



**Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes February 19, 2026 Zoom Webinar**

1. Chairperson Belanger called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

2. Clerk Robin Grimm called the roll

Remote Attendance members: Stephen Rolle – Worcester, Brian Pigeon – Alt Worcester, Robert Blair-Berlin, Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Brian Bullock – Holden, Robert Spain – Millbury, Suzanne Lewandowski – Alt, North Brookfield, Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Carol Grueneich Alt - Northborough, Mark Binnall – Auburn, Kelly Bol Alt – Northbridge, John Jovan – Southbridge, Laura Wilson – Alt Oxford, Mike Kennedy CWD – Millbury. Remote attending after roll call: Mike Ward – Clinton.

Chairperson Belanger asked for any amendments to the January 15, 2026, meeting minutes. Brain Pigeon requested attendance for himself at the January 15, 2026, meeting. Attendance was after the initial roll call.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2026

Motion: To accept the amended minutes for January 15, 2026. By: Brian Bullock. 2nd: Mark Binnall.

Vote by Roll Call: (13 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 Blair	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes	Mark Binnall	yes
Kelly Bol	yes				

4. Business from the Public

Shaun Bartone commented on the need to expand Route 2 on Saturday mornings to meet the 9:00 am MBTA station schedule. Shaun Bartone commented on the need for Route 2 to travel up Pleasant Street to Tatnuck Square on Sunday due to Newton Hill's steepness. The Administrator acknowledged the comments and deferred to the upcoming board report later in the meeting.

5. FY26 Revised Budget - Thomas Coyne, Assistant Administrator & CFO

The WRTA Advisory Board approved the original budget on April 17, 2025. At that time, no allocation was made for the labor agreement, and CARES Act monies were used to offset fares. The FY26 revised budget was outlined. Total expenses increased by 7.8% to \$41,795,340, up from the approved budget of \$38,754,911. This increase included expenses for moving PBSTM to a downtown location during construction, as well as fixed-route and demand-response costs. Chairperson Belanger asked whether the relocation cost could be paid with capital funds from the construction. The Administration would look into that request. Debit service was down -14.4% due to a lower interest rate. Revenue increased due to the use of the MassDOT Discretionary Grant. Brian Bullock commented on the need to spend down CARES Act (federal funds), given the current political climate. Whether for overall offsets or other WRTA needs. The Administration is working closely with the board to continue balancing grant and CARES Act spending. Robert Spain made a motion to accept the FY26 revised budget as presented.

6. Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to accept the FY26 revised budget as presented. By: Robert Spain. 2nd: Brian Bullock. 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	Carol Grueneich	yes	Robert Blair	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes	Mark Binnall	yes
Kelly Bol	yes				

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

The first of the quarterly 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 forum provides riders and community members

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	



with the opportunity to learn about ongoing service improvements, ask questions, and provide feedback. Information has been posted in the vans, on social media, and on the website. The administration will use both the survey and public meeting input results in the process. Meeting dates for the rest of the year are posted on the WRTA website.

8. Rebrand Launch - Jamie Winters, Director of Marketing & Communications

The new bus wrap design launch began on the 13th and was showcased on social media. Next, the new hybrid buses will be partially wrapped, while the existing fleet will be either full or partially wrapped. When 1/3 of the fixed-route buses have been wrapped, the website and social media will transition to the new branding. Rebranding of the fixed route buses is expected to wrap up at the end of June; however, vans may take until the end of the Summer. Bus stop signage updates will roll out in phases, starting with the top 10 ridership locations in early Spring. Bus stops will have two signs per location. The smaller sign will have QR codes for downloading the transit app, location stop number, and contact information.

Administrators Report - Josh Rickman, WRTA Administrator

- **Lobby Update:** Concrete work is underway for the necessary piping and HVAC work. The base floor is being completed. The construction continues without any incidents. Hoping for a reopening in June 2026.
- **CRTP:** CRTP final document is available on the website. The document showcases needs and goals, existing conditions, and provides ideas, including new route concepts like “crosstown” services. Ideas for exploring more microtransit and same-day paratransit options. As the Administration moves forward, it will vet these ideas with the board and the public. Refining service ideas and presenting cost estimates and implementation strategies. Develop better public-facing materials to clearly communicate what these changes would be, their benefits, and the trade-offs for the riders. The Administration continues to work with other RTAs to improve interconnectivity. Steve Rolle asked for a timeframe on the release to the public and the board. Steve Rolle suggested the need for broader state-wide discussions on funding the RTAs to achieve sustainable, expanded service goals. Joshua Rickman acknowledged that funding is needed as both buses and drivers would be required for expanded services.
- **Transit App Update:** In January, an onboard “door hanger” promotion resulted in 598 new users. The WRTA saw a 56% increase in app usage since last January.
- **Other Administration Updates:** We are installing new on-time signs at the Hub. These will be located above the platform area and will include push-to-talk buttons. An email will be sent to the board once the project is complete.

9. Advisory Board members and Other(s) as directed by the Chairperson - NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To Adjourn at 9:01 a.m. By: Brian Bullock, 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	Carol Grueneich	yes	Robert Blair	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes	Mark Binnall	yes
Kelly Bol	yes				

NEXT MEETING DATE

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

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R. Pokoly

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Berlin	Charlton	East	Holland	Northborough	Oakham	Rutland	Sturbridge	Webster	Brookfield
Boylston	Clinton	Brookfield	Leicester	Northbridge	Oxford	Shrewsbury	Sutton	Westborough	Worcester