



**Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes January 15, 2026 Zoom Webinar**

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

2. Clerk Robin Grimm called the roll

Remote Attendance members: Stephen Rolle – Worcester, Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Brian Bullock – Holden, Robert Spain – Millbury, Suzanne Lewandowski – Alt, North Brookfield, Hollie Lucht – Shrewsbury, Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Carol Grueneich Alt - Northborough, John Jovan – Southbridge, Laura Wilson – Alt Oxford, Mike Kennedy CWD – Millbury. Remote attending after roll call: Mark Binnall – Auburn, Kelly Bol Alt – Northbridge, Brian Pigeon – Alt Worcester, Heather-Lyn Haley – Alt, Leicester, Nelly Medina, (RCP), Worcester,

3. Approval of Minutes from November 20, 2025

Motion: To accept the minutes for November 20, 2025. By: Brian Bullock. 2nd: Robert Spain. Vote by Roll Call: (10 in favor, 0 opposed) vote passed.

Steve Rolle	yes	Robin Grimm	yes	Suzanne Lewandowski	yes
Brain Bullock	yes	John Jovan	yes	Laura Wilson	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes	Carol Grueneich	yes		
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes		

4. Business from the Public

Shaun Bartone commented positively on the transit app and asked about QR codes on bus stop signs. The Administrator explained that the bus stop project includes new QR codes with a possible text option. Bus stop signage is being addressed as part of the rebranding. J Vessella-Smith from the Bell Hill area requested consideration for rapid transit options for RT 9 to improve travel times. The Administrator acknowledged the traffic issues and spoke about the numerous public meetings and locations to address public concerns. Stephen Rolle from the City of Worcester briefly outlined the City’s priority to study and plan for further safety enhancements along Route 9. Joseph Belsito of ASAP Signs Inc. informed the board of his company’s formal appeal of a recent RFP for bus wrapping. Joseph Belsito claims the decision was indefensible and appealed to the board members to take a second look. Joseph Belsito spoke about being a local business versus the Canadian firm selected, and listed cost savings. Chairperson Belanger stated that the RFP was not an agenda item. Adam Thielker asked about the progress of signal priority for the buses. Stephen Rolle stated that the city continues to work with the WRTA on this enhancement. The Administrator acknowledged that fixed-route technology has improved and that the WRTA continues to work toward advancing this goal.

5. Chairperson Doug Belanger’s Agenda Administrators Review

Personnel Committee Chairperson Mark Binnall has agreed to an upcoming meeting for the annual review of the Administrator. The annual review forms will be sent to committee members shortly, and a meeting will be scheduled. Personnel Committee Chairperson Mark Binnall asked for consideration to shorten the review form. Chairperson Doug Belanger stated it would be looked into. Robert Spain made a motion to direct the personnel committee to review the Administrator.

6. Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to direct the Personnel Committee to do a review of the Administrator. By: Robert Spain. 2nd: Mark Binnall. Vote by Roll Call: (13 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed unanimously.

Steve Rolle	yes	Robin Grimm	yes	Suzanne Lewandowski	yes
Brain Bullock	yes	John Jovan	yes	Laura Wilson	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes	Kelly Bol	yes	Nelly Medina	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes	Mark Binnall	yes
Carol Grueneich	yes				

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	



7. Quarterly Paratransit Rider Forum Update – Nick Burnham, Director of Operations

The first of two public paratransit forums will be on February 26, 2026, at 1 pm via Zoom due to the present lobby construction at the WRTA Hub. The second is likely in May or June of 2026. All notices and schedules will be posted on the WRTA website. There will be an upcoming procurement for paratransit demand response technology, and both the survey results and public meetings will assist with future determinations.

8. Next Stop News - Jamie Winters, Director of Marketing & Communications

The newsletter has been sent to the board members. The newsletter captures projects and information about the WRTA. Sign-up is available on the website, and postings are up on social media. Prior issues will be available, and postings are expected quarterly. Chairperson Doug Belanger asked about possible distribution to the City Council. Steve Rolle stated they can add it to the Council Calendar or forward it as a link.

9. Administrators Report - Josh Rickman, WRTA Administrator

- **Paratransit Budgetary Requests:** Paratransit cost associated with Yellow Cab vs. CMTM from fiscal year 2020-2025 were reviewed using NTD data, which is the fully allocated costs. Overall, the cost of paratransit service from CMTM was higher in FY 2020 at \$56.00, but has since decreased to \$45.00 per passenger in FY 2025. During the WRTA budget process in early Spring, the administration is happy to review further with the board. Mark Binnall asked for a paratransit passenger by revenue report. The Administrator acknowledged the report request.
- **Lobby Construction Update:** The construction is fully underway, and photos were shown. The second-floor staff have been temporarily moved to the T&G building, and a temporary Customer Service booth is located on the platform. More information will be forthcoming as things progress. Tours for the space will be looked into. Our design for the space is ADA-compliant. Mark Binnall requested the installation of yellow striping on the platform floor to guide visually impaired persons to the new customer service booth. The Administrator stated they would look into that possibility. Nelly Medina asked for a list of the specific ADA complaint items. The Administrator stated that the bid documents would include the following items. Meetings with the VIP task force and a walk-through have been conducted to improve access at the Hub. Nelly Medina asked whether there would be any public meetings for people who may not be attending the VIP task force. The Administrator suggested sharing contact information to facilitate broader distribution and input.
- **Demand Response Software:** The WRTA is currently reviewing internal needs and industry best practices for the upcoming procurement. One benefit will be expanded automated calls, including daytime calls. The WRTA is also seeking options that would allow us to operate micro-transit internally. The priority was stated as providing the passenger with more information. Mark Binnall asked about better timing to get to the vehicle.
- **Epoxy Floor Project:** The WRTA had a new epoxy floor installed at the M&O building for safety and overall convenience.
- **Comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan:** Final stages of the CRTP 5-year vision, which were also done in 2015 and 2020. Service concepts will be included in this plan, and public input survey results will be used. The report will be available by the end of February and will be posted on the website.

10. Advisory Board members and Other(s) as directed by the Chairperson

Mark Binnall asked for a copy of the presentation. Mark Binnall stated that the old vans had 3 steps, while the new vans have only 2. The Administration will look into the different changes on the van and provide an update to the board.

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Boylston	Clinton	Brookfield	Leicester	Northbridge	Oxford	Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	Worcester



Moving Our Region Forward

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Adjourn

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:01 a.m. By: Robert Spain, 2nd: Mark Binnall Vote by Roll Call: All in Favor (13 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed unanimously.

Steve Rolle	yes	Robin Grimm	yes	Suzanne Lewandowski	yes
Brain Bullock	yes	John Jovan	yes	Laura Wilson	yes
Douglas Belanger	yes	Kelly Bol	yes	Nelly Medina	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes	Mark Binnall	yes
Carol Grueneich	yes				

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on February 19, 2026, at 8:00 a.m., via Zoom Webinar.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R. Pokoly

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