

## **GATRA Virtual Advisory Board Meeting**

**November 30, 2020**

Mayor Heroux called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken. Those in attendance were: Janet Angelico, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan and Alan Slavin. Also, in attendance were Mark Sousa, Daniel Burgess, Stacy Forte, Nancy Foley, Paul Mission-SRPEDD and Peter Wiggins.

### **Review/Approve 6/23/20 Minutes**

Mayor Heroux asked for motion to approve the 6/23/20 minutes. Greg Guimond made a motion to approve, seconded by Michael Gallagher. A roll call vote was taken: Janet Angelico, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin - all voted yes. The motion to accept the minutes was approved.

### **Fare Policy**

Mark reported that in 2018 GATRA and Massdot entered an MOU that required that each RTA's update their fare structures. Stacy Forte worked with AECOM on the fare policy as distributed. This Fare Policy shows that GATRA will review fares every 5 years and adjust if warranted. Massdot requires approval of this Fare Policy by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Heroux asked for a motion to approve the Fare Policy. Greg Guimond moved, Michael Gallagher seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Janet Angelico, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan and Alan Slavin all voted yes. The motion to approve the Fare Policy was approved.

### **Safety Plan**

Mark reported that Legislation that was passed in 2018 required all RTA's to develop a safety plan. This document is required. Stacy Forte worked with Cambridge Systems to develop the plan. GATRA is working with all operators to implement any new procedures. One new feature is that we will have to have a safety officer. We will review

this policy on a yearly basis. This will be the foundation of our plan. Moving forward we will update and review. There will not be changes unless we see major service changes. This document is what GATRA will present to Massdot and to FTA as our Safety Plan. Mayor Heroux asked for a motion to approve the Safety Plan, Greg Guimod made a motion, Michael Gallagher seconded. A Roll Call vote was taken: Janet Angelico, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin all voted yes. The motion to approve the Safety Plan was approved.

Peter Wiggins asked if GATRA could look into problem with the homeless at Taunton Terminal and the ATC. Mark will report to our operator to have supervisors handle this.

### **Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan**

Every 5 years Massdot contracts with someone to review our whole system to see what is working what is not. It is a very comprehensive analysis. Stacy Forte worked with AECOM on the plan and we have distributed that draft to the board. Mark wanted to update the board that this draft will be out for public comment in two weeks and will be finalized in the near future. Once the plan is finalized we will present to the Board for approval.

The process of reviewing all of our routes for this plan has allowed our team to look at each route to identify what we could do better and how we could connect more with other RTA's so that someone could travel from one zone to another. We will look at this again in the Spring and maybe in the future be able to make routes more efficient. Stacy reported that the report is being made accessible to the public and will be posted on the website.

### **Maintenance**

At the last meeting Mark asked for the Board's approval to look into having the Maintenance Manager work directly for GATRA and to report back to the board if this is fiscally responsible. Currently our operator PTMA manages the maintenance. To separate the Maintenance Manager position gives us more checks and balances. Massdot and FTA have both questioned in the past several audits, our system of having maintenance reporting to an operator. GATRA has millions of dollars of equipment that is currently being overseen by our operator. GATRA pays PTMA for salaries of all maintenance staff. Moving the Maintenance Manger's position to GATRA would show no fiscal change. The only change may be some benefit costs which are not significant. Financially and

operationally this change makes sense. Mark reported that for these reasons he will move forward with this change. Mayor Heroux thanked Mark for looking into this and making this change in the best interest of GATRA.

## **Audit**

Mark reported that the AFC committee voted to recommend the audit to the full board. As presented to the AFC Mark explained that the audit packet we sent has only 2 of the 3 items that the Board will need to vote on. The third document our auditors have not received yet because of some of the language from the Federal Government due to the CARES Act. The single audit is the federal reporting piece that we are still waiting on. The auditors have reported that they should receive this by the end of December.

Dan reported that the independent audit includes the Yellow Book Report. Please note on the opinion piece. The Auditors opinion is positive. There are no findings. The next piece to note is on page 7 of the MD&A. On the operating expenses and revenues, of particular note is that the operating revenues decreased by 9.5 million dollars which is down about 20%. This has had the most significant effect on our financial position for FY 20. It is primarily the result of Covid the MBTA and other RTA's have significantly reducing service which has affected our revenues. The operating expenses decreased as well by almost 9 million. There were no other significant items. The bulk of this is the result of the medical transportation. The HST contract is a revenue driven by expenses, a cost reimbursement system. Some differences are the loss of fare box revenue and some COVID expenses. Some of these expenses will be offset by CARES money.

On last few pages of the Yellow Book report the Auditors state that they did not find any deficiencies of internal controls that are considered to be material weaknesses. The results of the Auditor's tests show no instance of non-compliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

When the Single Audit Report comes in we will have to another Board meeting to accept that piece. It was reported that the Audit went smooth with a good outcome.

Mayor Heroux asked for motion to approve the audit as presented. Greg Guimond moved, Michael Gallagher seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Janet Angelico, Kevin Dumas, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan and Alan Slavin all voted yes. The Audit was approved.

## **Budget Discussion**

As reported in the AFC this is a six-month update of the budget quarter ended 9/30/20. The thrust of the FY20 budget is modeled under the assumption that as we moved through the year we would see a return to more normal pre-covid activity level, revenues and expenses as well. The analysis takes the total year budget and compares it for the first quarter, therefore some of the analysis may look more significant than it really is because we are looking at the very bottom of activity levels. We do expect a good amount of catch up to happen in Quarters 3 and 4.

HST Revenue and expenses are in line as expenses drive revenue. As of 9/30/20 this is down about 50% from the budgeted number. Dan feels that we will eventually catch up in the Spring, if not we can make some adjustments to the budget as needed. The number of calls/trips are starting to increase consistently. The expectation is that the number will come back closer to the budgeted amount as we return to normalcy.

There is a similar situation with the Commuter Rail, with revenues driving expenses. The revenue is down about 70%, expenses are down 65%. This is lower than we had budgeted. This number will come back as people return to work. Depending on what we see, we may have to make an adjustment. These revenues are restricted to the parking lot expenses.

Fare box revenue is about 45-50% of what was budgeted. We do have some CARES money to offset this lost revenue. Admin expenses which include payroll, benefits and office expenses are 10% below budget. We are on a month to month basis with the State Contract Assistance. We are getting 1/12<sup>th</sup> of contract each month. Normally we would have a full year of SCA. All expectations are that the numbers will be what we budgeted at the beginning - so far they are.

This could change if the State makes changes. We would then have to make the related adjustment in the budget.

Mayor Heroux asked about GATRA ridership. Mark reported that ridership is down about 50%. Dial a Ride is down significantly it is about 1500 a week as compared to 3200. The fixed route is at about 6,000 compared to 12,000. The Revenues are down overall 50%. The expenses are down 25-30%. This does show a gap in expenses and revenue. Cares funds are critical to offset lost fare box revenue. We will have to supplement there. We have made a concerted effort to reduce expenses where we can with variable costs related to FR and Dial A Ride. There are some inherent fixe costs that we cannot do

anything about. Mark stated that when we started receiving fares again in August we showed a 10% decrease in ridership. We have recouped this. We are moving in the right direction with ridership and fares.

### **Weighted Vote**

This is based on each community's assessment. In the Mass General Law's, the weighted vote is a calculation of the local assessments. This distributes the vote throughout the board based on services each community receives. This weighted vote determines our Advisory Board's quorum.

The Mayor asked for a motion to approve the FY21 Weighted Vote, Greg Guimond moved to approve, Mike Gallagher seconded. A roll call was taken: Janet Angelico, Kevin Dumas, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Joanne Moore, Bradley Marshall, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powell, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan and Alan Slavin all voted yes. The motion to approve the weighted vote was approved.

### **Other business**

Mark had several updates to report. The State put out an RFR for Medical Transportation for 3 regions. GATRA submitted a response for Region 3, which is all of our communities plus the Cape and the Islands. GATRA was awarded the ability to negotiate that contract. We have been in negotiations with promising discussions with HST as well as CCRTA to provide this service on the Cape & Islands. GATRA will be one of only 2 RTA's to provide this service. MART received the contract for Region 1 & 2. Mark has negotiated a clause to review the rates in the Spring due to unforeseen changes and increases due to Covid. Once negotiations are complete this contract is expected to begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Once the contract is signed it will be lot of work to get up and running with personnel, training and software. Mark is confident the GATRA team will get it done.

Mark reported that GATRA has partnered with National Express for Microtransit pilot program in the Foxborough, Franklin, Norfolk and Wrentham area. This Microtransit will combine the services in those areas. Microtransit is really the way transportation is going. Joanne, Stacy and Angie have been working very hard on this program for the last several months. This will be launching December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The GATRA Covid 19 update is that only 3 employees have tested positive. All of them have been isolated cases and each employee is doing well. Each of these cases were contracted outside of GATRA. GATRA has been diligent in our cleaning and our policies to

keep everyone safe. GATRA just bought 2 new Gillig buses with UV air filtration systems. Once tested if results are positive we will work to retrofit our other buses.

GATRA has received a contract from Massachusetts Environmental Protection to purchase 6 Electric Buses. This is through the VW money approved by the Legislature and is 100% funding with no match required. GATRA has contracted with Gillig for these buses. The Electric Buses will be here in June.

Mark reported to Board that we are still looking for a new facility in the Kingston/Plymouth area. The current area we have will not allow us to provide maintenance. If anyone knows of any available facility in that area please let us know.

Lastly, Mark wanted to compliment the GATRA team. Mark wanted to acknowledge the GATRA staff as an amazing team and we are successful because of them and their hard work. Mayor Heroux appreciates the shout out to the staff.

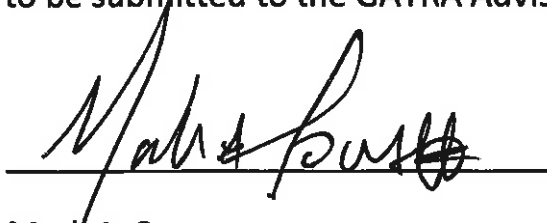
### **Other Business**

Peter Wiggins as a regular GATRA rider wanted to compliment GATRA for job well done. He also hopes that the Route 140 Shuttle to Mansfield will be restored in the future.

Mayor Heroux asked if anyone had any other business to discuss. Hearing none he asked for motion to adjourn, Kevin Dumas moved to adjourn the meeting, Joanne Moore seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Janet Angelico, Kevin Dumas, Gill Enos, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Linda Hayes, Paul Heroux, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Tammy Murray, Stacy Powel, Michael Raymond, Courtney Riley, Joseph Ryan and Alan Slavin all voted yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

to be submitted to the GATRA Advisory Board for approval by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Sousa", is written over a horizontal line.

Mark A. Sousa  
Administrator