

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD

January 23, 2020

In Attendance:

Frank Hegarty, Town of Avon
Kerri Richards, City of Brockton
Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater
John Charbonneau, Town of Stoughton
Frank Lynam, Town of Whitman
Cathie Klabish, Consumer Representative

Charlie Kilmer, Old Colony Planning Council
Mary Waldron, Old Colony Planning Council
Michael Lambert, Administrator
Linda Sacchetti, Chief Financial Officer
Kelly Forrester, Manager of Transit Operations
Glenn Geiler, Grants Manager
Kathy Riddell, BAT

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Mr. Hegarty. He welcomed everyone and introductions took place around the table.

Mr. Hegarty asked if there was anyone who wanted to make public comments. There were none.

Mr. Hegarty asked for a motion to approve the Advisory Board Minutes of October 10, 2019. A motion was made by Mr. Lynam and seconded by Mr. Dutton. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Next on the agenda was a service update. Ms. Forrester reminded the Board of the fare increase that was implemented on July 1, 2019. The decrease in ridership is largely a result of the fare increase. Approximately one year ago, the Old Colony Planning Council conducted a study that projected an approximate decrease of ridership of 5.9%. As the charts in the Board packages indicate, ridership has declined just 3.8%. DIAL-A-BAT ridership has declined 2.7% for the first half of the fiscal year. Calling the Boards attention to the performance dashboard, Ms. Forrester noted that all areas of review are meeting the established standard with the exception of passengers per revenue mile due to decreased ridership.

The group then reviewed the statistics of the three discretionary grants. The Stoughton extension of service is getting close to its goal. More outreach is planned to help boost ridership. Mr. Lambert stated that in partnership with the Town of Stoughton, more bus stop signs will be installed and further collaboration will take place with Stoughton's cable network and newspaper. The additional four trips to Ashmont have exceeded their ridership goals. Additionally, the increased service on the Bridgewater State University (BSU) bus service to the BAT Intermodal Center on weekdays has exceeded it goal. Mr. Hegarty entertained a motion to accept the service update as presented. Mr. Lynam made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Dutton. All were in favor.

Ms. Sacchetti provided the Board with a financial update. She stated that expenses were favorable to budget through December. Farebox revenues for the first half of the fiscal year are unfavorable to budget mostly due to decreased ridership and the impact of the fare increase that was implemented in July. However, overall, revenues are favorable to budget and BAT will likely access less federal funds to balance the budget. Mr. Hegarty entertained a motion to accept the budget update as presented. Mr. Lynam made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Dutton. All were in favor.

Mr. Lambert provided the Board with the Administrator's Report. He apprised the Board of the three operating grants that BAT was awarded by MassDOT. The first is funds to purchase automated passenger counters (APCs) which will provide for more accurate boardings and alightings so BAT can focus its resources on increasing efficiency. BAT will be better able to identify where customers are accessing BAT services. The second grant is to explore the possibility of working with GATRA to make a transit connection between Taunton and Brockton. The Old Colony Planning Council will solicit customer feedback, provide cost estimates and suggestions for the best way to operationally approach the project. The third project is funds to upgrade BAT's fare products which will allow students to purchase monthly reduced fare passes and allow them unlimited travel in the service area. The grant will also allow for mobile ticketing so riders can purchase passes outside the BAT Centre via their smart phones.

Mr. Lambert noted BAT's efforts to boost customer service efforts by training the drivers in general courtesy and friendliness and adding shelters. BAT is developing a new website which will include trip planning and be more mobile friendly for phone usage. BAT's goal with these customer service initiatives is to boost ridership without adding service. Additionally, BAT is ramping up outreach via Twitter and Facebook. Also, some cross promotion will take place via City Hall, MassDOT, OCPC and advertising in the Brockton Enterprise. An example is BAT advertising on Facebook for \$150. For a small amount of money, BAT information was accessed by 11,000 people that are BAT "followers."

Additionally, Mr. Lambert gave the Board an overview and update of its efforts to move paratransit fare collection from cash based to account based similar to the MBTA's approach.

Next was a state update. Under a previously signed Memorandum of Understanding, the state is requiring all RTAs to adopt a fare policy by 12/1/2020. They are requesting a fare policy that will incorporate periodic modest fare adjustments and be adopted by BAT's Advisory Board. As of yesterday, the Governor's budget included a 2.5% increase in funding and will maintain the discretionary grant program. It is felt that the RTAs need a dedicated revenue source for funding.

Next was a First Transit update. Mr. Lambert stated that the paratransit contract held by First Transit will be up this year. It has been suggested that a part-time human resource employee be hired. The request for the hire has been approved and the job will be posted in the next few weeks. It is expected that the new hire would mitigate risks and bolster training. Mr. Hegarty entertained a motion to accept the Administrator's update as presented. Mr. Lynam made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Dutton. All were in favor.

Mr. Hegarty provided an update to the Audit and Finance Committee meeting that took place just prior to the Board meeting. He noted that many of the topics discussed were also addressed at the Board meeting. Discussion also took place regarding the discretionary grants and the requirement to address sustainability should the funding no longer be available. The Committee also discussed the dip in ridership, particularly in December, and how the abbreviated holiday season also impacted those numbers. Mr. Hegarty also noted BAT's conservative approach to financing and the Committee's pleasure that finances are on budget. Mr. Lynam made the motion to accept the Audit and Finance Committee's report and it was seconded by Mr. Dutton. All were in favor.

Under Old Business/New Business, Mr. Lynam mentioned the unfortunate impact of the closing of the Brockton Registry due to flooding. BAT should look for ways to assist individuals impacted by the closure. At this time, it is unknown if and/or when the facility may be operational again. The closest Registry facilities are in Braintree, Plymouth and Taunton.

Next meetings will take place on April 9 and May 21, 2020 at 11:00 AM.

Mr. Hegarty made the motion for the meeting to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Lynam. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Riddell

Documents Included in January 23, 2020 Advisory Board Package:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2019
3. Fixed Route Ridership Comparison incl. BSU
4. Fixed Route Ridership Comparison excl. BSU
5. DAB Ridership Comparison incl. Purchased Trips
6. BSU Ridership Comparison
7. Discretionary Grants Statistics
8. FY20 Budget Update
9. Copies of BAT's Online Ads with the Brockton Enterprise
10. Outreach Posting for Brockton Enterprise, Facebook, etc.
11. Two Brockton Enterprise articles featuring BAT