

RECORD OF EVENTS

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 November 15, 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
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54
Jonathan von Ranson	Wendell	1.29
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	1.00
	Total	41.66

Also present were:

Tina M. Cote; FRTA Administrator, Michael Perreault; FRTA Assistant Administrator, Molly Morin; FTM General Manager, and Jenna Howitt, FTM Assistant General Manager.

Chairman Lance Fritz called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was not** present to hold a meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

3. REVIEW AND VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES FROM MAY 17, 2018 AND SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 MEETINGS:

Vote to accept meeting minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

5. REVIEW FY18 AUDIT AND UPDATED WEIGHTED VOTE:

Tina M. Cote discussed that the auditors met with the Finance and Audit Committee in August to review the FY18 audit. The audit has since been finalized and submitted into the State. There were no deficiencies or findings from the audit. Michael Perreault added that if anyone has questions on the calculations for local assessments based on the audit to please contact him for further explanations.

6. MAINTENANCE FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE:

Tina M. Cote explained that the FRTA was awarded a federal grant through MassDOT of \$6,000,000 for the construction of a new maintenance facility. This was far below the estimated cost of \$20,000,000 that FRTA had applied for. With that award FRTA is still in negotiations with the architectural and engineering firm, STV, to amend the existing contract fee in line with the award amount for construction. Robert J. Decker III asked if the Town of Montague could sell the land out from under FRTA. Michael Perreault explained that FRTA is not under contract with the Town of Montague for the purchase of the land yet. Tina M. Cote explained that FRTA needs to bring the design of the facility farther along to meet FTA's requirements before the purchase and sale can be finalized. Tina M. Cote also added that there is no indication that the Town of Montague has any intention of selling that parcel to anyone else.

Separate from the construction project, FRTA had a discussion with members from the GMTA on the upcoming lease renewal with the idea to use capital funds in lieu of traditional lease payments for building improvements. FRTA is now in discussions with MassDOT to see if that is an acceptable use of RTACAP funds.

7. RTA TASK FORCE UPDATE:

Tina M. Cote updated that the RTA Task Force recently released a bid for discretionary grant applications to all of the RTAs. They are looking to award up to \$500,000 for each project and RTAs can submit one project for themselves and an additional joint project with another RTA. One caveat is that the projects must be sustainable once the funding for the projects has been exhausted. So, for FRTA, this means we cannot apply for funding for weekend transportation because if we could sustain it we would already be providing it. FRTA intends to submit at least one project for itself and possibly partnering with another RTA on a joint project. FRTA is considering applying for two additional vehicles, an update to our current demand response software programs to allow for same day or next day scheduling trips online or through a mobile application. This would give the FRTA the ability to open the demand response program to the general public to fill empty seats, better utilizing vehicles already out on the road. Tina M. Cote stressed that FRTA is trying to think about projects that are able to start small to be able to sustain into the future and grow upon. As part of the grant application process FRTA may look for letters of support. Tina M. Cote suggested she would reach out to the FRCOG and has already been in contact with Senator Hinds' office on submitting a letter. Lance Fritz suggested he could draft a letter on behalf of the Advisory Board.

8. UPDATE FROM TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Michael Perreault provided the following updates from the Transit Advisory Committee:

- There was a lot of discussion about the RTA Task Force and members are very interested in what their final report will consist of in terms of offering best practices for RTAs. The Committee has also sent a letter to the task force requesting they make a priority for all regional transit authorities to have weekend fixed route service.
- The last meeting had an in-depth discussion with a lot of great ideas about promoting FRTA and its services. One of the suggestions that came out of the discussion was the potential to find college interns during the summer to assist FRTA staff with marketing and promotion ideas.

9. OTHER FRTA UPDATES:

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

- FRTA will begin to provide demand response transportation Leyden seniors starting in January. These trips will be provided by FTM.
- In addition to the free fixed route transportation on the day after Thanksgiving, FRTA will surprise people with free bus passes at random bus stops along different routes every Friday through December.
- FRTA has had a busy year with HST, National Transit Database, Drug and Alcohol, and financial audits.
- Jenna Howitt is our new Assistant General Manager for FTM, replacing Rauley Caine.
- FRTA is working with the Town of Greenfield and trying to finalize a contract with a consultant, STV, on town road and other infrastructure projects adjacent to the transit center. More information to come as this project develops.
- FRTA reported an additional \$8,000 in fixed route fare box revenues.
- The previous New Freedoms shuttle has now been modified into a new program operated by the Franklin County Sherriff's Office. That program is being funded by a grant from MassDOT.
- FRTA is working with the Town of Montague on a pilot project to add one or two additional trips into Sunderland on the Route 23. FRTA is projecting to start the new service in mid-January, in conjunction with the start of the spring college semester. It is estimated that the cost for the additional runs would be about \$10,500 for FY19. Megan Rhodes suggested putting flyers up at park and ride lots to promote the new trips.
- GCC recently started purchasing bus passes to re-sell to students at a discount.
- Peter Pan Bus Lines has ended service to Greenfield. FRTA has been working with displaced riders to use the Route 31 bus into Northampton to catch Peter Pan buses. Greyhound is now the sole remaining intercity bus line servicing Greenfield.
- FRTA will be donating a bus to transport Turners Falls Middle and High School students to participate in a walk-a-thon for the Western Mass Food Bank.

Robert J. Decker III asked if RTAs are still prohibited from providing school bus transportation. There was a recent meeting in Belchertown that both Tina M. Cote and Megan Rhodes attended in which that topic was discussed. Tina M. Cote confirmed that current regulations do prohibit

RTAs from providing school bus transportation but there has been some recent interest and discussions about moving to change those regulations.

The next Advisory Board meeting will be on March 21st.

The meeting concluded at 4:35pm.