

MINUTES OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD
AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND

February 1, 2024 9:30 AM

In Attendance:

Frank Hegarty, Town of Avon

Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater

Michael Lambert, Administrator

Linda Sacchetti, CFO

Kelly Forrester, Manager of Transit Operations

Kathy Riddell, Assistant Grants Manager

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 January 29, 2024. 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 and called the meeting to order. He asked if there were any public comments. There were no public comments at this time.

The minutes from the meeting of October 5, 2023 were reviewed. Mr. Dutton made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Mr. Hegarty. All were in favor.

Number 4 on the agenda was an update of the FY24 Budget. Ms. Sacchetti provided the group with a review of the budget comparison for the fiscal year. BAT received an increase of \$3,392,452 in funding this past year. In addition, BAT received \$1,395,187 in "Fair Share" funds to provide free fare for fixed route and paratransit riders for a six-month period from 12/1/23 to 5/31/24. Operating revenues are reporting unfavorable to budget and operating expenses are favorable to budget. Both operators have been able to fill open positions and BAT has increased service beginning in October. Fuel is currently favorable to budget. New service will increase fuel consumption but a lower per gallon diesel price obtained in a recent contract award will have fuel report under budget at yearend. Interest expense will be over budget at the end of the fiscal year. BAT anticipates balancing its budget through the use of federal operating assistance. There is more than \$13,000,000 remaining in federal emergency relief funds at the end of FY23 thus BAT is in a strong position financially in FY24.

Mr. Lambert provided the Administrators Report. He first explained the increase in State Contract Assistance and the Fair Share Amendment Funding. The influx of these funds has enabled BAT to focus on its core services enabling an increase in service and free fares as Ms. Sacchetti explained above. BAT has increased runs to Stoughton and Ashmont. It has also

doubled Saturday service by providing half hour pulses. Additionally, Sunday service has been extended to include early morning hours. The added service is also extended to paratransit riders.

BAT has applied for macro transit service through a new MassDOT grant. This service will be similar to Rockland service, which has been very successful. The new service will focus on 2nd and 3rd shift workers that do not have access to public transportation like that available during the day. The rider would pay a base fare similar to bus fare, BAT would pay a pre-determined amount on top of that and any additional cost would be paid for by the rider. If successful, this could fund the program for this fiscal year and next.

Mr. Lambert informed the group that the Governor released her budget. It will level fund BAT at the higher level. In addition, a request is being made to put something formal in place to move funds from the fair share line item to the RTAs regular budget line item. This is great news and would allow BAT to expand its service over this and next year.

Due in large part to the fare free program and expanded service, January showed ridership that exceeded pre-COVID levels for the first time. This is great news as January is typically a hard month to get people out and riding. It should be a launching point for the next several months. Customers and drivers are enjoying the free fare service and there may be money available to extend it beyond the 6-month period. Mr. Lambert asked if anyone had any questions.

After a year, Mr. Lambert informed the group that the State Audit was complete. The audit focused on cybersecurity and paratransit on-time performance and reporting. BAT is hoping for a good outcome but has not yet received the Audit Report.

Mr. Hegarty asked if anyone had anything on Old/New business. Seeing none, Mr. Dutton made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Hegarty seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Riddell, BAT

List of handouts for 2/1/24 meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes – 10/5/23
3. FY24 Budget

4. FY24 Budget Summary