



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

Union Station Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester, MA 01608

508.453.3403 Fax: 508.752.1676 therta.com

**Worcester Regional Transit Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes June 20, 2024**

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

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present by Zoom webinar: Steve Rolle – Worcester. Mark Binnall – Auburn, Robert Spain – Millbury, Brian Bullock – Holden, Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Heather-Lyn Haley – Leicester Alt, Shannon Smith – Grafton Alt, Hollie Lucht – Shrewsbury Alt, Kendra Faldetta- Northborough, Kelly Bol – Northbridge, Austin Cyganiewicz-Rutland, Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Members entering after call to order: Michael Ward – Clinton, Winifred Octave – Worcester (RCP), Marcelino Guerra - Southbridge, (DP). Robert Blair- Berlin, Jennifer Gingras- Westborough, Alt.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC - There was no business from the public.

ELECTIONS OF WRTA OFFICERS: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Clerk

Chairperson Belanger asked if there were any nominations for the officers’ positions. Mark Binnall nominated himself as Vice-Chairperson. The slate of offices for FY’25 was introduced by Robert Spain as the following: Doug Belanger Chairperson, Brian Bullock Treasurer, Robin Grimm Clerk. **Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to approve the following slate of officers Doug Belanger Chairperson, Brian Bullock Treasurer, Robin Grimm Clerk. By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Brian Bullock. Roll Call Vote:**

Steve Rolle	yes
Brian Bullock	yes
Doug Belanger	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Hollie Lucht	yes
Mark Binnall	yes
Robin Grimm	yes
Austin Cyganiewicz	yes
Kendra Faldetta	yes
Kelly Bol	yes
Shannon Smith	yes

All in Favor (11 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed.

Chairperson Belanger stated the nominations for Vice Chairperson as Mark Binnall and Robert Spain. A roll call vote for which candidate would be tallied to determine the Vice Chairperson. **Motion: I move that the WRTA Advisory Board votes to elect the vice chairperson from the nominations of Robert Spain and Mark Binnall. By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Mark Binnall. Roll Call Vote:**

Steve Rolle	Robert Spain
Brian Bullock	Robert Spain
Doug Belanger	Robert Spain
Robert Spain	Robert Spain
Hollie Lucht	Robert Spain
Mark Binnall	Mark Binnall
Robin Grimm	Robert Spain
Austin Cyganiewicz	Robert Spain
Kendra Faldetta	Robert Spain
Kelly Bol	Robert Spain
Shannon Smith	Abstained

The WRTA Advisory Board voted to elect Robert Spain as the Vice Chairperson for FY25. **By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Mark Binnall. Roll call Vote: All in Favor (9 in favor Robert Spain 1 Mark Binnall 1 abstention) vote passed by majority vote.**

Communities Served:

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



Doug Belanger informed the members that at the July meeting the standing subcommittees appointments would be announced. The two major committees are Audit and Finance and Personnel. The other committees are ad hoc and meet only as needed. Doug Belanger announced that he was elected as a selectman for the Town of Leicester. Chairperson Belanger asked for comment from those board members who attended the WRTA Tour. The board members comments were positive on tour participation and the pride in the work done by the employees. Chairperson Belanger recommended that tours be given as new board members join.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES - out of order

Motion: To accept the minutes for April 18, 2024

By: Robert Spain. 2nd: Mark Binnall. Vote: All in Favor (11 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed.

Josh Rickman addressed the June 12, 2024 incident at the WRTA Hub. Josh Rickman stated this occurrence does not reflect the standards upheld at the WRTA for safety. Ensuring the health and safety of our riders and drivers is paramount in our mission. The WRTA continues to work with Worcester Police Department while this active investigation continues. Josh Rickman thanked the WPD and CMTM for their continuous communication throughout the incident. The WRTA held an internal meeting on Thursday, June 13 and actions plans are under view for implementing. Mark Binnall asked if security officers were armed. Josh Rickman stated that security officers are not armed as stated in the contract. Josh Rickman stated that he would follow up with options and they are reviewing the current number of security employees.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION ON CONSTRUCTION FOR LOBBY DESIGN

Josh Rickman gave a presentation outlining the two options regarding the WRTA Hub Lobby Design. The presentation listed the history of the lobby and Administration’s goals and directives for the concept development. The WRTA is working with the firm STV, Inc for this project. The two designs differences were broken down in terms of seating capacity, initial cost, maintenance budgeting costs/increases and customer service access. Option One outlines additional seating space (64 seats and 4 wheelchair spaces) as well as larger Customer Service space. Option Two includes public bathrooms 2 stalls each side (47 seats and 2 wheelchair spaces) as well as all seating to only one side of the floor plan. Both Options offer more seating then presently available and both include changes to entry doors. Operational Costs are significantly higher long term for Option Two. It was reported that roughly \$200k would be required in 2024 for a cleaning company. Lobby and waiting areas are smaller on Option Two due to the space needed for bathrooms. Josh Rickman stated that the Driver’s lounge would remain available through the construction process. There are no plans to renovate that space with this lobby construction. The security office will be equipped with wired CCTV access for monitoring and mitigating incidents. Josh Rickman state how the Front Street entrance has less foot traffic and would add value to the space if redesigned. Josh Richman commented on how the design accommodates future plans for trip planning kiosks and real-time signs. No vote was taken at this meeting regarding modifications or budgeting. The item will be placed on the WRTA Agenda for July for further considerations/approval on modifications. Josh Rickman noted that they will be looking into the use of sliding doors within the project. Doug Belanger commented on Option One including the possible use of portable toilets. Josh Richman replied that details of any possibility would be addressed at the July meeting.

INNOVATION GRANT UPDATE

The WRTA did receive the Mass Innovation grant for just under \$500,000 dollars. The WRTA had a successful kick off meeting with SMOC, Town of Shrewsbury and the Middlesex Opportunity Council. The WRTA will meet with Yellow Cab next week to fulfill that side of the grant. The WRTA’s target start date is by the end of July. The WRTA received notification from CMRPC that the individuals housed in Sturbridge will be relocated by the end of the month. The WRTA wrote in some flexibility to accommodate changes to location. The WRTA will continue to work with the Town of Sturbridge on transportation issues. The WRTA is looking to incorporate more services from Elderbus to accommodate needs. Robin Grimm commented on the needs of the surrounding rural communities. Robin Grimm asked that the conversations continue for service in these areas.

UPDATE ON HIRING

Josh Rickman announced how CMTM is only two employees short of their 110-total goal. Josh Rickman praised CMTM for doing a fantastic job. CMTM continues to recruit and work with all interested agencies. Josh Rickman announced that two individuals came from Ascentria and are driving buses today. The WRTA is looking at the most responsible ways to achieve full service and will keep the board updated. Josh Rickman stated that the long-term goal is to get back to full service with the fall bid.

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MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mark Binnall asked if there are plans to work on platform redesign. Josh Rickman confirmed that changes are being discussed for the platform in the future. Robin Grimm asked about the use of Narcan at the Hub. Josh Rickman stated that Narcan is carried and use by Security. Heather-Lyn Haley commented on using a line of portable toilets as a compromise to indoor facility bathrooms. Josh Rickman stated they are looking into possibilities of long-standing use of portable toilets and their specific considerations. Chairperson Belanger thanked CMTM for their efforts. Robert Spain asked that the WRTA/CMTM continue to make hiring a priority. Josh Rickman stated that they have enhanced tracking and needs efforts to be ahead of the curve. Mark Binnall asked about hiring increases in van drivers. Josh Rickman stated that they would continue to monitor any further needs.

Josh Rickman announced the 2nd Riders forum at the Hub on July 10th. WRTA/CMTM/CMRPC staff will be getting rider feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 8:51 a.m.

By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Mark Binnall

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

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on July 18, 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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