

**Worcester Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board**

**Meeting Minutes April 23, 2026 Zoom Webinar**

- 1. Vice-Chairperson Robert Spain called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.**
- 2. Clerk Robin Grimm called the roll**

Remote Attendance members: Stephen Rolle – Worcester, Brian Bullock – Holden, Robert Spain – Millbury, Suzanne Lewandowski Alt –North Brookfield, Robin Grimm – Sturbridge, Carol Grueneich Alt - Northborough, Hollie Lucht – Shrewsbury, Austin Cyganiewicz – Sutton, Mark Binnall – Auburn, Kelly Bol Alt – Northbridge, Stephenie Abate Alt – Grafton, Laura Wilson Alt - Oxford, Rose Russell Alt- Auburn, Heather-Lyn Haley Alt – Leicester, Mike Kennedy CWD – Millbury, Nelly Medina RCP - Worcester. Remote attending after roll call: Douglas Belanger – Leicester, Mike Ward – Clinton.

Vice-Chairperson Robert Spain asked for a motion to accept the minutes from March 19, 2026.

- 3. Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2026**  
**Motion: To accept the minutes for March 19, 2026. By: Robin Grimm. 2<sup>nd</sup>: 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	Nelly Medina	yes	Heather-Lyn Haley	yes
Carol Grueneich	yes	Laura Wilson	yes	Austin Cyganiewicz	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes		
Kelly Bol	yes	Mark Binnall	yes		

- 4. Business from the Public**

Nadine Paige spoke in support of extending fare-free WRTA services for FY27 and beyond, as difficult times remain.

- 5. Audit and Finance Committee: Report and Recommendation from the Audit & Finance on the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

Committee Chairperson Brian Bullock gave a summary of the committee's key budget points. Spikes in fuel costs will be covered by the CARES and ARPA funds' surpluses. Thomas Coyne, Deputy Administrator and CFO, stated that the current contract expires on June 30th and that they will monitor prices before considering locking in a diesel fuel price. Thomas Coyne reviewed the decrease in health insurance reported to the full board in March, which was 27.5%. The figure is now 13% of the budget for this expense. Chairperson Brian Bullock announced the recommendation of continued fare-free for FY27. The cost would be offset by CARES Act and/or ARPA funds; however, the committee recognizes that using these funds to offset fare revenue will likely expire in FY29 or sooner, depending on the need to offset increased fuel prices. Chairperson Brian Bullock acknowledged the increased narrative support documentation and recommended that the administration continue its efforts by including a “Budget Message” in next year's budget presentation.

**Motion: The WRTA Advisory Board votes to accept the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, to approve the FY27 Consolidated Budget as presented. By Brian Bullock. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Robin Grimm. Vote by Roll Call: (13 in favor 0 opposed) vote passed unanimously.**

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

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Brian Bullock thanked Thomas Coyne for his work regarding the budget with the Audit and Finance Committee. Brian Bullock mentioned that votes may not take long, but the work and organization behind them are extensive and much appreciated. Brian Bullock also thanked Elizabeth Pokoly for assisting the board and committee members during this process. The Administrator added gratitude to Elizabeth Pokoly for the effort.

**6. Administrator’s Update – Joshua Rickman**

**Lobby Update**

The lobby renovations remain on schedule with substantial completion by mid-June. At that time, we will be moving employee and support staff into the area with a public opening date expected by mid-July. Further timelines to be announced to the board upon availability. With the approved budget, both the expansion of cleaning and security will be finalized.

**Other Administration Items**

The Administrator announced that students from WPI will be presenting their Major Qualifying Projects (MQPs) at the WRTA Maintenance and Operations Facility on Monday, April 27, at 10:30 AM. Each year, WPI students complete an MQP as part of their degree requirements. This year, two student teams focused on the Lincoln Street and Southbridge Street corridors. Their projects apply engineering and design approaches to improve conditions for all users along these corridors. Board members are welcome to attend this meeting. Robert Spain requested that a reminder notice for the meeting be sent to the board members.

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

Robert Spain thanked the administrator and his team for the work during the budget process. Nelly Medina and Mike Kennedy showed support for expanded fare-free and thanked the board members for the vote. Nelly Medina mentioned the letters of support for fare-free and asked about acknowledgment responses. Elizabeth Pokoly responded that all letters sent to board members are acknowledged by the administration with an appreciation statement and an acknowledgment that the letter will be forwarded to the board members. Mark Binnall asked for an update on the new branding for the buses and vans. Jamie Winters, Director of Marketing and Communications, stated that the bus fleet is on target for completion by June 30th. Vans will be addressed after the buses are completed. Mark Binnall asked the Administrator about the adjustment time policy being “medical only”. The Administrator stated he would review and respond directly to him.

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To Adjourn at 8:25 a.m. By: Doug Belanger, 2<sup>nd</sup>: 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	Nelly Medina	yes	Laura Wilson	yes
Carol Grueneich	yes	Doug Belanger	yes	Austin Cyganiewicz	yes
Robert Spain	yes	Mike Kennedy	yes		
Kelly Bol	yes	Mark Binnall	yes		

**8. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next WRTA Advisory Board Meeting will be on May 21, 2026, at 8:00 a.m., via Zoom Webinar.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth R. Pokoly