide transportation to medical appointments outside Franklin County. The drivers are reimbursed \$0.55 per mile. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

7. REVIEW AND VOTE ON PROPOSED FIXED ROUTE SERVICE CHANGES:

Taking into consideration budget implications and public comments throughout the month of April, FRTA proposed several changes to the fixed routes as outlined in the PowerPoint. Peter Otten made a **motion** to accept the fixed route service changes effective September 4, 2018 as presented with the condition that as funding is increased, service will be restored based upon the available funding as prioritized in the tier plan presented in the Board Packet. Robert J. Decker III seconded and discussion followed. Tracy Rogers asked why the changes would take effect in September as opposed to July in conjunction with the fare changes. Tina M. Cote explained that it will take more time to update bus schedules, website, Google Transit, and the automated announcement equipment on the vehicles. Additionally, once the State budget is adopted for FY19 FRTA will have a clearer picture of what that impact will be. Lastly, setting the route changes for the beginning of September falls in line with the route changes at the PVTA and will be less disruptive for riders using both systems. Jeff Singleton stated that the Montague Selectboard is concerned that, for two years in a row, significant route changes have been proposed for the town "at the last minute" after the official public input and discussion process has ended, leaving no time for the Montague Selectboard to evaluate those proposals. Jeff Singleton asked if service restorations, with increased funding, would take into consideration what Towns want. Tina M. Cote stated that if funding was restored/increased FRTA would meet with Towns for additional discussions prior to any further service changes. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

8. UPDATE FROM FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Peter Otten updated the Advisory Board on the Finance and Audit Committee meeting from April 24th. Much of the discussion at the meeting was regarding the FY19 budget. The budget doesn't include any staff salary increases because there is still so much uncertainty in the State budget and funding levels for RTAs. Depending on the funding level of the State Contract Assistance FRTA may need to meet again and discuss an amendment to the budget at a later point in the year. FRTA is cautiously optimistic that the funding levels will come through as laid out in the proposed budget, but the budget reflects conservatism.

9. REVIEW AND APPROVE FY19 BUDGET:

Peter Otten made a **motion** to approve the FY19 budget as presented. Robert J. Decker III seconded and discussion followed. Ed Sanborn explained that the funding amount for federal 5311 funding is based upon a projection from MassDOT but that the FRTA won't receive the contract with the actual amount until late into the 1st quarter. Tina M. Cote reiterated that this

budget is extremely conservative with little room for error. Peter Otten also added that this budget does not include funding for any capital projects, which are funded separately. Jonathan von Ranson asked about results of the union contract negotiations and if there were any increases in wages. Tina M. Cote clarified that the union contract was settled for three years with wage increases of 1% in year 1, 2% in year 2, and 2.5% in year 3. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

10. REVIEW AND APPROVE FY19 RESOLUTION:

Lance Fritz read the FY19 Resolution. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to approve the FY19 Resolution. Peter Otten seconded, and discussion followed. Tina M. Cote explained that the Resolution language remains the same as last year. Robert J. Decker III made an amendment to the **motion** to include authorizing the Assistant Administrator to sign all checks amounting to \$5,000 or less or to cosign, with either the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Board, all check amounting to more than \$5,000, in the absence of the Administrator. Eric Twarog seconded the amendment, the vote was unanimous, and the amendment to the **motion** carried.

The **motion** was now amended to include authorizing the Assistant Administrator to sign checks in the absence of the Administrator. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

Michael Perreault will revise the FY19 Resolution after the meeting for the Advisory Board Clerk sign.

11. REVIEW AND VOTE ON PROPOSED BY-LAW UPDATES:

Lance Fritz highlighted some changes to the by-laws, which includes eliminating staggered term limits for officer positions, a new section allowing for remote participation, and allowing for electronic transmission of documents as an alternative to providing meeting notice information to Advisory Board members. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to accept the changes to the Advisory Board By-Laws and Finance and Audit Committee By-Laws as presented. Peter Otten seconded, and discussion followed. Peter Otten stated that having documents sent electronically would put the burden on the Advisory Board members to have to print information for meetings. Michael Perreault explained that it would give flexibility to send information electronically, but that FRTA still would provide hard copies that would request them. Tracy Rogers asked about remote participation and if the Advisory Board will have to adopt it at a future meeting. Michael Perreault agreed that the Advisory Board would need to adopt the practice of remote participation at meetings, and that this section lays the groundwork for that. Jeff Singleton stated his concern about people habitually using remote participation and not attending meetings. Lance Fritz stated that there would be certain rules and criteria established for use of remote participation so that it is not abused. FRTA would need to research the specifics guidelines and technology that would be required to allow for remote participation.

Jonathan von Ranson had some spelling/grammatical corrections regarding the Advisory Board By-Laws. Article IV, Section 2; the word “it’s” should not have an apostrophe. Article V, Section 4; the last sentence in the paragraph should replace the word “that” with “who”. Article

V, Section 8; the second paragraph should pluralize the word “include” to read “includes”. Article VIII, Section 1; the second sentence in the second paragraph should replace the word “involved” to “involves”. Lastly, Article VIII, Section 1; the first sentence in the last paragraph should insert the word “for” after the word “determined”. Lance Fritz stated that these minor spelling and/or grammatical changes were not substantial enough to require an amendment to the **motion**. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

12. NOMINATION/ELECTION OF CLERK FOR FY19-21:

With the newly adopted revisions to the By-Laws, the Advisory Board needed to elect all three officer positions for FY19-21. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to nominate Lance Fritz as Chair to the Advisory Board for FY19-21. Jonathan von Ranson seconded. There were no other nominations. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to nominate Peter Otten as Vice-Chair for FY19-21. Jonathan von Ranson seconded. There were no other nominations. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to nominate Ruth Preston as Clerk for FY19-21. Tracy Rogers seconded. There were no other nominations. The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

13. NOMINATION/ELECTION OF FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE FOR FY19:

At the March Advisory Board meeting, Lance Fritz was temporarily elected to the Finance and Audit Committee for the remainder of FY18 to serve on the Committee along with Peter Otten and Robert J. Decker III. With the newly adopted revisions to the By-Laws, the Advisory Board must elect at least three members to the Finance and Audit Committee. This change now allows for more members to be on the Committee. Richard Tillberg made a **motion** to nominate Peter Otten to the Finance and Audit Committee for FY19, and Ruth Preston seconded. Richard Tillberg made a **motion** to nominate Robert J. Decker III to the Finance and Audit Committee for FY19, and Ruth Preston seconded. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to nominate Lance Fritz to the Finance and Audit Committee for FY19, and Ruth Preston seconded. There were no other nominations. The vote to elect Peter Otten, Robert J. Decker III, and Lance Fritz to the Finance and Audit Committee for FY19 was unanimous and the **motion** carried.

14. UPDATE FROM TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

George Touloumtzis provided the following updates from the Transit Advisory Committee:

- While recent meetings have had great public attendance, the Committee has not been able to make a quorum in several months and is still trying to increase membership.
- There has been a lot of ongoing discussions to encourage people to advocate for public transportation and funding for increased services, particularly weekend service.

15. UPDATES:

Tina M. Cote gave some brief updates on the following FRTA projects:

- FRTA finalized procurement for transit management and fleet maintenance services, awarding the contract to First Transit Inc. The contract was for ten years beginning on July 1, 2018. The management fee is approximately \$20,000 more for FY19 over FY18. There will be an increase of 2.5% for years two through five and then a 2% increase for the remainder of the contract. Having those financial terms locked in for the life of the contract will also better help FRTA with budgeting moving forward.
- First Transit, Inc. finalized union negotiations signing a three-year contract beginning July 1, 2018. As disclosed during the budget discussion wage increases will be 1% in year 1, 2% in year 2, and 2.5% in year 3. Other notable changes were with regard to health insurance options, which should maintain current insurance levels for union employees while reducing costs.
- The State legislature is discussing a possible supplemental budget for FY18 to include an additional \$2 million in State Contract Assistance for RTAs. That would equate to approximately \$24,000 additional funds for FRTA.
- As of this meeting, the Governor's budget for FY19 includes \$80.4 million for State Contract Assistance and the House FY19 budget includes \$80 million. The Senate is still debating the budget. There has been some early indication that the Senate may include \$84 million for State Contract Assistance with an additional \$4 million available for RTAs through some type of memorandum.
- As disclosed during the budget discussions there are a few more moving pieces in the budget, including the federal 5311 funding which will be finalized prior to the next Advisory Board meeting in September.
- The Route 41 Charlemont center bus stop has been an issue with some residents. The bus was originally stopping and turning around at Avery's Store, but FRTA was asked to move the stop off of their property. The bus stop has since been relocated to the Charlemont Post Office, but there is now some question with the adjacent property ownership and potential issue with a share driveway/easement onto the Post Office property. FRTA will continue to work with the Charlemont Selectboard to hopefully find a suitable location for a stop/turn-around point in the center of Town.
- FRTA was awarded \$6 million federal grant through the Bus & Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program for the construction of a new maintenance facility. FRTA recently met with officials from MassDOT and FTA and were instructed to reduce construction costs as much as possible to fit within the grant award. FRTA will also look at the potential for constructing the facility in phases. FRTA still continues to move forward with the purchase and sale of the property.

Peter Otten asked if the Advisory Board needed to approve the Administrator's contract for FY19. Tina M. Cote clarified that she doesn't have a contract and as there were no salary adjustments included in the FY19 budget her salary remains the same from FY18.

John Parks asked about approved changes for the last Route 23 run. Molly Morin explained that there will be minor adjustments to the route timing on the last trip with the route ending in downtown Turners Falls instead of returning to the JWO Transit Center.

Elizabeth Quirk reached out to the Mayor of Greenfield and his office suggested FRTA contact Representative Paul Mark to advocate for increased funding transportation services.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to adjourn; Peter Otten seconded, and the meeting concluded at 5:35pm.