

Minutes
GATRA Virtual Advisory Board Meeting
June 23, 2020 - 11:00 a.m.

Chairman Mayor Heroux called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. and explained that for virtual meetings the Attorney General requires a roll call vote to be taken for each vote. Roll Call was then taken. Those Advisory Board members in attendance were: Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. GATRA staff in attendance were: Dan Burgess, Lorri Emond, Nancy Foley, Stacy Forte, Mark Sousa. Also in attendance: Sean Rutledge of Lakeville Cable

Introductions

Mark Sousa introduced himself to all thanked everyone attending and announced that this meeting was being recorded by GATRA and by Lakeville Cable.

Minutes of the December 18, 2019 Meeting

Mayor Heroux asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting. Greg Guimond moved, Mayor O'Connell seconded the motion. A Roll call vote was then taken. Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All voted yes. The motion passed.

Covid 19 update.

Mark Sousa reported that as the Covid 19 Pandemic began in early March decisions had to be made immediately to protect staff, drivers and passengers. Staff were sent home to work remotely. The terminal building was shut down. The maintenance staff developed a proto type of a vinyl barrier to protect drivers and passengers. Mark acknowledged the excellent work of the Maintenance Staff in designing and implementing these barriers so quickly. GATRA has had only one driver test positive and we believe that was due to being exposure that happened outside of GATRA. The driver quarantined appropriately and there was no spread. Due to widespread shut down GATRA cut back on service. GATRA is an essential service to our citizens and ridership does remains consistent at between 400-500 riders per day. Although schedules were cut back, a program was implemented to use our vans and cut aways to help people get to work and for essential travel. Operationally GATRA has stayed as consistent as possible. GATRA has adjusted procedures rotating vehicles out during shift changes in order to sanitize vehicles at least twice a day and has purchased a fogger to sanitize not only vehicles but facilities as well. All of the Regional Transit Authorities have been in constant contact with each other, the FTA, the CDC, the State, and the Governor's Task Force for consistent updates. The Administrative staff continues to manage all functions including funding and grants. Initially the HST call center staff had been split into two alternating shifts. Vinyl partitions have been installed to separate the HST call center

staff. As volume of calls has started to tick up in the last week, we have called all call center employees back. The RTA's are all working together to secure PPE's for staff and passengers (if needed). We are working toward a reopening of all services. Mark reported that he conducts staff conference calls and RTA conference calls each week and has met with two Union Presidents to get their feedback and is keeping an open dialogue with them. They are comfortable with the protections that we have in place to date. The terminal building and the Diner that leases from us has reopened today. GATRA stopped collecting fares in March and is working on procedures to collect fares safely. Mayor Heroux questioned how not collecting fares came about. Mark explained that this was a result of the MBTA deciding to do only rear boarding only and not enforcing the collection of fares. All of the RTA's agreed to do the same collectively. There were a lot of discussions surrounding this issue with the State, Mass DOT and the Governor's office. Mayor Heroux wanted to know if GATRA is requiring passengers to wear masks. It was reported that although there is no requirement for passengers to wear masks at this time, we are strongly encouraging all passengers to wear masks. We have had no real issues with this. If passengers have a medical issue they are not required to wear a mask.

Mayor Heroux asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Hearing none we can move on to the next order of business.

The Revised FY2020 budget.

Mark reported that because of the no fare policy and the lost train station revenue we have had zero revenues since March. Under guidance from the FTA and the State GATRA along with all of the RTA's have been able to use CARES Act funds to close the gap in our budgets.

Dan pointed out the significant drop in ridership of both Demand Response and Fixed Route due to Covid 19. This is reflected in the Operating portion of the budget comparing Revision 1 to 2. On the Administrative side very little has changed from Revision 1 to 2, with the exception of the fringe benefit line. This is related to a reallocation done and the final payout to the former administrator per his contract. There is variability with each community depending on their individual services. On the Commuter Rail expenses projected for both the Attleboro and Mansfield are down. The costs are fixed so there is not much drop there. Insurance upkeep and maintenance remain the same. The last piece on the expense side is Human Service Transportation. GATRA is looking at about a 30% drop in total expense from what we projected in Revision 1. This is a direct result of massive drop in trips since March. On the revenue side the fixed route and DAR farebox revenue is down about 30% from what was budgeted in Revision 1. You will see we are offsetting this loss as well as some additional costs related to Covid 19 with CARES funds.

The other big number on the revenue side is the HST revenue. The expenses drive the revenue here, so there is a similar drop in revenues and expenses. The Commuter Rail will be above where we thought we would be in Revision 1, even with the drop of vehicles parking. State contracts and local assessments figures are pretty standard. Mayor Heroux asked if there were any questions, hearing none the Mayor asked for a motion to approve the FY2020 Revision 2 Budget, Bradley Marshall moved, Alan Slavin seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All voted yes. The motion to accept the FY2020 Revision 2 Budget passed.

FY2021 Budget.

Mark reported that this first go around of the FY2021 budget is the foundation for FY2021 and is very conservative because we do not know what is in store for us. Mark will more than likely have to come back to the Board for an adjustment at some point. Dan has done a lot a work to put this budget together and we believe very it is reasonable. One of the directives Mark has given Dan as the CFO is responsibility for budget, from this point forward he will be responsible for the budget and all Accounts Payable. Dan will be monitoring all Revenues and Expenses closely.

Dan then presented the FY2021 budget. The format is a little different. We now have a true section for expenses and revenue is now separate. The Administration and Brokerage is broken down separately. The big difference is personnel and personnel related costs have rolled into a single number. We have added another expense line to both Administrative and the Brokerage to account for critical pieces that have not been flushed out in previous years. This will be things like utilities and insurance and some other miscellaneous costs. On the whole the Administrative budget is up about 4% from last year. Moving on to Operations, we are projecting an 8-9% decrease in fixed route and about a 6.5% decrease in Demand Response from FY2020 Revision 2 to FY2021. In total services on the expense side will show a decrease of about 7.5%. This is a very conservative estimate and in next 3-4 months this could be a very different picture. Moving on to the Brokerage piece, we are looking at a significant increase, about 13% in expenditures related to the Brokerage Operation. This is driven by trends in call volume. Medical transportation is starting to tick back up. Offices are reopening and people with regular medical appointments and critical medical needs are scheduling these trips. Projecting out what we are seeing now to the beginning of FY2021 Dan believes we will see Brokerage really ramp up, hence the increase projection in the costs related to that function. The commuter rail piece is pretty much the same as last year. Mansfield is down a little bit because there is not a lot running there right now. The Attleboro station is only about a 2% reduction. There is a baseline cost to maintain the parking lot and the building. We are being conservative with the Fixed Route and Demand Response revenue. We are estimating that we will see further reductions in farebox revenue through the remainder of the year. When we are able to collect fares again these numbers would be adjusted. On the whole we are looking at about a 15% decrease in farebox revenue for FY2021. With the HST Brokerage, the expenses drive the revenue here. We are projected about a \$4 million increase from FY2020 to FY2021. As for the Commuter Rail, we do not really know when we will start to see numbers of parking that we saw pre-Covid. There may be employers that permanently move their employees to remote work, therefore we are again taking a very conservative approach to this revenue number. This is a 25% decrease from this past year. The Microtransit Pilot has two new expansion contracts that will be rolling out in FY2021. In FY2021 we are budgeting for our full Federal Operating Assistance to come out of the CARES Act Grant as opposed to splitting this with the 5307 FTA Operating Formula Grant. The State Contract Assistance and the local assessments are just a standard 2.5% increase over prior year. Mayor Heroux asked about the Microtransit expansion. Mark explained that we have expanded the service in Mansfield and Foxboro to nights and weekends. This grant is a matching grant with the Kraft Group. We have also added a new program in South Plymouth. Mayor O'Connell questioned if GATRA is prohibited from collecting fares. Mark explained that not enforcing the collection of fares came about primarily to keep our operators and passengers safe and is projecting to return to collecting fares in the early Fall. We are working in collaboration with all of the other RTA's on this. Mayor O'Connell expressed that this is a very long time to go without collecting fares and would encourage GATRA to continue to work on this to come to a

solution as soon as possible. Mark explain that we will have to have an added partition for fare collection to keep the drivers and passengers from being exposed. All of the RTA's working together on this together to find a solution. In the interim the CARES Act specifically covers this lost revenue. Mayor O'Connell questioned why the CARES Act Funding for FY2021 was less than in FY2020. Dan explained that the \$4.5 million was a budget balancing piece and as time goes on and we go through our revisions this number will more than likely change. This will be based on projected reduction in costs of the big cost drivers specifically the fixed route and the demand response activities. This number could grow if we see an increase in activity there and an increase in costs related to that activity. When we are able to receive fares again that might help to offset. Mayor O'Connell questioned the office administration services line. Dan reported that this is a variety of things including audit related services, IT services, Hvac and any professional and technical services needed. Mark conveyed to the Board that he and Dan will be monitoring this budget very closely on a monthly basis and will report any new developments or major changes.

Mayor Heroux asked how much of the budget is from the State. Dan stated that figure is at the bottom of the second page on the State Contract Assistance line. Mayor Heroux reported that the State budget is not done yet. The State Ways and Means and the Speaker are basically waiting to hear what will happen with the Federal Cares Act expanding into covering lost revenues for Municipalities. Mayor Heroux believes that the Federal Cares Act will cover lost meals tax, hotel tax etc. Once the Federal Cares Act does that, then the State will know that lost revenue will be made up by the Federal Government. We do not know when that will happen, but believe that the legislation will be amended before our own State budget is passed. Mayor Heroux has talked with Joe Kennedy and Senator's Markey and Warren and that is the best sense that we get of what will happen. Mayor O'Connell as a new Advisory Board member would like to know how often the Advisory Board meets and how often the Regional Transit Authorities meet. Mark stated that Advisory Board meets as needed and typically the RTA's meet every other month, but under the current circumstances they have a standing weekly conference call. Mayor O'Connell would like an update on Revenue Fare collection in four weeks and stated that it would be very beneficial for GATRA to begin to collect fares before September. Mayor Heroux then asked if any questions, concerns or comments. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the FY2021. Bradley Marshall moved, Greg Guimond seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher (who was able to join the meeting), Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All voted yes. The motion passed.

Facilities and Maintenance

Mark reported that in order to get staff back to work there has to be some changes made to the building. Currently the Administrative staff is clustered together. The best solution here is to separate the large office area into individual offices. The Customer service will be moved to the first floor. We are also making some changes in the Maintenance and Administrative facility. GATRA is coming up with a protocol for wearing masks in the office. These measures are all to keep our staff safe.

Mark reported that in coming on as a new Administrator and looking at how we operate as GATRA, one thing that concerned him is that GATRA's Operator PTM/Transdev currently manages GATRA's Maintenance Department. GATRA pays all of the expense for this to our operator along with a \$25,000 monthly management fee. Having a third party with control of maintenance is always a discussion with

the FTA and the State. The FTA and the State always like to see clear checks and balances. GATRA would have more control over all vehicles and in keeping those vehicles safe if the Maintenance function was under direct control. Mark believes pulling Maintenance in-house would be level funded and would have no financial impact on GATRA. The Maintenance piece would have to be negotiated out of the Operator contract. Mark believes this would be the right thing for GATRA and is asking the Board today for their approval to pursue the feasibility of this and present all options to the board. Mayor O'Connell would like to see a cost analysis included with the report. Mayor Heroux asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, the Mayor asked for a motion to vote to give Mark the authority to pursue the option of bringing the Maintenance Department into GATRA, Bradley Marshall moved, Greg Guimond seconded, a Roll call vote was taken. Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All voted yes. The motion passed.

New Business

Courtney asked if GATRA could pursue a hands-free fare system on a phone. Mark reported that we are currently reaching out to several companies to look into the Mobil Ticketing as an option. GATRA would always have to maintain a cash fare option, but the mobile ticketing would cut down on interaction when paying the fare. Andrea Priest asked if we could require exact fare. Mark reported that this has definitely been part of the discussion that the GATRA directors are looking at and he will report back to Board.

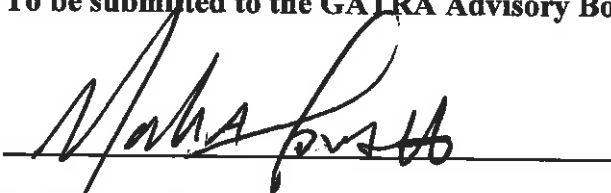
Mayor Heroux asked if anyone else had a new business to discuss. A roll call was taken. Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All stated no, there was no new business.

Mark wanted to thank the Board for being here today and to let the Board know that he is always available. Mark's cell is 802-373-2111.

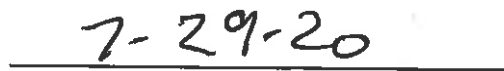
Mayor Heroux asked for a motion to adjourn, Greg Guimond moved, Mayor O'Connell seconded. A roll call vote was taken, Janet Angelico, Josie Dutil, Brittany Faria, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Gallagher, Greg Guimond, Mayor Heroux, Carol Julius, Bradley Marshall, Joanne Moore, Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Andrea Priest, Courtney Riley, Paula Rossi Clapp, Joseph Ryan, Alan Slavin. All voted yes. The motion passed. Mayor Heroux thanked Mark and his team for all of their hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

To be submitted to the GATRA Advisory Board by:



by **Mark A. Sousa**
Administrator



Date