



**Worcester Regional Transit Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes July 18, 2024**

Chairperson Belanger called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

AB MEMBERS ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present by Zoom webinar: Steve Rolle – Worcester. Robert Blair – Berlin, Robert Spain – Millbury, Brian Bullock – Holden, Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Shannon Smith – Grafton Alt, Kendra Faldetta- Northborough, Kelly Bol – Northbridge, Jasmin Rivas – Southbridge, Marcelino Guerra - Southbridge, (DP). Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Members entering after call to order: Adam Menard- Auburn, Heather-Lyn Haley – Leicester Alt.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes for June 20, 2024

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

CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT FOR STANDING COMMITTEES:

Chairperson Belanger announced Brian Bullock for the Audit and Finance committee and Mark Binnall for Personnel Committee. Chairperson Belanger announced that Robin Grimm would be an add on to audit and finance committee. Chairperson Belanger stated that any board member can join in at a committee meeting. The audit and finance committee members meet about twice a year. This committee receives detailed information about fiscal budgeting for the WRTA. The personnel committee meets as needed and generally when the Administrator is hired.

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

Josh Rickman gave a presentation on the lobby renovations which included follow up from comments made at last month’s board meeting. The lobby construction timeline is dependent upon board approve. The intention being Spring of 2025 with completion last fall of 2025. Option #2 with bathrooms was discussed and questions from the board about security space and management of the bathrooms were discussed. Board members spoke of the importance of providing bathrooms at the WRTA. Discussions on exterior porta-potties were concerning for safety and aesthetic value to the City. Josh Richman stated that permitting and/or rental of porta potties presented numerous challenges. Exterior construction for permanent bathroom facilities were discussed with placement by the old bike rack. Board members agreed that the initial costs and then added maintenance would not add value or be as sustainable as an interior bathroom. Board members reviewed Option One (without the bathrooms) at a cost of \$850,000 and Option Two was estimated at \$1.25 million not including yearly maintenance, etc. Capital money and some CARES ACT would cover the construction. If bathrooms are approved then their maintenance costs would be yearly as an operational expense. Thomas Coyne stated that the projected 5-year plan supports the board’s prior proprieties and is sustainable due to the CARES ACT and other prior funding. Should the operational budget increase and when prior monies are exhausted; the WRTA will need to adjust with cuts. Fare free is being paid by CARES ACT and other funding which has a timeframe while State funding is variable.

Chairperson Belanger asked for input from the board members. The majority of the members were for internal bathrooms as designed. Marcelino Guerra commented on the importance of fully manageable and safe access to bathrooms for those with disabilities.

Motion: I move that the WRTA Advisory Board votes to undertake Option #2 for the Lobby Re-Design Concept. By Robert Spain, 2nd: Robin Grimm. Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (11 in favor 1 opposed) vote passed by majority vote.

Steve Rolle	yes
Doug Belanger	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Brian Bullock	no
Robert Blair	yes
Jasmin Rivas	yes
Marcelino Guerra	yes
Robin Grimm	yes
Adam Menard	yes

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



Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Moving Our Region Forward

Union Station Hub 60 Foster Street Worcester, MA 01608

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Kendra Faldetta	yes
Kelly Bol	yes
Shannon Smith	yes

The WRTA Advisory Board voted to undertake Option #2 for the Lobby Re-Design Concept.

Josh Rickman updated the board on the use of Narcan at the WRTA Hub. Security firm’s employees are trained and can administer Narcan. Existing protocol by security is to clear and secure area due to individual response to Narcan. Security may also choose to observe and wait for emergency officials. The challenges with administrating Narcan is in clearing and securing an area especially onboard buses and the hub platform. Josh Rickman commented on Robert Blair’s suggestion to use self-cleaning toilets. Self-cleaning toilets were noted as requiring single stalled bathrooms but can be investigated further based off of preferred solutions. Josh Rickman commented on the success of the 2nd Rider’s Forum with over 200 responses. They will continue to reach out using this format. Josh Rickman announced that “Save the Date” notices had gone out through Jamie Winters. The WRTA will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary on September 26th. Board members are invited to the M&O for a brief celebration and the public event will be at the Hub with a” touch a bus” activity and WRTA informational tables.

Josh Rickman introduced Nick Burnham who gave a presentation on the WRTA submission of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. (PTASP). The Administration requested a vote of approval for this FTA required document. The document outlines the comprehensive and collaborative approach to managing safety. The document detailed safety processes and procedures for the WRTA, and utilizes existing safety practices and includes transit industry best practices. The first PTASP was endorsed by the Advisory board in 2020 and updated in 2022. CMTM already had a safety framework in place and it has been incorporated to meet the plan’s needs. The WRTA continues to update and report for its Fixed Route and Demand Response Services as required. Safety performance saw decreases between 2022 and 2023 performance metrics. Nick Burnham stated that CMTM has an open stream of communication on safety issues including security reports with the WRTA. Nick Burnham informed the board that additional targets will show up next year due to the Federal attention on driver assaults and employee threats/assaults.

Motion: I move that the WRTA Advisory Board approves the Annual PTASP 2023 safety targets. By Robert Spain, 2nd: Brian Bullock. Roll Call Vote: All in Favor (12 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed by majority vote.

Steve Rolle	yes
Doug Belanger	yes
Robert Spain	yes
Brian Bullock	yes
Robert Blair	yes
Jasmin Rivas	yes
Marcelino Guerra	yes
Robin Grimm	yes
Adam Menard	yes
Kendra Faldetta	yes
Kelly Bol	yes
Shannon Smith	yes

The WRTA Advisory Board voted to approve the Annual PTASP 2023 safety targets.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To Adjourn at 8:58 a.m.

By: Robert Blair, 2nd: Brian Bullock

Vote: All in favor (12 in favor 0 opposed)

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on August 15, 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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Boylston	Clinton		Leicester	Northbridge	Oxford	Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	