

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, Kristen Lepore, the meeting of the Advisory Board of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on September 15, 2016 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>
Dianne Cornwell	Bernardston	1.92
Peter Otten	Buckland	1.55
Ted Willard	Charlemont	2.30
Robert Baker	Conway	1.03
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	7.83
Ray Purington	Gill	1.05
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	27.31
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00
Jeff Singleton	Montague	13.26
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.62
Diana Schindler	Orange	4.34
Fredrik Marsh	Petersham	1.01
Thomas Brouillet	Phillipston	1.00
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.63
	Total	67.85

Also present were:

Tina M. Cote, FRTA Administrator, Michael Perreault, FRTA Assistant Administrator, Lisa Paquette, FTM Acting General Manager, Kayce Warren, Town of Ashfield, and George Touloumtzis, FRTA Transit Advisory Committee.

Chairman Lance Fritz called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was** present to hold a meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY 19, 2016 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING:

Peter Otten made a **motion** to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2016 Advisory Board meeting and Jeff Singleton seconded. There was no discussion and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Dianne Cornwell	Bernardston	1.92	Yes
Peter Otten	Buckland	1.55	Yes
Ted Willard	Charlemont	2.30	Yes
Robert Baker	Conway	1.03	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	7.83	Yes
Ray Purington	Gill	1.05	Yes
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	27.31	Yes
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00	Yes
Jeff Singleton	Montague	13.26	Yes
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.62	Yes
Diana Schindler	Orange	4.34	Not Present
Fredrik Marsh	Petersham	1.01	Yes
Thomas Brouillet	Phillipston	1.00	Yes
Ruth Preston	Southwick	<u>2.63</u>	Yes
	Total	67.85	

Yes – 63.51
 Not Present – 4.34

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

4. UPDATE ON RECENT FIXED ROUTE CHANGES:

Tina M. Cote updated that the new fixed route changes went into effect August 1st. During the first week of August FRTA staff set up an information table outside the transit center to make sure riders had all of the current schedules, answered questions, and took feedback regarding the service. Also, Michael Perreault and Amy Rau set up an informational table at GCC at the start of the fall semester in September to offer the same. Overall the changes seem to be well received. In addition, Tina M. Cote stated that she has been riding on all of the routes to make herself familiar with the routing, stops, etc. She will be having all of the staff do the same so that they will become familiar with all of the new route changes and are able to answer riders’ questions. Tina M. Cote spoke about the installation of bus stop signage and it has been delayed as we’ve had a change in management personnel at the garage.

Jeff Singleton stated that he’s heard the overall changes have been good but that there are issues that should be addressed in the future. Tina M. Cote explained that there have been some smaller changes that we have either made or are considering in the near future, such as driving into the industrial park in Turners Falls along our Route 32, but that the Advisory Board had asked for a follow up of the route changes after one year. Jeff Singleton asked to begin thinking

about the public process for review when the Administration is getting ready to do the analysis for the Advisory Board. Tina M. Cote said that she will be looking for feedback from riders, drivers, and staff members. Michael Perreault added that with these changes in effect, it now puts the FRTA in a better position to make changes in the future such as add trips to increase frequencies, add trips to extend later into the evening, and use the existing route structure as a template for creating weekend service.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING PLANNING PROCESS FOR FUTURE WEEKEND FIXED ROUTE BUS SERVICE:

Tina M. Cote stated that Jeff Singleton had asked to add this discussion point onto the agenda. Tina M. Cote added that one of the most frequent questions/requests that FRTA receives is “when we will have weekend service?”. Tina M. Cote stated that FRTA is the only transit authority in MA that does not have any form of weekend service. While there is no current indication that FRTA will be getting a substantial amount of new revenue to begin offering weekend service, there will need to be discussion at some point as to what weekend service will look like including which routes to operate, what and how many hours the routes will operate, and if and what hours the transit center will be open and staffed.

Jeff Singleton reiterated that riders are looking for some type of weekend service. The Comprehensive Service Analysis study that FRTA had finalized in 2015 called for rolling a huge amount of weekend service for both Saturday and Sunday service, in Phase II of the report, with an equally large amount of funding needed to operate it. Jeff Singleton stated that it might be better to lobby for a lesser amount of funding to operate a half day of Saturday service to better and more quickly be able to start offering some weekend service, rather than waiting for a huge amount of funding to do everything all at once. Jeff Singleton is just looking for a discussion with FRTA, key fixed route stakeholders on the Advisory Board, the FRCOG, the FRTA Transit Advisory Committee, Representative Paul Mark, Representative Steve Kulik, and Senator Rosenberg to come up with a modest proposal and a strategy to get funding.

There was discussion about the timing of our next Advisory Board meetings which are scheduled for November and March and whether or not FRTA should look to call a special meeting for this discussion. Tina M. Cote suggested that we could plan a meeting in January to give us enough time to prepare something in terms of estimates for costs, farebox revenue, and ridership. Lance Fritz suggested getting a meeting before January because the Legislature must file new legislation at the beginning of the year. Tina M. Cote also added that she recently heard from MassDOT that Massachusetts is expected to receive money from the VW emissions settlement and that could be a potential source of funds to start weekend service. Robert J. Decker III suggested that FRTA also look at funding for operating on holidays as well. Discussion concluded that Tina M. Cote and Jeff Singleton would get together off line to put together a list of stakeholders and a draft agenda to plan for a late November/early December meeting.

6. MAINTENANCE FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE:

Tina M. Cote wanted to give the Advisory Board an update on our maintenance facility project. Since the last Advisory Board meeting it was determined that MassDOT would not fund our

project at the Bendix property due to unresolved contamination issues and potential future issues due to the contamination on the site. Since that point FRTA has been searching for potential sites that would suit our needs in terms of buildable size and within close proximity of the transit center. We have found one such site in the Town of Montague off of Sandy Ln. behind Judd Wire where the town is looking to build a new industrial park. FRTA met with representative from the town and they were open to the idea of allowing us to build on this site, so we brought representatives from MassDOT out to the site and after an initial site visit they suggested we continue to pursue this site to see if this would work for our needs. FRTA is now collecting information on wetland boundaries near our proposed site and will need to perform environmental testing, site surveying, and then property appraisal. Tina M. Cote also stated that FRTA would need to do some infrastructure upgrades to the road, sidewalks, water, sewer, electric, and communications in order to access and operate on the site as it is currently not developed.

Robert J. Decker III asked who currently owns the property. Tina M. Cote explained that it's owned by the Town of Montague. Robert Baker asked if there is enough room on the property for FRTA to expand in the future. Michael Perreault explained that FRTA is looking for approximately 5.5 acres, which is based upon previous maintenance facility needs assessment studies and includes enough room for growth into the future. Robert J. Decker III asked if the Town of Montague was receptive to this project. Tina M. Cote explained that herself, Michael Perreault, and Ron Morgan from MassDOT met with the Board of Selectmen and they had indicated that they were open to selling a piece of the property for FRTA to develop into a maintenance facility and have allowed the Town Administrator and Town Planner to give us access to the site and to follow up at a later date when we have once we have completed all of our necessary pre-purchase and sale tasks. Robert J. Decker III asked how these pre-purchase and sale testing were going to be paid for. Michael Perreault stated that these things would all be paid for through the FRTA's capital funds and would not be charged back through the towns' assessments. For FY17 FRTA has approximately \$450,000 for property acquisition and approximately \$1,000,000 for design and engineering services. Ruth Preston asked if there was any chance the outcome of the testing on this property will be the same as the Bendix property. Tina M. Cote stated that there is no initial indication that this property has any contamination issues but we need to go through the motions to make sure we know for sure.

7. FRTA UPDATES:

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

- The court house construction project is expected to be finished around January 1, 2017. Once the court house moves back to Main St. it is expected that we will eliminate the Corporate Shuttle and create a new Downtown Parking Shuttle. FRTA is anticipating on a shuttle from the Chapman St/Davis St lot to downtown stopping at the transit center and the court house for people working in downtown Greenfield.
- Greyhound and Peter Pan new contracts have been signed and we are moving ahead with a new agreement for them to pay FRTA a monthly fee rather than based on ticket sale commissions.

- A new bus service called MAX is expected to start a direct service from Greenfield to Boston later this fall and has met with Tina Cote to draw up a contract similar to Greyhound and Peter Pan.
- The meeting room dedication for Bill Allen is being coordinated with family for some time near the end of October. Once date and time is finalized notices will be sent out to the Advisory Board members.
- FRTA has two bids out; one for decommissioning and testing of the fuel pumps at the garage and one for constructing two bus shelters and a bike shelter at the transit center.
- FRTA is working to get their new ticket vending machine up and running in another month or so to hopefully launch our new monthly passes.
- Our previous General Manager, Kevin Melendez, has left and Lisa Paquette is now the acting General Manager. We are hopeful to be fully staffed soon.
- With our new later evening service that began in August as part of our fixed route changes FRTA has hired a new part time supervisor for the end of the day and is in the process of hiring a new end of day dispatcher. Robert J. Decker III asked if these positions were already accounted for in the budget. Tina M. Cote confirmed that budget had taken in account the costs of these two positions.
- The parking lot project is now underway increasing our parking spaces from 13 to 33 and is expected to be substantially completed by the end of November.

Tina M. Cote stated that with the addition of the new parking spaces there would be need to control/monitor use to ensure that parking spaces were used for FRTA employees, people using public transportation or intercity transportation, and visitors to the transit center. Tina M. Cote asked the Advisory Board for suggestions for how to best handle this. It was discussed that the initial thought was to have 9 spaces reserved for FRTA employees, 3 spaces for handicap accessibility, 1 taxi space, 1 space for the company vehicle, and the remaining 19 spaces for the public to park. Tina M. Cote also added that FRTA has also been considering the possibility of installing a parking meter and/or working with the Town of Greenfield's Parking Enforcement. Robert J. Decker III asked about the possibility of leasing the parking spaces to the Town of Greenfield. Peter Otten suggested that FRTA could monitor the lot similarly to Greenfield Community College's Main Campus. There are signs posted which state people must sign in and out when parking in their designated spaces or face having their car towed. Peter Otten offered a suggestion to have people sign in/out at the ticket booth at the transit center. Robert Baker suggested that FRTA could try the sign in/out and if that didn't work then could look to purchase a kiosk. Discussion concluded that Tina M. Cote would continue to explore different options for monitoring the new parking spaces and would also continue to discuss with the Town of Greenfield on options to work with their Parking Enforcement.

Ruth Preston asked if FRTA has saved any money with the lower fuel prices. Tina M. Cote stated that yes, FRTA has seen some savings in fuel pricing over the course of the last year; some of which has gone towards providing the new fixed route service changes.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to adjourn, Ted Willard seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm.