

**GATRA Advisory Board
Executive Compensation Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, May 4th at 2:00 p.m.
Middleborough Town Hall, 10 Nickerson Avenue
Middleborough, MA 02346

At 2:00 p.m. Joanne Moore Called the Meeting to order

Executive Compensation members present were Joanne Moore, Linda Hayes, Heather Martin Sterling,

Board Members in attendance: Scott Bragdon, Marc Craig, Brittany Faria, Connie Kelly, Mark Germain, Paul Heroux, Shauna O'Connell and Joseph Ryan Also in attendance: Angie Constantino, Nancy Foley, Frank Gay and Consultants Bernie Lynch and Ray Santilli

1. Interview format

Bernie Lynch from Community Paradigm outlined the interview process for the two Administrator candidates. Bernie will lead the interviews. Each candidate will interview separately with the Committee. Bernie will ask each candidate the same questions on a number of topics compiled that are appropriate (see attached interview questions). Bernie will ask a lead question and members of the Committee or any of the Board Members can then ask follow up questions. Bernie announced that the two candidates being brought forward today are Mary Ellen DeFrias and Kathleen Lambert.

2. Interviews

Mary Ellen DeFrias was welcomed by the Committee

Mary Ellen currently serve as VP of Community Development for Mass Development. This position has given Mary Ellen the opportunity to work with many of the GATRA communities and get to know a lot of the area Transit professionals. Mary Ellen worked for Southeastern Regional Transit Authority for 5 years and has a lot of working relationships with area transit professionals including GATRA staff.

Some points Mary Ellen made were: Mary Ellen feels the importance for the Administrator to be the public face of the Agency to get out into the communities to hear the needs. Mary Ellen feels delving into the upcoming Triennial Review information is of utmost importance. She feels looking at the Capital Plan and expanding on that would be a priority. She would meet with staff to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses and empower people to do their job. Mary Ellen would create a dialog and set expectations. Mary Ellen sees Human Resources as a critical role. The importance of working with the State Legislature explaining the needs of the Authority. She would set clear expectations in any contract. Mary Ellen would begin to build relationship and earn the trust of the GATRA communities. She feels the importance of working with GATRA's funding partners would be a priority. Mary Ellen has strong working relationships with FTA Region 1. She would also capitalize on connections between all Massachusetts RTA's.

The Committee thanked Mary Ellen for coming and Bernie explained that next step will be that the committee will deliberate and hopefully bring forth one candidate to the Board for consideration at the Advisory Board Meeting in late May. At that point background checks will have to be completed. Bernie will be in touch.

Kathleen Lambert was welcomed by the Committee

Kathleen's background started in architecture and design which she feels has given her a creative point of view. Kathleen began working in transit during her graduate work in Planning. Kathleen ran a small agency in Arkansas for 5 years. Her work there allowed her to delve into all aspects of transit and also involved redesign of the entire transit service. In her role as Deputy Administrator at MVRTA Kathleen led a Massachusetts bus procurement which gave her the opportunity to work with the other RTA's in Massachusetts. Some points that Kathleen touched on were: She has a vision of GATRA being a leader in the industry, she believes strongly in sustainability in transit, intelligent information transit systems and reducing the amount of cash processed each week. Kathleen feels she has good skills in bringing groups together and considers herself a team manager. Kathleen has experience with running fare free services. She believes the lack of fares could be made up from corporate and university support. Kathleen is very familiar with the funding structure, the budget procedures and has successful Grant writing experience. Kathleen would do a risk assessment and an audit to see status of GATRA finances and operations.

The Committee thanked Kathleen for coming and Bernie would follow up with her on next steps.

3. Follow up discussion, next steps

The Committee members discussed the two candidates at length and asked the Board members present to add their input. There was limited input from the Board but there was support from then to appoint Mary Ellen.

After a thorough discussion Heather Martin moved to bring Mary Ellen DeFrias to the full Board as the candidate for Administrator, Linda Hayes seconded the motion. All members voted aye. Motion passed.

Bernie Lynch will contact both candidates with the Committee's decision. Frank will organize a Board meeting for some time in May.

As there was no Other Business, Joanne Moore moved to adjourn, Linda Hayes seconded. All members voted aye.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Greater Attleboro/Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)

Interview Questions

1. Opening/Introduction

- Briefly tell us of your background, career, and experiences relative to this position.
- What do you envision is the role of the Administrator of GATRA?
- What is your vision of the future of the organization and how do you plan to lead it there?

2. Management Style

- How would you describe your management style?
- How important is communications with staff, and what would that involve with you as the Administrator?
- What do you believe is/are key(s) to staff motivation, engagement and retention? How would you implement such?
- For this type of organization, what qualities do you think makes an Administrator an effective leader and which of these do you consider your strongest and lesser strong points?

3. Contract Administration

- Can you describe your experience with contract negotiation and administration – both with employee groups and vendors?
- What experience do you have with measuring and monitoring performance standards related to transit operations?

4. Finances

- The development of the budget is the responsibility of the Administrator. What has your experience been with respect to budgeting?
- What do you consider important indicators of the health (fiscal and professional) of an agency and how would you approach assessing these?
- Can you describe how the GATRA budget is funded?
- GATRA is largely dependent upon state and federal transportation funding to supplement community assessments. However, there are occasions that may arise to obtain other funds through grant opportunities. What has been your experience in the area of grant writing and grant administration?

5. Capital Assets

In addition to the management of transit operations and related finances, the Administrator is also responsible for the maintenance of all GATRA properties, facilities and equipment. There are several planned large capital projects in the coming years.

- Describe your experience with this type of responsibility, your experience with capital budgeting, and managing capital projects.

6. Relationships

GATRA interacts on a regular basis with local, state and federal officials. It is helpful to have an Administrator who has a productive working relationship with our legislative delegation as well as other state and local officials.

- What is your experience in networking with both governmental and non-governmental entities that are important to the mission of the Authority?
- Describe the relationship that you would have with the members of the Advisory Board?
- A public agency leader is beholden to multiple stakeholder groups – Board members, outside organizations, communities, staff, and members of the public. How would you approach managing the sometime disparate interests of these stakeholder groups?

7. Marketing

The projected success of GATRA includes increasing ridership and increasing local support for its mission. This requires messaging and marketing to the general public. Can you describe efforts that you have led that relate to this area of responsibility?

8. Transportation Issues

- What do you see are the biggest transportation problems facing the GATRA region and what do you see as GATRA's role in addressing these challenges?
- The COVID Pandemic has dramatically impacted travel in the GATRA region and across the country. What do you think will be the long-term changes to transportation as it transitions to a "new normal?"
- The President's proposed Infrastructure Bill places a great deal of attention on addressing inequities that are embedded in the nation's existing transportation system. What types of adverse impacts are of most concern to you and how might they be addressed?
- Can you summarize your vision for new and/or innovative areas in which GATRA could engage?

9. Conclusion

Do you have any questions for us? . . . Any final comments?