

# **MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE BARTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**June 24, 2013**

The monthly meeting of the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority was held at BARTA headquarters located at 1700 N. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Reading, Pennsylvania.

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Ronald Seaman, Chair . The following Board members were present: Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt, Vice Chair, Alice Kutz, Treasurer, James Schlegel, Secretary, Gregg Bogia, Jayne Dieruff, Dennis Rex, Michael Roeberg, and Timothy Snyder.

Others attending the meeting were: Dennis D. Louwarse, Executive Director/CEO, Robert Fletcher, Assistant Executive Director, Ryan Furgerson, Deputy Executive Director, Kevin Hessler, Director of Finance, Vicki Weidner, Director of Special Services, Janet Weiss, Manager of Programs & Marketing and Richard L. Orwig, Solicitor. Also present were William Frees and John Doerrman of the Amalgamated Transit Union #1345 and Liam Migdail-Smith, Reading Eagle.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Seaman entertained a motion to approve the Board minutes of May 20, 2013, as distributed by mail. Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to accept the minutes which was seconded by Mr. Roeberg. There were no opposing votes and therefore the motion was carried unanimously by the Board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO**

**In Washington**, recently members in both the House and Senate introduced legislation that would permanently codify Commuter Tax Benefit at parity with the Parking Tax Benefit. Current law allows both pre-tax and tax-free fringe transit and parking benefit at a maximum of \$245 per month. However, if the new legislation is not passed by December 31, 2013, the Commuter Benefit will plunge to a \$125 per month, while the Parking Benefit remains unchanged. We believe this benefit is extremely important to those who commute using public transportation. I will keep you advised.

**In Harrisburg**, on June 5, 2013, the Pennsylvania Senate overwhelmingly approved Senate Bill 1, a \$2.5 billion bipartisan transportation funding bill that mirrors most recommendations of the Transportation Funding Advisory Commission. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of this bill. The vote was 45 to 5. The House is now given consideration to the Transportation Funding package. Recently, the House Transportation Committee held hearings and received testimony from the Secretary of Transportation, members of public transportation, and other interest. I will keep you advised on this very important matter.

Mr. Louwarse mentioned that there is now a Hess Amendment to Senate Bill 1 that is very disappointing. Representative Hess is the Majority Chair of the House Transportation Committee. The committee did have a meeting scheduled for 11:30a.m. and the meeting was immediately adjourned. The level of funding is less than Senate Bill 1. This bill would provide less than Governor's proposal and a lot less than the Senate proposal and we would have less money then we have right now. The following are the disconcerting items on this amendment:

- Increases local match for operating assistance to transit agencies from 15 to 20 percent.

- Increases local match for capital assistance to transit agencies from 3.3 to 10 percent.
- Enables municipalities to impose local taxes for mass transit in order to achieve the increased local matches:
  - Up to 0.5 percent increase in Realty Transfer Tax
  - Up to 0.2 percent increase in Earned Income Tax
  - Up to 0.25 percent increase in Sales and Use Tax
- Add a bus route privatization component. Requires that 10 percent of current routes of mass transit systems in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to be made available for possible operation by private operators through a competitive bidding process.
- Adds a provision enabling PennDOT to veto a transit agency's budget within 30 days of approval by the agency's board if the agency budget is not balanced or adds strike notification requirements, prohibiting a union leader of a collective bargaining unit representing transit workers from calling a strike unless there is notification to the general public and no sooner than 72 hours after the public has been notified.
- Creates a Shared Ride Service Delivery Pilot Program.
- On the revenue side it raises the average wholesale price of gasoline. An artificial cap on the taxable amount per gallon was set by the Legislature at \$1.25 per gallon in 1983 and has been capped at that level. This cap would be removed and then it would increase.
- Liquid Fuels Tax – Eliminates proposed temporary reduction in liquid fuels tax assessed at pump. Keeps current rate at 12 cents per gallon.
- Removes all proposed fee and fine increases.
- Eliminates the proposed \$100 surcharge on traffic violations.
- Eliminates Special License Plates provisions.
- Eliminates increase in Optional Donation to Organ Donor Fund.
- Eliminates the proposed extended periods of vehicle registration and driver's license. Keeps annual vehicle registration and four-year driver's license.
- Sunset of Act 44 Turnpike Obligation – Immediately stops the \$200 million-a-year portion of the \$450 million annual debt obligation to PennDOT that is directed to roads and bridges, as authorized by Act 44 of 2007. Turnpike can cut their borrowing of this amount. Continues for eight years the \$250 million-a-year portion of that annual debt obligation that is directed to fund mass transit. Ends that portion of the obligation after eight years.
- Uncaps ceiling on Oil Company Franchise Tax (OCFT) over 10 years instead of the three-year phase-out of the ceiling proposed in SB1. Estimated to generate an additional \$2 billion a year by the 10<sup>th</sup> year. In this amendment it is projected estimate of price increase per gallon potentially passed on to consumer:
  - 7 cents per gallon in 2013-2014
  - 1 cent per gallon in 2014-2015
  - 4 cents per gallon in 2015-2016
  - 2.3 cents per gallon each year thereafter

Mr. Louwse mentioned that this amendment is not a good one for transportation as a whole and he thinks this amendment will provide less for highways and bridges and less for public transportation. What we are trying to achieve here is a comprehensive transportation funding solution. This has to be fixed for the long-term and this amendment does not do that. An email was sent out today to our House members to not support the Hess Amendment to Senate Bill 1.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mrs. Kutz presented the Treasurer's Report:

The previous report balance as of May 13, 2013 was **\$5,325,928.78**. The current cash receipts are **\$327,598.62**. ACH/Transfers into Checking Account were **\$742,600.14**. Interest earned was **\$1,549.09**. Total receipts: **\$1,071,747.85**. Total Funds available were **\$6,397,676.63**. Current checks issued were **\$950,923.48**. Checks outstanding were: **(\$168,754.05)**. EFT/Transfers from checking account total **\$689,111.68** for a disbursement of **\$1,471,281.11**. Balance reported as of June 14, 2013 was **\$4,926,395.52**.

A motion was made by Mr. Bogia to accept the Treasurer's Report as written and was seconded by Mrs. Dieruff. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

## **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT**

Mr. Hessler presented his report as follows:

The operating revenue for year-to-date ending May 31, 2013 was **\$5,987,905** versus the budget amount of **\$5,847,292** which is **\$140,613** or **2.35%** over budget. Our total operating expenses for the same period was **\$14,688,289** versus the budgeted amount of **\$15,992,480** which is **\$1,304,191** or **8.88%** under budget. The operating deficit for the year-to-date was **\$8,700,384** which is **\$1,444,804** or **16.61%** under budget.

Mr. Roeberg questioned why the Park-N-Transit Revenue was budgeted for \$82,104 but the actual revenue is \$57,308. Mr. Hessler explained that last year the lot across from the Sovereign Center was closed due to the building of the construction of the new parking garage. So our revenue was up last year because the folks who parked in that lot where moved to the P-N-T. So last year when the budget was being done we didn't know when the garage was going to be completed so we budgeted higher.

## **COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS**

### **Operations Report**

Mr. Fletcher presented his report as follows:

The operating data for May 2013 indicates that the total system ridership decreased by **0.3%** when compared to May 2012. There was a **0.7%** decrease in the fixed route passengers and a **4.2%** increase in special service passengers. For the month of May on the fixed route service, we experienced a **0.4%** decrease in the revenue passengers, and a **2.2%** decrease in senior citizen rides.

In the fixed route division there were 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays operated in May 2013 as compared to 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays in May 2012. In the special services division there were 22 weekdays operated in May 2013 as compared to 22 weekdays operated in May 2012.

The average weekday ridership for May 2013 was 10,801 as compared to 10,832 in May 2012. For the fiscal year, the total system ridership has increased **0.6%**. The fixed route ridership has increased **0.4%**. This is composed of a **0.6%** increase in revenue passengers and a **0.1%** decrease in senior citizen passengers. The special service passengers increased **2.7%**.

### **Special Services Report**

Ms. Weidner presented her report as follows:

The total Special Services Division ridership for May was **22,997** a **4.2%** increase compared to the same month of 2012. Year-to-date figures show a **2.7%** increase when compared to the last fiscal year. With 22 operating days an average of **1,045** passengers were transported per day.

### **Public Information**

Public Information included in board packet compiled by Mrs. Weiss. Mr. Louworse noted that included in the packet is the June 2013 Bulletin newsletter. Mr. Roeberg mentioned that he saw Mrs. Weiss at the Chamber's reverse trade show on behalf of BARTA.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Wireless Electric Vehicle Project Update**

Mr. Louworse mentioned that we are near completion of the vehicles and they should arrive at the end of June or beginning of July. The two wireless charging units are currently being installed on the 11<sup>th</sup> Street side of our building where the canopy is located. Mr. Louworse stated that the wraps and decals on the buses are being worked on.

#### **BARTA & Lebanon Transit – Berks/Lebanon Service Plan**

Mr. Louworse mentioned that you may be aware Bieber Tourways will stop running their route to Lebanon/Harrisburg as of July 1. We are currently working on our study for the BARTA/Lebanon Service Plan but that will not be completed until December 2013. In the interim we really need to provide service from Reading to Lebanon for folks to get to the VA Hospital, Hershey Medical and Harrisburg. Lebanon Transit (LT) already has service to VA Hospital, Hershey Medical and Harrisburg. But folks who live in Reading need transportation to catch the LT buses to get to these locations. This would be a temporary measure to keep service between the cities alive while details of the permanent route are being worked out. This service would hopefully start in August but will depend on finalization of details. Mr. Louworse is in contact with PennDOT for the funding of this service. Mr. Louworse respectfully requests the Board to approve BARTA to run service to Lebanon in the interim period until the long range study is completed.

A motion was made by Mr. Roeberg to approve BARTA to run service to Lebanon in the interim period and was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

#### **Fuel Bid Tabulations**

Mr. Louworse mentioned on Wednesday, May 29, 2013, at 10:00a.m. fuel bids were opened for BARTA, LT and YATA. A copy of the fuel bid tabulations are in the board packet. The fuel purchase is the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013. The award was made based on the fixed price. The Unleaded Gasoline (87 Octane) at \$2.772 was made to Talley Petroleum Enterprises, Inc. of Grantville, PA. the Blended 2% bio-diesel/98% Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel at \$3.029 was made to Edris Oil Service, Inc. of York, PA. This includes Standard Lubricity Agent/Additive at no cost and Winterizing Agent at additional \$0.02 per gallon. Currently we are paying \$2.7108 per gallon for gasoline and \$2.9334 per gallon for diesel fuel.

A motion was made by Mr. Bogia to ratify the fuel bid award and was seconded by Mr. Rex. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **US BUS – Tiger V Grant**

Mr. Louworse mentioned that at the last meeting the Board approved for the executive director to look for the funding for two electric fixed route vehicles. Since the meeting, there was Tiger V money available which is

very restrictive. You need to have a \$10 million grant in order to apply. What has transpired is that BARTA is now part of what is known as US BUS – National Long Range Electric Bus Deployment Partnership. The US BUS will deploy 41 Zero Emission Propulsion System (ZEPS) electric buses across the United States. The partnering agencies represented operate across a range of diverse geographies and climates with unique route structures and ridership communities. Approximately 50 percent of the project's vehicles will be deployed in rural areas, and more than 65 percent of vehicles will be acquired by small and mid-size transit partners. This partnership with the diversity makes it a great candidate for this grant. The partners are as follows:

- Ben Franklin Transit, Richland, Washington
- CALSTART, Pasadena, California
- Clallam Transit, Port Angeles, Washington
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority, Reading, Pennsylvania
- Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, Santa Cruz, California
- Lane Transit District, Eugene, Oregon
- Tri-Delta Transit, Antioch, California
- Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation, Indianapolis, IN
- OmniTrans, San Bernardino, California
- Gardena Municipal Bus Lines, Gardena, California
- New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, New York, New York
- Kansas City International Airport, Kansas City, Missouri

The total project cost is \$39.95 million. The Federal request is for \$24,975 million and our match money is \$14,042 million. We do have tough competition. They have received 568 applications and there was a request for \$9 billion which is 20 times the \$474 million available. There are no guarantees that we will get this grant; however, in Mr. Louwarse' judgment we have a good project that it is new electronic technology and it is a national project.

## **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program**

### (DBE)

Mr. Louwarse mentioned in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, 49 CFR Part 26, BARTA has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. For the Federal Fiscal Year 2013-2014, beginning October 1, 2013 and ending September 30, 2014, BARTA has set a DBE goal of 0.8% which will be reached through 0% race conscious and 100% race neutral means.

Mr. Louwarse respectfully requests that the BARTA Board approve the DBE goal of 0.8% for the Federal Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

### (EEO)

Mr. Louwarse mentioned that BARTA is hereby committed to comply with prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age or handicap as set forth in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Section 19 of the UMT Act of 1982.

BARTA hereby committed to continue its affirmative action program, including goals and timetables, in order to overcome the effects of past discrimination on minorities and women.

BARTA hereby affirms that the responsibility for the implementation of the EEO program is assigned to Janet M. Weiss, Manager of Program and Marketing/EEO Officer/Civil Rights Officer.

BARTA acknowledges that all management personnel share in this responsibility and have been or will be assigned specific tasks to assure compliance is achieved.

BARTA further acknowledges that applicants and employees have the right to file complaints alleging discrimination with the appropriate official.

BARTA avers that performance by managers, supervisors, etc. will be evaluated on the success of the EEO program the same way as their performance on other authority goals.

BARTA acknowledges that successful achievement of EEO goals will provide benefits to the authority through fuller utilization and development of previously underutilized human resources.

Mr. Louwrese respectfully requests that the BARTA Board approve the Equal Employment Opportunity Program Statement of Policy.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dieruff to accept the DBE goal of 0.8% for the Federal FY 2013-2014 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Program Statement of Policy and was seconded by Mrs. Kutz. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

### **Dump the Pump**

Mr. Louwrese mentioned that Dump the Pump day was on June 20, 2013. Berks County residents were asked to Dump the Pump and enter the Dump the Pump essay contest. They are to tell us how BARTA benefits them and our community in 200 words or less. We have done this in the past and received some great essays and used them for marketing. The following are the prizes:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize – twelve (12) 31-Day Anywhere Passes

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – two (2) 31-Day Anywhere Passes

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – one (1) 31-Day Anywhere Pass

Essays may be sent by email or mail by no later than July 1, 2013. The winning essay will be published in the Reading Eagle.

### **Commuter Services Earth Day Challenge Winners**

Mr. Louwrese mentioned during the week of April 22-26 Commuter Services of PA issued a challenge to commuters to try an alternative commuting option, other than driving alone for Earth Day to help reduce noise and air pollution in the south central PA region by trying transit, carpooling, biking, walking, vanpooling and even telecommuting throughout the week. In total, 272 commuters logged more than 53,494 miles by taking alternative transportation for the week of Earth Day. In 2012, 260 participants logged more than 53,100 miles. The Berks County winner was Patricia Zuber of Wyomissing, who logged 55 miles by biking to her job at Alcon in Berks County five times and Bobbie Shanfelder of Richland in Lebanon County rode the bus five times to her job at County of Berks and logged a total of 220 miles.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Board of Directors July Meeting Date Change**

Mr. Louwerse mentioned that it has recently come to his attention that our July 29, 2013, meeting conflicts with a state meeting which is to be held on July 29, 2013. Mr. Louwerse respectfully requests that the July meeting be changed to July 22, 2013, and a public notice will be advertised regarding the date change.

A motion was made by Mrs. Kutz to accept the Board of Directors July 29, 2013, meeting be changed to July 22, 2013, and was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

**Election of Officers**

Mr. Louwerse mentioned that Board members had received the Nominating Committee Report dated June 3, 2013. The Nominating Committee was composed of Michael Roeberg, Chairman and Timothy Snyder, member. Their report stated that they recommend the following BARTA officers to serve from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

Chair: Ronald R. Seaman  
Vice Chair: Kevin S. Barnhardt  
Treasurer: Alice Kutz  
Secretary: James Schlegel

All of the elected officers are eligible to serve and have agreed to serve the Board term. Mr. Louwerse called for nominations from the floor. With no nominations from the floor, Mr. Louwerse respectfully requested a motion to elect the officers as recommended by the Nominating Committee. A motion was made by Mrs. Dieruff and was seconded by Mr. Bogia. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business a motion was made by Mrs. Dieruff to adjourn at 4:03pm and was seconded by Mr. Snyder. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melanie A. Heffner*

Melanie A. Heffner, Executive Assistant for  
James Schlegel, Secretary, Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority