

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD

October 10, 2019

In Attendance:

Frank Hegarty, Town of Avon

Nick Giaquinto, City of Brockton

Dottie Fulginiti, Town of Easton

Peter Czymbor, City of Brockton

Cathie Klabish, Consumer Representative

Allen Karon, customer

Charlie Kilmer, Old Colony Planning Council

Michael Lambert, Administrator

Kelly Forrester, Manager of Transit Operations

Linda Sacchetti, Chief Financial Officer

Kathy Riddell, BAT

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Mr. Hegarty. He welcomed everyone.

Mr. Hegarty asked if there was anyone who wanted to make public comment. Mr. Allen Karon, from the town of Canton, provided public comment. He stated that the increased Route 14 (Stoughton) service is operating as well as expected. He stated that he heard a few comments made by riders that were not able to get to One Pearl St. in Brockton directly any longer. It was pointed out that access to One Pearl St. is available through a connection at Westgate Mall.

Mr. Hegarty asked for a motion to approve the Advisory Board Minutes of May 30, 2019. A motion was made by Mr. Giaquinto and seconded by Ms. Fulginiti. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Next was a report by the Audit and Finance Committee. Mr. Hegarty informed the Board that the committee met and received BAT's FY19 Audit from the auditors. The audit reflects no material deficiencies and no management issues. He stated it was one of the "cleanest" audits he has ever seen and attributes it to the diligence of the finance department. Mr. Hegarty also noted that the Committee voted to give the Administrator approval to apply for any grants he deems appropriate without waiting for Advisory Board approval. Most grant opportunities have short time-frames and the Committee has full confidence in Mr. Lambert. Mr. Hegarty asked for a motion to accept the Audit and Finance Committee report. Ms. Fulginiti made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Giaquinto. There were no questions or further discussion and all were in favor.

Next on the agenda was a service update. Ms. Forrester called the Board's attention to the ridership data enclosed in their packets. Fixed route ridership is down slightly, which was to be expected due to the fare increase implemented in July. Mr. Lambert added that the charts indicate ridership is heading in the right direction. Overall, ridership is being impacted by lower gas prices and UBER/Lift ride sharing options. BSU ridership, with only one month's data, shows a decrease of 8% over last year despite two additional trips added between BSU and the Intermodal Centre. Historically, BSU ridership decreases in the good weather.

Mr. Lambert gave the Board an overview of the MassDOT discretionary grants awarded to BAT. Increased Ashmont service added four trips to the weekday schedule. BSU is now providing two additional weekday trips (when school is in session) connecting BSU to Brockton via the BAT Intermodal Centre. Lastly, increased service provided in Stoughton. The trend for the Stoughton

service is moving upward and BAT plans an increased push to notify riders of the enhanced availability of service.

Mr. Hegarty asked about the MBTA's service from Randolph to the Avon line. They are not servicing on a regular basis and do not pick up riders after Crawford Square. BAT seems to be very active in that area. Mr. Lambert stated that BAT has some flexibility and a good relationship with the MBTA bus operations and will look into the issue.

Item 6 on the agenda was a Financial Update. Ms. Sacchetti stated that she was reporting through the month of August. Revenues are on budget. Expenses are favorable to budget, which is not uncommon so early in the fiscal year. No seasonal expenses have been incurred. As of October 1, Massachusetts PFML was put into effect. BAT will not be participating. Fuel prices are favorable to budget as BAT has entered into two long term fuel contracts, diesel and gasoline, at prices less than budgeted. BAT's insurance program saw an increase of 9.5% at renewal in May and is on budget through August. Interest expense is tied to borrowings. BAT borrowed \$6.3 million in FY20. Overall, expenses are favorable to budget. Ms. Sacchetti presented the Board with the Certified FY19 Local Assessments. Assessments increased 2.5% and there were no big changes. Weighted vote by community was also included in the package. Mr. Hegarty asked if there was a motion to accept the budget update and certified assessments. Mr. Giaquinto made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Fulginiti.

Mr. Lambert provided the Board with the Administrator's Report. First Transit is in the third year of its contract to provide management services for fixed route services and its first year for paratransit services. In the past year First Transit has acquired a number of other management services contracts in Massachusetts. BAT has had an uptick in incidents on the road and First Transit performed a Safety Review of Training and materials, which were up-to-date. They did make some suggestions to realigning trainings and documentation. First Transit will also be helping procure a tire lease.

Mr. Lambert updated the group on Rail Vision. The state is reviewing and planning commuter rail service. There are seven proposals on the table for discussion. Mr. Lambert says it is key that the region provides comments on the proposals so that south of Boston service is not ignored. Congestion at JFK/UMass seems to be hindering increased service to the region and expansion for our area is not included in the top three proposals. OCPC and the city have input and should comment on the economic advantages increased service would provide.

Mr. Lambert described the MassDOT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that BAT, along with the other RTAs, signed. The Governor's budget increased RTA funding from \$88,000,000 to \$90,000,000 for base funding. Additionally, \$3,000,000 will be made available for discretionary grants on a competitive basis. Another round of discretionary grants is presently being solicited. BAT plans to apply for automated passenger counters (APCs) to boost data collection and accuracy. The MOU requires RTAs to provide detailed statistics and data along with projections for future service as a measure of performance and efficiency. The second application will be to study and design a cross RTA borders connection between Brockton and Taunton. The study will identify service options, passenger safety concerns and amenities, ADA requirements, potential deviations, etc.

In addition to above, BAT is applying for a Workforce Discretionary grant which would provide for expanded Rockland service to provide increased connectivity to downtown Brockton, Rockland Industrial Park, and the Park & Ride facility on the Rockland/Hingham border as well as increased frequency of trips and extended service hours.

Under Property Disposition, Mr. Lambert informed the Board that BAT is disposing of a number of revenue vehicles considered beyond their useful life. Additionally, two vehicles that are not suitable for sale will be donated to the Brockton Fire Dept for training purposes.

Ms. Fulginiti commented on the commuter rail service that residents of Easton access in Stoughton. She stated that there seems to be an increased trend in problems and delays. She stated that in many instances' fares are not collected. Providing a ticket verification/collection system somewhere on pathway to train would help raise needed capital. She takes part in the Commuter Rail Coalition and is more than willing to show support for the southern part of the region and will seek letters of support from the Easton Board of Selectmen and Economic Development Council.

Mr. Lambert noted that one element that MassDOT did not take into consideration when developing the seven Rail Vision proposals was the cost of upgrading the equipment/infrastructure which has to be incurred to make the system work. Increased pressure on housing in Boston means that people are moving to outer communities. There is also increased pressure to take into account people's ability to pay the fare.

Under Old Business/New Business, Ms. Sacchetti informed the Board that BAT's FY19 Financial Statements are available on BAT's website. Next meeting will take place on January 16, 2020 at 11:00 AM.

Mr. Giaquinto made the motion for the meeting to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Fulginiti. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Riddell

Documents Included in October 10, 2019 Advisory Board Package:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – May 24, 2018
3. Fixed Route Ridership Comparison incl. BSU
4. Fixed Route Ridership Comparison excl. BSU
5. BSU Ridership Comparison
6. Discretionary Grants Statistics
7. FY20 Budget Update
8. FY19 Assessments