

MEETING NOTES

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 14, 2017 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following TAC Members:

Suzie Hale, Josh McElhone, and Deb Wilson.

Also present were:

Jasper Lapienski, Amanda Smith, Carol Letson, Molly Morin, FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine, FTM Assistant General Manager, Ron Andronaco, FTM Safety and Training Manager, and Michael Perreault, FRTA Assistant Administrator.

Michael Perreault 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, MEETING NOTES FROM MAY 11, 2017, AND MEETING NOTES FROM JULY 13, 2017:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FY18:

This item was tabled until the next meeting. Josh McElhone stated that he might be interested in an officer's position on the Committee. Suzie Hale asked if there was a description of duties for the officer positions. Michael Perreault stated that we would email information from the by-laws regarding those duties.

4. REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL TOPICS:

Michael Perreault stated that Rachel Fichtenbaum was not available for today's meeting but is attending a Design Thinking Workshop, hosted by MassDOT and MassMobility, and will update the group at the next TAC meeting about the workshop.

5. DEBRIEF/DISCUSSION ON UNSUCCESSFUL WEEKEND SERVICE PROPOSAL:

Michael Perreault stated that Representative Paul Mark had put in a request for \$180,000 to operate fixed route service on Saturdays, but unfortunately that request did not pass in the State House of Representatives. FRTA then worked with Senator Adam Hinds to put in a similar request in the State Senate but that request did not make it into the Senate. Michael Perreault tried following up with Senator Hinds to get some feedback about the process and a better understanding as to why the request was unsuccessful, but as of this meeting had not received a response.

Moving forward, Michael Perreault asked the group about possible next steps for a new proposal for weekend service. Some ideas for engaging the public were to create postcards with information about the need for weekend service and contact information for local legislators. Michael Perreault stated that an idea from the FRTA Advisory Board chair was to get formal letters from the Towns that currently have fixed route service requesting weekend service. Jasper Lapienski asked if FRTA knows if towns are willing to put up some of their own money for this service. Michael Perreault stated that towns would be responsible for paying a portion of the costs through local assessments, but that having letters from the towns reiterating the need for the service and willingness to contribute would hopefully make for a stronger case. Suzie Hale suggested that the most important part for the legislators is to hear directly from their constituents and FRTA should reach out to Community Action, as they have had success working with the state legislature in the past. Suzie Hale also suggested meeting directly with state legislators, or legislative aides, as many of them hold regular local office hours. Discussion continued that in order for people to be willing to contact legislators to support a cause, the process needs to be simple and straightforward.

6. FRTA UPDATES:

Michael Perreault announced that FRTA took delivery of two additional low floor transit buses from Gillig in August. Those buses were put into service at the beginning of September and have brought the total number of low floor buses in the fleet up to four.

Michael Perreault announced that FRTA launched the new Go-Card on August 7th. The Go-Card is a new, reloadable smart fare card that can hold both an unlimited 31 consecutive day pass as well as stored value. Jasper Lapienski suggested that FRTA and PVRTA should work together to have an interagency pass for riders that use both systems. Rauley Caine stated that there is potential for both FRTA and PVRTA to have such a pass because both agencies have the same farebox system, but there would need to be a lot of coordination with the backend programming, tracking, and accounting.

Amanda Smith stated that there was a problem early on with dispensing tickets out of the machine and that the fareboxes on the buses were not accepting them; she asked when this problem is expected to be resolved. Rauley Caine explained that after some investigation there was a software programming issue which was causing this problem.

FRTA was working with the farebox company to correct the programming issue and it was expected to be fully resolved in the coming weeks.

Jasper Lapienski asked if FRTA has considered offering a discount for people that purchase bus passes with credit cards to reduce/eliminate the need to collect and count cash fares. Molly Morin stated that FRTA has no current plans to offer discounts for credit card purchases but also explained that the unlimited use monthly bus passes are already being offered at a discount.

FRTA held ten information sessions from the end of July through August offering information about the new route changes, the new Go-Card, the fixed route mobile application, other FRTA transportation services and help with trip planning. Sessions were held at the Transit Center, Elm Terrace, Orange Food Pantry, Oak Courts, and Montague Town Hall.

FRTA launched the new fixed route changes on September 5th. FRTA met with the GCC Student Senate on September 11th and will be attending the GCC Resource Fair on September 20th to talk about the new route changes, answer questions, and offer information about FRTA services. The new 11:00am Route 31 run to Northampton has been very well received as well as the new Route 24 between downtown Greenfield and downtown Turners Falls which services three supermarkets, the Franklin Medical Center and GCC.

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

Jasper Lapienski suggested that having the stop numbers be three or four numbers long as it is confusing to some that the stop numbers listed on the schedule are not listed in numerical order. He also suggested that instead of placing ‘dots’ on the schedules where the buses don’t stop we should use downward pointing arrows as a better way to show stops that are not served during certain runs.

Amanda Smith stated that previously FRTA had tables on the website with the schedule information for each bus route and suggested that these tables were very helpful searching for schedule information quickly, as well as links to the bus schedules. Michael Perreault stated that with the route changes it was discovered that those tables were not able to be modified to update the new route information so for now we are only able to offer the separate links to the bus schedules.

Molly Morin stated that RouteMatch will be upgrading the online portal for the live interactive bus tracker. It is currently in the testing phase and should be updated on the FRTA website in the coming weeks.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2017. The meeting was adjourned at 2:05pm.