



June 21st, 2023 at 1 PM
Open Session Minutes
Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
Advisory Board Meeting
Taunton City Hall Council Chambers
15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780
and
Zoom

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Alan Slavin, Wareham called the meeting to order at approximately 1:04 PM in Chair Mayor O'Connell's absence.

A roll call attendance was taken.

The following board members were present:

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone
(remote)- arrived at 1:12 PM
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil (remote)
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly (remote)
Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell (remote)
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore (remote)
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo (remote)-
arrived at 1:31 PM
Hanover (3.57), Tammy Murray (remote)
Kingston (1.96), Patti Waitkevich (remote)
Lakeville (1.59), Christina Cotsoridis
(remote)
Mansfield (2.80), Kevin Dumas (remote)
Marshfield (3.04), Greg Guimond (remote)
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain (remote)
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards (remote)

Norton (2.11), Michael Toole
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi (remote)
Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson
(remote)
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros (remote)
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky (remote)
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes (remote)-
arrived at 1:08 PM
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria (remote)-
arrived at 1:06 PM
Taunton (5.49), Patrick DelloRusso
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond
(remote)

The following board members were absent:

Berkley (1.38), Dean Larabee
Foxborough (1.98), Marc Craig
Medway (1.96), Courtney Riley
North Attleboro (3.26), Antonio Morabito
Pembroke (2.53), Gretchen Emmetts
Wrentham (1.92), Janet Angelico

Rider Advocate (1.00), Vacant

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Also present:

Mary Ellen DeFrias, Dan Burgess, Kylie Araujo

2. May 17th, 2023 Open Session Minutes

Vice Chair Slavin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 17th, 2023 Advisory Board Meeting.

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

Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- 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
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.11), Michael Toole- aye

Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson-
abstain
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- abstain
Taunton (5.49), Patrick DelloRusso- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond-
aye

Motion to approve Open Session Minutes from May 17th, 2023 passed.

3. Administrator's Report, Civil Rights Report, & Financial Report

Mary Ellen DeFrias reviewed the Administrator's Report. She noted it had been about a year since the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had conducted their Triennial reporting. GATRA is working on closing out lingering Triennial issues, including procurement and other federal guidelines. Some of these guidelines cannot be demonstrated as followed until future projects, like the Wareham building project as most are construction related.

The Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) is being installed and GATRA hopes to have meaningful data to present to the Board by the Fall. GATRA is also updating the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) dispatch software over the summer. GATRA is closing on the Wareham land next week before the end of the fiscal year (FY), and will then pursue engineering and design as well as permits. GATRA is still working on accurate cost per mile calculations, but hoping that the new accounting software, AVLs, and DAR software will help provide more meaningful data to track and calculate these. In regard to personnel, the Administration office is now fully staffed with the addition of a Comptroller. Mary Ellen had a goal of reducing the number of outside consultants GATRA was paying by bringing these roles in house. In the next FY, the consulting cost should be reduced significantly. Brokerage currently has two customer service representative positions open.

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Mary Ellen reviewed that Dan would review the April Actuals in the Financial Report next. Following that report, the FY23 budget adjustment will be reviewed and voted on, as well as the FY24 budget. The budget for FY24 is based on level funding from the state as there is no final determination as of that morning. The governor had proposed a 1/12 budget, where GATRA will receive a portion of next year's funding on July 1, based on last year's budget, until a determination is made. GATRA is preparing items like Sunday service in the event that additional funding is received, so they can be enacted in a timely manner.

Mary Ellen reviewed the Civil Rights Report. There is no change in Title VI. Kiessling of Attleboro's (KOA) Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan has been completed and is being monitored. GATRA submitted Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) report June 1, 2023 and is on track with contracting. The next report is due December 1, 2023.

Dan Burgess reviewed the financial actuals through April 2023. The Operating budget is on track with what was expected. Commuter rail revenue (and expenses, as expected) are up, which indicates people are using the parking lot and commuting more frequently. Fuel costs are up, which is expected as well. The Administration and local assessment actuals are in line with the budget. The Brokerage income and related expenses are as expected. The Brokerage budget is running a purposeful surplus to prepare for future years of the Brokerage contract.

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

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- 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
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

Norton (2.11), Michael Toole- aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson- 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), Patrick DelloRusso- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond- aye

Motion to approve the above-stated reports passed.

4. FY23 Budget Amendment

Mary Ellen DeFrias and Dan Burgess reviewed the proposed FY23 Budget Amendment. This budget pre-dates Mary Ellen's tenure as Administrator and is therefore in a different format than it will be moving forward.

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Dan reviewed different line items on the budget as well as the proposed amendment number and the reasoning for the changes from budget number and actuals.

Patrick DelloRusso, Taunton, Taunton's CFO, asked Dan several questions regarding the budget sheet as well as discussed ways that he may be able to assist or advise in the future.

With the proposed amendment, the FY23 budget is balanced. There were no further questions or comments from the Board.

A motion to approve the FY23 budget amendment was made and 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- 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
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye

Norton (2.11), Michael Toole- aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- aye
Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson- 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), Patrick DelloRusso- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond- aye

Motion to approve the FY23 budget amendment passed.

5. FY24 Budget Approval

Mary Ellen DeFrias and Dan Burgess reviewed the FY24 Operating Budget. Mary Ellen reviewed that this budget format, which the Board had been presented with at the last meeting, is the new format GATRA will be using moving forward. The Board will receive the cover page/summary each month. If the budget needs to be adjusted in the future, the more detailed departmental budgets/pillars will also be shared with the Board.

Mary Ellen reviewed changes to this format that will help GATRA better track and identify the cost for individual services, as well as create more transparency between GATRA and the Advisory Board. She also reviewed each budget item and number on the cover sheet to identify how that number was determined, using historical data and other factors.

Mary Ellen notified the Board that GATRA has used all their Federal 100-percent funds and is now using 5307 funds. Therefore, no CARES Act funds are outlined in the FY24 budget.

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The FY24 budget outlines an identical state funding number to FY23 as there is no final determination at this time. Mary Ellen is expecting a decision in the mid-Fall. If more funding from the state is received than last year, GATRA will discuss service expansion opportunities. If level funding is received, service reduction may need to be discussed as other operating costs will rise. Mary Ellen also emphasized that sustainable, consistent funding is key to providing reliable service expansion in the future.

Mary Ellen reviewed that Capital is not included in this budget and that GATRA is actively working on a Capital Budget to present to the Board in the future. Based on Triennial findings, solving issues with the Operating Budget were prioritized. Dan also outlined that with the new Comptroller starting soon and the change in software from QuickBooks to Munis, tracking the budget should be easier.

The discussion opened up to the Board for questions, as follows.

Patti Waitkevich, Kingston asked if AVL was being installed in all the vehicles, including in the Plymouth area. Mary Ellen answered that AVL was being installed on fixed route buses, and that Spare would provide the real-time updates for microtransit vehicles. Patti also asked if there was going to be any change to the flag stop policy. Mary Ellen answered that there wouldn't be changes to the current flag stop policy until there was a larger overhaul of the service area. There is not a timeline for service changes at this time. Patti also asked if TransLoc and Spare are still being used. Mary Ellen answered that the goal is to get everything on Spare by July 1, 2023.

Cobi Frongillo, Franklin asked for explanation of demand-response vs microtransit, as laid out in the budget. Mary Ellen answered that microtransit doesn't require a qualifying reason for needing transportation, where demand-response typically does require a qualifying reason. The Councils on Aging (COAs) are listed with microtransit on the budget because COAs have more flexibility with the transportation they provide than demand-response. Cobi clarified that microtransit is the service offered in Franklin currently. Cobi noted that, on paper, it looks like fixed-route is the biggest return on the dollar. Mary Ellen answered that it is difficult to compare fixed-route and microtransit dollar for dollar because the services, vehicles, and locations are so different from one another. Moreso, certain services work better in certain communities.

Colleen Thompson, Plympton, noted that last year Plympton was not counted in the budget as there were no services being provided. Colleen wanted to confirm that Plympton was counted in the budget this year. Mary Ellen confirmed that, yes, Plympton was counted in the FY24 budget.

A motion to approve the FY24 GATRA Operating Budget was made and 2nd. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye

Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell- aye
Duxbury (2.25), Joanne Moore- aye
Franklin (2.35), Cobi Frongillo- aye

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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
Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.11), Michael Toole- aye
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- abstain

Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes- abstain
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Patrick DelloRusso- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond- aye

Motion to approve the FY24 GATRA Operating budget passed.

6. FY24 Board Meeting Schedule

Mary Ellen DeFrias reviewed the FY24 Advisory Board meeting schedule. The schedule outlines monthly meetings for FY24, but Mary Ellen explained the plan to meet roughly every other month, as noted on the schedule, in line with important dates (such as budget check ins/proposed amendments, budget draft, budget approval, and orientation months). On the months where there is not a meeting, the Board will still receive updates via the Administrator's Report, Civil Rights Report, and Financial Report. If a meeting on off-months is deemed necessary, the Board will meet.

No vote is needed as this was a presentation only.

7. Adjournment

A motion is made and 2nd to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.40), Mayor DeSimone- aye
Bellingham (2.59), Josie Dutil- aye
Carver (1.61), Connie Kelly- aye
Dighton (1.15), Anabela Powell- 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
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Middleboro (2.79), Mark Germain- aye
Norfolk (2.24), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.11), Michael Toole- abstain
Plainville (1.29), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.33), Derek Brindisi- abstain

Plympton (1.00), Colleen Thompson- aye
Raynham (2.06), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Richard Panofsky- aye
Scituate (2.32), Linda Hayes- abstain
Seekonk (2.11), Brittany Faria- aye
Taunton (5.49), Patrick DelloRusso- aye
Wareham (3.20), Alan Slavin- aye
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond- aye

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Open session adjourned at approximately 1:52 PM.

Documents & Exhibits Discussed in this Meeting:

- June 21st, 2023 Meeting Agenda
- May 17th, 2023 Open Session Minutes
- Administrator's Report
- Civil Rights Report
- Financial Report
- FY23 Budget Amendment
- FY24 Budget
- FY24 Meeting Schedule

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