

Pursuant to written notice sent to Board Members and pursuant to notice posted at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting, copies of said notice having been sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, William F. Galvin and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Kristen Lepore, the meeting of the Advisory Board of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on March 15, 2018 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following Advisory Board Members and/or Member Designees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>
Marguerite Willis	Charlemont	2.73
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	6.32
Randy Crochier	Gill	1.11
Bill Martin	Greenfield	25.77
Cindy Doty	Hatfield	2.38
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00
Jeff Singleton	Montague	12.91
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54
Richard Tillberg	Whately	2.36
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	<u>1.00</u>
	Total	59.79

Also present were:

Tina M. Cote; FRTA Administrator, Michael Perreault; FRTA Assistant Administrator, Ed Sanborn, FRTA Bookkeeper, Molly Morin; FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine; FTM Assistant General Manager, George Touloumtzis; FRTA Transit Advisory Committee Chairman, and Jasper Lapienski; FRTA Transit Advisory Committee.

Chairman Lance Fritz called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was** present to hold a meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jasper Lapienski asked Megan Rhodes if she rides the bus. Megan Rhodes stated that she does not. Jasper Lapienski commented that it seems odd that the Rider Community Representative to the Advisory Board does not use public transportation.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

4. REVIEW AND VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 16, 2017 MEETINGS:

Tracy Rogers made a **motion** to accept the minutes from the November 16, 2017 meeting. Robert J. Decker III seconded and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Marguerite Willis	Charlemont	2.73	Abstain
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	6.32	Yes
Randy Crochier	Gill	1.11	Yes
Bill Martin	Greenfield	25.77	Yes
Cindy Doty	Hatfield	2.38	Abstain
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00	Yes
Jeff Singleton	Montague	12.91	Yes
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67	Yes
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54	Yes
Richard Tillberg	Whately	2.36	Yes
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	<u>1.00</u>	Abstain
	Total	59.79	

Yes – 53.68

No – 0.00

Abstain – 6.11

The vote passed and the **motion** carried.

5. FY19 FUNDING OUTLOOK AND IMPACTS DISCUSSION:

Tina M. Cote presented a PowerPoint (see attached) for discussion with the Advisory Board on current FY19 funding outlook and impacts on transit services. Lance Fritz asked if services are eliminated would the towns affected see a reduction in their local assessments. Tina M. Cote explained that costs for services have a direct correlation to local assessments so that if costs were reduced for certain services towns received then they would also see a correlating reduction in their local assessments.

There was some discussion that some of the cumulative ridership figures might be incorrect. Tina M. Cote stated that staff will go back and re-calculate all of the figures again and if there are any corrections the updated information will be re-sent by email to all of the Advisory Board members.

Megan Rhodes asked if FRTA has any data on the riders using the Route 22 3:15pm run versus the other five, given the high ridership numbers for that one specific run time. Tina M. Cote

explained that FRTA is trying to gather such information but at this time it is only speculative that has something to do with that run traveling to Park Villa and not Millers Falls.

Jeff Singleton asked where the potential deficit is coming from and it would be helpful to see revenue and expense numbers to help better explain. Michael Perreault explained that this information is being presented at a high-level overview with early projections of what is being anticipated for FY19. FRTA will soon be meeting again with the Finance and Audit Committee to start reviewing revenue and expense projections, draft budgets, and looking at specific line item funding and other operating costs. All of that will be brought back to the full Advisory Board to discuss and approve the FY19 budget later in May. Jeff Singleton if there is any collaboration between FRTA and PVRTA with route changes and connections between the two systems. Tina M. Cote stated that she has attended some of PVRTA's public hearings and has advocated to maintain existing connections with FRTA routes in South Deerfield, Whately, and Sunderland. Lastly, Jeff Singleton stated that the Town of Montague needs to work with FRTA to lay out transit priorities for the town.

Marguerite Willis asked what the start date to FRTA's fiscal year is. Tina M. Cote clarified that it follows the state's fiscal year calendar beginning on July 1st. Megan Rhodes asked if these changes would be a whole package or if FRTA will need to decide which ones to pick and choose. Tina M. Cote explained that FRTA will present all of the different options that are on the table to the public, including fare increases and service changes. Tina M. Cote concluded that it is her intention to get the approval from the Advisory Board to go out to public hearings over the next several weeks to seek feedback from the public on any proposed fare increases or service changes.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to authorize the FRTA to hold public hearings seeking input and feedback on proposed fare increases and service changes for FY19. Jeff Singleton seconded and discussion continued.

Bill Martin asked if Lifepath was reducing or eliminating their funding for transportation services. Tina M. Cote explained that indications are that Lifepath are looking to reduce their funding through limiting the number of trips covered through their program. Lifepath consumers currently do not pay fares for transportation, but also would qualify for our Demand Response program.

Marguerite Willis asked if there is a breakdown of ridership by town for the Route 41. Tina M. Cote explained that the fareboxes are not able to track boardings and alightings at individual stops. Marguerite Willis asked a follow-up question on how FRTA calculates local assessments for fixed routes. Tina M. Cote explained that it is based on costs related to operating the fixed routes and the number of miles routes travel through each individual town.

Megan Rhodes asked when FRTA expects any changes to take effect. Tina M. Cote stated that it is expected changes would go into effect at the start of FY19, on July 1st.

There was discussion about the use of the Whately Park and Ride lot and Tina M. Cote stated that FRTA and PVRTA do make connections, but it appears that the primary use of the lot does

not seem to utilize transit. Richard Tillberg asked about the cost to build the Whately Park and Ride and how it was paid for. Megan Rhodes explained that that state paid for the construction of the lot through MassDOT funds but did not know the cost. Discussion continued that the project was conceived to reduce traffic on the I-91 bridges and the Route 9 corridor with the intent on getting people to carpool along the Route 116 corridor to and from UMass. The FRCOG is looking to conduct a survey this summer on park and ride lots throughout Franklin County to gather information on who is using them and how often.

The vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

6. FY18 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT:

Lance Fritz announced that long time Advisory Board member, Dianne Cornwell, has resigned leaving a vacancy on the Finance and Audit Committee as well as the Clerk for the Advisory Board. Robert J. Decker III nominated Lance Fritz to the Finance and Audit Committee for the remainder of FY18 and Bill Martin seconded. Tracy Rogers nominated Jeff Singleton to the Finance and Audit Committee for the remainder of FY18 and Randy Crochier seconded. There was discussion that the by-laws for the Finance and Audit Committee shall only have three members. There was further discussion from Michael Perreault that there is a By-Law Review Committee that are currently reviewing all of the by-laws and the Finance and Audit Committee By-Laws could be expanded to include more than three members. Upon this realization Jeff Singleton withdrew his nomination. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to appoint Lance Fritz the Finance and Audit Committee for the remainder of FY18. Bill Martin seconded, the vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

Under Item 12, items not anticipated, Lance Fritz asked the Advisory Board if there are any objections to filling the Clerk position on the Advisory Board for the remainder of FY18. With no objection Robert J. Decker made a **motion** to appoint Ruth Preston as the Clerk for the remainder of the current term. Megan Rhodes seconded, the vote was unanimous, and the **motion** carried.

7. UPDATE FROM TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

George Touloumtzis provided the following updates from the Transit Advisory Committee:

- The FY19 FRTA budget remains the highest priority issue that the TAC has been discussing. At the last meeting there was discussion a draft letter for TAC members to send to the Governor advocating for funding. In addition, FRTA has been working on a listing of state legislators contact information for people to reference and use if wanting to reach out to local state representatives or senators to discuss issues.
- On Monday March 26th FRTA will be hosting another system orientation program. This is designed for human service and social service program staff as an introduction to FRTA services, bus routes, trip planning, etc. This is the second year in a row FRTA has offered this training.
- The TAC has been discussing issues surrounding the rider experience with inclement weather and snow storms this past winter and access to bus stops. This has been a

challenge for both FRTA and the riders in trying to find solutions with more research to come on solutions and best practices from other communities.

Marguerite Willis stated that similar challenges have occurred at the town level along Route 2 in Charlemont. There have been challenges with keeping sidewalks clear and accessible.

Jeff Singleton asked about the process for replacing the cardboard bus stop signs that have gone missing. Molly Morin stated that signs that have been damaged or stolen were replaced with leftover stock available, but the main goal is to install permanent signage.

Bill Martin stated that the agreement for the temporary signage in downtown Greenfield is soon coming to an end, but there have been discussions with the DPW to extend for another 90-days to resolve bus stops in downtown. FRTA will follow up with Greenfield DPW.

Robert J. Decker III suggested FRTA looking into grants for solar bus shelters.

8. UPDATE ON BY-LAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE:

Lance Fritz stated that the By-Law Review Committee met earlier today to review final changes and recommendations. The By-Law Review Committee has been looking at articles involving terms of officers, remote participation, and other simple language changes. All changes and recommendations will be presented at the Advisory Board meeting in May. Robert J. Decker III added that the by-law revisions will come in two copies; one copy highlighting and redlining changes to the current by-laws, and one 'clean' copy only showing the final revisions to be voted on.

9. MAINTENANCE FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE:

Michael Perreault gave a brief update on the maintenance facility project. Recent conversations with FTA through MassDOT revealed some additional steps, with FTA's approval, prior to finalizing the purchase and sale of the property to remain in compliance of federal regulations and remain eligible for federal funding. Regardless of the timeframe to complete those additional steps, FRTA has worked with MassDOT to ensure adequate funding available for the purchase and sale of the property whether it is finalized in FY18 or in FY19. FRTA has settled on a design concept on the new maintenance facility and has provided much feedback to the A/E to finalize the schematic design phase and move into design development. Once design development is completed it is expected that FRTA will go into site plan review with the Town of Montague. Recent conversations with the FTA indicate that awards for the Bus and Bus Facilities grants are expected any time. The results of that grant award will be the main driver for our project timeline moving forward.

Robert J. Decker III suggested that FRTA should be proactive with security at the Transit Center and be aware of potential grant funding available for additional security.

10. OTHER FRTA UPDATES:

Tina M. Cote gave some brief updates on the following FRTA projects:

- FRTA will be providing a FRTA System Orientation for Human Service Agency Staff training on March 26th from 9:00am to 2:00pm.
- On April 25th, 26th, and 27th FRTA staff will be attending a Travel Training program sponsored by MassDOT.
- FRTA will be drafting letters for the Advisory Board members, if they wish, to send to the Governor to advocate for increased funding for RTAs. Tina M. Cote will be emailing out those draft letters to Advisory Board members soon.

11. PENDING LITIGATION BETWEEN PEREGRIN J. SCHWARZER VS. FRANKLIN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY AND FRANKLIN TRANSIT MANAGEMENT, INC.:

Lance Fritz made a **motion** to enter into executive session under M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation in an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares. Bill Martin seconded. It was discussed that in addition to the Advisory Board members and FRTA staff present, FTM General Manager and FTM Assistant General Manager would be present in executive session and that the meeting would reconvene in open session following the close of the executive session. The roll call vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Marguerite Willis	Charlemont	2.73	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	6.32	Yes
Randy Crochier	Gill	1.11	Yes
Bill Martin	Greenfield	25.77	Yes
Cindy Doty	Hatfield	2.38	Yes
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00	Yes
Jeff Singleton	Montague	12.91	Yes
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.67	Yes
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.54	Yes
Richard Tillberg	Whately	2.36	Yes
Megan Rhodes	Rider Community	<u>1.00</u>	Yes
	Total	59.79	

Yes – 59.79

No – 0.00

The vote passed, the **motion** carried, and the meeting entered into executive session at 5:05pm.

The meeting returned to open session at 5:20pm.

Cindy Doty asked about the ongoing bus shelter project in Hatfield. There was discussion that FRTA currently has bus stops in Hatfield near the Danco Plaza and the Kenwood Apartments. Rauley Caine stated that he had been previously working with the Town Administrator and MassDOT District 2 gathering information from property owners and finding next steps for permitting and requirements for bus shelters along Routes 5 & 10. FRTA will follow up with Hatfield to update on this project.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to adjourn; Randy Crochier seconded, and the meeting concluded at 5:25pm.