

## MINUTES OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD

### JOINT AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

May 27, 2021 10:00 AM

In Attendance:

Frank Hegarty, Town of Avon

Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater

Dottie Fulginiti, Town of Easton

Michael Lambert, Administrator

Linda Sacchetti, CFO

Kelly Forrester, Manager of Transit Operations

Kathy Riddell, BAT

The virtual meeting was called to order by Mr. Hegarty, for the purpose of discussing business brought before the Audit and Finance Committee in accordance with the agenda presented and the notice sent out on May 20, 2021. The meeting was held virtually and streamed live on BAT's YouTube channel to meet the public meeting engagement requirements.

Mr. Hegarty welcomed the group. He asked if there were any public comments. Seeing as there were none, the group moved to the next item on the agenda.

The minutes from the meeting of April 15, 2021 were reviewed. Mr. Dutton made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Mr. Hegarty. The minutes for the Compensation Committee Meeting of May 21, 2020 were reviewed. Mr. Dutton made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Mr. Hegarty.

Mr. Lambert gave an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The split letter agreement has been signed by Rhode Island. New Hampshire and the MBTA have reviewed the letter and are in agreement. ARPA will provide BAT with \$8.9 million in additional funding to offset some of the effects of the pandemic. When combined with CARES and CRRSAA, BAT will have received over \$20 million. The funds are designed to be flexible but BAT expects to utilize them for operating expenses.

The amended budget for FY21 was presented to the Committee. Mr. Hegarty will present to the full Board. Overall, there was a reduction of \$2,000,000 in expenses. Although performance has continued to rebound, on average fixed route reached only 34% of its pre-COVID level. Interest income was also reduced due to the timing of State Contract Assistance. Expense reductions were achieved by fixed route schedule adjustments, integrating the Mini-Maller route into an expanded Stoughton service, reducing overtime, combining Routes 10 and 11, and pushing the new Rockland service out to FY22. Mr. Dutton asked for a clarification of federal operating assistance compared to last year. He also asked how the revenue and ridership were being projected for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Lambert stated that BAT was utilizing caution in its projections going forward for FY22. Ms. Fulginiti asked for further background on local

assessments. Motion was made by Mr. Dutton and seconded by Ms. Fulginiti to accept the FY21 amended budget as presented. There was no further discussion and all were in favor.

Next the FY22 Draft Budget was presented. The same trend can be seen as in the amended budget. BAT utilized a conservative approach while still allowing for some flexibility to bring customers back. A conscientious effort was made to pare down unknowns by entering into a new long term and favorable fuel contract, a tire lease, Health & Human Service contract with Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit, insurance negotiations, and a continued contract with Bridgewater State University. Mr. Lambert asked if there were any questions. Ms. Fulginiti asked what the percentage increase in the budget was over the previous year's actual expenditures. Ms. Sacchetti stated that there was just under a 10% increase; however, the draft budget for FY22 was less than FY21's original proposed budget. Mr. Hegarty noted that some communities have adopted a "no fare" policies. If BAT did the same, he asked how it would work? Who would subsidize the cost? Mr. Lambert stated that Lawrence had downtown routes fare free that were considered critical. The City of Lawrence covered the cost. He also stated that Worcester has been running service fare free since quarantine. Worcester is its own Urbanized Area and has received a large amount of federal money so they have extended the service through the summer.

BAT would be supportive of anything that would build service. Brockton service pre-COVID was close to capacity in part due to the dense urban area and a mature bus system. The Legislature is aware that if service expands, which is what would be expected if fares were greatly reduced or eliminated, there would be need for a larger fleet and new drivers, etc. A motion was made by Mr. Dutton and seconded by Ms. Fulginiti to accept the FY22 Draft Budget as presented. There was no further discussion and all were in favor.

Under the COVID update, Mr. Lambert stated that BAT had one of the highest percentages (80%) of vaccinations compared to other RTAs in the state. BAT was also the only RTA to host its own clinic, thanks to Mayor Sullivan, Brockton Board of Health and Neighborhood Health Center. He stated that restrictions are still in effect for transit across the country. BAT will work to communicate with customers that capacity restraints are being lifted but masks are still required. He indicated that the workforce is healthy and on the job.

Mr. Dutton stated that about 50% of Bridgewater's population has been vaccinated. Ms. Fulginiti reported an overall vaccination rate of 50% in Easton but 80% of the elder population was fully vaccinated. Mr. Hegarty reported a 62% vaccination rate in Avon due in large part to establishing a regional vaccination site with the Towns of Randolph and Holbrook.

Next, the committee discussed Compensation and Personnel. Mr. Lambert provided the group with his goals and objects for the previous year. Of the sixteen specified goals, 8 had been completed and 8 were in progress. Obviously, the pandemic turned transit around and changed prioritizations, including the health and safety of the riders and employees. He went on to give examples of the progress made on the goals and objectives.

Next, compensation pursuant to 801 CMR 53.04 was discussed for Ms. Sacchetti, CFO. Mr. Hegarty was nominating that her salary be increased by 2.5% in July and evaluated again in

January for up to an additional 2.5%. This is in line with other employees. He asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Mr. Dutton made a motion and it was seconded by Ms. Fulginiti to increase Ms. Sacchetti's salary as stated above. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Under Old / New Business Mr. Lambert stated that, for the agency itself, next year's goals and objectives are exactly the same as the prior year – the projects will change, however. Ms. Fulginiti thought it was an ambitious list and shows "out of the box" thinking, particularly important when so many older individuals need the transportation assistance.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutton to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Ms. Fulginiti.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Riddell, BAT

**List of handouts for 5/27/21 meeting:**

1. Agenda
2. Minutes – 4/15/21
3. Minutes - 5/21/20 Compensation and Personnel Committee
4. FY21 Amended Budget
5. FY22 Draft Budget
6. M. Lambert Year Two Goals
7. BAT COVID-19 Response & Operational Changes