

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 September 21, 2017 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>
Dianne Cornwell	Bernardston	1.79
Peter Otten	Buckland	1.70
Beth Bandy	Charlemont	2.48
Robert Baker	Conway	1.04
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	8.42
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	26.29
Marlene Marchonski	Hatfield	1.68
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00
Jeff Singleton	Montague	13.37
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.40
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.74
Jonathan von Ranson	Wendell	<u>1.05</u>
	Total	62.96

Also present were:

Tina M. Cote, FRTA Administrator, Michael Perreault, FRTA Assistant Administrator, Rauley Caine, FTM Assistant General Manager, and George Touloumtzis, 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.

Tina M. Cote announced that our former board member from Charlemont, Ted Willard, recently passed away in August. Tina M. Cote had sent a card of condolences to Ted's family on behalf of the FRTA and the entire Advisory Board.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

4. REVIEW AND VOTE TO ACCEPT MINUTES FROM MAY 18, 2017 MEETINGS:

(Dianne Cornwell arrived at 4:03pm). Tracy Rogers made a **motion** to accept the meeting minutes from May 18, 2017. Peter Otten seconded and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Dianne Cornwell	Bernardston	1.79	Yes
Peter Otten	Buckland	1.70	Yes
Beth Bandy	Charlemont	2.48	Not Present
Robert Baker	Conway	1.04	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	8.42	Yes
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	26.29	Yes
Marlene Marchonski	Hatfield	1.68	Abstain
Lance Fritz	Leyden	1.00	Yes
Jeff Singleton	Montague	13.37	Abstain
Tracy Rogers	Northfield	1.40	Yes
Ruth Preston	Southwick	2.74	Not Present
Jonathan von Ranson	Wendell	<u>1.05</u>	Yes
		Total	62.96

Yes – 42.69
 No – 0.00
 Abstain – 15.05
 Not Present – 5.22

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

5. DISCUSSION ON BY-LAWS AND APPOINT BY-LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE:

(Ruth Preston arrived at 4:06pm). Lance Fritz stated that the by-laws were last reviewed and updated in 2015 and thought it would be appropriate to review again. Robert J. Decker III, Jeff Singleton, and Lance Fritz volunteered to be on the By-Law Review Committee. Jeff Singleton asked whether public participation in the discussion of route changes were guided by the Advisory Board By-Laws or governed by State law. Tina M. Cote explained that matters of environmental justice are covered under FRTA’s Title VI program.

6. DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSION ON RECENT FIXED ROUTE CHANGES AND GO-CARD LAUNCH:

Tina M. Cote updated that we launched the new Go-Card on August 7th. This new fare card can hold unlimited use 31-consecutive day pass as well as stored (monetary) value. The unlimited use passes are sold at \$30 for full fare riders and \$15 for half fare qualified riders.

FRTA held ten information sessions from the end of July through August at the Transit Center as well as other locations around Franklin County. These were designed as drop in sessions with different stations set up to provide information on the new route changes, the new Go-Card, the fixed route mobile application, other FRTA transportation services, and to help with Google Transit trip planning. On September 5th FRTA launched the new routes changes with a few minor hiccups, but overall with great success. Lance Fritz asked what the minor hiccups amounted to and Tina M. Cote explained that there was a last-minute change to the Charlemont bus route moving the stop from Avery's Store to the Post Office due to the owners of the store no longer wanting us to use their location as a bus stop. Other minor issues were helping people that were unaware of the route changes or how they would affect their trips based on the previous schedules, assisting people with reading the new schedules, assisting people in finding bus stops closest to their trip origin/destination, and assisting people with purchasing/reloading the new Go-Cards. Robert J. Decker III stated that he read an article in the local newspaper recently about the Greenfield school system using public transportation and asked if there were more details to share. Tina M. Cote stated that FRTA had met previously with the Mayor, his staff, and Greenfield school officials to discuss transportation. FRTA made clear that there are laws and regulations that prohibit FRTA from providing charter service or school bus transportation; however, it was explained that our routes are open to the public, including students wishing to take the bus to school. There has been no further discussion since that initial meeting. Jeff Singleton stated that the route changes were a "radical change" for the Town of Montague and would like to review the process for making route changes. Additionally, Jeff Singleton is advocating for mid-day service into Sunderland with connections into Amherst. Robert J. Decker III suggested that FRTA should get Sunderland to join the authority to help expand services. Tina M. Cote added that we will continue to monitor ridership and feedback on these new route changes and will be able to report more to the Advisory Board this time next year.

7. MAINTENANCE FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE:

Tina M. Cote explained that FRTA recently put together a federal grant application for submission by MassDOT on our behalf. The grant requested \$20 million for the construction of a new maintenance and operations facility in the Town of Montague. The FRTA is continuing the process of the purchase and sale agreement for said property and recently completed a procurement for architectural and engineering services, and issued an award letter to STV Incorporated. It is expected that FRTA will issue a notice to proceed in the coming weeks. Robert J. Decker III asked how FRTA is paying for the architectural and engineering services contract and Tina M. Cote explained that it will be paid for with state RTACAP funds. Robert J. Decker III asked if there were any environmental issues or issues with subdividing the property and Michael Perreault stated that there are no indications of any environmental issues; the Montague Town Planning Board recently approved the subdivision of the property. Next steps for the project are to complete the appraisal, review appraisal of the property, have legal counsel update the P&S, and then begin working with the Town for whatever permitting will be required for the project. If FRTA is awarded the grant funds for construction it is anticipated that construction would begin around this time next year.

8. OTHER FRTA UPDATES:

(Beth Bandy arrived at 4:28pm). Tina M. Cote gave some brief updates on the following FRTA projects:

- FRTA took delivery of two additional low floor transit buses from Gillig in August. Those buses were put into service at the beginning of September bringing the total number of low floor buses in the fleet up to four. The next large transit bus replacement will be around 2020.
- State Contract Assistance total for all RTAs was reduced from \$82 million to \$80.4 million, which translates to approximately a \$19,000 shortfall for FRTA's FY18 budget. FRTA will continue to monitor how that will impact this year's budget.
- FRTA was recently awarded a federal New Freedoms grant for \$100,000. This will be used for a new pilot project to assist individuals with disabilities and recovering from substance abuse. FRTA is working with the Opioid Task Force explore pilot service for people living in West County, additional transportation for veterans, providing people with monthly bus passes, and teaching individuals to use the fixed route system.
- FRTA was not awarded any funds for weekend service from the state legislature for this fiscal year but FRTA will continue to advocate for this service and hopefully put in a new request for next fiscal year. Robert J. Decker III suggested that FRTA consider offering free fixed route service on the four Fridays leading up to Christmas.
- Our Administrative Assistant Amy Rau recently left and has been replaced by Marisa Dalmaso-Rode. In addition, FRTA recently hired another part-time person for the call center, (Andrea Talbot).
- The Massachusetts Rehab Commission (MRC) recently contacted all RTAs across the state advocating to allow MRC, Department of Public Health (DPH), and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) consumers to automatically qualify for half-fare on fixed routes. As this request came in after this meeting was set, it was discussed that this will be added as an agenda item at the next Advisory Board meeting.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to adjourn; Peter Otten seconded and the meeting concluded at 4:45pm.