

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD

May 27, 2021

In Attendance:

Mayor Robert Sullivan, City of Brockton	Cathie Klabish, Consumer Member
Frank Hegarty, Town of Avon	Michael Lambert, Administrator
Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater	Linda Sacchetti, Chief Financial Officer
Stanley Zoll, Town of Stoughton	Kelly Forrester, Manager of Transit Operations
Dottie Fulginiti, Town of Easton	Charles C. Stevenson, General Counsel
Mary Waldron, Old Colony Planning Council	Kathy Riddell, BAT
Charles Kilmer, Old Colony Planning Council	

Chairman Sullivan welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. He stated that based on Governor Baker's declaration of a state of emergency on March 12, 2020 enhanced open meeting regulations were being utilized for the meeting. The meeting was being recorded and live streamed on BAT's YouTube video platform to provide a public forum/access. All requirements have been met.

Chairman Sullivan welcomed everyone, a roll call was performed and a quorum was declared.

Chairman Sullivan asked if there were any public comments. There were none. Chairman Sullivan asked if there were any changes or questions regarding the minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting. Mr. Zoll noted three typing errors. Ms. Fulginiti noted an error in her name. Chairman Sullivan asked for a motion to approve the Advisory Board Minutes of September 24, 2020 reflecting the corrections mentioned above. A motion was made by Mr. Zoll and seconded by Mr. Dutton to accept the minutes as presented with the noted changes. A roll call was performed and all were in favor.

Next on the agenda was a service update. Ms. Forrester updated the Board on ridership data. She pointed out the 119% increase of April ridership over last April's numbers but noted that the pandemic's full impact was in place last April. Ridership is trending upward. Paratransit ridership is experiencing a similar increase. Mr. Lambert stated that last week's ridership was the best since last fall.

The Performance Dashboard was then reviewed. Ms. Forrester pointed out that the goals and standards are still being compared to metrics established in 2020. Although ridership is down, safety, maintenance and customer service are doing well. Chairman Sullivan asked if anyone had any comments or questions on ridership or the performance dashboard. There were none.

Mr. Lambert stated that employee and customer safety was of paramount importance. On the vaccination front, Mr. Lambert informed the Board that 80% of the workforce has been vaccinated and the organization is focused on increasing that rate. BAT is continuing to monitor and

encouraging testing be performed as quickly as possible. Reopening of the state begins on Saturday; however, transit falls under TSA guidelines which means masks and other protocols are still in place. BAT plans to prepare drivers for increased activity on the streets. Additionally, there will be a lifting of bus capacity restrictions on Saturday. BAT will be discontinuing rear door entry and going back to front entry. BAT plans to have sufficient PPE on hand and to disseminate information to the public that will clarify any confusion. Chairman Sullivan said that Brockton's Emergency Management team has plenty of masks should BAT need any.

Ms. Sacchetti provided the group with an overview of the DBE program. She said BAT's three-year goal is 2.5% and BAT plans to achieve that goal through public outreach. A virtual public meeting will take place on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 PM and information for interested parties can be found on BAT's website.

Mr. Lambert provided the State and Federal Funding Update. State transportation funding is ongoing, but based on the House and Senate discussions, BAT expects to be at least level funded. However, there may be an opportunity for additional funding through discretionary grants. On the federal side, he stated that Rhode Island, New Hampshire and the MBTA have agreed to the split agreement for the American Rescue Plan Act. That will mean an additional \$8.9 million dollars will be allocated to BAT to ensure safe and effective transit service. Mr. Zoll had a question about the infrastructure bill. Mr. Lambert informed him that news yesterday indicated that the amount being considered was \$20 billion nationwide and transit needs were included.

Mr. Hegarty provided the Board with a report on the Audit and Finance/Compensation Committee meeting that was held earlier in the day. He directed the groups attention to the Amended 2021 Budget. He said that a number of items were adjusted downward due to service alterations, fuel contract, insurance, etc. He pointed out that despite the slower than expected return increase in revenues, federal operating assistance was only slightly higher (\$28,000) than the original proposed budget. He stated that the Audit and Finance Committee unanimously recommended adoption of the amended 2021 budget. Motion was made to accept by Mr. Hegarty and seconded by Mr. Dutton. A roll call was performed and all were in favor.

Next, Mr. Hegarty presented the 2022 Proposed Budget. This was also reviewed by the Audit and Finance Committee. He noted that line items were based on as many "known" costs as possible and less than the original proposed 2021 Budget. He stated that the Audit and Finance Committee unanimously recommended adoption of the Proposed 2022 Budget. Motion was made to accept by Mr. Hegarty and seconded by Mr. Dutton. A roll call was performed and all were in favor. Mr. Lambert stated that the budget was developed to allow for some flexibility should an opportunity arise to expand some service.

Number 8 on the agenda was the Administrator's Report. The Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan (CRTP) has been out for public review and no significant comments were received. BAT would like the Board to accept the document as a guide for the next three to five years. The overreaching goals include working with the City of Brockton to help achieve economic, environmental and equity goals,

in addition to working with member communities to ensure emerging innovative services can be utilized to assist with their needs. Additionally, coordination with the MBTA for the benefit of the customers is recommended. Ensuring transparency with workers and customers without regard to origin, ethnicity, gender, income, language or physical abilities is also a high priority. Mr. Hegarty made a motion that the Board accept the CRTP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dutton. A roll call was performed and all were in favor.

Under Old/New Business, Chairman Sullivan asked the Board to consider instituting “free” fares during the summer in an effort to promote increased ridership and economic activity in the City. He asked for comments and thoughts from the Board. Mr. Lambert said that as Ms. Sacchetti pointed out, BAT has federal funding to support any changes that would reintroduce the community to BAT and promote businesses in the area. Mr. Dutton fully supported the idea. He suggested collecting data to see how the “free” fare equates to increased ridership and jump starting both ridership and businesses. Ms. Fulginiti thought it was a good idea to promote economic development and should be advertised in multiple languages for outreach. Mr. Zoll asked that the group consider expanding the free weekend service to Stoughton/Cobbs Corner. Mr. Hegarty suggested reaching out to Westgate Mall and Cobbs Corner businesses and restaurants so they could participate in advertising the free transportation. By utilizing their support, BAT might gain riders that are not usual riders of the service thus expanding the ridership base. Chairman Sullivan thought that was a very good suggestion. Ms. Waldron suggested utilizing OCPC staff to meet people in the community and go where people gather to promote public transit. She said she would put a proposal together with her staff and provide to Mr. Lambert. A motion was made by Mr. Dutton to support providing “free” bus service during the summer. Mr. Hegarty seconded the motion. A roll call was performed and all were in favor.

Mr. Zoll informed the group that his appointment to the Advisory Board for Stoughton would be expiring next month. He did not know who would be representing Stoughton but wanted to thank the Board and BAT staff for the opportunity to learn and participate. Mr. Lambert sincerely thanked him for his participation and input. Chairman Sullivan thanked Mr. Zoll for his public commitment. Members wished him well.

Next meeting will take place in September. Mr. Hegarty made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Mr. Dutton. A roll call was performed and all were in favor. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Riddell, BAT

Documents Included in May 27, 2021 Advisory Board Package:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Advisory Board Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2021
3. Fixed Route Ridership
4. DAB Ridership Comparison
5. Performance Dashboard FY21
6. DBE Meeting Notice
7. FY21 Amended Budget
8. Resolution 260
9. FY22 Proposed Draft Budget
10. Resolution 261