



Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Special Meeting Minutes March 10, 2022

Chairperson Gary Rosen called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present by teleconference: Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Barbara Connelly – Grafton, Laura Wilson – Oxford, Hollie Lucht (Alt) -Shrewsbury Michael Ward-Clinton, Mark Binnall – Auburn, Brian Bullock – Holden, James R. Nee – Charlton, James Delage, Worcester DP, Robert Spain-Millbury, Jeffrey Bridges – Spencer, Adam Menard – Auburn Alt, Brian Pigeon – Worcester Alt, Gary Rosen - Worcester. The following members arrived after the meeting was called to order; Michael McCall-Southbridge.

Chairperson Rosen announced that this special meeting was called for the purpose of discussing and possible vote regarding the WRTA’s six (6) employees joining the City of Worcester’s Retirement system. Agenda item: Acceptance of G.L. c. 32, Retirement Systems and Pensions, sec. 1-28 – consideration and vote on acceptance of statutory provisions allowing for establishment of a retirement system and provision of employee retirement benefits.

Chairperson Rosen introduced the administrator.

Mr. Lipka gave a brief overview of the reasoning, benefits and procedures for joining the City of Worcester’s Retirement system. The WRTA Administrative staff presently has a defined contributions plan. Under the provisions of our charter; to change to a (DB) plan there are two options. To request enrollment from the largest municipal entity (City of Worcester) or to get special legislation to change plans. Mr. Lipka announced that the City of Worcester has approved enrollment. Mr. Lipka acknowledged working with Chairperson Rosen and stated his gratitude to the City Officials for making this possible. This change will have long term effects on the retention and recruitment of personnel for the WRTA. If voted, the effective date would be July 1, 2022. Mr. Lipka informed the board that due to the requirements for joining; the financial details would be forthcoming to the board. The WRTA would not be paying Social Security or its Defined Contribution plan’s existing split match of up to 7% per employee.

Speaker: Attorney Tim Zessin

For the purpose of further explanation on G.L. c. 32, Mr. Lipka introduced Attorney Tim Zessin, of KP Law. Attorney Zessin gave a brief overview of the process of acceptance. Highlights: the mandatory participation, considerations for mid-stream timing, 10 years vested, age 55 to receive allowance and some percentages for employee “buy back”.

Brian Bullock and James Nee voiced concerns about present and further financial obligations. Discussions about any “buy back” responsibility for the WRTA and how other expenses would be budgeted. Mr. Lipka explained that the process (by law) is acceptance by vote and then a certificate from the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC). After which a meeting with the City’s retirement director would produce the numbers necessary. Generally, most agreed that the “buy back” responsibility is the burden of the employee and not the WRTA. Mr. Lipka stated that given the time span needed for this entire process more specific details will be made available. Board Members agreed in general to the benefits of the change but some also questioned the lack of financial data.

Communities Served:

Auburn	Brimfield	Douglas	Grafton	Millbury	North Brookfield	Paxton	Southbridge	Wales	West Boylston
Barre	Brookfield	Dudley	Holden	New Braintree	Princeton	Spencer	Warren	West Brookfield	
Berlin	Charlton	East Brookfield	Holland	Northborough	Oakham	Rutland	Sturbridge	Webster	Worcester
Boylston	Clinton		Leicester	Northbridge	Oxford	Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	



Chairperson Rosen asked for a motion to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 32, sec. 1 through 28, as far as applicable, for the purpose of establishing a retirement system and providing retirement benefits for its employees.

Motion – I move that the Advisory Board, acting on behalf of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 161B, vote pursuant to G.L. c. 32, sec. 28 to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 32, sec. 1 through 28, as far as applicable, for the purpose of establishing a retirement system and providing retirement benefits for its employees. It was discussed and generally accepted that after voted “to accept” the WRTA could technically “not participate” via board vote. Chairperson Rosen stated how the process needs to move forward and more financial information would be forth coming.

On motion by Robert Spain, seconded by Doug Belanger (by roll call vote) the WRTA Advisory Board votes pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 161B, votes pursuant to G.L. c. 32, sec. 28 to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 32, sec. 1 through 28, as far as applicable, for the purpose of establishing a retirement system and providing retirement benefits for its employees. The vote was carried: (11 in favor 2 abstained 0 opposed).

Douglas Belanger	yes
Barbara Connelly	yes
Laura Wilson	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Jeffrey Bridges	yes
Michael McCall	yes
James R. Nee	Abstained
Brian Bullock	Abstained
James Delage	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Hollie Lucht	yes
Michael Ward	yes
Gary Rosen	yes

The WRTA Advisory Board voted pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 161B, votes pursuant to G.L. c. 32, sec. 28 to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 32, sec. 1 through 28, as far as applicable, for the purpose of establishing a retirement system and providing retirement benefits for its employees.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:11 a.m.

By Robert Spain: 2nd: Robert Spain:

Vote: All in favor (13 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be March 24, 2022 at 8:30 a.m., via teleconference due to the Governor’s continuation of remote participation of public bodies until July 15, 2022.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R Pokoly

Communities Served:

Auburn	Brimfield	Douglas	Grafton	Millbury	North Brookfield	Paxton	Southbridge	Wales	West Boylston
Barre	Brookfield	Dudley	Holden	New Braintree	Oakham	Princeton	Spencer	Warren	West Brookfield
Berlin	Charlton	East Brookfield	Holland	Northborough	Oxford	Rutland	Sturbridge	Webster	Worcester
Boylston	Clinton		Leicester	Northbridge		Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	