



May 17th, 2023 at 1 PM
Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
Advisory Board Meeting
Taunton City Hall Council Chambers
15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780
and
Zoom

1. Open Session Convenes

Mayor O'Connell called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.

A roll call attendance was taken.

The following board members were present:

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone (remote)- arrived at 1:33 PM	Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards (remote)
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil (remote)	North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito (remote)
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee (remote)- arrived at 1:07 PM	Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly (remote)	Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi (remote)
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore (remote)	Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros (remote)
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo (remote)- arrived at 1:08 PM	Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky (remote)
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray (remote)	Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes (remote)- arrived at 1:26 PM
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich (remote)	Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria (remote)
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis (remote)- arrived at 1:08 PM	Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas (remote)- arrived at 1:10 PM	Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin (remote)
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond (remote)	Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico (remote)- arrived at 1:16 PM
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley (remote)	ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond (remote)

The following board members were absent:

Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell	Pembroke (2.53), Gretchen Emmetts
Foxborough (1.98), Marc Craig	Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain	Rider Advocate (1.00), Vacant
Norton (2.11), Michael Toole	

Also present:

Mary Ellen DeFrias, Dan Burgess, Kylie Araujo, Attorney Michele Randazzo

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950
Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439



Mayor O'Connell welcomed new Board member, Richard Panofsky, Rehoboth.

2. April 19th, 2023 Open Session Minutes

Mayor O'Connell reminded the Board that according to Robert's Rules, you can vote on minutes even if you were not at the meeting that the minutes are for.

A motion was made to approve the minutes. Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye
North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito-
aye

Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

Motion to approve April 19, 2023 Open Session Minutes passed.

3. Administrator's Report and Civil Rights Report

Mary Ellen introduced Kylie Araujo as the new Executive Assistant to the Board.

Mary Ellen shared that GATRA is still working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to close out unresolved Triennial findings. Some findings may need to wait to be resolved until next fiscal year because there are not current projects to demonstrate a resolution. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) are coming in at the end of this month and will be installed in busses soon. A new dispatch software is also coming soon and should help to increase efficiency and provide better route planning in the future.

Ridership is continuing to trend positively on all modes. In the future, Mary Ellen is hoping to break out demand response and microtransit numbers separately so the Board can see how ridership differs in both.

The State is covering the full cost of the Wareham Land Purchase. *More information about the Wareham Land Purchase is discussed in Section 7 of these minutes.* GATRA is still waiting to learn the State's contribution to the GATRA Fiscal Year (FY) 24 budget. Mary Ellen is expecting an increase in funding, but the number is not yet finalized.

In the Civil Rights Report, GATRA signed off on the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan for Kiessling of Attleboro (KOA). GATRA is working on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) report, due June 1, 2023.

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439

www.gatra.org



A motion was made to approve the Administrator's Report and Civil Rights Report. Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis- aye
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito-
aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

Motion to approve the above-stated reports passed.

4. Financial Report

Dan Burgess reviewed the Financial Report as follows. The operating revenue total is still trending above budget for the year. The revenue from multiple transit sources has been more than anticipated. Operating expenses are also slightly above expected, including fuel costs. Administrative costs are consistent with the budget, as are state and local funding. On the Brokerage side, the numbers are also trending above budget, which is a good sign that ridership is almost back to pre-Covid numbers. The net surplus still consistently where it has been for last several months. Dan expects the surplus to decrease slightly as the end of the year approaches, but feels that GATRA will be able to put away at least \$300,000 to put towards the last 1-2 years of the contract, where an increase of cost is expected.

A motion was made to approve the Financial Report. Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis- aye
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito-
aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico- abstain
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

Motion to approve the Financial Report passed.

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439



5. Presentation of Preliminary Fiscal Year (FY) 24 Budget

Mary Ellen introduced the FY24 Draft Budget. She noted this is just a presentation of the budget to familiarize the Board with the new format and provide an update to the Board about the work she and Dan have been doing to the budget. No vote on the budget will be made at this time.

The first page is an overview of the entire GATRA budget. This page will be updated and shared with the Board at monthly meetings throughout the next fiscal year. Mary Ellen hopes this consistent sharing will provide a new level of transparency to the Board regarding the budget and that, moving forward, there will be no surprises if/when unexpected expenses arise throughout the year.

The following 4 pages of the Draft Budget document shared with the Board outline the overall budget for each “pillar” of GATRA: Operations (KOA fixed and demand response), Microtransit and COA, Brokerage, and Administration.

The Operations budget has been reviewed and agreed upon with KOA and will allow GATRA to hold KOA accountable to their budget. This budget will be continually assessed for unexpected costs, including fuel. This budget was determined by reviewing years of historical data. By organizing the budget this way, the hope is also to clearly see cost per revenue mile figures in the future.

The Microtransit and COA budget will also allow GATRA to easily track cost per revenue mile as well.

Brokerage is the largest portion of the budget. Most of the budget is contract revenue, which then goes back out as a contract expense. By tracking the Brokerage separately, so that department has authority and accountability over their own budget.

The Administration budget includes the cost of all staff salaries, travel, office supplies, printing, building expenses, etc. Mary Ellen noted that over the last year, she has implemented several changes to be more fiscally responsible with this funding. She also noted that one of the most uncontrollable expenses planned for in the budget is on the revenue anticipation note (debt services). The rate is based on the bond market, and GATRA has budgeted for approximately 6%, which is higher than planned for in the past.

The discussion was opened up to the Board for any questions or comments.

Dean Larabee, Berkley remarked that the above-mentioned rate was high. Mary Ellen shared this was the rate a counterpart Massachusetts (MA) Transit Authority received a week prior and that they were budgeting more conservatively on that line item since it is so unpredictable.

Mayor O’Connell, Taunton asked about budget reviews moving forward. Mary Ellen shared that each month the Board would receive the overview sheet. If any changes needed to be made, GATRA would also provide the 4 “pillar” sheets to show more information to the Board. She

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439



also noted that she was planning to do a periodic review, potentially in January, so if changes need to be made, it is well in advance of the end of the fiscal year.

Mary Ellen also noted that since this format is new this year, there may be changes made along the way to make the format and system work for GATRA and the Board.

6. Executive Compensation Committee (ECC) Recommendation for FY24

Mayor O’Connell shared that the ECC met May 12, 2023 to review the compensation of the Administrator for FY24. The ECC was presented with salary comps from other counterpart MA Transit Authorities, Mary Ellen’s achievements over the last year, and goals for next year. Mayor O’Connell noted that Mary Ellen has done significant work to the GATRA budget, is rectifying procurement issues, is addressing staffing structure and holes, has increased team morale, resolved issues with the FTA, improved communication with the Board, and increased outreach to community. Mayor O’Connell also noted that this is not a 40-hour per week position. Mayor O’Connell shared that based on the above information, the ECC unanimously determined that they would recommend a salary of \$150,000 for FY24 to Mary Ellen.

Mayor’ O’Connell invited the ECC and Board to ask questions or share comment.

Josie Dutil, Bellingham asked if this process is repeated each fiscal year. Mayor O’Connell confirmed that, yes, a performance review process will take place each year and salary will be determined for the next fiscal year.

A motion was made to approve this recommendation by the ECC. Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- abstain
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis- aye
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito- aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O’Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond- aye

Motion to approve the ECC recommendation for the FY24 Administrator salary passed.

Mary Ellen and Mayor O’Connell signed a copy of a contract addendum for FY24 to revise the Administrator salary accordingly.

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439



7. Wareham Land Purchase

Mary Ellen shared an overview of the land in Wareham, MA (2345 and 2347 Cranberry Highway) that GATRA would like to purchase as well as the reasoning for the purchase. She noted that this process has been in the works for years. GATRA needs to own property to be able to make create the maintenance space needed to accommodate the service communities most efficiently as well as accommodate an increasing number of electrical busses in the future. The above-mentioned land is in the right geographic area, at a price that GATRA can afford, and is currently vacant and clear. The land is currently having an environmental review done, but nothing indicates that there will be any issues.

The original plan was to purchase the land next fiscal year and split the cost over two fiscal years in the Capital Budget. Recently, the State came to GATRA and offered to pay for the purchase in full if it is purchased in this fiscal year. It is vague if GATRA needs Board approval to purchase land, so Mary Ellen is bringing it to the Board for a vote to err on the side of caution.

Buying the land now will allow GATRA to spend time designing a space that will service GATRA's current needs and also position GATRA for future success and growth.

The discussion was opened to the Board for questions or comments.

Mayor O'Connell asked if GATRA did comps on the land cost. Mary Ellen said that yes, comps were done and the land is being purchased for a fair amount. Mary Ellen also confirmed that the purchase is 100% state-funded. Future design and building costs will be accounted for in the future Capital Budget. Mary Ellen also noted that the 5-year Capital Budget is forthcoming and the Board will be updated once it is more complete.

Josie Dutil, Bellingham asked if GATRA will be taxed for the land while we are waiting to develop it. Mary Ellen confirmed that, no, there will not be taxes as GATRA is treated as a municipality.

Patti Waitkevich, Kingston asked how many communities this new maintenance facility would service. Mary Ellen shared that all current Plymouth operations, and more, would be moved to the new Wareham location.

Richard Panofsky, Rehoboth asked if the water is testing well. Alan Slavin, Wareham shared that Wareham is already treating the water with facilities and systems in place across the town, so water concerns should not be an issue.

Alan Slavin, Wareham clarified the location of land using local landmarks.

A motion was made to approve the purchase of the previously-mentioned Wareham land. Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye

Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439



Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis- aye
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye
North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito-
aye

Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- abstain
Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

Motion to approve the purchase of the Wareham land passed.

8. Executive Session

Kevin Dumas, Mansfield moved to go into Executive Session,

Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(7), to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special laws or federal grant-in-aid requirements (G.L. c. 30A, §22): approving minutes of January 18th, 2023 and April 19th, 2023 Executive Session

Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Authority's bargaining or litigating position, and the chair so declares. -- Barlow v. GATRA, MCAD Docket No. 23NEM00868

Motion 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray- aye
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis- aye
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas- aye
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond- aye
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito-
aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- abstain
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Mayor O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439

www.gatra.org



Motion to move to Executive Session passed. It was announced Open Session will not reconvene after Executive Session.

Open session adjourned at approximately 1:49PM and moved to Executive Session.

Documents & Exhibits Discussed in this Meeting:

- May 17, 2023 Agenda
- April 19, 2023 Open Session Minutes
- May 2023 Administrator's Report
- May 2023 Civil Rights Report
- FY23 Actuals July-March (Financial Report)
- FY24 Draft Budget- Consolidated
- Addendum to Administrator's Contract for FY24
- Wareham Land Information Packet

10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor, Taunton, MA 02780-3950

Phone (508) 823-8828 • Fax (508) 824-3474 • TDD (508) 824-7439

www.gatra.org