Pursuant to written notice sent to Committee Members and pursuant to notice posted at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting, copies of said notice having been sent to the FRTA’s 41-member towns, the meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on September 8, 2016 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following TAC Members:

Vice-Chairman George Touloumtzis, Suzie Hale, Jasper Lapienski, Josh McElhone, and Deb Wilson.

Also present were:

Carol Letson, Megan Rhodes, Doug Repp, Lisa Paquette, FTM Assistant General Manager, and Michael Perreault, FRTA Assistant Administrator.

Vice-Chairman George Touloumtzis called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and it was noted that a quorum was present to hold a meeting.

2. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 12, 2016 AND REVIEW MEETING NOTES FROM JULY 14, 2016:

Jasper Lapienski made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from May 12, 2016. Suzie Hale seconded, the vote was unanimous, and the motion carried. There were no comments on the meeting notes from July 14, 2016.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, AND SECRETARY:

Suzie Hale made a motion to elect George Touloumtzis as Chair and Deb Wilson seconded. George Touloumtzis explained that elections normally take place during the July meeting but there was not a quorum at the last meeting. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Jasper Lapienski stated that he was interested in the Vice-Chair position but did not want to self-nominate. There was no further discussion on nominations for Vice-Chair. Discussion turned to the active members of the committee and since the last meeting John Cormican had resigned and Susan Marineck’s term had lapsed and she did not request to
renew. There are now only five committee members and all are present at this meeting. There was discussion as to what the role of the Vice-Chair was. George Touloumtzis explained that the Vice-Chair would perform the duties of the Chair in their absence. This includes presiding meetings, creating meeting agendas, appoint ad hoc committees, and attend FRTA Advisory Board meetings as requested. Jasper Lapienski then made a motion to elect himself as Vice-Chair. There was no second and the motion failed. Discussion concluded that electing a Vice-Chair would be tabled until the next meeting.

Michael Perreault asked if anyone was interested in the Secretary position, but there was no further discussion.

4. DISCUSSION OF MOVING ANNUAL TAC OFFICER ELECTION:

Suzie Hale made a motion to recommend to the FRTA Administrator to amend the by-laws to move the annual election of officers to September. Deb Wilson seconded and discussion followed. Jasper Lapienski stated that he was opposed to moving to September and would like to hear other proposals before making a decision. The vote was as follows:

- Suzie Hale: Yes
- Jasper Lapienski: No
- Josh McElhone: Yes
- Deb Wilson: Yes

The vote passed and the motion carried. Michael Perreault will bring the recommendation to the FRTA Administrator to amend the by-laws.

5. DISCUSSION OF TAC MEETING DATES/TIMES:

Jasper Lapienski suggested that the committee should meet monthly September through June, move the meeting time to start at 3:00pm, and extend the meeting from 60 to 90 minutes. Suzie Hale commented that the school day for both her and Josh McElhone end at 2:10pm and a time change to later in the day would present a hardship for them to attend meetings. Deb Wilson stated that while a change to a 3:00pm meeting time would work better for her she has been able to make 1:00pm meeting times. There was discussion about striving to get committee members to make every meeting but we don’t want to punish those that are not able to make every meeting. Jasper Lapienski suggested that the committee should try and involve people that drive the bus and ride the bus.

Jasper Lapienski made a motion to recommend to the FRTA Administrator to amend the by-laws to have the committee meet monthly September through June, move the meeting time to 3:00pm to 4:30pm. Deb Wilson seconded and discussion continued. Suzie Hale suggested that changing the times won’t necessarily improve committee membership but the committee should look for other approaches to get people involved. The vote was as follows:
As the vote resulted in a tie, George Touloumtzis cast the tie-breaker vote of ‘No’. The vote did not pass and the motion failed.

6. FIXED ROUTE CHANGES AND BUS STOPS/FLAG STOPS UPDATE:

Michael Perreault stated that as of August 1st FRTA began operating its new routes and time changes. FRTA is looking ahead to actively monitor these route and time changes to find things that are working and build upon those successes and find things that aren’t working and finding a way to fix and/or improve those deficiencies. FRTA also continues to assess bus stop locations and erect stop signs. Jasper Lapienski asked if there is a published list for passengers to know where it is safe, or not safe, to stop. Lisa Paquette stated that there is not a published list but that managers have identified flag stops that the general public have been using and working to establish if it is a safe location and if not, looking in the general vicinity to see if there is a suitable safe location within walking distance. George Touloumtzis asked if there were flag stops that have been identified as unsafe. Lisa Paquette stated that there have been some, but didn’t know an exact number. Lisa Paquette commented that what she has noticed was that most of the flag stops that passengers use regularly tend to be in safe locations and those that are used sporadically tend to more likely be in an unsafe location. Jasper Lapienski asked how the public would know what flag stops are safe and unsafe. Lisa Paquette stated that riders can contact the garage and the dispatchers can answer questions and be able to direct riders to safe stop locations. George Touloumtzis suggested that having a list online might be beneficial for riders to access that information.

Deb Wilson spoke with a woman from Elm Terrace who used to be able to get picked up along the fixed route in front of her house and now has to walk down to the bus shelter. Deb Wilson asked if there were any type of exceptions for seniors, such as this, when it comes to bus stops. Lisa Paquette explained that you need consistency and continuity with fixed route service to keep the bus on schedule and that stopping too many places along the route could end up making the bus route late. Discussion continued that FRTA also operates ADA transportation and Demand Response transportation that may be better suited for individuals with situations such as this. Deb Wilson also asked if there were safe stop locations being planned for Main St. in Greenfield. Michael Perreault confirmed that FRTA is working to find safe stop locations along Main St. and coordinating with the Greenfield Traffic and Parking Commission to find suitable locations that the Town would support.

7. REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL TOPICS:

Michael Perreault stated that Rachel Fichtenbaum had a scheduling conflict that prevented her from attending today but wanted to update the committee that she is
continuing to look for local organizations that might be interested in creating a travel
training program.

8. OTHER FRTA UPDATES:

Michael Perreault provided the following FRTA updates: In mid-August FRTA put its
newest bus, and first low-floor bus, into service. The new bus is scheduled to be moved
around to travel along all of our routes so riders get a chance to check out our newest
addition to the fleet. Construction is now under way to expand the parking lot at the
transit center. This project will add an additional 20 parking spaces for employees,
transit center users, and visitors and is expected to be completed in late November. In
August FRTA participated in Community Action’s Belly Bus food drive and donated a
bus to be stationed at Food City and Foster’s for the event. FRTA is working with
MassDOT to install a second bus shelter at the Farren bus stop in conjunction with a road
improvement project already underway. This will provide a bus shelter at that stop
location on both sides of the road. Lastly, FRTA staffed an information table at GCC on
September 6th and 7th to offer information, answer questions, and take feedback on our
new fixed route changes.

George Touloumtzis also updated that he did get confirmation from a representative from
the Franklin County Fair that FRTA is eligible to enter a bus into the fair parade but that
FRTA did not have enough time to enter into the parade this year. Michael Perreault
stated that now we have this information FRTA is planning to enter into the fair parade
next year.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS:

Doug Repp stated that FRTA should consider increasing the frequency on the
Northampton route and have some weekend service.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2016. The meeting was adjourned at
2:05pm.