

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE BARTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

July 22, 2013

The monthly meeting of the Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority was held at BARTA headquarters located at 1700 N. 11th 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, 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, Laura Hopko, Director of Administration and Human Resources, 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 June 24, 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, the House and Senate will be returning for a brief session prior to their recess for the month of August. There are many items to be considered. We do not anticipate any legislative action regarding transportation. Further, Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx was sworn in as the Nations 17th Secretary of Transportation. Secretary Foxx has invested in transportation during his term as mayor. Charlotte possesses an efficient and innovative transportation network. The transit industry looks forward to working with Secretary Foxx on important issues.

In Harrisburg, the General Assembly failed to pass a transportation package. It is the opinion of many that failure to pass transportation funding threatens to send the Commonwealth down the wrong path. Our transportation system is in need of repair and improvement. Our economy rests on a good transportation system. Right now there are a lot of opinions on what will or will not happen when the legislature reconvenes in September. We continue our efforts and I will keep you advised.

Mr. Louwarse announced the winners of the Dump the Pump essay contest as follows and read their essays:

- 1st Place – Christine Ely of Temple – twelve (12) 31-day anywhere passes
- 2nd Place – Tim Bourland, Mohnton – two (2) 31-day anywhere passes
- 3rd Place – Robin Mitchell, Reading – one (1) 31-day anywhere pass

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mrs. Kutz presented the Treasurer's Report:

The previous report balance as of June 14, 2013 was **\$4,926,395.52**. The current cash receipts are **\$752,318.90**. ACH/Transfers into Checking Account were **\$1,173,954.85**. Interest earned was **\$1,257.01**. Total receipts: **\$1,927,530.76**. Total Funds available were **\$6,853,926.28**. Current checks issued were **\$1,220,667.69**. Checks outstanding were: **(\$279,599.10)**. EFT/Transfers from checking account total **\$511,253.21** for a disbursement of **\$1,452,321.80**. Balance reported as of July 12, 2013 was **\$5,401,604.48**.

A motion was made by Mr. Bogia to accept the Treasurer's Report as written and was seconded by Mr. Snyder. 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 June 29, 2013 was **\$6,584,851** versus the budget amount of **\$6,472,228** which is **\$112,623** or **1.71%** over budget. Our total operating expenses for the same period was **\$16,059,197** versus the budgeted amount of **\$17,488,135** which is **\$1,428,938** or **8.90%** under budget. The operating deficit for the year-to-date was **\$9,474,349** which is **\$1,541,561** or **16.27%** under budget.

COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS

Operations Report

Mr. Fletcher presented his report as follows:

The operating data for June 2013 indicates that the total system ridership decreased by **6.8%** when compared to June 2012. There was a **7.4%** decrease in the fixed route passengers and a **1.8%** increase in special service passengers. For the month of June on the fixed route service, we experienced a **7.4%** decrease in the revenue passengers, and an **8.7%** decrease in senior citizen rides.

In the fixed route division there were 20 weekdays and 5 Saturdays operated in June 2013 as compared to 21 weekdays and 5 Saturdays in June 2012. In the special services division there were 20 weekdays operated in June 2013 as compared to 20 weekdays operated in June 2012.

The average weekday ridership for June 2013 was 10,215 as compared to 10,648 in June 2012. For the fiscal year, the total system ridership has remained even with the previous fiscal year. The fixed route ridership has decreased **0.2%**. This is composed of a **0.1%** decrease in revenue passengers and a **0.8%** decrease in senior citizen passengers. The special service passengers increased **2.6%**.

In the fixed route division there were a total of 254 weekdays and 52 Saturdays, operated this Fiscal Year as compared to 255 weekdays and 53 Saturdays operated last Fiscal Year. In the special services division there were a total of 254 weekdays operated this Fiscal Year as compared to 255 weekdays operated last Fiscal Year.

Special Services Report

Ms. Weidner presented her report as follows:

The total Special Services Division ridership for June was **20,388** a **1.8%** increase compared to the same month of 2012. Year-to-date figures show a **2.6%** increase when compared to the last fiscal year. With 22 operating days, with one less operating day compared to last year, an average of **1,019** passengers were transported per day.

Public Information

Public Information included in board packet compiled by Mrs. Weiss. Mr. Louwerson noted that included in the packet is the July 2013 Bulletin newsletter. Mr. Roeberg mentioned that whoever is doing the marketing for BARTA is doing a great job. Mr. Roeberg stated that every day he hears one of our ads or sees it on the bulletin boards around Berks County.

Mr. Louwerson mentioned that on July 17, 2013, the Mid-Day Café was held at the Franklin Street Station. It went well but due to the extreme heat the attendance was low compared to the past events.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Wireless Electric Vehicle Project Update

Mr. Louwerson mentioned that on July 17 and 18 he and Dan Russell, Director of Maintenance, went to Loveland, Ohio to do the first inspection of the new vehicles at AMP. Mr. Louwerson mentioned that he test drove the vehicle and wanted to assure everyone that it has a lot of power. This first vehicle is equipped with special software that will give statistics on the vehicle that will be observed by AMP and BARTA. We anticipate that the first vehicle will be completed in a few weeks. In the board packet are photos of the vehicles components. Mr. Bogia asked if we were going to have a horn or something installed on the bus to alert folks that it is a running vehicle since it is extremely quiet and you won't hear it. Mr. Louwerson stated that they are looking into finding a system to install to alert citizens.

BARTA & Lebanon Transit – Berks/Lebanon Service Plan

Mr. Louwerson mentioned we are extremely close to running an express route to Lebanon. We are finalizing the service schedule and test runs are being done in the next few weeks by both BARTA and Lebanon Transit to get the appropriate running times. This will be an express service with limited stops for BARTA and Lebanon Transit. This service will only be available Monday through Friday. A start date of service will be determined after the schedule is finalized. The bus will be running out of the Franklin Street Station. This service is temporary route while the study is being finished to determine what a permanent route would be. BARTA will send two early-morning buses and one late-morning from the Franklin Street Station to Lebanon Transit's bus station at Third and Willow Streets. From Lebanon Transit's station passengers can catch the bus to Hershey, Harrisburg and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. BARTA's buses will be timed to arrive shortly before those routes leave. In the afternoon and evening, Lebanon Transit will send buses to BARTA's Park-N-Ride lot in Womelsdorf, where riders can take a BARTA bus back to Reading. The trip from Reading to Lebanon will cost \$4 each way and then an additional \$1.50 to go to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center or \$2 to go to Hershey or Harrisburg. Passengers who are 65 years old or older ride for free. Mr. Louwerson mentioned that we are receiving a Technical Assistant Grant to help with the marketing and service in the interim time frame. Mr. Louwerson also stated that we will be running an ad in the Reading Eagle and the Lebanon paper regarding the new service and also requesting comments on the service.

NEW BUSINESS

PA Preservation Award

Mr. Louwerson mentioned that the Franklin Street Station has been selected to receive the Ralph Modjeski Award for Excellence in Transportation, Design, Preservation or Archaeology. BARTA is receiving this for an exceptional effort within the transportation field combining the best practices of historic preservation and compatible design that results in an improvement in transportation.

Since 1979, the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards have honored individuals and organizations that exhibited excellence in the field of historic preservation. Mindy Crawford, Executive Director of Preservation Pennsylvania said "The annual awards program highlights the richness and diversity of Pennsylvania's heritage

and recognizes the valuable contribution historic preservation projects make to community vitality.” The award will be presented at a luncheon on Friday, September 27 at The Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, PA. Additional information will be forthcoming and hopefully a few Board members would be interested in attending.

Assurances

Mr. Louwse mentioned the Consolidated Capital Grant Application (CCA): Board resolution to file application and to certify local match. The Board of Directors resolves and certifies that the requested state amount of \$1,130,000 of Section 1517 funds; and/or state amount of \$0.00 of Section 1514 state discretionary trust funds; and/or, \$620,094 of state Section 1514 Bond funds are requested for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 to help pay for projected capital costs, excluding asset maintenance, and that these funds will only be used for this purpose since these funds are ineligible to be used for operating costs. Any of these funds not used this Fiscal Year will be used only for capital assistance in a subsequent year. Further the Board of Directors resolves and certifies that in Fiscal Year 2013-2014 that local, or if applicable private, cash matching funds of no less than \$0.00 will be provided to match the requested amount of state Section 1514 discretionary trust funds; and/or, that local, or if applicable private, cash matching funds of no less than \$10,694 will be provided to match the requested amount of state Section 1514 bond funds. No local matching funds are required for the requested state Section 1517 funds.

Mr. Louwse respectfully requests that the Board approved the resolution to file application and to certify local match. A motion was made by Mr. Roeberg to accept the resolution and was seconded by Mrs. Kutz. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

BOSS 2020

Mr. Louwse respectfully requests the Board’s approval to support the Borough of Sinking Spring’s BOSS 2020 Committee application for DCED grant funding for the first phase in a series of projects that would support the plan elements for improved sidewalks, streetscapes and the bus shelters. The ultimate potential, in later development phases, is to address traffic congestion and improve the travel time through Sinking Spring which would be a great benefit to BARTA’s local and express services that travel through this corridor. This support does not commit BARTA to anything financially and only to support the first phase of this project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to send a letter of our support to the Borough of Sinking Spring’s BOSS 2020 DCED grant funding for just the first phase with no financial commitment and was seconded by Mr. Schlegel. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Correspondence - US BUS - Tiger V Grant

Mr. Louwse mentioned in the Board packet are copies of letters we received from Senator Pat Toomey, Senator Robert Casey, Jr., Congressman Charles Dent, Congressman Jim Gerlach, Congressman Patrick Meehan, Congressman Joseph Pitts, and Representative Cox in support of the application by the US BUS – National Long Range Electric Bus Deployment Partnership.

Fightin' Phils

Mr. Louwerse mentioned that on Monday, July 29, 2013 we have received 20 field box seats with deck buffet passes to see the Fightin' Phils. We would like to extend an invitation to Board members who may be interested in attending. If you are interested in attending please inform Melanie Heffner by no later than Wednesday, July 24 at noon. Tickets will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Mr. Bogia asked if we were working with Dollar General regarding service to Berks Parks 78. Mr. Louwerse mentioned that we are currently working with them on service to their facility.

Commissioner Barnhardt also mentioned that BARTA should talk to the appropriate people to start the talks for bus service due to the Penn Street Bridge closure that will be taken place in the near future to assist with the potential congestion problems. Mr. Louwerse stated that he mentioned this at the last Reading Area Transportation Study meeting but will lead the discussion again to inform them that we can provide service to help with the congestion that will take place during this bridge closure.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business a motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to adjourn at 4:10pm and was seconded by Mr. Bogia. 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