

**Worcester Regional Transit Authority
 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes November 21, 2024**

Chairperson Belanger called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

Present by Zoom webinar: Steve Rolle – Worcester, Robert Spain – Millbury, Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Mark Binnall – Auburn, John Jovan- Southbridge, Austin Cyganiewicz – Rutland, Brian Pigeon, Alt – Worcester, Brian Bullock – Holden, Kelly Bol – Northbridge, Heather-Lyn Haley – Leicester Alt., Kendra Faldetta – Northborough, Marcelino Guerra - Southbridge, (DP). Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Jeff Bridges – Spencer, Suzanne Lewandowski – North Brookfield. Members entering after call to order: Michael Ward- Clinton, Jasmin Rivas – Southbridge Alt., Jennifer Gingras- Westborough, Adam Menard- Auburn Alt., Hollie Lucht, Alt- Shrewsbury, Nelly Medina- Worcester RCP,

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes for September 19, 2024

By: Mark Binnall. 2nd: Robert Spain. Vote: One Abstention (12 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC - Benji Kemper (listed as Worcester) requested an update on the WRTA technology needs assessment, any goals for improvement/next steps, and trackers for paratransit vans. Through the Chair to Josh Rickman. Josh Rickman stated a demand response report would be forthcoming next month to address these questions.

Chairperson Belanger introduced the WRTA Administrator Josh Rickman for the Administrator's update. The presentation given covered the following items: Public hearing request for fixed- route schedule changes to enhance reliability, fixed route service adjustments- January 2025 and 2024 Audit report results. Josh Rickman stated that Tom Coyne would be presenting the Audit Report results while Nick Burnham would be presenting the other items. The presentation will be available to all board members at the end of the meeting and posted on the WRTA website.

Josh Rickman stated that the WRTA's goal is to achieve clock faced headways of 30, 45 and 60 minutes, bus bunching minimum of 5-minute gaps and better overall system service. Josh Rickman announced the purpose of the presentation is to offer the Administration's recommendations. Those schedule options will go out for public review via meetings in December and January. After public input the final recommended services changes will come to the board for an endorsing or modifying vote. Changes will go into effect end of March to early April 2025.

Nick Burnham gave a brief overview of the CSched Analysis and the details of the working arrangement to achieve the needed data. The WRTA Administration used this data to assist with making the recommendation presented. Examples of schedule time tables were presented for review. Adjustments in timing to better facility Hub time leaving consistencies were highlighted. Route 5 outbound weekday schedule was discussed and would no longer be interlined with Route 6. The weekday outbound schedule running times would vary between 12-22 mins. Route 3 outbound would no longer interline with Route 1. Starting at 5:20am and end later in the evening at 9:05pm with running time between 10-19 minutes. The Administration feels that changes like these will assist with their goal of 95% on-time departure from the Hub. They are also seeking to improve the fixed route on-time performance to a goal of 80%. The current fixed route on-time performance in FY 2024 is 61%. Doug Belanger asked if consideration was given to traffic flow. Josh Rickman stated that consideration was given (in general) and that tools like signal priority are helpful as well. These changes presented have no impact on the existing operating budget or operator/bus numbers.

The chairperson opened the floor for any input on the presentation and discussion. Heather-Lyn Haley remarked on the importance of appropriate timing and possible extra bus drop off space for those needing to make a transfer at the Hub. Josh Rickman stated that they can look into filled slips vs. transfer times. Doug Belanger suggested another new member/member orientation tour. Josh Rickman agreed but no date was set at this time. Doug Belanger stated the importance of riders being able to count on times being reliable. Nick Burnham stated that when appropriate/timely road construction data is considered. Board members asked about the schedule changing process and its timing. Josh Rickman went over the details of the public meeting process. Nick Burnham explained that public outreach is targeted to specific areas and CMRPC is developing an outreach plan. The WRTA Hub has about 4,000 persons daily at the Hub so that makes for the biggest draw. The WRTA has achieved a higher visibility due to the efforts of the Travel Trainer, Karen Andersen-Walsh and Marketing and Communications Director, Jamie Winters. Steve Rolle asked about loss of trips within the system due to the proposed changes. Loss of trips system wide was

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	

stated as within an extremely low margin. Steve Rolle requested that the board be updated with the outreach progress before the next board meeting. Josh Rickman stated there would be updates given to the board members.

APPROVAL

The Chairperson asked the board members if there were any objections to the Administration proceeding. Hearing None. The Chairperson informed the Administration that they should consider being approved to proceed.

Nick Burnham reviewed the January 2025 fixed route service adjustments. The changes were minor and apply to two fixed routes. Routes 7 would add two trips on Saturday (6 daily trips) to Coes Pond Village (CPV). Departing CPV at 8:04am, 9:55am, 11:45am, 1:40pm, 3:35pm, 5:30pm. Add one trip on Sundays (4 daily trips). Departing Coes Pond Village 9:39am, 12:25pm, 2:15pm, 4:05pm. The WRTA met with CPV residents from the last service change, and has added the trips based on resident feedback. Route 29 would add two trips on weekdays to the Amazon Distribution Facility. Outbound trips will arrive at 6:08am, and 6:13pm while Inbound trips will depart at 6:45am, and 6:50pm. This limited schedule was developed based on Amazon employee shift times, and with minimal disruption/impacts to existing Route 29.

Tom Coyne gave a brief presentation of the 2024 Audit Report results. A brief overview of the relative roles and responsibilities was given. The Audit was completed September 18, 2024 by Roselli, Clark & Associates. There were no significant deficiencies in internal controls. It was reported that unmodified (i.e. “clean”) opinions were given based on the audit, the financial statements are materially accurate and on compliance as related to Authority’s “major” federal awards program. Budget to Actual FY 24 was outlined with being 2.4% less than the final budget on both actual expenses and actual revenues. Expenses were lower than expected due to CMTM wages/fringe, Administration fringe and overall Demand Response costs. Revenues were due to net combination of additional Try Transit, Bank interest, member assessments and fewer FTA operating revenues. When comparing operating results final figures for FY 24 were up 5.7% from FY 23. Charts and other materials are available in the presentation on line at therta.com.

Josh Rickman informed the board that they are updating the sever weather plan.

BUSINESS FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD – out of order

Nelly Medina asked about recent changes to Route 7 and requested more detailed data on that route. Josh Rickman stated that more *scheduled* trips have been added from Coes Pond Village. The upcoming presentation will highlight additional weekend service which will take effect in January 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:05 a.m.

By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Steve Rolle

Vote: All in favor (16 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on December 19, 2024 at 8:00 a.m., via hybrid teleconference due to the Governor’s State of Emergency provisions for public meetings extended.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R Pokoly

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