

## MEETING NOTES

Pursuant to written notice sent to Committee Members and pursuant to notice posted at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting, copies of said notice having been sent to the FRTA's 41-member towns, the meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on January 11, 2018 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

### **1. INTRODUCTIONS:**

Present were the following TAC Members:

Jasper Lapienski.

Also present were:

Deb Wilson, Linda Gralenski, Donna Suskawicz, Megan Rhodes, Rachel Fichtenbaum, Peter Kuusisto, Molly Morin; FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine; FTM Assistant General Manager, Ron Andronaco; FTM Safety and Training Manager, and Michael Perreault; FRTA Assistant Administrator.

Michael Perreault called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was not** present to hold a meeting. If anyone is interested in becoming a committee member, or knows someone that may be interested, please email Michael Perreault at [michael@frta.org](mailto:michael@frta.org).

### **2. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2017 AND MEETING NOTES FROM NOVEMBER 9, 2017:**

The meeting minutes from March 9, 2017 were tabled until the next meeting. Rachel Fichtenbaum noted a minor correction for the meeting notes from November 9, 2017. The dates of the Design Thinking Workshop were September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and not the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER RIDERSHIP:**

Michael Perreault handed out information regarding fixed route ridership information by route, comparing ridership from the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (October, November, and December) in 2017 to the same period in 2016 (see attached). As a point of discussion, FRTA has seen increases in total ridership each month compared to the previous year and in total for the quarter saw an increase of 8%. FRTA will continue to monitor ridership over the coming

months. Jasper Lapienski suggested that having information on the number of runs for each route would help give more context when comparing information year over year. Megan asked if ridership is tracked on a stop by stop basis. Molly Morin stated that stop by stop information is not currently tracked by the farebox and Rauley Caine added that FRTA can perform manual counts at stop levels through ridership surveys but that is more on a sample basis. Jasper Lapienski asked if there is any data for on-time performance on routes. Molly Morin stated that operations personnel track it on a day-to-day basis to ensure routes are operating on time, but that it is not something that is not recorded and compiled on a regular basis.

#### **4. DISCUSSION ON FY19 FUNDING OUTLOOK AND SUPPORT:**

Michael Perreault stated that at the last FRTA Advisory Board meeting there was continued discussion about weekend service and support for funding weekend service. Since that meeting FRTA has learned that early projections for FY19 state operating funds for all Regional Transit Authorities are expected to be \$80 million, which is the same level of funding from FY15. Several years ago, Regional Transit Authorities were trying to work with the state to help establish funding projections to help with operational budgeting and it was expected that state funding would be increased by 2.5% year over year. For FY19 all Regional Transit Authorities are advocating for \$88 million for statewide operating funding. With this new information, FRTA is less focused on weekend transportation and instead working on advocating for the \$88 million statewide funding to maintain current services. Megan Rhodes concurred that the focus right now should be on getting the funding to continue the existing transit operations and less on weekend service. Michael Perreault is working to craft a support letter for the Advisory Board and the TAC and will send it around for those that want to submit a similar letter of support. Discussion concluded that the Governor will be submitting a draft budget by the end of January and then budget moves to discussions in the House, followed by the Senate.

#### **5. REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL TOPICS:**

Rachel Fichtenbaum announced that MassDOT will host two travel training workshops coming up in April; with one anticipated to be held in Springfield or in Amherst with dates to be announced as soon as the location is secured. Anyone interested can contact Rachel Fichtenbaum at [Rachel.Fichtenbaum@state.ma.us](mailto:Rachel.Fichtenbaum@state.ma.us). Michael Perreault will also send an email out to the TAC when more information becomes available.

Rachel Fichtenbaum also announced that Community Transportation Conference will be combined this year with the Innovation Conference and held at the DCU Center in Worcester. This year will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> with the Community Transportation portion to be held on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Rachel Fichtenbaum also stated that those that are interested in attending may also apply for a scholarship. Michael Perreault will also send an email out to the TAC with information about the conference and scholarship information.

## **6. FRTA 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MARKETING/PROMOTION:**

2018 will mark the FRTA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Without a specific anniversary date, it is anticipated that FRTA could celebrate/promote itself all year long. Michael Perreault asked the group if they had any ideas on how FRTA could celebrate throughout the year. Molly Morin stated that FRTA had previously discussed entering in the Franklin County Fair Parade in the fall. Megan Rhodes asked if there were photos of old buses that could be used for promotional flyers. Michael Perreault stated that there are some old photos from the late 1970s/early 1980s that may still be in storage. Molly Morin also added that FRTA was looking to increase its social media presence. Megan Rhodes stated that the FRCOG had a more pronounced presence on social media last year during their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was suggested that FRTA could post a weekly 'fun fact Friday'. Rachel Fichtenbaum suggested that celebrating FRTA's anniversary could be combined with raising awareness for increased funding and weekend service.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS, TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA TOPICS:**

Deb Wilson stated that the bus stop sign at Elm Terrace was missing. Ron Andronaco stated that it was knocked over earlier in the winter and had since put it back up, but it may be covered by snow now. Deb Wilson commented that she believes that the stop along Elm St at Elm Terrace is not a safe location, particularly with the snow bank build up at the stop. Megan Rhodes indicated that the Town should have an ordinance about keeping the snow cleared. Molly Morin spoke about reasonable accommodations where drivers would look for a location near the bus stop that is cleared and accessible. Michael Perreault added that people can call the dispatch desk any time and either the on-duty dispatcher or manager could help find a safe location near any blocked or inaccessible stop.

Michael Perreault stated that the FRTA will be participating in the Greenfield Winter Carnival Parade on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm. The Greenfield Winter Carnival will be having events throughout the weekend of February 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Michael Perreault received an email from Russ Fisher to announce Transportation Justice Franklin County will be meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 5pm at the Greenfield Public Library. Part of the discussion at the meeting will be to discuss whether or not they will be hosting a Stand Up 4 Transportation conference this year. Molly Morin added that Russ Fisher would also be looking for speakers at the Stand Up 4 Transportation event.

Michael Perreault has been thinking about ways to increase membership on the TAC and pondering if quarterly meetings may be more appropriate. Michael Perreault will follow up with George Touloumtzis on some ideas before the next meeting as well.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2018. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.