

Approved 4/30/24

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. Gavin and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, Matthew Gorzkowicz, the meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on May 3, 2023 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

Finance and Audit Committee Members present were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield
Eric Twarog	Greenfield

Also present were:

Tina Cote, Administrator and Michael Perreault, Deputy Administrator.

Peter Otten called the meeting to order at 12:00pm.

**2. REVIEW AND APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 23, 2022:**

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to approve the meeting minutes from September 23, 2022. Eric Twarog seconded, and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	Yes
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	Yes

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

**3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON FY24-28 CAPITAL PROJECTS LIST:**

Michael Perreault explained that MassDOT recently updated their capital project management through a new web portal. Michael Perreault presented the list of capital

projects for FY24, including costs and additional project description information. Project highlights include: tires and other capital maintenance items; miscellaneous shop tools and equipment; bus stop and sidewalk improvements at Millers Falls Rd and Industrial Blvd in Turners Falls; vehicle paint/graphics for Community Transit Grant Program vehicles; update/upgrade of fareboxes and fare collection system; and construction of a solar installation project at the new maintenance and operations facility in Turners Falls.

Eric Twarog asked what happens to the project for update/upgrade of fareboxes and fare collection system if the Advisory Board decides to continue not to collect fares moving forward. Michael Perreault stated that FRTA can make a request to MassDOT for a change to this project and it is up to MassDOT whether or not to approve the change. This could include changing the project amount, moving the project into an out-year, or cancelling the project altogether. Robert J. Decker III stated he wanted to ensure that software updates and upgrades are included in the procurement of a new system. Discussion concluded that once the Advisory Board has a chance to discuss fares at the next meeting, FRTA will have a better sense of a plan for this project.

#### **4. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON DRAFT FY24 BUDGET:**

Tina Cote gave a brief overview of the FY24 draft budget. Long-time Bookkeeper, Ed Sanborn, retired at the end of March. FRTA hired his replacement, but soon had to let go for lack of knowledge. Revenues are approximately \$100,000 over FY23 due to an increase in Access program revenues, a grant award to expand the Med Ride program, and for existing grant funds for the employment transportation program. State Contract Assistance remains level funded until the FY24 State budget is finalized and approved.

Robert J. Decker III asked about budget line item 407990 – Misc. Income. Tina Cote explained that is income from a grant to hire a travel trainer. Robert J. Decker III asked about budget line item 413040 – Section 5311. Tina Cote explained that is federal operating assistance.

Tina Cote explained that the FY24 budget includes additional administrative expenses for staffing the travel trainer position as well as additional funds to increase staffing back towards pre-COVID levels. Eric Twarog asked about the number of additional employees budgeted for in FY24. Tina Cote indicated that in addition to the travel trainer, there is also enough for one additional full-time administrative employee. This is all in addition to the Bookkeeper position that remains vacant.

Robert J. Decker III asked about the decrease in administrative health insurance. Tina Cote explained that the FY24 budget figure is more in line with the projected actual expenses for FY23. Robert J. Decker III asked about the overage for equipment expense in FY23. Michael Perreault explained that there are occasions when using capital funding used to purchase equipment doesn't rise to the level of depreciation, so it is instead expensed within the budget. Overages in this expense line will generally correlate with in the RTA Capital revenue line item.

Robert J. Decker III asked if there is an insurance rider for volunteers in the Med Ride program in case they're in an auto accident. Tina Cote explained that FRTA's auto policy includes non-owned and hire vehicles.

Robert J. Decker III asked if the line items under Demand Response expenses are passed through the Towns' Cherry Sheets. Tina Cote explained that only a portion of those line items are paid for through local assessments through the Towns' Cherry Sheets. The majority of the revenues that offset those line items are from Federal and State operating revenues, along with other contracts, grants, and fare collections.

Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to recommend the draft budget to the Advisory Board as presented. Eric Twarog seconded, and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	Yes
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	Yes

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

#### 5. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON ADMINISTRATOR'S FY24 SALARY:

Robert J. Decker III asked what size of an increase was included in the draft budget for administrative staff. Tina Cote stated that the draft budget included a 3% increase. Peter Otten and Eric Twarog commented that 3% seemed reasonable. Discussion concluded that the Advisory Board has the final authority on the Administrator's salary, but that the Administrator has the final say on how she wants to allocate the remaining funds in that line item to the rest of the administrative staff. Robert J. Decker III made a **motion** to recommend a 3% raise for the Administrator to the Advisory Board. Eric Twarog seconded, and the vote was as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Peter Otten	Buckland	Yes
Robert J. Decker III	Deerfield	Yes
Eric Twarog	Greenfield	Yes

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

Tina Cote added that the grand opening of the new maintenance and operations facility is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> at 11am.

Eric Twarog made a **motion** to adjourn, Robert J. Decker III seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:40pm.