

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE BARTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 26, 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: James Schlegel, Secretary, Jayne L. Dieruff, Dennis Rex and Michael Roeberg.

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 Roy Flowers, Retired BARTA Employee of the Amalgamated Transit Union #1345 and Valdis Lacia, Reading Eagle.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Seaman entertained a motion to approve the Board minutes of July 22, 2013, as distributed by mail. Mrs. Dieruff 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 have been in recess since August 1. The recess will continue until after Labor Day when Congress will return. However, already there is much discussion regarding the spending limits; the Federal deficit; and, the possibility of another Government shutdown. It is obviously too early to tell what will happen. I will keep you advised on these very important matters.

In Harrisburg, the Legislature will be returning in September. We are hopeful that upon their return they will take up the important issue of funding for transportation. It is obvious that our transportation system is in need of repair and improvement. Recently, there have been reports concerning the potential for bridge restrictions and other delays in construction activities as a result of the funding crisis. In the area of Public Transportation, we also have been gathering information on the severe negative impact should a transportation funding package fail to be passed. We continue our efforts with the various coalition members and I will keep you advised as to this important issue.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Seaman presented the Treasurer's Report:

The previous report balance as of July 12, 2013 was **\$5,401,604.48**. The current cash receipts are **\$373,746.16**. ACH/Transfers into Checking Account were **\$182,318.50**. Interest earned was **\$1,499.09**. Total receipts: **\$557,563.75**. Total Funds available were **\$5,959,168.23**. Current checks issued were **\$856,558.15**. Checks outstanding were: **(\$101,464.21)**. EFT/Transfers from checking account total **\$514,570.02** for a disbursement of **\$1,269,663.96**. Balance reported as of August 16, 2013 was **\$4,689,504.27**.

A motion was made by Mr. Rex 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 July 31, 2013 was **\$520,670** versus the budget amount of **\$526,241** which is **\$5,571** or **1.07%** under budget. Our total operating expenses for the same period was **\$1,432,790** versus the budgeted amount of **\$1,463,517** which is **\$30,727** or **2.14%** under budget. The operating deficit for the year-to-date was **\$912,120** which is **\$25,156** or **2.76%** under budget.

COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS

Operations Report

Mr. Fletcher presented his report as follows:

The operating data for July 2013 indicates that the total system ridership increased by **3.6%** when compared to July 2012. There was a **3.1%** increase in the fixed route passengers and a **9.1%** increase in special service passengers. For the month of July on the fixed route service, we experienced a **3.6%** increase in the revenue passengers, and a **1.4%** increase in senior citizen rides.

In the fixed route division there were 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays operated in July 2013 as compared to 21 weekdays and 4 Saturdays in July 2012. In the special services division there were 22 weekdays operated in July 2013 as compared to 21 weekdays operated in July 2012.

The average weekday ridership for July 2013 was 10,658 as compared to 10,820 in July 2012. For the fiscal year, the total system ridership has increased **3.6%**. The fixed route ridership has increased **3.1%**. This is composed of a **3.6%** increase in revenue passengers and a **1.4%** increase in senior citizen passengers. The special service passengers increased **9.1%**.

In the fixed route division there were a total of 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays, operated this Fiscal Year as compared to 21 weekdays and 4 Saturdays operated last Fiscal Year. In the special services division there were a total of 22 weekdays operated this Fiscal Year as compared to 21 weekdays operated last Fiscal Year.

Mr. Roeberg mentioned with all the advertising on the three routes how has that affected the ridership numbers on these routes? Mr. Louwse stated that the routes have increased overall since we started our marketing this past winter.

Mr. Schlegel also mentioned that our bike racks are being used often on the buses and is very pleased to see them being used on different routes.

Special Services Report

Ms. Weidner presented her report as follows:

The total Special Services Division ridership for July was **22,331** a **9.1%** increase compared to the same month of 2012. Year-to-date figures show a **9.1%** increase when compared to the last fiscal year. With 22 operating days an average of **1,015** passengers were transported per day.

Mr. Rex mentioned that Mr. Greene uses the Special Services to go to doctor appointments and loves the service he receives. He stated that he is treated very well.

Public Information

Public Information included in board packet compiled by Mrs. Weiss. Mr. Seaman noted that included in the packet is the August 2013 Bulletin newsletter. Mr. Louwse mentioned that we highlighted in the Bulletin the MidDay Café at the Franklin Street Station on July 17 and BARTA Night at the Fightin' Phils on July 29.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Wireless Electric Vehicle Project Update

Mr. Louwse mentioned that the Wireless Electric Vehicle is finally here. This is the first of its kind in North America and has zero emissions. After the Board meeting, Board members can go for a ride on the vehicle and see the charging station. The bus wrap is currently being designed by a company called Ewing Lettering and Graphics in Farmington, NY. There is no local company that does bus wraps. In the Board packet is information which highlights the vehicle specs, secondary display and error messages. This vehicle is the first one of the two vehicles that BARTA will be receiving. The second vehicle has not been converted yet because we are waiting to do all the tests and learn things from the first vehicle before the second one is completed. We have the latest and greatest battery for the vehicle. This vehicle also contains a plug-in. When the vehicles are running, it will send data on the vehicle to BARTA, AMP and Momentum to give us statistics. This vehicle is very quiet; however, when other equipment such as air conditioner is running you can hear the vehicle.

BARTA & Lebanon Transit – Berks/Lebanon Service Plan

Mr. Louwse showed the Board the new logo for the Berks/Lebanon Express Service. We are currently working on the marketing materials and will start marketing the service to the public on September 2. We will start service on September 9, running from the Franklin Street Station. The Franklin Street Station will officially be open for bus service. The fare will cost \$4 one way and is cash only. The express service will leave the Franklin Street Station and go straight to Womelsdorf with no stops in between. Then it will proceed to Myerstown and then to Lebanon Transit station. From Lebanon Transit passengers can pay \$2 to go to Hershey Medical or \$1.50 to the VA Hospital. They also can go to Harrisburg for additional fare. When passengers return from Lebanon Transit, they will be dropped off at Womelsdorf with a transfer pass to catch the BARTA bus back to Reading. If passengers are 65 years or older they can ride for free. This service will be Monday through Friday only. The Veterans Affairs office will reimburse a veteran for their transportation fare.

Berks Parks 78

Mr. Louwse mentioned that he is currently working with the Human Resource Directors of Dollar General and Pet Smart to coordinate efforts during their hiring process and events. This is to provide information on mobility options to potential workers. That entire area is growing and is a large undertaking for BARTA.

Impact of Inaction on Transportation Funding

Mr. Louwse mentioned in the Board packet are news article clips on the bridges as well as, articles on transit. Once Congress is back from recess we are hoping to have the transportation funding package passed. Mr. Louwse stated that if this package is not passed not only will it affect our roads and bridges but it is going to have an impact on transit agencies. Mr. Louwse mentioned three areas where it will impact BARTA if this package doesn't go through.

1. The Berks Parks 78 – Currently we have funding for BARTA to have service to Berks Parks 78 to start the service; however, if we don't get the funding we will not be able to sustain the service and that will impact the employees getting to their job.
2. The Berks/Lebanon Service – If we don't get the funding this service will end after the interim period. We won't be able to have this service anymore.

3. Special Services – The reason we keep growing is because we have the funding to provide this level of service. BARTA has tried to improve this service and we have routinely increased our fares to take advantage of the lottery. Last year BARTA subsidized the special service program to \$1.2 million dollars. This year we budgeted that we would subsidize \$1.4 million. No other transit system in Pennsylvania subsidizes their share-ride program to the amount of money BARTA does. If the transportation bill does not go through we will have to cancel some of the service that we currently run or raise the fare costs to an amount that is not affordable which will have a great impact on the citizens of Berks County.

This past year, we have sent letters to the delegation stating that we need a comprehensive transportation funding program. This program is not only about bridges, highways and roads.

NEW BUSINESS

Transit Planning Agreement between BARTA and County of Berks

Mr. Louwse mentioned that we work with the MPO on the requirements of planning for public transportation as part of the Federal program. Funding is passed from the Feds and the State to the County and then to BARTA. We annually have a contract with them. Mr. Louwse respectfully requested the Board approve the Transit Planning Agreement between BARTA and County of Berks.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dieruff to approve the Transit Planning Agreement and was seconded by Mr. Roeberg. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

Resolution for Execution of Grants

Mr. Louwse mentioned the following resolution: By the authority of the Board of Directors of BARTA that the Executive Director of said Municipality be authorized and directed to sign agreements with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and that any officer of the Board of Directors be directed to attest for the Programs identified below on its behalf. This resolution shall remain in effect until rescinded or replaced with a new resolution.

Mr. Louwse respectfully requests that the Board approved the resolution of execution of grants. A motion was made by Mr. Rex to accept the resolution of execution of grants and was seconded by Mrs. Dieruff. A vote was taken and with no opposing votes, the motion was passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Roeberg to adjourn at 3:46pm and was seconded by Mr. Schlegel. 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