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 May 11, 2017 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following TAC Members:

Chairman George Touloumtzis, Susan Mareneck, and Deb Wilson.

Also present were:

Donna Suskawicz, Linda Gralenski, Megan Rhodes, Molly Morin, FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine, FTM Assistant General Manager, and Michael Perreault, FRTA Assistant Administrator.

Chairman George Touloumtzis called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and it was noted that a quorum was not present to hold a meeting.

2. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2017:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

3. FRTA PROPOSED FIXED ROUTE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:

Michael Perreault stated that during the month of April and early May the FRTA held seven public meetings (Community Conversations) to discuss proposed changes to our fixed route system. There was great participation, comments, and feedback regarding the proposal. The next step is to bring the final proposal to the Advisory Board meeting on May 18th to be discussed and, if approved, then work towards rolling out the new changes later this year. FRTA worked to incorporate much of the feedback into the final revision of the changes that will be presented to the Advisory Board.

As part of the Community Conversations, FRTA was also looking for feedback on proposed weekend service. Initially, FRTA worked with Representative Paul Mark to put a request into the state budget for $180,000 to pilot a half day of Saturday fixed route
service. Michael Perreault indicated that while the House budget has not been finalized, it does not look like Representative Mark’s request will get into the final House budget. Representative Mark has been in discussion with FRTA and indicated that he will be working with Senator Adam Hinds to revise and put in a similar request into the Senate budget. In discussions with the FRTA since the initial proposal, Representative Mark suggested that he had not received any phone calls, emails, or letters expressing the need or support for weekend service. That information is what he would normally take to Beacon Hill when advocating for a budget request for a particular project.

Michael Perreault asked if there were any ideas on the best way to get people information to support this request for weekend service. There was some discussion on putting information onto a postcard or mailer. Megan Rhodes stated that the FRTA and FRCOG recently worked to gather letters from the community in support of weekend service and sent them out to the local legislators. Susan Mareneck suggested sending an email with all of the information regarding the pilot project for Saturday service and include contact information for legislators, so that people can email, mail, or call to voice their support. There was additional suggestion to set up a table, or booth, somewhere locally with a lot of foot traffic, such as Fosters or Stop & Shop, to handout postcards with the information. That would work particularly well to get information out to people that don’t use computers or email.

George Touloumtzis asked what the timeline is in getting information out to people and garnering support for Saturday service. Michael Perreault stated that he is unsure of the exact timeline but that he assumed it would be soon. The discussion continued that we should send support to both Senator Hinds and Senator Rosenberg, who represent the FRTA service area. George Touloumtzis asked how many people are on the TAC email list. Michael Perreault stated that it is somewhere between 80-100 people. George Touloumtzis suggested that sending an email out to that group would be a great place to start, as those individuals have already expressed interest in supporting public transportation. Michael Perreault suggested that we should also wait to get the wording from the amendment, once it is submitted by Senator Hinds, before trying to contact people for support.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DISCUSSION ON NOMINATION FOR RIDER COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE TO AFL-CIO FOR FY18:

Michael Perreault apologized for the title of this agenda item; it was supposed to read “Discussion on Election of Officers and Nomination for Rider Community Representative to the AFL-CIO for FY18”. As a reminder, election of officers are supposed to take place at the July meeting and Michael Perreault wanted to reiterate that while George Touloumtzis is the current Chair of the committee, the Vice-Chair position still remains unfilled.

In addition, Michael Perreault wanted to again reach out to the group to see if individuals would be interested in serving on the FRTA’s Advisory Board as the Rider Community Representative to the AFL-CIO for the next fiscal year. Last year, the FRTA Advisory
Board asked the Transit Advisory Committee to help find people interested to serve on the Advisory Board for one year. FRTA is looking to gather a list of interested persons to submit to the Town of Phillipston to select the Rider Community Representative to the AFL-CIO for this coming fiscal year. The wording of Mass General Law does not require the representative to be a resident of the Town that is selecting in any given year. The FRTA Advisory Board is scheduled to meet four times per year on the third Thursday in March, May, September, and November. Anyone interested in this position should contact Michael Perreault.

5. REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL TOPICS:

Rachel Fichtenbaum was unable to attend today’s meeting, but asked Michael Perreault to give the following updates:

MassMobility and MassDOT held their annual Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference on May 2nd at Holy Cross in Worcester. Some of the working group sessions included Volunteer Transportation Programs, Pedestrian Safety for Seniors and People with Disabilities, Employment Transportation, Partnering with On-Demand Services, PERCEPT: Indoor Navigation System, Older Drivers and the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Regional Coordinating Council Roundtable, and Coordination and Innovation at the MBTA and MassDOT. Both Michael Perreault and Molly Morin had attended the conference this year and Rachel Fichtenbaum reported that there were over 200 people at the conference this year, with a large percentage of first time attendees.

On March 22nd FRTA had partnered with Rachel Fichtenbaum and held a travel training event at the Transit Center for local human service and social service agencies. This was to show people how to read schedules, learn about the different services FRTA provides, and give people an overall better understanding of FRTA. George Touloumtzis added that he attended this event and was able to go back to his employer to help provide this information to other staff members.

Coming up on September 13th and 14th MassDOT is sponsoring Community Transportation Association of America to deliver a Design Thinking for Community Transportation Workshop in Worcester. This two day workshop is geared to provide mobility managers and community stakeholders engaged in these Design Thinking strategies to be responsive to the needs of their consumers. If anyone is interested, please email rachel.fichtenbaum@state.ma.us.

6. OTHER FRTA UPDATES:

Michael Perreault updated that FRTA is working with the Town of Goshen and the Hilltown CDC to transition the demand response transportation contract to the Hilltown CDC by the end of May.
Michael Perreault announced that FRTA had received the newest bus to its fleet, which will soon be out on the road. This bus is very similar to the last bus, which is a low floor model, which has no steps entering onto the bus.

George Touloumtzis asked if the new fixed route changes will be covered under the next fiscal year’s budget. Michael Perreault affirmed that all of the latest changes would fit within the FRTA’s proposed operating budget.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENTS, TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA TOPICS:**

Michael Perreault followed up from the previous meeting that the Stand Up 4 Transportation event from April 10th is now online on GCTV.

Michael Perreault announced that the FRCOG will be hosting Bike Breakfast event on May 16th from 7:30am to 10:00am at the Transit Center. There will be coffee, juice, light breakfast food, and fun giveaways. FRTA will have their newest bus on display for people to check out and practice loading and off-loading on the bike rack. There was some follow up discussion as to if people with motorized bikes could load them on the bus. Molly Morin explained that motorized bikes cannot be loaded onto FRTA bus bike racks. If anyone has any questions about using a bus bike rack, how to load/off-load a bike, or about equipment attached to a bike (such as a motor, child seat, etc.), please contact one of the managers at the garage at 413-773-8090.

Molly Morin announced that FRTA had invited a local pre-school class to visit the Transit Center in March and is scheduled to have another visit later in May. This gives us the opportunity to spread awareness of public transportation and allow the children to see a bus up close in a controlled environment.

There was some discussion about the possible expansion of the Amtrak service in Greenfield. Megan Rhodes explained that the FRCOG and PVPC have been working on a plan to expand rail service between Greenfield and Springfield. This would be a commuter-type schedule with trips clustered in the morning and again in the afternoon. People would then be able to travel farther south either on the same train line or transfer to a different train in Springfield.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2017. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.